



Santa Cruz County

Comprehensive Plan



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Vision

This Vision statement describes the place Santa Cruz County will become through implementation of this Comprehensive Plan. Our Vision for Santa Cruz County places special emphasis on our unique communities, environmental resources and rich cultural heritage as Santa Cruz County is its environment, people, and history. Through careful management Santa Cruz County will be a place where:

Growth is accommodated in a manner that preserves our sense of community and protects and enhances our quality of life;

Natural resources, energy and water are sustained;

Cultural heritage is an integral part of the environment;

Differing lifestyles, development patterns, economic activities, and mobility options mesh together, providing benefits for people living, working or visiting the County.

Our Vision for Santa Cruz County will be realized when:

Our river systems are conserved and managed as healthy, living, working river ecosystems;

Our open space networks are preserved to support wildlife, wildlife movement, and a variety of native ecosystems;

Our natural resources are in balance with our population and environment;

Our economic activities provide adequate employment for our citizens and are compatible with our resource base;

Our historic, cultural, and archaeological sites are protected and preserved;

Our air and water are clean and our dark night skies are preserved.

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

The 2004 Santa Cruz County Comprehensive Plan (the Plan) provides our County with a vision to guide growth and development through 2014.

Background and History

Santa Cruz County's current Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1988. Since the adoption of the 1988 Comprehensive Plan population growth and new development have resulted in significant changes to Santa Cruz County lifestyles and land use patterns. These specific changes include the growth of the population and land area of Nogales, the reach of urbanized Tucson to the Santa Cruz County line, and the development of rural areas along the Interstate 19 (I-19) corridor north to the rural suburbs of Tucson and south to Nogales. The communities of Rio Rico, Amado, Tubac, and Tumacácori have also increased in population over the past decade. Patagonia, Sonoita and Elgin have become destination points – bringing tourists across State Route 82 (SR 82) to the northeastern portion of the County. Since the adoption of the 1988 Comprehensive Plan, other public and private plans have been completed to address topics that were not anticipated in 1988. These plans include, but are not limited to, the April 2002 Master Plan Update Nogales International Airport, the Santa Cruz County Capital Improvement Plan, and the Sonoita Crossroads Community Forum “A Comprehensive Plan for Northeast Santa Cruz County”. These plans, and other documents such as approved rezonings and master plans, were considered in the development of the 2004 Comprehensive Plan.

The Santa Cruz County 2004 Comprehensive Plan

To ensure the unique communities and diverse development patterns of Santa Cruz County are maintained as the County continues to chart its future growth, this Plan includes character area, water resources, open space/environmental, growth area development, and cost of development elements in addition to the State statute required comprehensive plan land use and circulation elements. The character area element is a key component of the Comprehensive Plan, and defines in qualitative and quantitative terms, characteristics of land use patterns and designs appropriate in different areas of the County. Because the character of development is so fundamental to the Santa Cruz County vision, all requests for rezoning must be in conformance with the character element, as well as other Comprehensive Plan maps and element goals, objectives, and policies. More information about this topic is located in the Land Use Element section of this plan.

The Comprehensive Plan contemplates that the County will undertake specific policy initiatives to better implement the Plan's goals. The purpose of the Plan is to guide future actions of the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Board of Supervisors. Implementation of specific policies outlined herein is subject to the discretion of the Board of Supervisors on a case-by-case basis, and may be influenced by fiscal realities and other constraints. Therefore, no policy goal specified herein is to be construed as a mandate on the Board of Supervisors, and the use of the term “will” does not imply the County must adopt such a policy. Adoption of new County ordinances, and perhaps changes to state statutes, may be necessary for the County to fully implement some of the goals outlined in the Plan, but the effectiveness of the Plan is not conditioned on such future legislative actions.

What is the Purpose of the Santa Cruz County Comprehensive Plan?

The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide guidance to the County Board of Supervisors to help maintain the diversity of development styles, cultures, and environments that make Santa Cruz County a unique and desirable place to live. This Plan is intended for a variety of users. New and existing residents, as well as people working with the County, can utilize the Plan to learn about Santa Cruz County and how it plans to achieve its vision and meet the future service, transportation, resource, and other needs of its citizens. County staff and the County Planning Commission will use this Plan as a guide to land use planning and development. County staff will also use the Plan to ensure County policies and procedures remain coordinated and focused on the County's vision. Private citizens and developers working with the County can use the Plan to help them understand the character and type of development desired by the County and its plans for future development.

This Comprehensive Plan is authorized by Arizona Revised Statutes (A.R.S.) §11-806 and prepared in conformance with A.R.S. §11-821.

Why Does Santa Cruz County Need a Comprehensive Plan?

All Counties are required by A.R.S. §11-806 to have a Comprehensive Plan to guide future land use and development in their communities. The topics included in the Comprehensive Plan are determined by the County.

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

The term "Comprehensive Plan" describes a general, comprehensive, long-range statement of goals, and related policies, to guide future growth and development. In Arizona, State law requires the Comprehensive Plan "be made with the general purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the area of jurisdiction."¹ To accomplish this end, the Comprehensive Plan addresses the coordination of physical development with infrastructure, resource conservation, and the economic goals of the County.

The Santa Cruz County Comprehensive Plan consists of seven chapters or elements. Each element includes the following components: a background section describing its legislative authority and purpose, a section summarizing the trends and potential opportunities available to the County, and the goals and objectives that, once achieved, and policies that, once implemented, will move the County towards its vision. State law requires that the Santa Cruz County Comprehensive Plan include a land use and a circulation element. To enable the County to prepare for the future and continue to address the issues associated with the rapid population growth, the Comprehensive Plan also contains open space/ environmental, growth areas, cost of development and water resources elements as permitted by State law. Finally, the Plan contains a Character Area element. The purpose of the Character Area Element is to ensure the unique characteristics of each area within the County is protected and conserved regardless of the type of development or facility planned. This element contains a narrative description of each area and specific goals, objectives and policies intended to provide guidance regarding land use and infrastructure to County staff, appointed and elected officials, those doing business with the County and interested citizens. The Character Area descriptions were developed by local citizens.

The Comprehensive Plan should not be construed as interfering with property rights already vested at the time this Plan is adopted.

About Goals, Objectives and Policies

A goal is a broad statement that, once accomplished, directly contributes towards the County vision. An objective is a measurable component of a particular goal. A policy is an action that will result in, or contribute to, the attainment of a particular objective.

The complete list of Comprehensive Plan goals, objectives and policies are contained in Appendix I. Within each Comprehensive Plan element are several goals with the original numbering from Appendix I retained so that referencing is clear and unambiguous. For each goal there may be several objectives, and for each objective there may be several policies. In combination, these provide decision guidance and an implementation program for the County to achieve the Comprehensive Plan vision. Santa Cruz County is composed of many, unique communities, therefore, to ensure the unique features of the many communities in the County are maintained, the Character Area appropriate to the application of each objective and policy is identified.

What Impact Does the Comprehensive Plan have on Existing Land Use and Future Development?

The Comprehensive Plan does not change existing zoning. In other words, if property is currently zoned and is not in conformance with the adopted plan, the property may be developed according to the in-place zoning. Any proposed rezoning of land, however, must be in conformance with the elements of the Comprehensive Plan. A.R.S. §11-824 (c) requires Comprehensive Plans to define major amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and a procedure for considering them. It also requires a two-thirds vote of the Board of Supervisors to approve a major amendment to the Comprehensive Plan and limits presentation of major amendments to a single public hearing before the Board, during the calendar year the proposal for the amendment is made. The Santa Cruz County Comprehensive Plan Amendment Process is described in the Land Use Element section of this Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan elements are related to one another and should be considered collectively in the decision-making process. People using the plan should not rely solely on select, excerpted statements to reach a particular conclusion, but should carefully consider all the Comprehensive Plan policies and supporting documentation. Supporting documentation for this Plan includes the Comprehensive Plan for Northeast Santa Cruz County (Sonoita Crossroads Plan).

