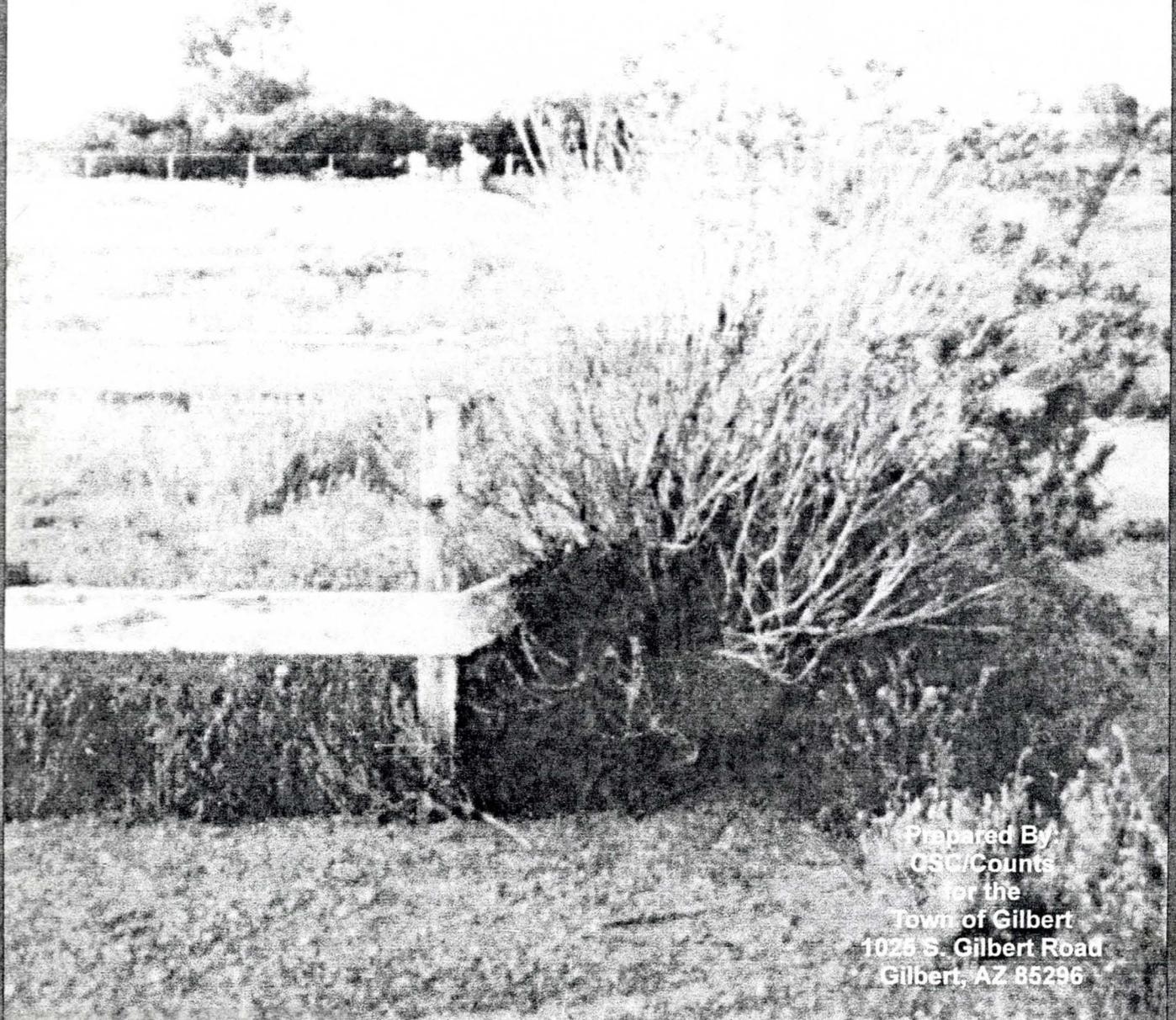
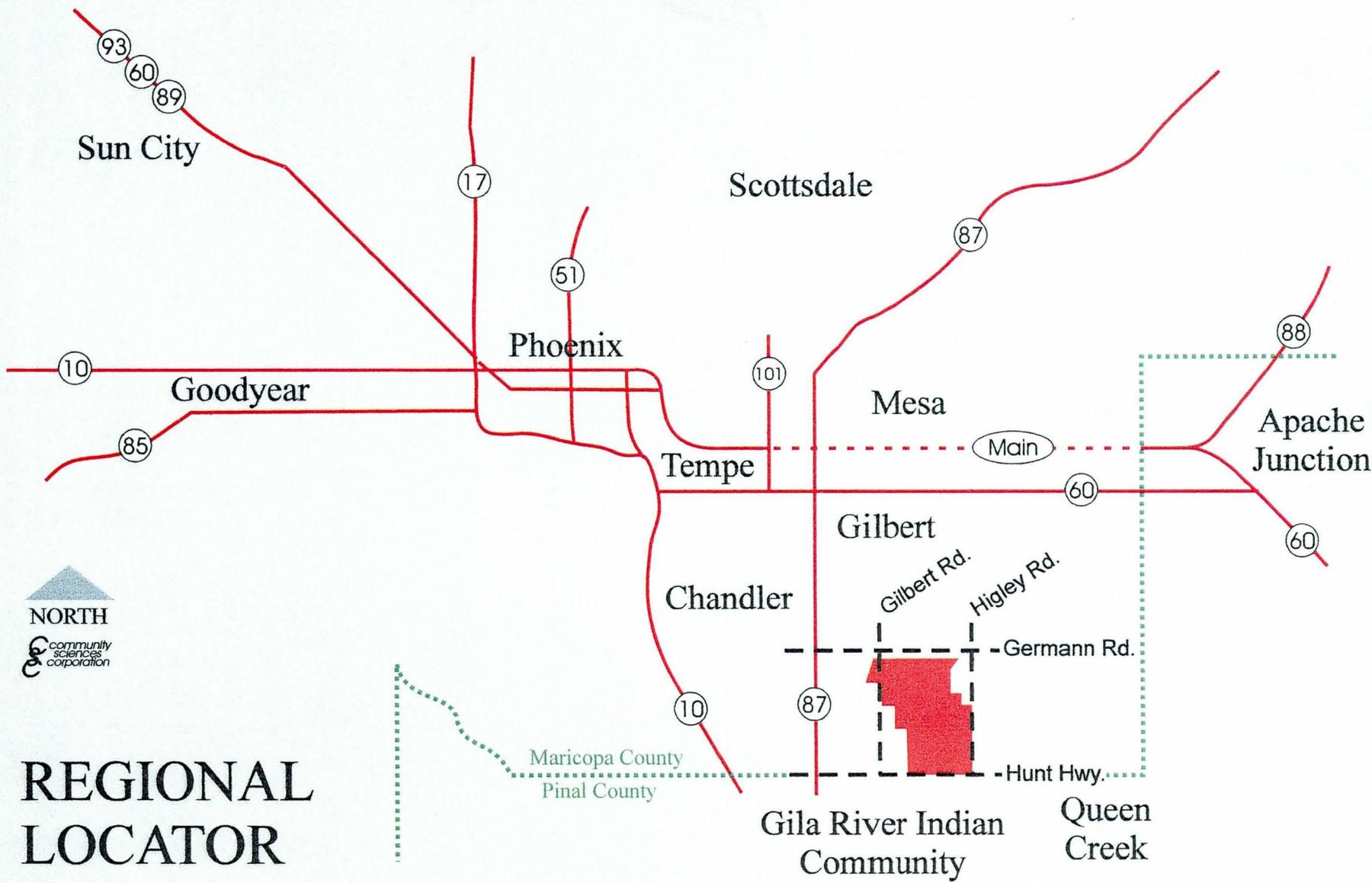


San Tan Area Plan

Property of Addition to the Gilbert General Plan
4 Control District of MC Library
Please Return to
2001 W. Durango
Phoenix, AZ 85009



Prepared By
OSC/Counts
for the
Town of Gilbert
1025 S. Gilbert Road
Gilbert, AZ 85296



2

**REGIONAL
LOCATOR**

SAN TAN PLANNING AREA

1997

Williams Field Rd

Pecos Rd

Germann Rd

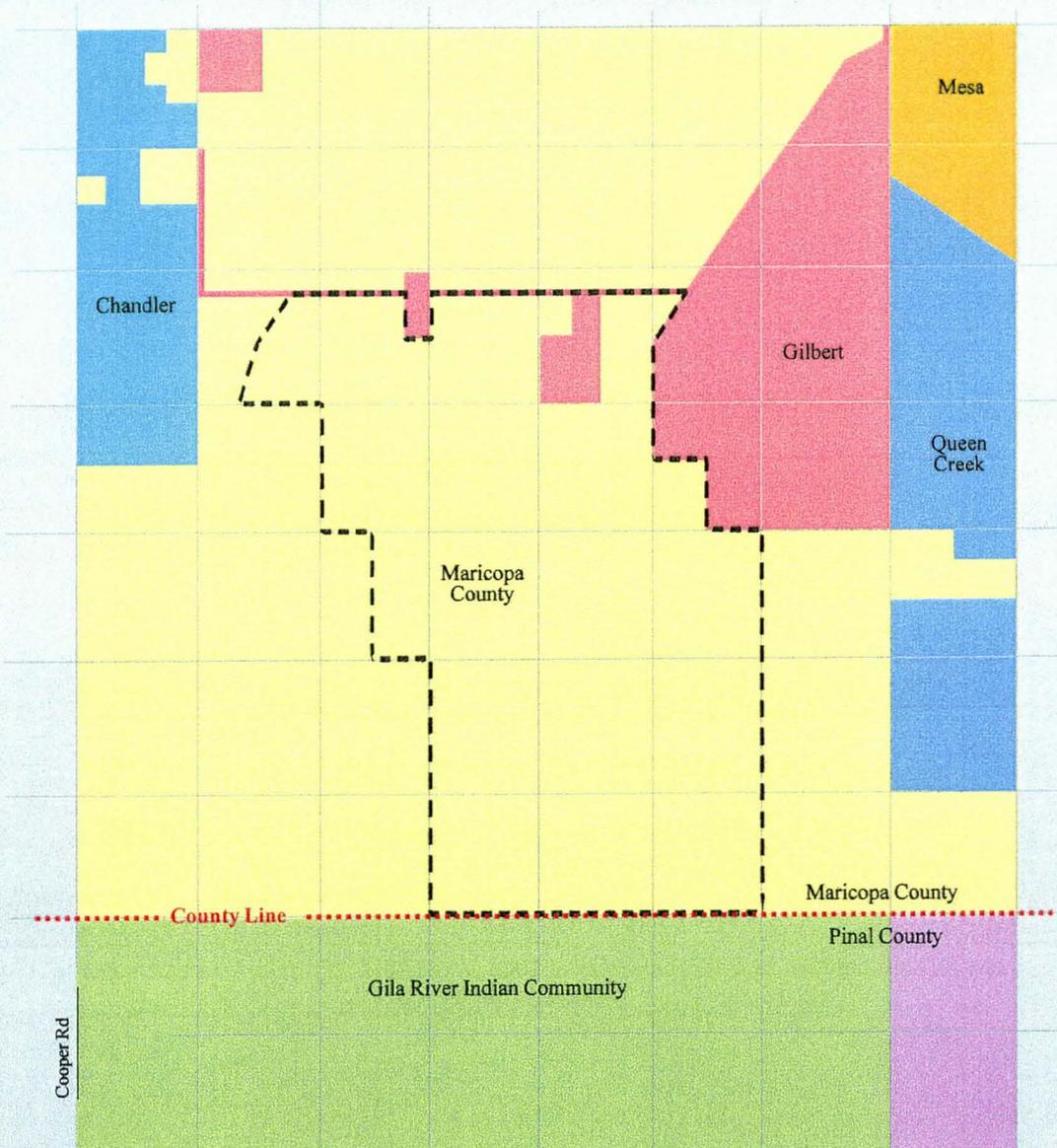
Queen Creek Rd

Ocotillo Rd

Chandler Heights Rd

Riggs Rd

Hunt Hwy



SURROUNDING JURISDICTION BOUNDARIES

- CHANDLER
- MESA
- GILA RIVER INDIAN COMMUNITY
- QUEEN CREEK
- GILBERT
- MARICOPA COUNTY
- PINAL COUNTY
- SAN TAN AREA BOUNDARY

