



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Gila County Comprehensive Plan is a planning document intended to serve as a guide to address future growth and development within the unincorporated portions of Gila County. Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS) require all county governments, including Gila County, to plan for future growth through the preparation, adoption and maintenance of a comprehensive plan for the unincorporated areas of the county.

The comprehensive plan articulates how the citizens in Gila County prefer development to occur, and is a tool to be utilized by county decision-makers, staff and citizens. The comprehensive plan serves as the foundation for the various other planning documents and ordinances that help to implement the plan, such as specific area plans, the Gila County Zoning Ordinance, the Gila County Subdivision Ordinance and others.

The purpose of the Gila County Comprehensive Plan is to provide for the health, safety and general welfare of the citizens of Gila County through the adoption of a plan that outlines a program for the organized use of land within the unincorporated portions of the county. The comprehensive plan is intended to serve the county over a 10 year period, after which time the county may either readopt the plan or prepare an update based on existing and projected conditions at that time.

INTENDED USE OF THE PLAN

The Gila County Comprehensive Plan is intended to provide guidance for all citizens in the county and other interested parties. In addition, the plan is intended to serve as a guide for decisions by county planning staff, the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Board of Supervisors. The plan identifies generalized land uses, development densities and intensities based on the desired vision of the future expressed by the citizens of Gila County. The comprehensive plan is not, however, intended to take the place of zoning nor is it intended to modify pre-existing land uses, entitlements or statutory rights.

While the Gila County Comprehensive Plan is adopted by the Board of Supervisors at a specific point in time, it is also a document that changes over time. The comprehensive plan is advisory in nature and is designed to be flexible and accommodating when a use is deemed to be appropriate by the Board of Supervisors. The plan should be utilized as a tool to assist in future planning decisions through the identification of appropriate land uses and land use relationships, and not be viewed as a tool by which to inhibit new development that is compatible with the goals, objectives and policies of the plan.



ELEMENTS

The Gila County Comprehensive Plan is organized to provide guidance for county growth on many levels. The comprehensive plan is divided into specific elements, or chapters, to better address and accomplish the multi-faceted scope of the overall document and its role in future development decisions. Listed below are summary descriptions of the individual elements of the comprehensive plan:

- **Introduction (Chapter 1):** This chapter provides information regarding the contents of the comprehensive plan, purpose, legal status, public participation process and a brief overview of the history and physical setting of Gila County.
- **Comprehensive Plan Elements:** The Gila County Comprehensive Plan includes three primary elements: land use, transportation, and public facilities. Each element describes the vision, goals and objectives desired for the future by the citizens of Gila County and the policies that will be used by the county government to accomplish the visions, goals and objectives. Each element also contains an implementation matrix that outlines the tasks that need to be accomplished by Gila County to implement the comprehensive plan.
- **Land Use Element (Chapter 2):** The Land Use Element is the principal element of the Gila County Comprehensive Plan. The preparation of the Land Use Element has shaped the preparation of the Land Use Plan. The Land Use Plan is presented graphically and also described in text. Because of the size and diversity of Gila County, the Land Use Plan is more general for the remote and less inhabited areas of the county. The Land Use Plans for these areas are called “Area Land Use Plans”. The Land Use Plans for areas that are relatively more inhabited (such as Pine, Strawberry and Young) are more detailed. These plans are called “Community Land Use Plans”. When used in combination, the Land Use Plan, policies and other text in the Land Use Element serve as the county’s primary tools to direct how, where and at what use and intensity development in Gila County is desired to occur.
- **Transportation Element (Chapter 3):** The Transportation Element is designed to provide for a safe, efficient and cost effective multi-modal circulation system in Gila County. Planning and coordinating land use patterns with a complimentary transportation system is essential in providing for the future growth and development of Gila County. This element identifies a system of primary, secondary, and local roadways within a coordinated transportation system network..



- **Community Facilities Element (Chapter 4):** Inclusion of the Community Facilities Element in the Gila County Comprehensive Plan is intended to integrate the planning of community facilities into the development process, and help to assure that adequate consideration is given to the provision of necessary services and facilities by new development.
- **Administration (Chapter 5):** This chapter describes the processes used to administer the comprehensive plan, including criteria for interpretation, periodic reviews and amendments.