Other Documents Incorporated By Reference Into This Plan

With the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, the following documents are incorporated by reference and considered implementation tools of this plan:

- *April 2002 Master Plan Update Nogales International Airport.*
- *Unified 2000 Santa Cruz County Transportation 2000 Plan.*
- *Corridor Management Plan for the Patagonia Sonoita Scenic Road.*

The following documents are referenced in this Plan and considered implementation tools of the Comprehensive Plan:

- *A Comprehensive Plan for Northeast Santa Cruz County (CPNSCC).*
- *Las Cienegas National Conservation Area Resource Management Plan.*
- *Wildlife Linkage Design and Planning for Western Santa Cruz County, AZ: Master's Thesis by Michelle Ilene Rudy, University of Arizona, College of Architecture, Planning and Landscape Architecture, 2003.*

Santa Cruz County Citizen And Business Involvement

A strong community participation program is key to developing a plan addressing the needs of and is supported by its citizens and businesses. A good Plan is developed when there is broad participation and consensus by community members and key stakeholders, ideas are well developed and clearly stated, and people are enthusiastic about future opportunities. Involving Santa Cruz County citizens, businesses, and staff was a fundamental component of the process used to develop this plan. As required by A.R.S. §11-806 (D), the County adopted a public involvement policy in September 2002 for the Comprehensive Plan and future amendments to it.

Santa Cruz County Public Involvement Process

Arizona law requires written procedures be adopted to provide effective, early, and continuous public participation in the development of the Plan from all geographic, ethnic, and economic areas of the County.

Santa Cruz County adopted a Comprehensive Plan Public Participation Strategy in September 2002. The strategy is in conformance with A.R.S. §11-806. The goals of the policy are to have the County Department of Community Development staff:

- Serve as a professional resource and information referral center for Santa Cruz County residents.
- Identify and create opportunities for citizen participation.
- Ensure early and continuous citizen participation in the process of formulating County goals, objectives and in preparing and implementing the Comprehensive Plan.
- Ensure collaborative long range planning efforts with representatives from appropriate agencies and incorporated jurisdictions within and outside of the County.

The adopted Santa Cruz County Comprehensive Plan Public Participation Strategy is included in Appendix II.

Public Involvement Activities Conducted in the Development of this Plan

The Santa Cruz County Planning and Zoning Commission formed the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) and provided guidance in the development of this Plan. Over 25 CPAC meetings were held. In addition to the CPAC meetings, an active Internet community commented on the Plan and reviewed drafts of the Plan components, community meetings were organized by citizens and held to review new ideas prior to their introduction into the process, and four focus groups and two public meetings were held during the Plan development process. Three of the focus group meetings were held in the beginning of the process in Kino Springs, Rio Rico, and Tubac. A fourth meeting was held in Sonoita to present the land use alternatives and preliminary draft plan goals and objectives for review and comment. A public meeting to present the proposed plan was held in February 2004 during which the Planning and Zoning Commission authorized the commencement of the statutory 60-day public review (A.R.S. §11-806.H). Finally, the draft Plan was presented to the Planning and Zoning Commission for review, comment and a final recommendation and to the Board of Supervisors for review, comment, and action.

Planning Considerations

The planning considerations were identified through research and the public processes conducted as part of the Comprehensive Development Process. As the County continues to evolve and address concerns related to growth and development, the following planning considerations will need to be considered and are addressed in the Santa Cruz County Comprehensive Plan.

Land Use

- Large master planned communities that are currently being planned and envisioned by landowners will impact the traffic, public services, land use, and community character of the County.
- Through the creation of the Comprehensive Plan for northeast Santa Cruz County, the Sonoita/Elgin area has taken a clear position regarding land use, development, and other topics. When possible and practical, this position needs to be considered in the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Significant public land exists within the County. These public lands are managed according to a variety of planning documents. These documents were considered in the development of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Existing, zoned development rights provide the opportunity to develop over 116,000 dwelling units and 46 million square feet of commercial uses. The location and/or intensity of this zoned development may impact the provision of public services and community character.
- The Rio Rico area has record of 4,372 residential water service connections. As this area continues to develop, the demand for services and infrastructure will increase. The current layout of platted lots poses concerns regarding appropriate development densities and land use patterns that need to be addressed.
- Commercial development from Rio Rico south along the I-19 Corridor is continuing. The impact of NAFTA on current and future development needs to be considered in land use and circulation considerations.
- Appropriate land use intensities for master planned communities need to be determined.
- The long-term impact of NAFTA on the County is unknown. It will, therefore, be important to maintain sufficient amount of industrial zoned land to accommodate quality economic development opportunities likely to occur in the future.
- The environmentally sensitive areas in the County today have the potential of becoming development liabilities in the future. Awareness and reasonable development around these areas in the short term will benefit the County in the long term by not having to contend with restrictions imposed from the outside entities such as those in neighboring counties.
- Future County land use plans need to allow for new development for current County residents who reside in households in the County to start their own new families or households, as well as for some in-migration.

Environmental

- Open space and the rural character in the northeast and northwest areas of the County need to be preserved.

Mobility

- Due to inevitable growth and the increasing cross-border trade and tourism, the existing transportation and circulation facilities must be able to accommodate the changing needs of Santa Cruz County.
- Federal and State highways need to be improved or maintained to accommodate traffic increases. This would include frontage road and interchange improvements along I-19 and maintenance issues on SR 82.
- With the approval of NAFTA, the increasing vehicular volume from Mexico and the use of bi-lingual or international roadway signs need to be evaluated.
- Specific roadways need to be upgraded to collector status and connected to existing collectors to give more efficient circulation patterns that will relieve congestion. It is particularly important in the Rio Rico area to identify these roadways and implement or require needed upgrades as development is initiated.
- Locations for new roadways need to be identified, either as development occurs or as population increases warrant them. One such new roadway was identified in the Transportation 2000 Plan as an extension of State Route 289 (SR 289 aka Ruby Road/Via Frontera) easterly to connect to SR 82 near the airport.
- Consideration needs to be given to implementation of scheduled passenger service at the airport to Phoenix and Tucson to increase tourism. There is currently no scheduled passenger service.
- To enhance tourism, the potential for passenger service for the railroad needs to be investigated.
- Rail spur lines for potential industrial areas should be investigated to support economic development.
- Transportation policies responsive to existing and changing land use patterns that can be used to require traffic impact studies or adherence to designated road classifications for new development and improvement of roadways need to be developed and implemented to ensure more consistent decisions regarding roadway classifications and improvements.
- There is a need for both drainage structures and roadway improvements at major and minor wash crossings. Ruby Road, east of I-19, is an example of a roadway with several low water crossings that can be made more efficient by drainage improvements.
- Congestion at the Nogales Port of Entry continues to increase.
- Less than 40% of the land in the County is privately owned. This has the dual effect of ensuring that the majority of the County will remain as open space, but also limits the options on where growth can occur.

Growth Areas

- Tourism is one of the key components of the County's economy and, as such, should be fostered through wise planning decisions. Bed and breakfasts, wineries, art galleries, cultural and historic sites and the natural beauty of the County draw tourists and money into the local economy. Allowing for an appropriate amount of commercial ventures will help industry to flourish while protecting the existing resources that draw tourists.