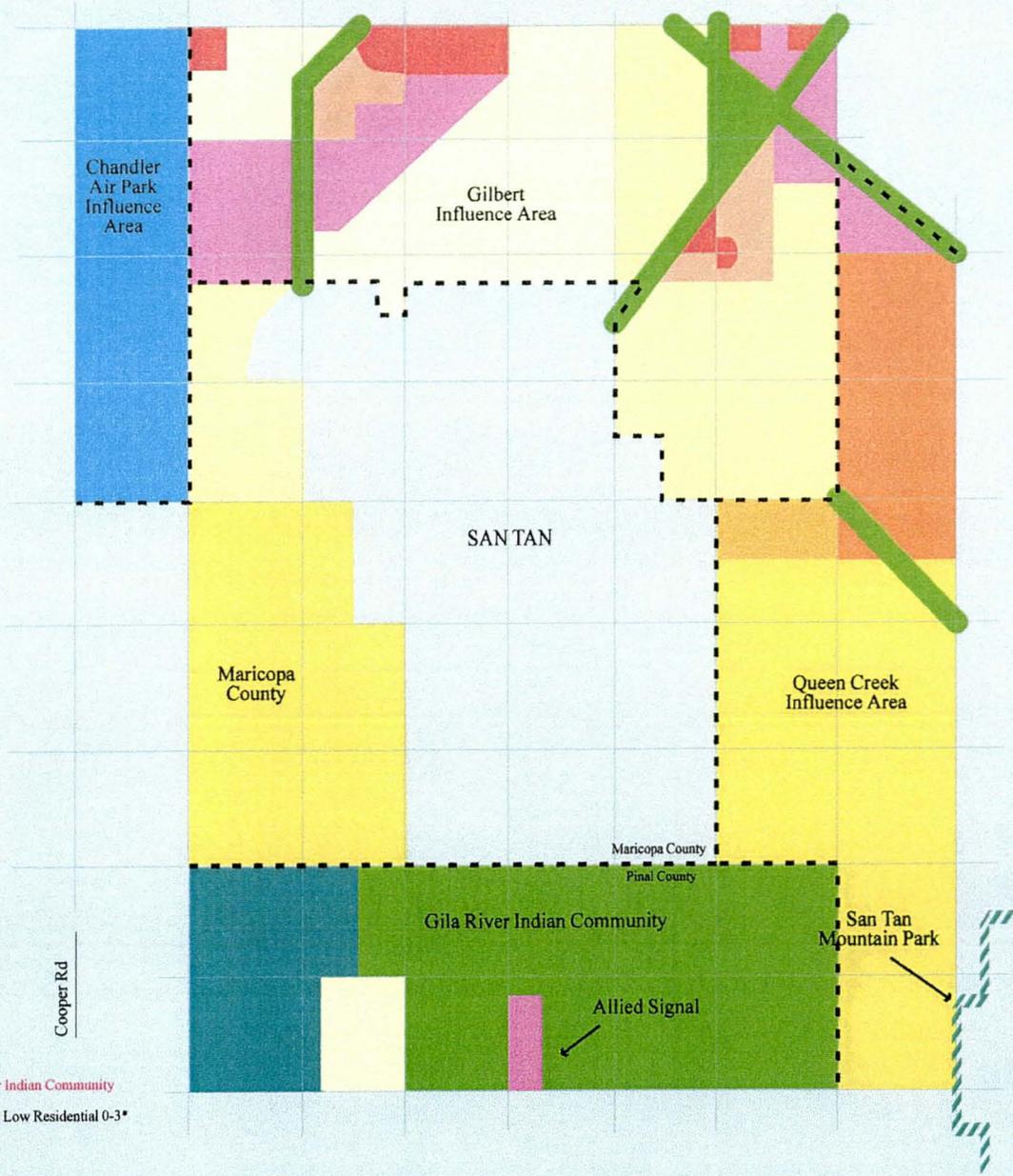


Cooper Rd

Gilbert Rd Lindsay Rd Val Vista Dr Greenfield Rd Higley Rd Recker Rd Power Rd Sossaman Rd

SAN TAN NEIGHBORING AREA

Williams Field Rd
 Pecos Rd
 Germann Rd
 Queen Creek Rd
 Ocotillo Rd
 Chandler Heights Rd
 Riggs Rd
 Hunt Hwy



SURROUNDING JURISDICTION PLANS

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Gilbert | Gila River Indian Community |
| Low Residential 0-3* | Low Residential 0-3* |
| Medium Residential 0-4* | All Areas |
| Medium High Residential 4-8* | Employment |
| Queen Creek | Commercial |
| Very Low Residential 0-1* | Open Space |
| Low Residential 1-2* | Agricultural |
| Medium Residential 2-4* | * Dwelling Units Per Acre |
| Maricopa County | |
| Rural Residential 0-1* | |
| Urban Residential 0-4* | |



SAN TAN NEIGHBORING AREA

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SAN TAN VISION

The residents of the San Tan Planning Area acknowledge their responsibility to adopt and follow a realistic, attainable Plan for growth management of the Area. A true test of community planning effectiveness is measured by tangible achievements required to maintain or obtain this desired lifestyle. San Tan people are committed to respond to growth in a positive, yet guiding manner to assure the spacious, agricultural atmosphere prevails as development occurs over time.

At the initial public workshop, in February 1998, nearly eighty citizens came together to take the first steps in forming a Vision Statement and to enumerate Goals for the future of San Tan. Subsequent meetings, with several hundred representatives from the Area at each, provided additional input to confirm and enhance this Vision and the Goals. Regular open meetings of a Steering Committee composed of homeowners, local leadership and developer representatives were held over a period of more than a year.

VISION STATEMENT

The people of San Tan envision their future area as a quiet, rural community of families that can enjoy the natural environment and preservation of wildlife, agriculture, and domestic animals. Emphasis is placed on outdoor living enjoyment and ability for people to live and play in a secure and safe environment. Through a citizen-driven Plan low density residential development has been blended with agriculture, equestrian trails, open desert, and limited commercial support uses to make up the character of the San Tan Area.

The San Tan Area Plan is designed to serve as a guide for future development over the next twenty years as the citizens of San Tan envision it. This Plan must be readopted with any appropriate changes at least every ten years; however, Maricopa County has a policy requiring updates at least every five years. The citizens of this area insist that the basic attributes which make the Area special — farming, respect for the land, family atmosphere — should be retained and strengthened. Local residents agree that the rural lifestyle and open space that characterize San Tan are part of the draw that brings people to the area and should be maintained. Priority is placed on agriculture, recreational open space and outdoor enjoyment.

Planning is undertaken as a means for assuring that attention is paid to community standards and that local officials, citizens and landowners follow the directions provided by the Plan, with the understanding it is an expression of community desires. San Tan is immediately adjacent to municipalities undergoing rapid growth and is, therefore, experiencing pressure from development. The Plan recognizes the desire to preserve the existing lifestyle and environment while properly planning and guiding future growth. The Vision, Goals and Objectives are established for the protection of San Tan's residential neighborhoods and agricultural lands from congestion, incompatible uses, and unmanaged growth. Goals and Objectives for each Plan Element are provided in Chapter II.

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Maricopa County's East Valley, which includes the incorporated municipalities of Chandler, Gilbert, Mesa, Queen Creek, and the Gila River Indian Community, has experienced population growth over the last two decades. Growth had been on a less steep incline up until 1980. In addition to these jurisdictions with a total mid-1998 population estimated at 628,023; there are other unincorporated communities in the remaining county area. The 15.25 square mile area referred to as San Tan is one of these developed county areas. The San Tan Area contains several established neighborhoods. The population currently residing in the San Tan Planning Area is estimated to be approximately 1,400.

The San Tan Planning Area is located in a multi-jurisdictional context as shown on the San Tan Neighboring Areas Map (preceding page). Jurisdictional boundaries and areas of influence among these communities promotes a framework for planning future infrastructure and services. To respond to character preservation and growth potential issues in the San Tan Area, the Town of Gilbert chose to prepare an Addition of the San Tan Area to the Town of Gilbert General Plan. Gilbert adopted its most recent General Plan in May of 1994. There is currently a Maricopa County Plan in place for the San Tan Area. This Plan, which is part of the Queen Creek Land Use Plan, was done in 1992. There has been considerable growth in the surrounding region since. Also, Queen Creek revised and updated its own General Plan in 1996.

In 1997 Maricopa County adopted *Eye to the Future 2020 - The County Comprehensive Plan*. Policies adopted in the plan address planning in unincorporated area such as the San Tan. Unincorporated areas of the County that are included in a municipal General Plan, may serve as a guidelines for development decisions by the Board of Supervisors. The General Plans are used as long as they are in general accord with the Goals and Policies of *Eye to the Future 2020*, have been updated within five years, and were developed and/or updated with the participation of the residents of the unincorporated area.

A. PLAN ORGANIZATION

The San Tan Area Plan is organized into five Chapters, arranged to flow from a statement of basic goals through the evaluation of community needs and the means by which to implement them. The opening section, San Tan Vision, introduces citizen desires for future development. Chapter I discusses the framework for the Plan and includes a Physical Assessment of the Area. Chapter II outlines the Plan Goals and Objectives concerning the six main Plan Elements. Next, the fundamental subject matter components, Plan Elements, are assessed. These Elements were derived from citizen emphases on particular areas needing attention for future development. Chapter IV covers coordination with other Plans in the region and discusses this Plan as an amendment to the current General Plan for Gilbert. Finally, Chapter V includes a recommended action plan for achieving local planning objectives.

B. PLAN INTENT

The San Tan Area Plan is intended to serve as a comprehensive framework for evaluating Land Use, Circulation, Public Facilities, Open Space and Trails, Economic Development, and Community Design with consistency. It seeks to establish a baseline that guides public and private decision making over the life of the Plan. Recent State legislation provides for a ten year review process and new guidelines for amending the Plan.

C. DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

The San Tan area has historically been a farming community. Dairies are the most predominant type of agribusiness. Over time, some larger land holdings have been subdivided into residential lots of one acre or more. The existing land use map, at page 19, depicts this pattern. Commercial activity has been limited to a few special use permits granted by Maricopa County for such things as dog kennels and cellular towers. Large employers, such as Williams Gateway Airport and General Motors Proving Grounds, are located several miles to the north; Allied Signal facilities are located south of Hunt Highway.

Most parts of the East Valley have been experiencing fast-paced residential development with new subdivisions and master planned communities. Retail and commercial activities have followed to serve these new residents. How this expansion will affect and impact the San Tan Area has led to this planning process. It is expected that this pattern of new home development will continue into the San Tan Planning Area. The challenge of this Plan is to balance the desires of those wishing to develop with those wishing to preserve the agricultural and rural residential lifestyle.

Identifying existing developments, land continuing in agricultural production, and lands featuring canals and flood control, shows a pattern with options for protecting existing residential areas. With good design and planning, the possibility exists to allow development to take place during the ten year life of this plan with open space or preservation buffers between uses. The Future Development Plan Map, on page 22, presents the concept of masterplanned mixed-use or residential developments up to a maximum of 3.25 units per acre but only if strict open space and character assurance criteria are met. These established performance standards are applied to any increase in housing density above one dwelling unit per acre, appropriate locations and parcel sizes for commercial uses, circulation system improvements and protection of sensitive environmental conditions.