Cost of Development

- The County is challenged with how to pay for growth based on the current growth financing paradigms. If a subdivision is platted today, developers are required to build basic infrastructure serving that development such as neighborhood roads, neighborhood parks, water and sewer lines, etc. However, a significant amount of the growth occurring within the County is on land platted decades ago or in sparsely populated areas, neither of which receive the benefit of developer supplied infrastructure. This leaves the County with the challenge of how to appropriately allocate limited resources for infrastructure investments that are generally not considered the responsibility of government today.
- In addition to the demand from new development, there are existing infrastructure deficiencies throughout the County. Prioritizing these has been a challenge for the County, and correction of the deficiencies is generally decided on a year-to-year basis.
- There is a dramatic difference between the speed and magnitude of growth on either side of the Santa Rita and Patagonia Mountains. Therefore, the overall demand for infrastructure is also different. For example, sidewalks would be welcomed in some areas of the western County, while the eastern areas would opt for a more rural feel along their roadways. Ensuring development in the various Character Areas maintains some homogeneity, in terms of its expectations for infrastructure, will help the County direct its funds and get the economies of scale needed to make investments that will benefit the most people.
- In an effort to grow, many local jurisdictions enter into development agreements to attract and facilitate appealing developments. While public-private partnerships are the hallmark of good planning, the County will need to enter into them with all of the data necessary to make fiscally prudent compromises. Oftentimes, an overly generous package will not generate the necessary funds to meet the public sector's obligation.

Water

- The availability of water for development may conflict with environmental water needs that contribute to the quality of life in the County such as riparian and wildlife.

Character Area Element

In many ways, this element is the most important of all elements in the Plan. It describes, in qualitative and quantitative terms, how each of the different communities in the County is unique. With these descriptions, the Character Area Element adds greater detail and depth to the Comprehensive Plan as a whole and the Land Use Element (which addresses land use, density and intensity) in particular by describing the pattern and character and interaction between the environment and its natural features and the human settlement patterns that create the different places in Santa Cruz County.

It is anticipated that the conservation of the unique combinations of environmental and human patterns making up the Santa Cruz Character Areas will be accomplished through implementation of the Character Element policies, and the subsequent achievement of the goals and objectives of this and other Comprehensive Plan Elements.

Character Area Overview

Santa Cruz County is composed of diverse landscapes, topography, development styles, and lifestyles that can not be managed solely through the regulation of development intensities and densities. As the County has grown, and these areas have become established, maintenance of these unique areas has become a common bond and source of pride to County residents. To ensure the conservation of these unique areas, this Comprehensive Plan includes five unique geographic areas, or Character Areas, defining the development intensities, densities, and land use patterns recognizable and unique from one another specific to their areas.

Volunteer Citizen Area Teams² formulated the Character Area descriptions included in this element and identified challenges specific to their area. The Teams also selected the goals for each Character Area from the list of Countywide goals developed during the public meetings of the CPAC. The CPAC encouraged the Teams to choose the five most important goals, recognizing that all of the Countywide goals are of critical importance.

The Character Areas described in this section are intended to work in concert with the Comprehensive Land Use Map (Figure 2 in Appendix V) and other Plan Elements to provide decision-making guidance about the types and patterns of development appropriate within a particular area of the County.

Northwest Santa Cruz County Character Area

BOUNDARIES

The physical boundaries of the Northwest County Character Area are the Santa Cruz County line to the north; the County line to the west; the ridge line of the Santa Rita Mountains of the Coronado National Forest to the east; and an offset line to the south which starts at the Tumacácori interchange of I-19 and goes due west from the interchange until reaching the west County line. On the east side of I-19 the area starts on the northern boundary of Rio Rico platted property and goes east, then north and then east again to exclude Rio Rico Estates Unit 16, Tubac Foothills Estates and Salero Ranch.

CHARACTERISTICS

The vision of development in the Northwest County is for slow, deliberate growth with the aim of preserving and maintaining the area's historic, cultural, ranching and agricultural heritage. In general, the character is of a rural lifestyle with relatively low-density population, inspired by the viewsheds of the Santa Cruz River Valley and the mountains on both sides of the river valley. People choose this area in which to live for many reasons, but also for what it is not. It is not a place of intense residential development or crowded urban sprawl with resulting traffic congestion.



A visitor traveling from Pima County south on I-19 should experience a transitional gateway upon crossing into Santa Cruz County just south of Arivaca Junction. The vista is of the Santa Cruz River Valley with its ribbon of cottonwood trees and ranch/farm land on both sides of the river floodplain. The land then gradually slopes up on the east and west to mesas and foothills before becoming the mountains that are part of the Coronado National Forest. These “sky island” mountain ranges are interconnected by wildlife migration routes, which typically follow natural drainages to the central river valley. This is mentioned elsewhere and not appropriate to Characteristics section

GROWTH

Future development along the Santa Cruz River should be similar in nature and style to the residences, shops, restaurants, bed and breakfast inns and local markets/stores that currently exist. “Big Box” stores, large grocery stores, chain restaurants, fast food stores, auto/truck gas stops, and similar land uses are incompatible with the character of the area. People are willing to drive north out of the County or south to Rio Rico and Nogales for this type of shopping. In general, new development incorporating architectural styles in keeping with early Arizona themes and those of the Spanish and Mexican period will serve to preserve the area's character. Limiting road signs and outdoor lighting to those necessary for public safety will help preserve the area's ambiance, viewsheds and night sky. Utilities should be underground for any new subdivisions/developments and will enhance the feeling of openness So that people view the area as a place in which to retreat, not from which to escape.

The majority of the 20 Goals contain important aspects affecting the Northwest County area; however, the five most important goals with a brief narrative are as follows:

GOALS

GOAL 1: THE HISTORIC, CULTURAL, RANCH AND AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY IS PRESERVED THROUGH LAND USE PATTERNS AND DEVELOPMENT STYLES.

The northwest part of the County has a rich historic, cultural and ranching heritage that remains active today. The Tumacácori National Historic Park and the Tubac Presidio State Historic Park are present-day reminders of early settlements that existed along the Santa Cruz River Valley. Early inhabitants included Native Americans, Spanish colonists, Mexican land grantees and finally American settlers, all of whom saw turbulent periods most often as a result of Apache raids. These diverse cultures made an imprint on the area. The historic districts of Tubac and Tumacácori, all archeological sites, as well as historic buildings, cemeteries, and other relevant features are links to the past worthy of preservation and protection.



New development in the area should incorporate early Arizona historical themes as well as those of the Spanish and Mexican periods. The beauty of the Santa Cruz River valley is enhanced by the pastoral scenery of the many ranches and farms that exist on either side of the river. Although present day and future economic factors may affect the viability of these ranches and farms, their continued existence should be encouraged through

developmental incentive programs, such as transfer of development rights. Although development and increased population are inevitable, it is necessary to insure the essence of the area's character remains.

GOAL 2: OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL TERRAIN REMAIN DOMINANT FEATURES OF THE LANDSCAPE AND VIEW SHEDS ARE PROTECTED.

Future developments, especially large tracts of land optimize the balance of open space and areas of development. Most current undeveloped areas are zoned General Rural. It is important that topographical features become a key factor in determining the location of building sites, roads and other improvements that can impact natural views. By directing densities away from arroyos, steep-sloped areas and foothill peaks these valuable resources will be protected. . Low density development should be encouraged. Wildlife corridors must be protected from any intrusive development that would impede migration routes.