D. PHYSICAL ASSESSMENT

Evaluation of the physical layout of the land, location of flood plains and other natural features, existing land uses, surrounding development and outside influences, and the views of the citizens were considered as determinants of the best use of land for the San Tan Planning Area. The planning area is relatively flat sloping from the southeast to the northwest. Slope in the area ranges from zero to two percent. Elevations range from 1,305 feet above sea level at the

northwestern boundary to 1,472 feet above sea level near the southeastern boundary. Terrain within the planning area is generally composed of alluvial plains. The closest mountains, the San Tan Mountains, are two to three miles to the southeast.

General geology within the whole planning area consists of sedimentary rocks composed of sand, gravel and conglomerate. Land subsidence has been noted throughout the San Tan vicinity, due to extensive ground water harvesting to support agriculture. The rate of subsidence was estimated at up to one (1) foot per year in 1992.

Three major soil associations are found within the area. The Antho-Valencia Association is found in the south portion below Chandler Heights Road. The Mohall-Contine Association covers the south half of the area. The Gilman-Estrella-Avondale covers the remaining part of the Planning Area. Brief definitions of these soil types are as follows:

- Antho-Valencia : Well drained soils, nearly level to gently sloping sandy clay loams and gravely sandy loams on old alluvial fans.
- Gilman-Estrella-Avondale: Well drained soils, nearly level loams and clay loams on alluvial fans and floodplains.
- Mohall-Contine: Well-drained soils, nearly level loams and sandy clay loams with old alluvial materials on old alluvial fans.

DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS BY SOIL ASSOCIATION

Soil Assoc.	Antho-Valencia	Gilman-Estrella- Avondale	Mohall-Contine
Septic Tank absorption	Moderate to Severe	Slight to Moderate	Severe
Dwellings without basements	Moderate to Severe	Moderate	Moderate
Dwellings with basements	Moderate to Severe	Moderate	Moderate
Local Roads and Streets	Severe	Moderate to Severe	Mod. to Severe
Small Commercial Buildings	Moderate to Severe	Moderate	Moderate
Lawns and Landscaping	Moderate to Severe	Moderate	Moderate

Source: U. S. Department of Agriculture

Geology and soil types are important in determining appropriate types of development. There are potential constraints on construction based on soil types. More detailed information can be found in the U. S. Department of Agriculture "Soil Survey: Eastern Maricopa and Northern Pinal Counties Area, Arizona".

Approximately seventeen percent of the Planning Area is open desert with the Creosote-Bursage Community making up the majority of the natural vegetation in the area. This vegetation category consists of Acacia, Agave, Bursage, Hedgehog Cactus, Barrel Cactus, Ocotillo, Cholla, and Mesquite varieties.

There is currently no designed drainage system for storm water run-off for the Planning Area. Current flows drain along the natural washes. The 100 and 500 year flood plains are identified along the Eastern Canal and the Roosevelt Conservation District Canal. The 100 year flood plain provides an opportunity to preserve this area as open space or park land. However, these areas are not counted as part of any development's required open space.

Queen Creek and the Sanoqui Wash are the principal washes crossing the Planning Area. Both generally flow from east to west. The Eastern Maricopa Floodway is a major drainage structure which traverses the central portion of the area. From north to south this floodway serves as a storm water collector, channeling flood water out of the planning area.

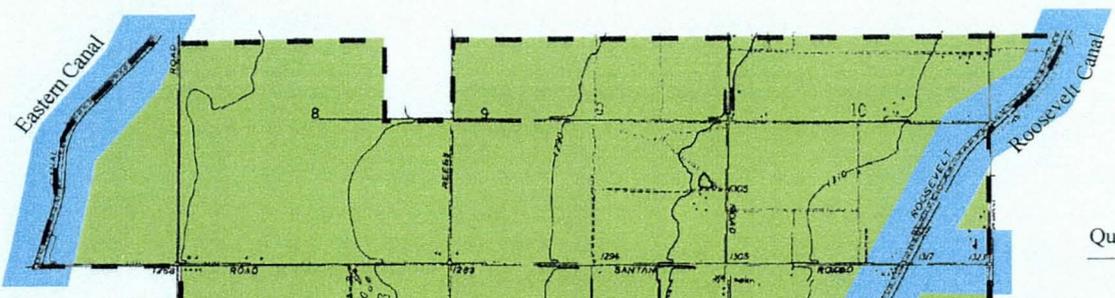
Water quality in the area is impacted by primary and secondary contaminants. Primary contaminants are nitrates above 45 mg and metals; secondary are sulfates above 250 mg and total dissolved solids above 500 mg. Agricultural activity is a potential contributor to nitrates in the water.

The climate for the Planning Area is similar to Phoenix, characterized by hot, dry summers with generally mild fall, winter and spring. This type is ideal for both agricultural productivity and an outdoor, rural lifestyle.

Air quality is affected in a number of ways as a result of many activities in the surrounding areas such as commuter traffic, farming operations, and airports. Sources of air pollutants can be mobile or stationary. The San Tan Area has several sources to contend with — the pollutants from automobile traffic during commuter peak periods, dust from the desert and unpaved roads, agricultural operations, crop dusting, and construction activities. Air pollution concentrations are not currently being measured in San Tan. Although the East Valley is seeing increases in pollution levels as a result of the growth, San Tan skies are still relatively clear. Concern for expanding residential growth might be the odors from the surrounding dairies and chemical applications to crops. In addition, any new developments should keep in mind that existing residential areas maintain livestock which result in odors that may affect neighbors.

Noise from airport and arterial road traffic is a potential concern regarding the tranquility of residential areas within the planning boundary. Noise contours for the Williams Gateway Airport and Chandler Airpark do not cross in to the Planning Area but may affect parts of San Tan as these facilities experience future economic growth. Annual review of this Plan should address any changes to noise contours from the surrounding airports.

Germann Rd



Queen Creek Rd



Ocotillo Rd

Lindsay Rd

Chandler Heights Rd

GEOLOGIC CONDITIONS

- Antho-Valencia
- Mohall-Contine
- Gillman-Estrella-Avondale
- 100 Year Floodplain
- U.S.G.S. Data (1951)
- Area Boundary

Riggs Rd

Hunt Hwy

Val Vista Dr

Greenfield Rd

Higley Rd

Recker Rd

SAN TAN PLANNING AREA

CHAPTER II. PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The San Tan Area is a unique place in the East Valley as yet untouched by urban development that has absorbed much of the metropolitan region. However, the potential for growth to expand into this area of agriculture and open desert is a distinct possibility. This Area Plan is an opportunity for residents and landowners to shape their future by stating their expectations for development and community improvement. Although the Plan is designed to cover a period of twenty years or more, it may be updated on a regular basis. Decisions based on its goals and objectives will be long term and extend into the future. The Growing Smarter Legislation recently passed by the State notes that the Plan is effective for up to ten years from the date of adoption and must be readopted or a new Plan adopted prior to the tenth anniversary.

Participants in the San Tan Area planning process have expressed their aspirations for the future in sets of Goals, with action-oriented objectives, for each Area Plan Element. These directions are supplemented with recommended policies and implementation strategies in later Chapters.

A. LAND USE

Future land use in the existing, minimally developed San Tan Area held strong interest for local residents. Preference prevailed for rural residential lifestyles with some neighborhood and convenience shopping to serve area citizens. Permitted land uses, with future implementing zoning districts or overlays, might include rural resorts, office uses, farmers' markets and employment campuses of appropriate size, as well as continuing agri-business. These desires are identified in five Goals, each with specific objectives intended to expand on key issues.

1. **Goal:** Promote and encourage innovative and existing agricultural uses.
 - a. **Objective:** Consider adding an agricultural preservation district to the Zoning Ordinance.
 - b. **Objective:** Promote new development that integrates into certain agricultural functions.
 - c. **Objective:** Use agriculture as greenbelt buffers to various areas.

2. **Goal:** Maintain low density, rural residential living.
 - a. **Objective:** Provide land use categories for one acre lots and custom-built homes.
 - b. **Objective:** Work with existing water providers to develop residential areas with irrigated yards.
 - c. **Objective:** Encourage large landholders to develop unique, low-density projects mixed with open space or agriculture.

3. **Goal:** Promote a safe, livable environment for raising families.
 - a. **Objective:** Discourage development of wide roads with high speeds.
 - b. **Objective:** Minimize large scale commercial and industrial development near residential land uses.
 - c. **Objective:** Preserve scenic beauty and natural desert.

4. **Goal:** Encourage development of businesses that complement a rural lifestyle.
 - a. **Objective:** Allow for development of neighborhood-scale commercial activity.
 - b. **Objective:** Provide regulations to limit commercial development from occurring on every corner.
 - c. **Objective:** Encourage development of expanded communications to allow for home occupations.
 - d. **Objective:** Encourage masterplanning for a village center or community gathering place.

5. **Goal:** Direct large scale commercial and industrial development to locate near existing municipal infrastructure.
 - a. **Objective:** Discourage development that would require expansion of utilities to remote areas.
 - b. **Objective:** Commercial and industrial development are allowed but should be designed to respect the existing lifestyle.

6. **Goal:** Provide substantial buffering between different land uses and densities.
 - a. **Objective:** Utilize distance separation, walls and landscaping for transitions.
 - b. **Objective:** Stress agricultural character and spaciousness.

B. CIRCULATION

There is strong interest in the safety and consistency of the existing automobile transportation system. Suggestions to include equestrian opportunities in conjunction with improved safety are reflected in the following set of Goals.

1. **Goal:** Provide a safe and well-maintained automobile transportation system.
 - a. **Objective:** Avoid disjointed roadway improvements.
 - b. **Objective:** Place traffic control devices, such as stop signs, where needed.
 - c. **Objective:** Discourage continuation of Hunt Highway to the west.
 - d. **Objective:** Plan for narrower streets where appropriate on collectors.

2. **Goal:** Provide equestrian/pedestrian trail systems throughout the Planning Area.
 - a. **Objective:** Utilize canals as part of a trail system.
 - b. **Objective:** Develop a trail system that connects to the San Tan Mountains.
 - c. **Objective:** Provide a pedestrian circulation network to provide options to vehicle use.

3. **Goal:** Design installation of aesthetic streetscapes.
 - a. **Objective:** Provide landscaped medians on main arterials.
 - b. **Objective:** Limit street lights — minimize light pollution — along less-traveled streets to preserve views of stars.

C. PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Future development even at relatively low density will necessitate extension of public services such as water and sewer systems. Sites will also need to be designated for schools, fire stations, post office, sheriff and other facilities.

1. **Goal:** Encourage development of expanded communications and natural gas service.
 - a. **Objective:** Work with communication companies on facilities for cellular and fiber optics.
 - b. **Objective:** Coordinate with natural gas companies to expand service in San Tan.
2. **Goal:** Encourage natural parks for outdoor enjoyment for adults and children.
 - a. **Objective:** Strengthen laws and enforcement to stop illegal dumping in the desert.
 - b. **Objective:** Allow natural desert to be used for recreation areas.
3. **Goal:** Promote proper installation and use of individual systems for water and wastewater.
 - a. **Objective:** Provide documents/suggestions of minimum standards for individual systems.
 - b. **Objective:** Assure that inspections are being done for new rural development to ensure the safety of all residents.

D. OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS

Local residents prize their existing open spaces and spacious image and prefer them to developed parks and recreation facilities. They stressed the desire to see a trail system developed throughout the San Tan Area, possibly utilizing existing features such as the canals. The Goals reflect these desires.

1. **Goal:** Designate portions of agricultural areas for open space and buffers between development.
 - a. **Objective:** Maintain citrus groves intact or as part of residential developments.
 - b. **Objective:** Provide incentives or require developers to maintain substantial portions of the land in common open space where residential density exceeds one unit per acre.
 - c. **Objective:** Keep the farm irrigation system in place, to enhance agricultural uses remaining with new development.
2. **Goal:** Adapt canals, laterals, washes and floodways for recreation and trails.
 - a. **Objective:** Provide natural park areas in conjunction with canals.
 - b. **Objective:** Utilize existing washes as part of trail system.
 - c. **Objective:** Maintain and enhance native landscape along floodways for reducing erosion and preserving the natural environment.