It is important that features of open space and sweeping vistas still dominate this part of the County even though future development may occur. Any commercial projects along I-19 should retain the small scale and informal character of existing development in the area. New roadside advertising signs should not be permitted and existing signs should be removed as leases expire.

State Parks and conservation areas must be maintained and protected from development. Much of the area's open space is state-owned land and should, to the extent allowed by law, be protected from land swaps or development. Incentives should



be developed for preservation of open space encompassing prominent landforms and geographic features.

GOAL 4: NEW DEVELOPMENT SHALL BE DESIGNED TO ENHANCE THE CHARACTER OF THE SURROUNDING AREA.

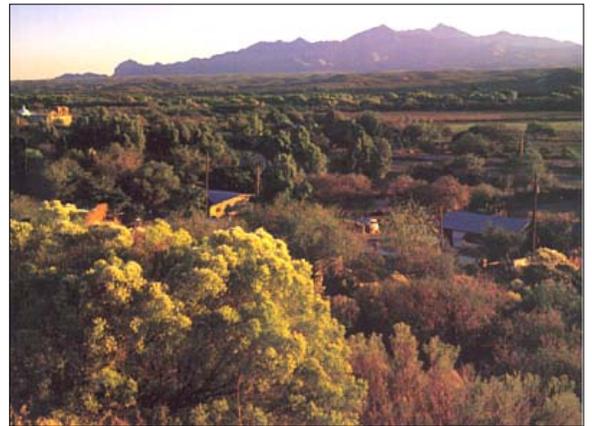


New development complements and enhances the development that currently exists, providing it conforms to the character set forth in the narrative. In general, development in the vicinity of existing communities will be more intensive than outlying areas. In general, residential densities should decrease as the distance from I-19 increases to the west and the distance from the river increases to the east. Through a design review process, standards should be in place so that future developers know exactly what the building requirements are. Structures should not exceed two stories

in height with architectural styles in keeping with early Arizona themes and those of the Spanish and Mexican periods.

GOAL 8: THE SANTA CRUZ RIVER AND ITS WATER SHED ARE CONSERVED AND MANAGED AS “LIVING RIVER” ECOSYSTEMS.

The heart of the Northwest Character Area is the unique riparian system evolving from the Santa Cruz River. This is where much of the history of the area took place and where people have lived for thousands of years. The multitude of cottonwood, alder, sycamore and willow trees needs to be preserved for both humans and wildlife. The river’s life-giving qualities must be preserved by keeping it clean and free of litter and by letting it roam when it periodically floods. These are definite challenges since the river flows north from Mexico and is effluent dependent thereby making the supply of water variable.



The river, although damaged over time by human activity and grazing, has begun a slow recovery from its wounds. Land use decisions must allow this healing process to continue for the sake of the generations to come. The watersheds, tributaries and wildlife corridors that follow gravity to the river are essential elements of this system. Even away from the river, wastewater systems must be utilized that do not adversely impact river water quality. Structures must be kept away from the river’s banks to allow it to meander independently. The riverbanks will be alive with native plants if those that degrade its natural flow are removed.

Eco-tourists can follow the Anza Trail to see what others saw long ago and to experience the local scenery. This river trail exists from Rio Rico to Tumacácori and its mission, to Tubac and its Presidio and historic village and then continues along ranch land and through a wildlife corridor to Amado and the northwestern gateway of the County.

GOAL 14: THE COUNTY'S NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES CONTRIBUTE TO TOURISM.

The Santa Cruz River, its adjacent mountains and local communities provide many kinds of tourist attractions. The County and local Chambers of Commerce play an important role in promoting tourism and educating the public on the myriad of attractions that exist for visitors to the area. The history of the area, as depicted at the state and federal parks, offers the public a look into the interesting and often violent past of the Santa Cruz River Valley. Ranching and mining were an integral part of this area's history. Today people visit for a variety of reasons in addition to visiting historical sites.



They come to hike the river and mountain trails and view native wildlife and birds. Horseback riding and the experience of life on a dude ranch are present and future draws for tourists. Some visitors are drawn to local, cottage-type industries and many visit the village of Tubac because of the shops and galleries. Artists visit because of the numerous natural and cultural scenes that



inspire their talent. The Smithsonian Whipple Observatory draws both professional and amateur astronomers to this County. Small inns and bed and breakfast businesses provide ideal lodging with a personal touch for these visitors. A golf resort and area dude ranches also provide lodging with associated recreational amenities. Local restaurants are a year 'round draw for residents and visitors alike. These types of tourist draws must be encouraged in order to maintain the cultural and historic uniqueness of the area. People seek the tranquility of the area and come here to escape urban pressures.

Maintaining the scenic viewsheds, clean air and dark night skies throughout the area will enhance the visitor's experience.

CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS

- Provide standards for future development and the controls to implement them.
- Stop the loss of existing ranches and farms along the Santa Cruz River Valley due to development pressures and economic factors.
- Prevent "Green Valley" type of development from intruding past the north County line.
- Protect the area from any large-scale commercial development.

Central Santa Cruz County Character Area (also known as Greater Rio Rico)

BOUNDARIES

The Central Santa Cruz County Character Area (also known as Greater Rio Rico) is predominately made up of the unincorporated community of Rio Rico, and the large lot developments north, northeast and east of Rio Rico, and the San Cayetano Mountains. Its character is primarily derived from the current and past land use patterns of Rio Rico. For

purposes of this description, the area will be referred to interchangeably as the Central County Character Area and Greater Rio Rico.

CHARACTERISTICS



Located in the lush, verdant Santa Cruz River Valley, the area offers the desert southwest as it always was meant to be: Unspoiled, rich with native wildlife, jeweled sunsets and breathtaking vistas of the surrounding mountains and countryside. The community's 35,000 acres roll gently down from the Santa Rita Mountains through the San Cayetano Foothills westward to the Santa Cruz River. Rio Rico is a planned community with a rural flavor twelve miles north of the City of Nogales and the Nogales international port of entry. The proximity to Mexico and the fact that the Santa Cruz River formed a valley made

this an ideal route for Native Americans, explorers, and pioneers. One can take relaxing walks through majestic mesquite-adorned knolls; spend quiet summer nights counting the stars in the night sky, and wake to the bluest skies. The area enjoys year round mild climate due to its elevation from 3,200 feet to 4,000 feet above sea level. The community is framed around significant open space and a system of riparian and mountain parks, which includes a portion of the largest native cottonwood forest in North America.

GROWTH

Greater Rio Rico is home to people who work in Rio Rico's Industrial Park and businesses, Nogales, Arizona, and Sonora; Green Valley; and even Tucson. It is also home, full-time or part-time, to retirees from Arizona and a number of other states, and Mexico. The community of Rio Rico has tremendous potential for population growth due to the desirability of the region.

Housing ranges from affordable to gracious living with custom homebuilding available. Because of the geology, topography and nature of the soils, large areas of open space exist between homes and subdivisions. This unique character of Rio Rico preserves the feeling of open space.



The Central County Character Area is bisected by Interstate 19, the principal route between Tucson and the International border. Commercial sites are located on both the east and west sides of Interstate 19 at Rio Rico Drive, which is the principal entry to Rio Rico. At this exit on the west side there is a shopping plaza with restaurants, a supermarket, shops, and other services, a gas station, and a resort. There is a large area of commercially zoned land that is yet to be developed. Rio Rico's urban core is an ideal center for goods, services, and businesses to flourish for the Greater Rio Rico community as well as tourist and business travelers on I-19.

The area is also rich in recreational opportunities, ranging from dispersed activities such as birding, hiking, fishing, and horseback riding, to more organized park usage, golf, and a fitness center with swimming and tennis available. There is also a community center that is utilized by residents of the community for many activities and events.

GOALS

GOAL 1: THE HISTORIC, CULTURAL, RANCH AND AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY IS PRESERVED THROUGH LAND USE PATTERNS AND DEVELOPMENT STYLES.

The Santa Cruz River Valley's abundant resources and climate have promoted settlement for thousands of years. Through this timeline extends Native American, Spanish, Mexican, and American cultures as well as a long line of productive ranches.

This heritage must be preserved and respected. The citizens of Greater Rio Rico and Santa Cruz County, as well as its visitors should be educated about the archeological, cultural and historical aspects so they may enjoy and respect them. An interpretive and cultural center should be established in the area to meet the need for heritage preservation and education on the area's rich history and culture.

Residents and visitors will have access to the history and culture through a network of publicly accessible hiking trails such as the Juan Bautista de Anza Trail and the trails of the Sonoita Creek State Park as well as established State parks and National Monuments. Historic resources will continue to be recognized and preserved.

Given the natural, cultural, historic and ranching quality of the Central County Character Area, it is essential future developments be master planned and designed to include open space, to consolidate infrastructure requirements and to preserve the independent historic, cultural and ranching sites of the area.



GOAL 3: RETAIL, COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IS SUITABLY LOCATED, ACCESSIBLE, ATTRACTIVELY DESIGNED, APPROPRIATELY LIGHTED AND COMPATIBLE WITH ADJACENT LAND USES.

As part of the CANAMEX Corridor and an important area of potential commerce for Santa Cruz County, the land along the Frontage Roads of Interstate-19, is the ideal location for retail, restaurants, commercial, and light industrial development. The population has grown from 7,000 in 1993 to close to 15,000 in 2003, presenting the opportunity for an increase in local services and employment opportunities. The larger commercially zoned parcels could be utilized for a cohesively planned mixed use attractively designed Town Center. These parcels have the potential for pedestrian-friendly town center commercial development to serve the Central County community as well as tourist and business travelers and visitors.

GOAL 4: NEW DEVELOPMENT SHALL BE DESIGNED TO ENHANCE THE CHARACTER OF THE SURROUNDING AREA.

Greater Rio Rico has the fastest growing population in Santa Cruz County. Many people are moving to this area for jobs as well as retirement. Future development should include a wide



variety of home styles and prices. There is demand for affordable housing (entry level), medium pricing for move up buyers, and higher priced custom homes. Homes should be designed to “fit the area”, but should not be restricted to any one style.

The terrain in the Central County Character Area naturally insures open space and wildlife corridors. Much of the land cannot be developed because of floodplain designations, incompatibility for septic systems and sloping terrain.

When unplatted parcels are developed, reasonable deed restrictions should be included to maintain the qualities incorporated into them at the start of development. New developments should be designed to instill a feeling of pride and community for its residents with elements such as linkages to the Trail systems of Rio Rico.

GOALS 9 & 18: INFRASTRUCTURE IS AT A SCALE THAT CONTRIBUTES TO THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES AND ECONOMY OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY AND A SAFE AND EFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM IS DEVELOPED AND MAINTAINED THAT SUPPORTS THE ECONOMY AND MEETS THE TRANSPORTATION NEEDS OF COUNTY RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.

As Nogales continues to develop in its position as an international border city, and economic development continues along the future path of the CANAMEX corridor, changes will have to occur in surrounding areas of the County. The manner in which those changes occur will be essential to orderly and positive growth for the Rio Rico area. One of the most important aspects of an active, growing community is the infrastructure that will allow development to support the economy and the needs of an increasing number of residents. At the same time protection must be provided for natural and cultural resources.



Electricity, gas, communication, water and waste systems as well as transportation corridors must expand to meet the increasing population and expanding areas of development. Wherever possible electric and phone lines should be located underground, and wireless communications facilities should be located so as to maintain the beauty of the natural landscape. Wastewater treatment facilities should be developed or expanded and gray water use programs should be implemented. Recycling programs should be expanded and promoted to preserve landfill space.

As residential development expands throughout the area adequate, safe, lighted road systems should be developed to allow access throughout the community, to I-19, and to

support rapid access by emergency vehicles. Pedestrian linkages to the Trail system should be encouraged. Adjacent bicycle paths, where appropriate, will serve to minimize air pollution. In the near future planning should begin for public transportation from Rio Rico to Nogales to reduce traffic on I-19 and preserve/improve air quality.

The Santa Cruz Valley is rich in natural beauty, which needs to be cherished and maintained while the growth and economy of the twenty-first century expands. Orderly growth combined with concern for cultural and natural resources can be accomplished.

GOAL 15: RESIDENTS AND VISITORS ARE AFFORDED A RANGE OF RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.



Due to its unique character, with its rolling hills, mild climate, abundant wildlife, and a river running through it, Greater Rio Rico affords visitors and residents with a variety of recreational opportunities. Future developments in the area should incorporate new recreational amenities and links to existing ones.

The many outdoor activities that should be emphasized include bird watching, hiking in many areas including the historic Juan Bautista de Anza Trail, horseback riding, tennis, golf, biking, and much more. There is a major resort

and country club, and a fitness center that is a full-scale health and fitness facility with swimming, volleyball, and tennis. Community County parks such as Calabasas Park and the planned west side park, offer picnicking and outdoor activity opportunities.

Arizona State Parks is planning a new State Park of potentially 6,000 acres, which will include riparian and mountain areas, as well as a Visitor/Information/Interpretive Center in the heart of Rio Rico. The new State Park will extend from the existing Patagonia Lake State Park along the Sonoita Creek to Rio Rico, and will include the Santa Cruz River riparian lands both north and south, the Tumacácori National Historic Mission, the Calabasas Mission, and the San Cayetano Mountain. There will be hiking, biking, bird watching, and horseback riding trails.



For the youth of the community, there are many activities and classes offered such as ballet, karate, swimming lessons, tennis lessons, etc. Organized youth recreation programs, such as little league baseball, basketball, soccer, and swimming are already an important part of community activities and should be encouraged and expanded.

Of major importance will be the completion of the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail and the Arizona Trail with connecting links to the planned State Park of Sonoita Creek and other cultural sites.

CHALLENGES

- Attract commercial and retail businesses to Rio Rico to meet the needs of the community and provide jobs.

- Develop an efficient transportation system with improved access, and paved roads (seal coat) to control dust.
- Adopt and enforce a Neighborhood Preservation Ordinance to preserve and maintain the integrity of the community.
- Adopt a community-wide Recycling Program.
- Encourage in-fill in the central corridor and lot consolidation in the outlying portions of the community.

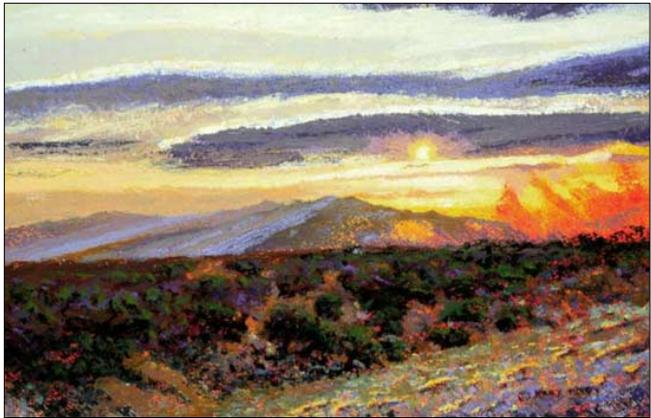
Northeast Santa Cruz County Character Area

BOUNDARIES

The Northeast County Character Area extends from the southern town limits of Patagonia on the south to the County line on the north and from the Santa Rita Mountains on the west to the County line on the east. These high desert grasslands range in elevation between 3800 and 5200 feet. This area includes the Whetstone and Mustang Mountains, the old mining and railroad town of Patagonia, and smaller population clusters in and around the ranching centers of Sonoita, Elgin and Canelo.