3. **Goal:** Plan an area-wide trail/pathway system.
 - a. **Objective:** Provide links and access trails to equestrian and hiking areas.
 - b. **Objective:** Designate a multi-use trail connection from the San Tan Area to San Tan Regional Park.
 - c. **Objective:** Designate corridors through existing washes, canals, and agricultural areas to begin the trail system.
 - d. **Objective:** Coordinate the trail system with neighboring communities.

4. **Goal:** Maintain traditional spaciousness, agriculture and/or citrus groves throughout the Planning Area.
 - a. **Objective:** Preserve natural desert between rural residential homes (0-1 per acre) and other residential developments.
 - b. **Objective:** Encourage the Gila River Indian Community to maintain the south side of Hunt Highway as open space.

5. **Goal:** Encourage developments that emphasize open space and low-density.
 - a. **Objective:** Establish minimum standards for developers and municipalities to provide open space and trails as part of development.
 - b. **Objective:** Develop small parks in the San Tan Planning Area that are strategically placed.
 - c. **Objective:** Maximize open space emphasis of the buffer around the wastewater treatment plant.

E. COMMUNITY DESIGN

Residents stressed the desire to maintain the existing character of spaciousness and natural desert. Custom homes and large lot development blended with agriculture are preferred over the development patterns that are taking place in surrounding jurisdictions.

1. **Goal:** Provide aesthetic guidelines and standards for all development.
 - a. **Objective:** Discourage the development of block walled communities.
 - b. **Objective:** Minimize the amount of street and other lighting to allow for enjoyment of the stars.
 - c. **Objective:** Shield lighting to prevent light pollution.
 - d. **Objective:** Maintain a rural character.

2. **Goal:** Preserve the agricultural atmosphere of community.
 - a. **Objective:** Acknowledge dairy farms' and other farming operations' appropriate continuation as San Tan neighbors.
 - b. **Objective:** Keep citrus groves by incorporating them into new development.
 - c. **Objective:** Blend smaller farms into residential developments.

3. **Goal:** Emphasize the visual quality and rural residential nature of the community.
 - a. **Objective:** Promote the use of natural open space buffers between residential and other development.
 - b. **Objective:** Place utilities underground for all development.
 - c. **Objective:** Encourage the development of rural residential, custom homes.
4. **Goal:** Accent smaller scale commercial use that serves residents.
 - a. **Objective:** Consider placement of commercial activity along canals where accessible.
 - b. **Objective:** Allow limited commercial activity in residential areas.
5. **Goal:** Ensure availability of open space.
 - a. **Objective:** Place parks and trails along canals.
 - b. **Objective:** Utilize the flood plain areas and washes for parks and open space.
 - c. **Objective:** Encourage the establishment of greenbelts throughout the Planning Area.

F. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Residents have expressed their desire to continue agricultural uses in the Planning Area. However, there is a need to provide at a minimum, basic commercial service for local residents.

1. **Goal:** Limit quantity of commercial development.
 - a. **Objective:** Allow small, individual businesses to develop throughout the Planning Area.
 - b. **Objective:** Match larger facilities, such as a chain grocery store, to the low density trade area.
 - c. **Objective:** Discourage development of strip malls and gas station/mini-marts on every corner.
 - d. **Objective:** Encourage development of agri-business that ties with existing agricultural products.
2. **Goal:** Encourage residential development that protects or incorporates agricultural uses.
 - a. **Objective:** Encourage development of one acre or larger lot subdivisions.
 - b. **Objective:** Prefer construction of custom homes over tract development.
 - c. **Objective:** Encourage housing product that provides open space such as clustered homes.
3. **Goal:** Limit industrial development to ensure preservation of current lifestyle and natural environment.
 - a. **Objective:** Encourage industrial development to locate near existing infrastructure.
 - b. **Objective:** Allow development of low impact industrial use with adequate buffers between industry and residents.

CHAPTER III. PLAN ELEMENTS

The San Tan Area Plan is intended to serve as a more detailed guideline for preservation and development, in furtherance of General Plan expectations. Chapter II of the Area Plan document incorporated the Goals and Objectives statements previously recorded at planning workshops. This input was crucial in setting themes for Plan Elements outlined below. Each Element is formatted to include goals responses, existing conditions, future implications and recommendations.

The Elements for this Plan were selected to provide a balance for future development that will meet the needs of residents and landowners. Protection of an existing lifestyle, open space and the natural environment, and basic services for the area residents are key issues that have been introduced in the Vision and Goals statements, then cross-referenced and expanded on in the following pages. Elements for this Plan include:

- Land Use
- Circulation
- Public Facilities and Services
- Open Space
- Community Design
- Economic Development

To help make these Elements easy to use when evaluating development proposals or public investment, the Area Plan components are arranged from the broad Land Use review to the more specific Community Design Element. The Elements open with a narrative review of the Goals, followed by policy statements which further establish an understanding of these Goals. The policies are followed by Future Development Pattern Implications that express the intended consequences of the Elements' influences on San Tan's future growth. Finally, a set of recommendations is offered to establish a pattern for implementation.

Plan Elements are a compilation of the analysis of existing data, public input taken at meetings, one-on-one discussions with larger landholders, and comments mailed in from area residents.

A. LAND USE

Current land use in the planning area is predominantly agricultural with concentrations of low-density residential, one home on one to five acre lots, in several locations. Housing ranges from modest to custom homes and manufactured housing. San Tan's location at the metropolitan edge suggests that its overall development character will continue to be rural residential in nature. Large expanses of land as indicated on the Land Ownership Table are owned by the

Maricopa County Flood Control District and the Roosevelt Water Conservation District, mainly along existmng canals. These holdings could possibly serve as part of the desired open space. Pressures for residential and commercial development experienced in adjacent jurisdictions are beginning to be felt in the San Tan Area. The Plan's projected future land use pattern is meant to accommodate limited growth — in keeping with the San Tan rural image.

A.1 Goals Responses

- a. Housing — Many residents have indicated a preference for new development to be consistent with existing lot sizes by continuing low-density housing development. Contributions to the Area's character expected of future residential growth includes reserving land for agriculture, open space and trail systems. Master planned developments are encouraged to utilize open space preserves or farms as part of the design and as means for achieving relatively low net densities. Possible sites for planned housing development are indicated on the Future Development Plan map. Criteria by which proposals would be evaluated are suggested in the Plan Coordination (pages 35-36) and Implementation "Land Use Decision Keys" (pages 39-41) Sections. Factors for evaluation include:
 - 1) Design Options — The use of open space through preservation by dedication of easement or trails improvement;
 - 2) Buffering — Phasing lot sizes to maintain existing large lot home sites; and
 - 3) Density Attainment — Establishing additional criteria required for proposals exceeding a specified dwelling unit density allocation.
- b. Commercial — Current commercial operations include businesses with Special Use Permits (issued by Maricopa County) and activities related to agriculture. Many residents prefer driving the distance to shop but might be amenable to smaller neighborhood commercial opportunities nearby. Siting standards are set in the Implementation Section of this Plan. Incentives should be considered to retain and attract agri-business to the area for compatibility with existing agriculture and rural low-density housing.

Certain types of low intensity, accessory farm uses, such as beds-and-breakfasts or U-pick-it operations, could be encouraged, together with seasonal festivals, to highlight San Tan's status as one of the region's few remaining agricultural production areas.

- c. Employment — Expanded communication technology allows for more home-based occupations. Small to medium-sized research or manufacturing campuses may be considered in appropriate locations. The San Tan Area's principal employment is expected to continue in large dairy, citrus and other farming operations. Many of the residents commute to jobs in other parts of the Phoenix metropolitan area.

- d. Open Space — Maintaining the open desert is desirable to residents in the area. As new development occurs evaluation of natural open space to be preserved will need to be done. Golf courses or existing flood plains may or may not be counted as part of the developments' required open space, depending on the amenity package. Developed parks will not be regarded as highly as natural open space or agricultural preservation.

A.1.1 Policies

- a. The Town of Gilbert respects the Area's agricultural activity and related agricultural-friendly development.
- b. Guidelines or policies shall be established to manage further development so that the existing lifestyle is preserved, and landowners have options for development.
- c. Review of master plans or other developments shall be considered with an emphasis on community safety and character.
- d. Dedications of sites for schools, parks, and trails will be addressed in development proposals.
- e. Retail, service and office uses will be evaluated in response to San Tan residents' needs.
- f. Destination commercial uses will be reviewed to correspond with the Area's character, such as farmers' markets, rural resorts, and trail rides.
- g. Employment opportunities, particularly for local residents, are encouraged to include farming, research and development uses which are designed responsibly to avoid impacts on neighborhoods or existing farm operations, and home businesses.

A.2 Existing Conditions

An assessment of the existing environment and conditions is necessary to understand the dynamics of the area and plan for the future. A look at land use, background data available, and plans currently in place are outlined in more detail below. Analysis of this information, from current aerial photographs, field observations and interviews with the local population, is key to determining future land use scenarios and implications.

The San Tan Planning Area is predominantly utilized for various agricultural purposes. Blended among these operations throughout the Area are several residential subdivisions of one acre or larger lots. The majority of the homes on these lots are individually built and are not production-built tract homes. Remaining acreage in the planning boundary is natural desert or man-made irrigation and flood control systems. The Roosevelt Conservation District Canal goes through the middle of the Planning Area.

This area is one of the remaining sections of Eastern Maricopa County that is not completely developed. The existing 500 homes are concentrated mainly in three areas: between Queen Creek and Ocotillo Roads, west of the Roosevelt Canal; east of the Roosevelt Canal between Ocotillo and Chandler Heights Roads; and north of Hunt Highway along Val Vista and Higley Roads.

Beyond the Planning Area, economic growth is underway. A regional mall and new Gilbert hospital are being planned just north of the Area. Several miles to the northeast is the Williams Gateway Airport. Development of this airport and the adjacent Williams campus will have an influence and impact on San Tan. The Chandler Airpark to the west is another growth area that will influence the San Tan Area. Residential development in Mesa, Gilbert, Queen Creek, and Chandler has been moving toward the San Tan planning boundary.

The largest land holdings in the San Tan Area belong to the Zinke Dairy, Maricopa County Flood Control and the Roosevelt Conservation District. A number of land holders own multiple, contiguous parcels of twenty or forty acres.

San Tan Area Plan Land Ownership				
by parcel size				
SIZE	NO. OF PARCELS	PERCENT parcel/parcel	NO. OF ACRES	PERCENT acres/acres
under 1 acre	144	15.5%	103.09	1.09%
1 acre - 1.99 acre	132	14.1%	170.64	1.81%
2 acres - 4.99 acre	283	30.4%	903.25	9.59%
5 acres - 9.99 acre	160	17.2%	1,158.09	12.29%
10 acres - 19.99 acres	86	9.2%	1,128.07	11.97%
20 acres - 39.99 acres	91	9.8%	3,116.01	33.08%
40 acres - 59.99 acres	11	1.2%	498.59	5.29%
60 acres - 79.99 acres	14	1.5%	1,052.48	11.18%
80 acres - 119.99 acres	3	0.3%	306.45	3.25%
120 acres - 159.99 acres	3	0.3%	456.65	4.85%
160 acres - 499.99 acres	0	0.0%	0.00	0.00%
500+ acres	1	0.1%	527.72	5.60%
Parcels no data on acres	4	0.4%	0.00	0.00%
TOTAL	932	100.0%	9,421.04	100.00%

Source: Maricopa County Assessor 1997 data

NOTES: Maricopa County Flood Control District owns 563.15 (6%) of the above acres in varying different size parcels. The Roosevelt Water Conservation District owns 220.73 (2.3%) of the above acres in varying size parcels. Approximately 340 acres, not included in the numbers above, are for roads. There are 614 separate property owners of record in the San Tan Area.



EXISTING LAND USES

-  Low Residential
≤1 Dwelling Unit per Acre
-  Open Space / Park
-  Agricultural
-  Citrus Groves
-  Wash
-  Special Use
-  Planning Area Boundary
-  School



SAN TAN PLANNING AREA

The most recent Specific Area Plan for the San Tan Area was prepared by Maricopa County in 1992 as a part of the Queen Creek Land Use Plan. Surrounding jurisdictions have not included this area in any of their recent General Plan Updates. Intergovernmental agreements among Gilbert, Chandler, and Queen Creek established that the Town of Gilbert would take the lead in planning for this area of influence. Surrounding municipalities have updated their General Plans and this information has been incorporated into designing the Future Development Plan.

Several large, master planned communities are proposed in the planning area and around its boundaries. Additionally, smaller planned developments are being considered throughout the Planning Area to the northeast of the planning boundary, to the east in Queen Creek, and at the base of the San Tan Mountains. These plans will affect the future of San Tan. This Area Plan may assist in guiding those developments to suit the character of the Area.

A current land use breakdown is as follows:

<u>EXISTING LAND USE</u>			
USE	SQUARE MILES	(ACREAGE)	PERCENT
Agriculture	9.90	(6,336 ac)	65%
Low Density Residential	2.75	(1,760 ac)	18%
Open Desert	2.60	(1,664 ac)	17%
	15.25	(9,760 ac)	100%
AGRICULTURAL BREAKDOWN			
Dairy or Feed Lot	0.70	(448 ac)	5%
Citrus Grove	1.90	(1,216 ac)	13%
Other Crop	7.30	(4,672 ac)	82%
	9.90	(6,336 ac)	100%

A.3 Future Development Pattern Implications

Orderly buildout requires consistent application of land use policies. Although the General Plan is meant to be flexible, large developments together with the cumulative effect of smaller scale projects, should be held to the established principles of growth guidance, community character, and rural preservation as depicted in the Area Plan. When looking at the entire region, the San Tan Area is regarded as the designated location for rural residential opportunity. The community will benefit in the long run by laying out a plan for the future, rather than allowing random subdivision of varying size lots and commercial developments to build out which would ultimately generate an equally large or larger population in a less orderly, inefficient pattern.

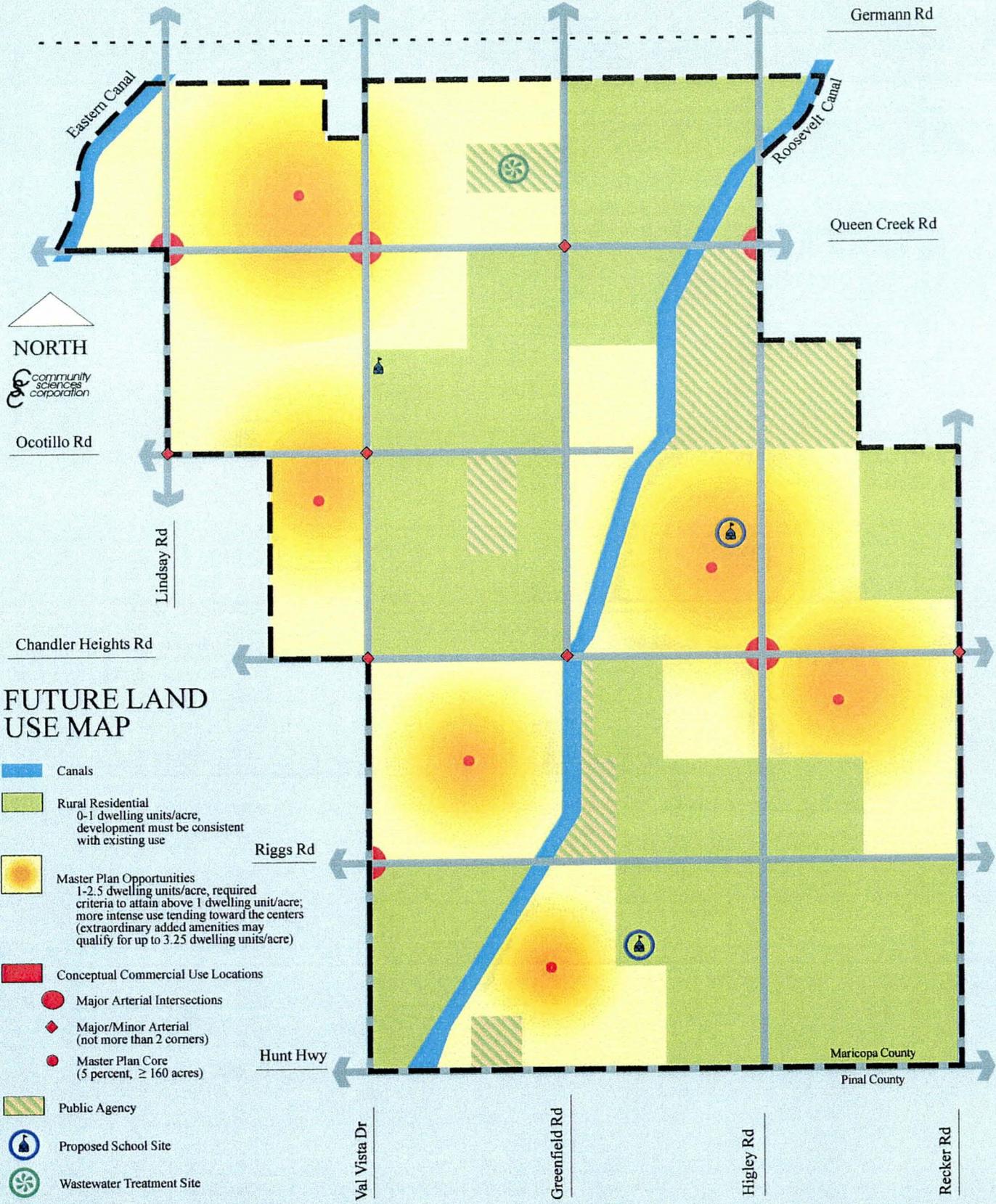
Enhancing or maintaining the existing environment as buffered edges to new residential development will continue the visual spaciousness. Master planned proposals that contain housing clusters will keep the desired openness, provide for opportunity to walk or bicycle safely, and in the interiors of future neighborhoods provide for commercial development serving those residents. The citizen-driven plan proposing concentric rings of development, which has been indicated on the Future Land Use Map, simulates the features of open space and clustered, interior dwelling densities.

Future development of the Gila River Indian Community, Maricopa County plans for the San Tan Regional Park, and new legislation on planning and potential growth management recently enacted will need to be tracked for effect on San Tan.

A.4 Recommendations

Maintaining the existing lifestyle, preserving agricultural production, yet allowing for new development to occur can be accomplished through creative long-range planning. Setting the parameters for appropriate land uses throughout the San Tan Area early on through this planning process will have a positive influence on how the area grows and maintains its character. Recommendations for the Land Use Element are offered to strengthen the Goals, Objectives and policies.

- A.4.1 Locations for neighborhood commercial use are provided for in the Land Use Keys evaluation criteria and are identified on the Future Land Use Map. Reasonable retail and service uses in community-scaled centers schematically serve area residents.
- A.4.2 Community leaders should work with farmers and Gilbert Economic Development staff to attract industrial opportunities, especially for agri-business, that may be compatible with the Plan through existing agricultural classifications or overlay district designations.
- A.4.3 Design guidelines should be established that strongly encourage a mix of housing styles for variety in accord with the existing lifestyle and character.
- A.4.4 Residents should explore programs for preservation of agriculture and acquisition of open space preserves to assure retention of these areas as desired by the community.
- A.4.5 Residents should also look beyond the Planning Area boundaries and assist with preservation of the San Tan Mountains and surrounding open desert.



SAN TAN PLANNING AREA

B. CIRCULATION

There is strong interest in safety, including rural improvement and maintenance standards, for the area's roadway transportation systems. Alternative modes for traveling and trail systems for non-motorized vehicles are primary goals.

B.1 Goals Response

- a. Major Arterial Development — Current roads need to be upgraded. Traffic safety devices, such as stop signs, need to be put in place to slow traffic.
- b. Internal Circulation — Minimal street lighting is preferred to preserve views of stars and reduce light pollution. Generally, local streets would be improved to rural standards, not requiring curb, gutter and sidewalk in most instances. Where they are required, detach sidewalks from curb.
- c. Alternative Modes of Transportation — Plans call for continuous equestrian and pedestrian trails that utilize existing canal rights-of-way and natural washes throughout the Planning Area. Riding and hiking connections to the San Tan Mountains is a desired feature of the future trails system.

B.1.1 Policies

- a. Evaluate overall circulation system to blend safely the automobile network with the trail system.
- b. Reduce speed limits and road widths where feasible.
- c. Create directional signage guidelines.
- d. Have MCDOT review existing traffic devices for safety and future needs.
- e. Utilize native landscaping to contribute to scenic standards and integrate with traffic calming measures.

B.2 Existing Conditions

Arterial streets in the San Tan Planning Area are maintained by Maricopa County in a one-mile grid pattern generally running north-south and east-west. The major north-south arterials are Val Vista Drive and Higley Road. Less developed north-south arterials are Lindsay, Greenfield, and Recker Roads. Major east-west arterials are Queen Creek, Chandler Heights and Riggs Roads. Hunt Highway, the southern boundary of the area, serves as an east-west arterial and carries traffic to Florence. Collector streets are minimal and in most cases not paved. Average width for collectors is fifty feet for right-of-way, and sixteen feet of asphalt if paved.

The Superstition Freeway, US 60, is approximately seven miles to the north and has interchanges at almost all of the north-south roads except Lindsay and Recker. The proposed San Tan Freeway, a continuation of State Route 202, will be located a half mile north of Williams Gateway Airport. Construction phasing is considered on an accelerated time table.

ARTERIAL STREET IDENTIFICATION			
EAST/WEST	Existing right-of-way	Existing paving width	Future Improvements
Germann Road	90 feet	28 feet (2 lane)	
Queen Creek Road	66 feet	26-28 ft (2 lane)	
Ocotillo Road	66 feet	26-30 ft (2 lane)	
Chandler Heights Road	66 feet	28 feet (2 lane)	
Riggs Road	66 feet	28-30 ft (2 lane)	under study
Hunt Highway **	66 to 110 feet	28 feet (2 lane)	
NORTH/SOUTH			
Lindsay Road	66 feet	28 feet (2 lane)	
Val Vista Drive	80 feet	26-28 ft (2 lane)	Riggs to ½ mile south - grade, drain, penetration, chip seal
Greenfield Road **	66 feet	28 feet (2 lane)	
Higley Road	80 feet	19-31 ft (2 lane)	reconstruction of bridge at Queen Creek Wash
Recker Road	66 feet	30 feet (2 lane)	Chandler Heights to ¾ mile north- grade, drain, penetration, chip seal
** road does not extend full length of Planning Area			

A variety of other transportation modes are in the vicinity of the Planning Area. Southern Pacific has a rail line running diagonal to the street pattern approximately three miles north of the area. The Williams Gateway Airport is two miles to the northeast and the Chandler Air Park is approximately two miles to the northwest. There is no public transit service in operation, due to the low-density of the residential areas and minimal commercial activity. Designated bicycle routes, sidewalks and other pedestrian amenities are not in place.