CHARACTERISTICS

In the Northeast County Area, the economy has been driven historically by ranching and mining. Ranching is still an active part of today's economy. In recent years vineyards, wineries and tourist accommodations have been established. Businesses serving residents and visitors remain local and small-scale. The Rodeo and Fairgrounds of Sonoita is the site of the annual County Fair, horse races, and rodeo. Rich and varied wildlife roam freely in open spaces - many species of birds and wildflowers, pronghorn, deer, bobcats, javelina, reptiles, and the occasional bear. Open space, beautiful landscapes, abundant wildlife, rural, quiet, and star-filled night skies are among the richest of the area's resources. The area is enhanced by the adjacent Las Cienegas National Conservancy Area, Coronado National Forest, Audubon Appleton-Whittell Research Ranch, Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Nature Conservancy, Lake Patagonia State Park and Parker Canyon Lake. Hiking and birding trails and camping areas are plentiful in the surrounding mountains. Limited off-road travel is permitted.



GROWTH

The northeast remains the least densely populated part of the County. Population growth is moderate but steady. Drawn by its natural wonders, people settle in the area to retire from work or to work outside the pressures of Tucson and Phoenix. As in all "last great places", those who live in the Northeast County area live within a paradox of their own making; they are attracted to the natural riches of the area but their very presence threatens to exhaust those same riches. The balance between the natural blessings of the area and human settlement is extremely delicate. Already some strains of growth are evident: wells have had to be drilled deeper to reach reliable water sources; wild animals find their habitats reduced and compete for territory or diminish in numbers; unplanned residential building clutters open

spaces and intrudes on landscape views; our scenic highways are filling with increased traffic, especially large trucks of international commerce; our pristine night skies have been degraded by unnecessary and intrusive lighting.

Forms of development compatible with the area's ecology are supported and encouraged by residents and visitors alike. It is a civic responsibility to protect as much as possible, to tread lightly, and to leave the Northeast County to the next generations in as good or a better condition than it was found.

GOALS

Since 1996 local residents have developed a vision for the Northeast County area, which is detailed in *A Comprehensive Plan for Northeast Santa Cruz County* (CPNSCC). Five of the goals of the County Comprehensive Plan are essential to fulfill that vision. While all 20 goals listed in Appendix I are compatible with CPNSCC, these five are paramount to guide growth in our part of the County.

GOAL 1: THE HISTORIC, CULTURAL, RANCH AND AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY IS PRESERVED THROUGH LAND USE PATTERNS AND DEVELOPMENT STYLES.

Ranching is still the most extensive use of private lands in our area, but the Northeast County area is becoming a residential community at a rate of about 30 new homes per year. More land is vacant, awaiting development, than is occupied by residential and commercial uses combined, but County regulations are needed to protect the rural character of this area and to make local land use better fit that character. Residential development appropriate to this character should install adequate on-site facilities, make a fair and proportionate contribution to improvement of off-site infrastructure, and be compatible with neighboring uses. (CPNSCC II, 2:5&6)

GOAL 2: OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL TERRAIN REMAIN DOMINANT FEATURES OF THE LANDSCAPE AND VIEWSHEDS ARE PROTECTED.

Preserving the landscape as the area grows is a major challenge for ranchers, businesses, and current and future residents. Opinion surveys conducted 1996-1998 confirm how important an unspoiled environment and the opportunity to see wildlife are to both residents and visitors. CPNSCC II,2:2 states: "Our Community's Goal is to maintain the natural attractions of NE Santa Cruz County by keeping public open space resources intact and to encourage voluntary conservation of private lands via gift or purchase of development rights. Cooperative efforts to these ends are being made by the Sonoita Crossroads Community Forum, South East Arizona Land Trust, Sonoita Valley Planning Partnership, Scenic Highway Corridor Management Plan, and other local organizations and individuals."

GOAL 7: WILDLIFE HABITAT AND WILDLIFE MOVEMENT CORRIDORS ARE RECOGNIZED AND PRESERVED THROUGH THE USE OF ESTABLISHED AND INNOVATIVE LAND USE MANAGEMENT TOOLS.

CPNSCC identifies important open space resources of the Northeast County area including large blocks of federal land in the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area and Coronado National Forest and protected private lands like the Research Ranch and the Conservancy Preserves on Sonoita Creek and in O'Donnell Canyon. A map following CPNSCC II,2:1 shows a framework of open space necessary to maintain biological connectivity between large blocks of public or protected lands. Any development in these corridors must provide for



free movement of wildlife.

GOAL 19: WATER SUPPLIES ARE PROTECTED AND CONSERVED.

The Northeast County area depends entirely on groundwater for domestic and commercial use. The availability of potable water will be the ultimate limiting factor on development in our community. Shallow and deeper aquifers are subject to depletion by overdrafting as the population grows. Development should leave open space buffers in which native vegetation can be retained or restored along all watercourses and alluvial aquifers, protecting them from contamination. Buffers will also protect development from flooding or stream channel changes. Density of development in alluvial valleys should be consistent with the potential for groundwater pollution in the coarse, permeable soils of these valleys. Hydrological studies of this County area suggest that it will be prudent to limit development here to about 2,485 residential units or their equivalent in residential, commercial, and other uses. This is about 26% of the build out anticipated with the current zoning. (CPNSCC II,2:8&9 and Appendix F, page 25)



GOAL 20: DARK NIGHT SKIES ARE PROTECTED

One of this area’s most valuable natural resources is a dark night sky. This sky requires protection beyond what is offered by the present County ordinance. Proper outdoor lighting practices protect property rights by reducing light trespass. CPNSCC states this goal as: “Outdoor lighting standards established to support astronomical research and appropriate to our area’s rural character should be applied in all new development. Current residents of our community should learn how the standards apply to them.” (CPNSCC II,2:4)

CHALLENGES:

- To achieve these goals a clearly stated development code is needed; CPNSCC, Part III, sets out a prototype for such a code. A development code modeled after that in CPNSCC should be approved for the Northeast County area. In this way the County can evaluate how growth may be guided by clearly defined requirements and responsibilities, established procedures and permitted uses, and stated performance standards for development review. (CPNSCC III)

South Central Santa Cruz County Character Area (Nogales East - Patagonia West and Patagonia-Sonoita Scenic Road Corridor)

BOUNDARIES

The boundaries of the South Central County Character Area (Nogales East – Patagonia West and Patagonia-Sonoita Scenic Road Corridor) are described as the public and private lands along State Route 82 between the ridgelines of the Patagonia Mountains and the Santa Rita Mountains east of the City of Nogales and west of the Town of Patagonia. The area extends south to the international border with Mexico.