Germann Rd

Eastern Canal

Roosevelt Canal

Queen Creek Rd



Ocotillo Rd

Landsay Rd

Chandler Heights Rd

CIRCULATION and EXISTING FACILITIES

- Arterial Streets
- Neighborhood Streets
- Weinberg Elementary School
- Sewer Treatment plant (Proposed)
- Chandler School District
- Queen Creek School District
- Planning Area Boundary
- School

Riggs Rd

Hunt Hwy

Maricopa County

Pinal County

Well Vista Dr

Greenfield Rd

Higley Rd

Resler Rd

SAN TAN PLANNING AREA

B.3 Future Development Pattern Implications

Although the existing street system is established on a grid pattern, the Roosevelt Canal serves as a divider that could shape future road extensions or layouts. Residents have commented that widening roads to accommodate large flows of traffic is not the recommended solution they desire for future circulation solutions. With these thoughts in mind, future developers have the opportunity to present innovative roadway concepts for projects in the San Tan Area. Residents have expressed desires for selective major arterial widening to carry large volumes of traffic, instead of all roads.

A trail system for pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians is of equal importance as the motorized vehicle routes. This system will need to be carefully thought out and interfaced with developments and streets to provide for maximum safety and mobility.

B.4 Recommendations

- B.4.1 Residents should work with Maricopa County Department of Transportation to plan for adequate paved shoulder area to accommodate bicycles and pedestrians until more urbanization occurs resulting in more defined trails or paths.
- B.4.2 Residents have expressed interest in a recreational use trail system as part of the Plan. The existing canals, washes and other natural features could be explored as opportunities for the beginnings of a trail system which would eventually connect to the San Tan Mountains.
- B.4.3 Many of the area's roads need to be brought up to a standard level for safety which may include street lighting. Subdued street lighting that does not detract from the night view of stars is preferred.

C. PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

High priorities are excellent schools and continued adequacy and economy in water service. Infrastructure improvement recommendations are kept simple, making sure that proposed facilities will be affordable and will contribute to quality of life.

C.1 Goals Response

- a. Facilities — Apart from the Area's schools, publicly-maintained facilities are minimal. Desired open space, recreation, gathering spots and the like could be privately developed; however, funding for operation and maintenance should be secured before accepting dedication.
- b. Services — Rural service systems are regarded, by most residents, as adequate for their needs. System capacity — from roads to water lines — should be a determinant in

evaluating development proposals, making certain that new construction pays its own way.

C.1.1 Policies

- a. Assess value of facilities such as trails and buffers to determine feasibility and funding to develop and maintain these features.
- b. Protect the quality of potable water.
- c. Set procedures for determining when schools, fire stations, and sheriff substations are needed.

C.2 Existing Conditions

The Weinberg Elementary School, in the Chandler School District, located at Val Vista and Appleby is the only public facility currently in the Planning Area. County or State services do not have any buildings within the Planning boundary. The Chandler Heights Post Office, one mile to the east on Power Road, is the closest facility for residents. Chandler-Gilbert Community College, one mile north, and the Chandler Regional Hospital, six miles west, are both located along Pecos Road within a reasonable distance from the San Tan Planning Area for resident accessibility. A landfill is located two miles to the east in Queen Creek. Regular garbage pick-up is not provided by any municipality or the County, but residents can contract with private haulers for service.

Septic systems are currently in use for existing development because wastewater collection systems are not available. A wastewater treatment facility, being constructed by the City of Mesa in cooperation with the Town of Gilbert in the north central portion of San Tan, will establish an alternative service option for Area development.

Police protection is provided by the Maricopa County Sheriff's Department. The Mesa substation and jail is the closest facility, located on Mesa Drive and Baseline Road, seven miles to the north. The Rural Metro Fire Department, which is privately owned, will provide fire and ambulance service on a contractual basis to unincorporated areas. The Towns of Gilbert and Queen Creek have fire stations for their departments located within several miles of the San Tan Planning Area boundaries.

Two water company service areas include portions of San Tan. The City of Chandler covers a two square mile area between Chandler Heights Road and Hunt Highway and Gilbert to Lindsay Roads. The area between Lindsay and Greenfield Roads, Germann and Ocotillo Roads, is served by the Town of Gilbert, formally the Tankersley Water Company service area. The remainder of the San Tan Area is not served by any water company or municipality. Residents must use private wells or other water delivery service.

All of the domestic water in the Planning Area comes from groundwater. The San Tan boundary contains a significant amount of agricultural activity which utilizes water from the Roosevelt Water Conservation District (RWCD). Supply water for RWCD comes from the Salt River Project, wells, and the Chandler Heights Citrus Irrigation District. As development occurs, greater amounts of domestic water will be needed. However, as agricultural lands are retired to make way for new development, groundwater withdrawal will decrease. Other sources of water, including the Central Arizona Project, will be used for agricultural activity reducing the dependence on groundwater in the area.

C.3 Future Development Pattern Implications

There will be increases in the San Tan population over the next twenty years. The addition of the wastewater treatment plant toward the north boundary will provide opportunity for development. Residential growth will generate the need for siting facilities such as a post office, sheriff substation, and possibly fire stations. Determining location of future schools will need to be planned up front to alert developers to possible land reservations necessary to provide land for these facilities.

C.4 Recommendations

- C.4.1 The existing school (Weinberg Elementary), wastewater treatment plant, Town of Gilbert water, and future San Tan Freeway may encourage more intense development in the north portion of the Planning Area.
- C.4.2 A pay-as-you-go policy should be established with new developments providing land or funds for future public facilities and services.
- C.4.3 Park facilities should be low-key using the natural environment and incorporating trails.

D. OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS

The existing open space, agriculture and spacious image are valued by the residents. Developed park sites are not a high priority but might be included in new residential developments. Current residents enjoy the outdoors, which includes the mountains and open desert, and would like to see use of these areas more accessible through trail systems.

D.1 Goals Response

- a. Trail System — Equestrian trails are proposed as a San Tan character feature. Multi-purpose pathway linkages from individual neighborhoods to connect with major trail corridors will increase system access.
- b. Open Space — The natural environment in and immediately beyond the San Tan limits is valued for its views and opportunities for outdoor enjoyment. Sensitive areas such as animal habitats, archeological sites, washes, natural desert and views are marked for preservation. The area's spaciousness is enhanced by the continued presence of working farms. Techniques for preserving agricultural activities, including development trade-offs and acquisition of use easements, are considered among Plan Implementation strategies. Public access for use of such natural features as Queen Creek Wash promote the Area's outdoor enjoyment.
- c. Recreation — Park land and improvements may be provided, as the Area continues to develop, to meet the community's need for playing fields/courts and other recreational facilities for residents of all ages. Portions of publicly-held land could be dedicated to low-maintenance park usage. Also, recreational amenities provided and maintained through master planned development (particularly those open to the general public) should be considered as possible development entitlement trade-offs.

D.1.1 Policies

- a. Allow for separate needs in design of trails for horses, bicycles, and walking trails.
- b. Establish trails along arterial streets to serve as buffers.
- c. Use buffer-areas identified on the Future Land Use Plan to serve as trails.
- d. Study neighboring cities' and towns' trail systems for possible application in the San Tan Planning Area.

D.2 Existing Conditions

The current developed portion of the San Tan Area, mainly residential, covers only 1,760 acres. The remaining land is dedicated to farming activity, the canal system and flood control, and undisturbed desert. No formal trail system has been designed or designated in the area. Local residents use the canal right-of-way, existing washes and open desert to horseback ride or bike through the area.

There are no established municipal parks in the area. The Weinberg Elementary School on Val Vista and Appleby has a playground but is not easily accessible to San Tan Area children on a regular basis. The Town of Gilbert is proposing a future district park to be located at the

northeast corner of Recker and Germann Roads. Although not in the Planning Area boundary, it will most likely be used by many San Tan residents.

The San Tan Regional Park, a County facility off Hunt Highway and just east of the Planning Area, is the largest nearby outdoor recreation facility for residents. Of the 8,100 acre park, approximately 85% has been left in its natural state. Aspirations are for a trail system connecting residential developments to the existing Maricopa County trails system in the park.

D.3 Future Development Pattern Implications

The San Tan residents envision preserving much of the natural environment. Existing features — washes, mountains, canals, flood control facilities — set natural boundaries for future development and can be used as a part of the trail and open space system.

The San Tan Area remains as one of the few places where large areas of open desert can still be found in the East Valley. Concepts to achieve the Plan's open space Goals and Objectives include requiring developers to provide landscaping consistent with existing vegetation and establishing a program to acquire open space.

D.4 Recommendations

D.4.1 Community leaders are urged to work with Maricopa County Flood Control and the Roosevelt Water Conservation District to identify areas of the flood control and canal systems that are suitable to use for trails and determine where funding would come from to upgrade these areas. These features could serve as the start of a system to which masterplanned developments could link their trails systems.

D.4.2 Masterplan criteria should include expectations of the trail system connections and specified percentages of the development to remain in natural open space preservation.

E. COMMUNITY DESIGN

High priority was placed on the natural environment within and immediately beyond the San Tan limits for its views and opportunities for outdoor enjoyment. Sensitive areas such as animal habitats, archeological sites, washes, natural desert and views are marked for preservation. No specific design theme is recommended for San Tan. The current mix of farm structures and homes of all varieties, manufactured housing to sprawling haciendas, is expected to continue in the Area. Although still promoting freedom of choice, a few basic guidelines may encourage property owners in the future to improve visual appeal with some consistent design, landscape and sign treatments.

E.1 Goals Response

- a. *San Tan Character* — To distinguish from more urban areas, rustic entry yards and street signage is advocated. Enhanced landscaping, adding native trees, should be encouraged along right-of-ways and, especially, to sustain the Area's visual image.
- b. *Architectural Emphasis* — Low, ranch-style housing is preferred, avoiding sameness in appearance (such as expanses of red tile roofs). Traditional styles are favored for commercial, institutional and residential structures (e.g. Territorial or Santa Fe; not Georgian or Cape Cod); and earth tone colors are appropriate — but it should be stressed that (except for master planned developments) the San Tan Area Plan does not intend to regulate individual taste.
- c. *Regional Identity* — The San Tan Area is a unique place in the East Valley, still maintaining the rural character and heritage of the farm history that established communities in this part of Maricopa County. Special signage at key entry points or development of gateways that identify San Tan as distinct from other parts of the valley could further emphasize these qualities.

E.1.1 Policies

- a. Design guidelines for development to preserve the natural environment.
- b. Establish regulations for preservation of open space.

E.2 Existing Conditions

Eclectic can best describe the array of homes sited on one acre or larger lots throughout the San Tan Planning Area. The commercial/industrial activity is farming based; ranging from a variety of crops to dairies. General retail does not exist in the area, but commercial developments in the neighboring jurisdictions include chain stores and restaurants as well as independent operations. The open desert and view of the San Tan Mountains set the character of the area. These features will be the predominant force behind any future, basic design guidelines that may be set to assist in preserving the Area's spacious appearance.

E.3 Future Development Pattern Implications

Striving to promote variety in new development through design guidelines will maintain the diverse nature that contributes to the character of San Tan. Where clustering is advocated for moderate density housing, rural destination activities or masterplanned core shopping, the development's edges are expected to mask non-rural interior uses. That is, large lot residences and open space, landscaped buffer tracts preserve visual consistency — hiding any discordant design emphasis.

E.4 Recommendations

- E.4.1 Design Guidelines for the blending in of new development should be developed and adopted by the Town of Gilbert as an expression of San Tan residents' desires.
- E.4.2 Standards should stress people-scale development especially for any new industrial or commercial enterprises.
- E.4.3 Coordination of Goals from the Open Space and Circulation Elements with Community Design Goals should be accomplished to shape the built environment as desired by residents.

F. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Agriculture will continue as the economic base for the San Tan Area. For many residents, San Tan is a "bedroom" community since most jobs and shopping are located in other communities. Some additional opportunities, however, may be explored.

F.1 Goals Response

- a. Employment — Small business development, especially related to agriculture, equestrian uses and destination tourism, could allow area residents to become entrepreneurs and/or find unique local work opportunities.
- b. Attraction — Encouraging the open desert and working farms to be considered as a resource for education and recreation might allow San Tan to fill a family tourism niche — offering day trips, trail rides and farm experience.
- c. Neighborhood Commercial Services — Encouraging "village centers" to develop where childcare, small retail businesses, and groceries could locate. These centers might also include public services such as fire, police, and post office.

F.1.1 Policies

- a. Establish a formula for limiting commercial development on arterial corners.
- b. Development guidelines are intended to conform with community desires expressed in the Community Design Element.
- c. The Town of Gilbert Development staff should attract opportunities that are compatible with the area.

F.2 Existing Conditions

Dairy, citrus, and grain farming activities are the business activity in the San Tan Area. Special Use Permits through Maricopa County have been granted for dog kennels, cellular towers, and related farm operations.

The majority of the existing residents commute to other parts of the Valley for employment. There are several large employers just outside of the Planning Area — the Williams Gateway Airport, General Motors Proving Ground, Allied Signal and Motorola are a few examples. The residents rely on retail services in the surrounding communities for basic needs and shopping opportunities.

The following major employment operations currently exist within a ten mile diameter around and including the San Tan Planning Area:

Major Employment Opportunity within a 10 mile Diameter		
Name	Location	No. of Employees
Intel	Chandler Blvd. & Rural Road	9,000
Williams Gateway Airport	Power & Williams Field Roads	2,000
General Motors Proving Grounds	Ellsworth & Elliot Roads	1,200
Motorola	Alma School & Ray Roads	1,200
Motorola	Ocotillo & Price Roads	1,100
Chandler-Gilbert Comm. College	Pecos & Gilbert Roads	400
Chandler Airport	Gilbert & Queen Creek Roads	135
Shamrock Dairy	Chandler Heights Blvd. & Higley Road	70
Allied Signal		
Zinke Dairy		

F.3 Future Development Pattern Implications

Destination agricultural or resort attractions are expected to protect the Area's spaciousness through internalized parking and visitor service facilities. Employment, likewise, is projected to concentrate on large acreage to convey a rural campus image.

Economic development land absorption serves three purposes of real estate configuration: 1) small, strategically-located, compatible shopping and services; 2) agri-business with accessory uses or employment sites that perpetuate farm tract dimensions; and 3) core clusters of resort or shopping that are insulated by open space, recreation and low-density housing sites.

F.4 Recommendations

- F.4.1 Development ordinances may require revision to assure allowance of desired activities such as bed and breakfasts, equestrian uses, and home businesses, in the Area's predominant zoning categories.
- F.4.2 Farms and outdoor activities, not shopping are emphasized as San Tan's attraction for visitors.
- F.4.3 Employment campuses, properly planned, may serve as visual separation buffers for masterplanned housing communities.

CHAPTER IV. COORDINATION WITH ADOPTED PLANS

The San Tan Plan is intended to constitute a refinement to Maricopa County plans for the area. Assessment criteria for development proposals – ranging from housing density and community appearance to environmental protection and traffic reduction – are offered as means to assure consideration of San Tan's unique, rural character in Maricopa County Planning Commission and County Board of Supervisor deliberations.

Adopted plans from other jurisdictions, including Maricopa County, Chandler, the Gila River Indian Community, Gilbert and the various plans developed by Maricopa Association of Governments are evaluated for consistency – or possible conflicts with San Tan planning principles. Particular attention is directed to coordination with Town of Gilbert General Plan Elements inasmuch as the San Tan Area may be most directly affected by that community's development.

A. COUNTY PLANS

Maricopa County officials and staff are working closely with the residents and the Town of Gilbert to define criteria for land use and development in the San Tan Area. A balanced approach that respects both the community's character and private property rights has been sought throughout this text. County acknowledgment of this Plan and the distinctly different appeal that attracts residents to San Tan is a basic reference in evaluating land use proposals.

Maricopa County has recently completed the *Eye to the Future 2020*, the Maricopa County Comprehensive Plan. Although the San Tan Area had been considered as part of the County's Queen Creek Area Plan, sufficient distinction has now been achieved through citizen participation that San Tan merits its own identity. Specific policies, such as preference for low-density housing and creation of a lineal open space network, are offered for consideration by officials in conjunction with the Maricopa County Comprehensive Plan.

The Desert Spaces Plan, supported by Maricopa County, highlights the Area as a predominantly agricultural sector. San Tan Regional Mountain Park, owned by Maricopa County Parks District although its 8,100 acres are located in Pinal County, is designated as a major desert preserve open space. Plans for San Tan Mountain Park show access as being farther to the east; however, San Tan Area residents – especially equestrians – would like to see access, in the form of horse trail connections, directly from San Tan into the western edges of the park.

Several recommended San Tan Area Plan implementation strategies (see Chapter V, Implementation Phasing, pages 37-39) are possible. Special zoning techniques, such as overlay districts, could benefit this Area. Land Use Decision Keys (pages 39-41) would, likewise, potentially serve as guidelines for County officials in their charge to maintain compatible development for San Tan.

B. OTHER JURISDICTIONS

The San Tan Plan recognizes existing development and future planning designations beyond the Study Area boundaries. The intent, however, is not to conform with other plans; but rather, to establish the Area's own distinctive character. Continuity, such as connecting with trail linkages along Queen Creek Wash is promoted; conflicts, ranging from transportation bottlenecks to street lighting that is inappropriate for rural character, are avoided.

Prior to the San Tan Area Plan being presented at public hearings, adjacent jurisdictions – and those with overlapping interests – were given ample opportunity for review and comment. Generally, other local governments and agencies have responded positively to the Area's planning efforts – preferring transitional uses and densities along jurisdictional boundaries rather than abrupt change from urban to rural character.

The Gilbert General Plan, in its 1994 Policy Guide publication, depicts Low Residential (0-3 du/acre) at the lower edge of the Land Use Plan graphic, forming San Tan's northern boundary between Eastern and Roosevelt Conservation District canals; medium (0-4 du/acre) to medium-high (4-8 du/acre) wrapping around San Tan's northeast corner between Higley and Recker Roads north of Ocotillo Road. San Tan Area Plan recommendations, adopted as a General Plan Amendment, revise density designations to a lower residential category with a target density of one dwelling per acre; masterplans to 2.5 d.u./acre, with a maximum — attainable only through special development features — of 3.25 d.u./acre. This designation permits a mix of housing types and clustered dwelling groups (possibly incorporating individual developments in the General Plan ranges) through properly-buffered development masterplans that correspond with adopted density limits and amenity packages set for the San Tan Area.

Gilbert General Plan modifications would also depict the schematic open space/trail system and other features of the San Tan Area Future Development Plan. Municipal system extension policy responds to future Area needs. Zoning techniques may be adopted by the Town to protect San Tan edges.

Plans in other adjacent jurisdictions may also impact — or be impacted by — the San Tan Area. In Chandler, for instance, the Air Park sector plan is proximate to northwest San Tan. Aviation facility impacts – from aircraft noise and hazard to surface transportation traffic generation – should be mitigated reasonably to preserve the peaceful living quality in San Tan. There are concerns about residential densities – and traffic – being potentially generated to the east, in Queen Creek's sphere of influence; and to the south, in the Box Canyon area of adjacent Pinal County.

In these instances, as well as along the common boundary with the Gila River Indian Community, San Tan Area Plan preferences urge: 1) maintaining visual and useable open space buffers between developments in separate jurisdictions; 2) observing low density residential patterns (one to the acre preferred); considering the village or hamlet concentric transition areas around community cores (generally not exceeding 0-2.5 du/acre); 4) integrating with lineal open space trails masterplans; and 5) orienting traffic so as not to penetrate the San Tan Area.

CHAPTER V. IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN

The concluding section of the Area Plan focuses on actions and guidelines for carrying out the San Tan vision. General recommendations for public entities, as well as initiatives that may be taken by Area property owners, are outlined.

Positioning the San Tan Area to accommodate appropriate development within the framework of a preserved, overall rural living atmosphere requires step-by-step planning implementation. Area residents and landowners, having participated in Plan preparation, will want to continue their involvement to assure that its principles and Goals are being met. Criteria for evaluating development proposals are being established to communicate citizens' expectations to decision-makers. These aspects of planning follow-through represent the Action Plan components: Implementation Phasing, Plan Monitoring, and Land Use Decision Keys.

A. IMPLEMENTATION PHASING

With Goals in mind, a staged progression of activity shows the incremental progress necessary to achieve San Tan Area Plan principles. Short Term first steps are those which are already underway or have sufficient resources so they may be started almost immediately, and will provide results in the first year or two. Mid-Term Actions build on the early implementation foundation to achieve significant objectives within three to five years from program inception. From a Long-Range perspective, beyond five and up to twenty years into the future, Area residents will be revisiting the values of rural living to reestablish or modify Goals in applicable jurisdiction plans.

1. Short-Term Actions, for example, might suggest ordinance incentives to encourage rural preservation; begin detailing a San Tan Area Master Trails Plan; obtain commitments from developers/landowners to observe internal clustering concepts; and see Maricopa County acceptance of the San Tan Plan. The foundation for each of these activities, and others, has been established through the planning process and is recorded in this Area Plan. Some start-up implementation programs are strongly recommended to include:

Action	Timing	Responsibility	Comment
a. CIP/Budget Coordination	1999	Town of Gilbert	Consider San Tan studies, projects
b. Monitoring Committee	1999	Town of Gilbert	Establish implementation oversight
c. Zoning Techniques	1999-2000	Town of Gilbert	Agricultural Preservation overlay, rural commercial overlay
d. Trails Master Plan	1999	Area representatives, landowners	Concept plan for jurisdiction review
e. Development Commitments	1999-2000	Town of Gilbert, Maricopa County, Area representatives	Condition of development approval; encourage village center masterplanning
f. County Plan Acceptance	1999	Maricopa County	Plan acceptance

2. Mid-Term Actions could include programs for reserving open space easements; establishing realistic development opportunities in accord with State "Growing Smarter" legislation; specifying utility service areas and extension criteria; commencing privately-funded open space/trail improvements; and employment/shopping needs analyses. Actions are recommended for building onto Short-Term programs and continuing toward realization of long-term Area Plan Goals.

Action	Timing	Responsibility	Comment
a. Growing Smarter	2001	Town of Gilbert, Maricopa County	Development planning phases
b. Utility Service	2001	municipalities, private providers	Water, wastewater capacity reevaluation
c. Open Space Preservation	2001-ongoing	Area representatives, Town of Gilbert, Maricopa County	Easement dedication process
d. Open Space and Trail Improvements	2001-ongoing	developers, trust funds	Collect in-lieu payments
e. Needs Analysis	2002-03	private/public research	Land use balance

3. Long-Range Planning focus should be on the desired continuation of an agrarian lifestyle. Examples of long-range planning actions could include: consideration of tax incentive policies; designation for scenic trails or drives; and evaluation of Specific Plan adoption potential.

Action	Timing	Responsibility	Comment
a. Tax incentives	2004-05	Town of Gilbert	Agricultural preference
b. Specific Plan Detail	2004 or later	Town of Gilbert, Maricopa County	Reassess San Tan Plan development parameters
c. Scenic Trails/Drives	2005-10	Town of Gilbert, Maricopa County Dept. of Transportation	Circulation improvements

B. PLAN MONITORING SYSTEM

Tracking systems for judging implementation performance need to be devised to enable Area residents to continue active roles in the process. Data gathered by the County and other jurisdictions' staff are reported regularly, with pre-established benchmarks (such as building permit issuance) used as measures of implementation achievement.

It is further recommended that a standing committee of citizens and landowners shall be appointed to meet quarterly, or more frequently as necessary, and given an opportunity to review and report findings annually on the San Tan Area Plan's status. For example, a joint public briefing session could be hosted by Maricopa County and the Town of Gilbert for the purpose of assessing types, locations and intensities of development that have occurred since San Tan Area Plan completion. Particular attention would be directed to General Plan/Area Plan amendments, if any.