CHARACTERISTICS

State Route 82 is the main arterial highway running through the area, and it was declared the Patagonia-Sonoita Scenic Road in 1985, the second such designation in the State at the time. The scenic road is a critical element shaping the South Central County Character Area. Along this scenic corridor near Nogales are the residential areas along South and North River Roads, rustic Duquesne Road, which traverses into the Coronado National Forest, the quaint Little Red School House, and the mixed use resort and residential development in Kino Springs (Estancia Yerba Buena). The Nogales International Airport, established in 1929, occupies 370 acres south of State Route 82 and is protected from encroachment by an Airport District Overlay Zone and substantial undeveloped land surrounding the airport property. Further east, the large lot subdivision of Patagonia Lake Estates borders the State Park, and the T4 and Circle Z Ranches run along the National Forest boundaries. The Sonoita Creek, a popular birding area, runs along SR 82 between Patagonia and Lake Patagonia State Park.

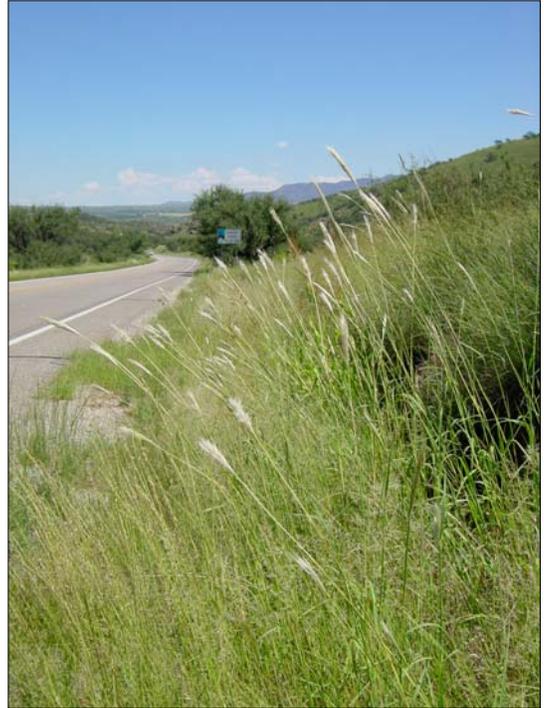


Photo credit: Wheat Scharf Associates

Dark night skies, wildlife corridors, canyons, gently rolling hills, steep, rocky ridges, transitioning grasslands, mesquite, oak and piñon pine forests along with numerous other types of native vegetation characterize this area and make it a unique and spectacular place to live and visit. The Santa Cruz River meanders north from its brief foray into Mexico crossing back into Arizona at the Buena Vista Ranch. The sky islands of the Patagonia and Santa Rita Mountains within the Coronado National Forest provide rich ecological potential. Wildlife corridors between the mountain ranges add to the area's natural and scenic beauty.

GROWTH

Growth along this corridor has been limited primarily to the Patagonia Lakes area and, to a lesser extent, in Kino Springs. Any new development needs to be consistent with and not compromise the values recognized by the designation of the Patagonia-Sonoita Scenic Road. This includes lands adjacent to the highway and those uplands that form the stunning natural viewshed. The scenic road cannot be enjoyed if it becomes a major truck route.

The availability of water and sewer in the area east of Nogales are important limiting factors in the future growth of this area. Nogales has extended service outside its city limits into the Kino Springs area and as far east as the airport. Properties not so served must have private wells and utilize conventional septic systems with leach fields. Water availability and recharge is a critical issue and justifies caution in this area. Due to the subsurface hydrologic conditions, shallow private wells tend to go dry during periods of low precipitation and surface water runoff. The primary sources of water for private wells are a series of four microbasins, which are heavily dependent on rainfall and runoff. While they do fill rapidly in times of adequate precipitation, they can be rapidly over drafted in drier times.

The City has expanded its water infrastructure in the direction of the South Central Character Area and it is reasonable to expect growth to come to this area from the direction of Nogales. In fact, a joint transportation plan commissioned in 2000 concluded that sometime in the 2011 to 2020 planning horizon, a five lane interconnector between SR 82 and SR 289 (Ruby Road/Via Frontera) in Rio Rico will be necessary to accommodate the residential and commercial growth in this area.



Further east beyond the airport, growth pressures are not as critical, but land use decisions still must be based on preserving the integrity of the Patagonia-Sonoita Scenic Road and its vistas and the rural nature of the area.

Property owners and residents in this area are concerned about growth adversely affecting their way of life and, therefore, prefer to be proactive, rather than reactive, in long-term land use planning. The land-planning objective is to attractively and efficiently integrate ranching, residential, employment, historical/cultural area land uses. Accordingly, the overall goal for the land use in this area is to provide a quality living and work environment for future generations.

GOALS

GOAL 4: NEW DEVELOPMENT WILL BE DESIGNED TO ENHANCE THE EXISTING CHARACTER OF THE SURROUNDING AREA.

Growth pressures from Nogales are inevitable. Additionally, large tracts of undeveloped land within the South Central Character Area will eventually be ripe for development. Such development, including retail and industrial, must occur with acute sensitivity to the attributes of the natural terrain in order to protect viewsheds. Open space should remain a dominant feature of this area. Attractive and thoughtful development is required and must significantly and successfully mitigate impacts on all resources, including water, air, wildlife and views.



GOAL 18: AN EFFICIENT AND ATTRACTIVE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM IS DEVELOPED AND MAINTAINED THAT SUPPORTS THE ECONOMY AND MEETS THE TRANSPORTATION NEEDS OF COUNTY RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.



The Patagonia-Sonoita Scenic Road is the main arterial route through the area. It cannot be allowed to be degraded through inappropriate uses piled on incrementally. New development must be required to upgrade the surface transportation network concurrent with development to avoid impacting the

scenic road and other existing routes.

GOAL 9: THAT INFRASTRUCTURE IS AT A SCALE THAT CONTRIBUTES TO THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES AND THE AREA'S ECONOMY.

New infrastructure, to include water distribution, wastewater treatment and disposal, roadways, power and communication facilities are all necessary to support new development and meet modern standards. Provision of infrastructure, however, needs to be thoughtfully undertaken to avoid adverse effects on wildlife, the visual quality of the area, natural areas, existing developments, and public health. New development should be given incentives to provide wastewater treatment facilities. Non-traditional energy sources should be encouraged as development encroaches into the area. Underground utilities should be standard practice.

GOAL 20: DARK NIGHT SKIES ARE PRESERVED AND PROTECTED.

With the recognition that future development is likely, it is critical for the County to adopt strict regulations on light pollution and apply them to all types of development. Dark night skies are a resource that must be protected like any other natural resource.

GOAL 19: WATER SUPPLIES ARE PROTECTED AND CONSERVED.

Water may be the single most limiting factor for development in the area. Watershed management addressing both groundwater and surface water is an appropriate tool to ensure not only the water is clean, but that there is adequate water available for existing and new development. The County should encourage watershed management in this area, particularly in light of the subsurface hydrology. Demonstration of a 100-year assured water supply for new developments, as required by law, will assist in keeping the Santa Cruz Active Management Area in safe yield. The County should also require developments not subject to the assured water supply statutes to prepare water budgets so their water usage can be documented. Developments should be required to develop specific drought protection plans and to implement water conservation and reuse measures.



CHALLENGES

- Ensuring all new growth in the area is supported by adequate and appropriate infrastructure.
- Ensuring water quality, supply and demand are monitored closely for all land uses.
- Maintaining the integrity of the Patagonia-Sonoita Scenic Road and other rural routes in the area.