The informal monitoring process would be intended, also, to maintain communications between Area residents and decision-making jurisdictions. Notice to the public for pending development proposals shall be facilitated through on-going citizen representation. The County and Town are expected to develop and implement guidelines for prospective developers' provision of information to Area residents as a means to foster San Tan Area Plan understanding.

C. LAND USE DECISION KEYS

Principles for the assessment of development applications by jurisdiction staff, Planning and Zoning Commission and governing body are offered as expressions of local preferences. Appropriate pre-conditions for rezoning are determined before the fact so that development proposals may be judged objectively. Typical conditions or stipulation to assure quality growth in conformance with the General Plan are listed for Commission and Council or Board of Supervisors consideration as means to mitigate possible negative impacts and to maintain consistency with community character.

Basic examples are suggested here. Of course, none is to be considered binding on elected or appointed officials; however, Area residents offer these keys as representing local expectations for San Tan. Applicants for rezoning are expected to meet with Area residents, particularly those within one-third mile of the subject property, for the purposes of informing the public and integrating concerns prior to public hearings. As guides, the indicators may be modified, added to and further refined as Area Plan monitoring progresses.

Sample "Decision Keys" are:

1. **Public Facilities:** Adequacy of facilities to serve proposed uses is essential to public health and safety and is, therefore, a primary consideration in evaluating rezoning proposals or annexation requests. Specifically, such applications should include reference to the following expectations: That the lands or land uses
 - a. possess an adequate supply of potable water or will otherwise contribute to the jurisdiction's water supply and quality; and
 - b. utilize wastewater treatment facility service for any use of land exceeding the equivalent of one-acre residential development.

2. **Density:** General target density for the Rural Residential land use is recommended at one unit per gross acre. Additional dwelling unit yields may be achieved in the 1-2.5 d.u./acre range upon demonstration of masterplan excellence, including significant amenity criteria responses. Further density increases, not to exceed 3.25 dwelling units per acre, may be considered on lands of which a majority of the area is designated on the Future Land Use Map, page 22, as "Master Plan Opportunities" or as may be subsequently so designated by governing body amendment. Additional density attainment criteria shall be observed, in accord with subsection b., below.

Large lot appearance is fundamental. Residential lot areas, in general, should match or exceed existing, nearby lot sizes. Subdivisions of eighty acres or less are generally expected to observe a minimum lot size of 15,000 square feet; greater than eighty acres, a variety of lot sizes.

To exceed the target density, a development may:

- a. Observe a clustered core concept (concentric ring theory), with ample open space buffers or peripheral lots not less than one acre in area; and
- b. Demonstrate compliance with the following character criteria, each factor permitting .3 dwelling units/acre above the base one unit per acre. That is, five criteria qualify for 2.5 units per acre. All criteria, including a minimum ten percent open space or acceptable alternatives, which meet the spirit and goals of the San Tan Area Plan, are required to achieve the 3.25 dwelling units per acre maximum:
 - 1) Perimeter landscape tracts, averaging one hundred feet wide or greater, adjacent to Rural Residential land use category as indicated on the Future Land Use Map, and across an arterial roadway from a Rural Residential land use.
 - 2) Peripheral lots (but not greater than a one acre lot), where not otherwise buffered by perimeter landscape tracts as defined in item 1), above, shall be of widths not less than existing adjacent residential properties; where an adjacent rural residential tract is undeveloped, widths shall be typical of one-acre lots, but individual parcels are not required to exceed one acre in area.
 - 3) Minimum 7.5 percent common open space, exclusive of perimeter landscaping.
 - 4) Rural design themes, such as open fencing, country entry treatments; and response to Plan objectives (see pages 12-18) including retention of farm irrigation, incorporating mature citrus into new development, enhancing native landscape and utilizing existing natural washes in the trails system.
 - 5) Lighting that is down cast and does not spill onto adjoining properties.
 - 6) Lots less than 15,000 square feet in area screened from arterial roadway view.
 - 7) Trail system throughout the project, totaling twenty-five lineal feet for each acre in the development, with connection points to community-wide trails; and

- c. Provide CC&Rs including a "lifestyle" statement acknowledging limitations or conditions such as:
 - 1) Transportation distance, roadway standards
 - 2) Animal raising - flies, odors
 - 3) Response times for emergency services
 - 4) Respecting pre-existing, legal home businesses, Special Permit uses
3. Non-Residential: Commerce is planned primarily to benefit Area residents.
- a. Retail and service establishments are to be located on appropriately sized, site-planned, parcels at major roadway intersections. Neighborhood retail/service centers may be appropriate in Master Plan Opportunities areas at the intersection of two major arterials (Queen Creek, Riggs, Val Vista, Higley) in addition to shopping facilities master planned in a core cluster for a development of a quarter section (160 acres) or larger.
 - 1) Core cluster commercial within master planned development, not to exceed five percent of the gross area, which may include lands in other jurisdictions, and integrally located within the development.
 - 2) Free-standing commercial not to exceed two acres (not part of masterplan) may be considered at the intersection of major and minor (other mile roads: Ocotillo, Chandler Heights, Hunt Highway, Lindsay, Greenfield, Recker) roads.
 - 3) A maximum of two corners may be considered for non-residential development at any intersection other than within a masterplanned development.
 - 4) No free-standing automotive use (e.g., service station, car wash must be part of mixed use development).
 - b. Employment uses (e.g., office, manufacturing) are expected to utilize spacious campus environments, accessible to major roadways and observing a low-density employment population.
4. Circulation: Land use should be scaled to existing or planned transportation facilities. Commuter traffic is discouraged through farmland and low-density neighborhoods.
- a. Masterplanned residential communities should be designed so as to disperse peak hour traffic, with a minimum of one point of ingress/egress to an arterial road for each forty acres of development.
 - b. Any development (residential, commercial, employment) expected to generate 1000 or more trips per day should provide two points of ingress/egress with one additional for each additional 1000 ADT; and with generation of 5000 ADT or greater, direct access to two arterials.

5. Environmental Issues: Prospective developers are expected to assess their lands, prior to grading or construction, for sensitive physical or cultural sites. Formal studies are not required; however, requests for development entitlements should be accompanied by statements of intended, protective response for any sensitive condition found. Areas of investigation include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a. Wildlife habitat or travel corridors, riparian and other distinctive vegetation should be identified and preservation plans indicated;
 - b. Potentially hazardous geologic or soil condition, such as fissuring as a result of land subsidence, requires notation in development proposals, consideration regarding the type and intensity of land use where indicators exist and, possibly, recordation of notice on lands with confirmed problems; and
 - c. Sites of archaeological, cultural or historic significance.

D. AMENDING THE PLAN

Amendments to the Plan may be initiated by the Town of Gilbert, or by a private individual or group. Amending the Plan will follow the procedure set forth in the Arizona Revised Statutes (§ 9-461.06). All required public hearings will be held and maximum effort will be made to inform the public, school districts, utilities, local agencies, and adjacent communities through a variety of methods. A Steering Committee was used to produce this Plan. It may be the residents' desire to appoint a Committee to be involved in reviewing or re-evaluating the Plan on an annual basis. This Committee should be a broad representation of the residents and landowners in the Area.

APPENDIX A

Citizen Participation Process

Development of a strong Plan comes from participation of those governed by it. The San Tan Area residents and landowners came together at a committee level and in public forum to express views that led toward the development of the San Tan Area Plan. A detailed breakdown of the citizen participation process follows.

Steering Committee — In late 1997 the Town of Gilbert advertised for interested persons to serve on a Steering Committee that would assist the planning consultant in preparing a Plan for the San Tan Area. At the start, twenty-seven people were placed on the Committee. These people represented the Gilbert Town Council and Planning Commission, held land in the Area, or were members of an agency or organization with an interest in the San Tan Area. Later, the Committee was expanded to include residents from several of the existing neighborhoods in San Tan. The Committee held numerous meetings to discuss concepts, review materials for upcoming workshops and to finally review the text and maps which would be the final Plan. Members also participated in the Public Workshops. Regular monthly meetings were held for the Steering Committee. At most of these meetings, residents and other landowners were present to follow the process and offer input.

February 11, 1998	October 14, 1998
March 11, 1998	October 28, 1998
March 30, 1998	November 11, 1998
May 13, 1998	November 24, 1998
June 10, 1998	February 10, 1999
July 15, 1998	March 9, 1999
July 27, 1998	March 24, 1999
September 9, 1998	

Meetings — Three Public Workshops were held to take broad-based citizen input. The first in the series, the Vision Workshop, introduced the planning process and participants expressed their desires for the future of San Tan. These words and concepts were formed into the Vision Statement that opens this Plan. Public participation meetings held in April and June of 1998 focused on Goals and Objectives and a Future Land Development Plan for the Area. Participation varied at these workshops, ranging from 80 persons in attendance to over 200. In addition to the Workshops that were designed to focus on the Plan and process, a Question and Answer meeting was held in August of 1998. This session gave residents an opportunity to hear responses from Town of Gilbert and Maricopa County representatives on a wide variety of issues of concern beyond the Area Plan process. The public meetings were held on the following dates:

January 28, 1998
April 22, 1998
June 10, 1998
August 12, 1998 (Q & A)

Notification — Steering Committee Members as well as representatives of Maricopa County and the surrounding jurisdictions of Mesa, Chandler, Queen Creek, the Gila River Indian Community received notice and packet material for each Steering Committee meeting. However, reaching out to the San Tan community required a number of techniques in order to receive maximum public input.

A list of all the property owners for the 15.25 square mile Planning Area was obtained from Maricopa County Assessor records. To start off the process a mailing was sent to approximately 200 residents to notify them of the first Public Workshop. Although participation was relatively strong at that workshop, outreach to the public was expanded. Postcards were sent to the over 600 property owners in the area and information faxed to the local newspapers to announce upcoming Workshops. The Town of Gilbert posted Steering Committee and Public Workshop meeting summaries on their web site as well as several of the maps and public information pieces developed for this project. The web page could also be accessed through Maricopa County.

Residents of the Area also developed a notification network to inform people of the upcoming meetings. This allowed for the people missed because assessor records lag slightly behind property sales or because they were tenants of the notified property owners to be aware of activity on the Area Plan.

Methods of Input — Interactive sessions were the goal of the planning consultant. Speaking out or getting ideas down on chart pads were encouraged at Workshops. In addition to the verbal input recorded by the consultant, questionnaires were circulated early on in the planning process to solicit more detailed comments and to capture responses from those who could not attend all of the meetings.

A spot was reserved on the Steering Committee agenda to give the public who attended an opportunity to speak.

Public Hearings — Public testimony was received at the Planning and Zoning Commission and Town Council hearings held regarding the San Tan Area Plan. (Listed below are the hearing dates.) At the Council hearing on January 19, 1999, the Councillors requested that, within 60 days, Town staff and consultants work with citizens and developers to form a consensus on the dwelling unit density provided for in the Plan. Following four additional Steering Committee meetings (2/10, 3/9, 3/24, 4/6), the refined Plan draft was prepared for final Council review. At the Council meeting of Tuesday, April 20, 1999, the Plan document was referred back to the P&Z for their final review. At the May 5 Planning and Zoning Commission meeting, there was no quorum; the matter was continued to May 12. On May 12, 1999, the Planning and Zoning Commission recommended forwarding the Plan, with minor changes, to Council; Council adopted the Plan on May 25, 1999.

Planning and Zoning Commission Hearings (1st & 2nd)	December 9, 1998 and January 6, 1999
Town Council Hearing	January 19, 1999
Town Council Hearing	April 20, 1999
Planning and Zoning Commission Hearing	May 5, 1999 no quorum
Planning and Zoning Commission Hearing	May 12, 1999
Town Council Hearing and Adoption	May 25, 1999