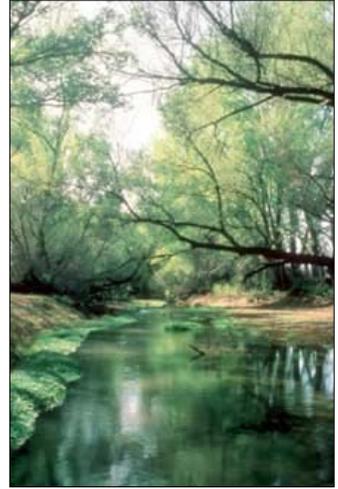
Southeast Santa Cruz County Character Area (SAN RAFAEL VALLEY)

BOUNDARIES

The 172 square mile San Rafael Valley is located in southeastern Santa Cruz County. The Patagonia Mountains and San Antonio Mountains, Huachuca Mountains, Canelo Hills and international border with Mexico form the west, east, north and south sides of the Valley respectively. The elevation ranges from 3500 to 5200 feet.

CHARACTERISTICS

This valley has been utilized solely for ranching and farming since the 1800's. It has one of the last few remaining short prairie grass eco-systems left in the southern United States. The headwaters of the Santa Cruz River are at the northern end of the Valley with tributaries contributing to the flow from the headwaters down to the Mexican border where it continues on into Mexico. The Valley also contains three conservation easements, which preserve an integral part of the valley. These conservation efforts have been instrumental in the long term vision of preserving the cultural, historical and ecological integrity of the Valley. On these three easements, comprising a total acreage of 19,000 acres, there are 4 – 5 small (5 – 10 acre) building envelopes.



A major portion of the Valley is comprised of the Coronado National Forest.



The recreational activities in the area include horseback riding, hunting, camping, and birding. It is important these recreational activities are kept to a minimum so as not to destroy the grasslands. There are County maintained dirt roads leading into the Valley from Patagonia, the Nogales area and Canelo. These roads meet and traverse through the Valley to Fort Huachuca and Parker Canyon Lake.

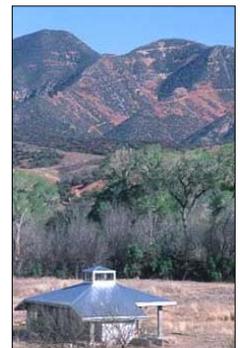
GROWTH

The Southeast Santa Cruz County Character Area has experienced extremely low rates of growth, which is consistent with the available infrastructure and services and the ranching character of the valley. Aside from the San Rafael State Park, no non-traditional land uses have been established in the area in modern times. This trend should continue with the only exception being land uses, such as dude ranches, that enhance and build upon the farming and ranching character.

GOALS

GOAL 1: HISTORICAL, CULTURAL, AND AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE OF THE SAN RAFAEL VALLEY IS PRESERVED THROUGH LAND USE PATTERNS AND DEVELOPMENT STYLES.

The Southeast Santa Cruz County Character Area has a rich and sustained agricultural heritage that remains vital today. It also has a rich historical and cultural value emphasized by the San Rafael State Park. Through promoting education and respect of the ranching heritage, the State Park is an integral part of the County's history will be preserved for generations to come. Supporting the State Parks mission in the area will help achieve this goal.



GOAL 2: OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL TERRAIN ARE DOMINANT FEATURES OF THE LANDSCAPE AND VIEWSHED VALUES ARE PROTECTED.

Anyone who has visited the San Rafael Valley cannot help but be struck by the incredible scenic beauty of this largely untouched landscape. This must be protected. The County should actively support the use of land management tools such as the establishment of conservations easements and transfer of development rights to protect valuable viewsheds within the Valley. Supporting land trusts that seek to preserve open space can also further this goal.

GOAL 6: LAND USES CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROTECTION OF NATIONAL AND STATE PARKS, CONSERVATION AREAS, PRESERVES AND OTHER NATURAL RESOURCE AREAS.

The San Rafael Valley, due to its location between mountain ranges, has long been noted for

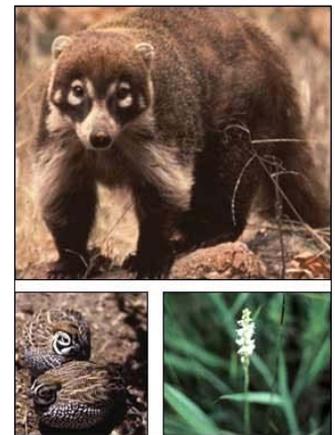


its wildlife and supports a diversity of habitat types, ranging from grasslands to mountain environments. Publicly and privately controlled lands provide habitat for a variety of wildlife and plant species. In areas of critical wildlife habitat, including wildlife migration corridors, jurisdictional wetlands, habitats with known occurrences of special status species and continuous riparian habitats, Santa Cruz County will continue to protect these resource values. By assuming a stewardship role in protecting these invaluable resources, Santa Cruz County will be actively

working to protect significant and sensitive habitats from intrusion and encroachment from incompatible uses and preserving this quality of life.

GOAL 20: DARK NIGHT SKIES ARE PROTECTED

There is something about the night sky that stirs the soul and frees the imagination. The San Rafael Valley's starry night skies are among the best in the State. The integrity of the resource is protected by the ring of mountains that shield the valley floor from the glow of urban centers such as Sierra Vista to the east and Tucson to the northwest. In 1999 the New Mexico Heritage Preservation Alliance included the New Mexico night sky on their list of "Most Endangered Historic Places". This highly public and widely noted action prompted the Governor to sign into law a Night Sky Protection Act. Could a similar "listing" in Arizona have the same outcome? Light pollution is not just an urban issue. The County should take every opportunity to protect and preserve this resource through regulation and public education.



CHALLENGES

- Encouraging limited residential and commercial development on private lands to locate on very large parcels to achieve the desired objective of preserving open space and valuable ranchland.
- Protecting the San Rafael Valley from intrusion by off-highway vehicle recreation.
- Protecting the San Rafael Valley from human-caused wildfires.

- Protecting property and water rights and carefully following State and Federal rules regarding land and water use particularly as regards future development on base ranch properties.

Southwest Santa Cruz County Character Area (Ruby Road South to City Limits)

Boundaries

The Southwest Santa Cruz County Character Area (Ruby Road South to City Limits) extends from the privately owned land east of Interstate 19 between Rio Rico and the City of Nogales west and south through the Coronado National Forest all the way to the County boundary with Pima County and the international border with Mexico. It includes the Old Tucson-Nogales Highway/Union Pacific Railroad corridor, SR 289, Peña Blanca Highlands, Oro Blanco and Ruby.

Characteristics

This area is marked by contrasts, ranging from the developed area along the Interstate corridor to the mining ghost towns in the forest.

Most of the area east of Interstate 19 was developed between 1930 and 1960, before Santa Cruz County had a zoning code.

The relatively early development of the east area occurred because, prior to construction of Interstate 19, the Old Tucson-Nogales Highway was the main transportation route between Nogales and Tucson.

The importation of Mexican produce into the United States began to grow significantly during this time period. As a result of this early development and a lack of controls, the area east of



I-19 is a poorly planned mixture of industrial, commercial and residential uses, including produce warehouses, a church, restaurant, propane distributorship, storage facilities and a commercial livestock operation that boarding and shipping livestock via truck. The northern portion of this area is largely undeveloped except for some small ranches and the Nogales Ranger District Station of the Coronado National Forest. As improvements along I-19 continue,

this area will develop further.

The I-19 corridor area west of the highway started developing much later than the east side due to lack of access. From the late 1800s to date, cattle ranching has been the prevalent industry within the area. Some of the ranches (a few still in existence) were created under the Homestead Act. With the creation of the Federal Forestry Department (now USDA Forest Service) in the early 1900's and the subsequent designation of the Coronado National Forest, the larger previously privately held lands were converted to federal property.

In the 1970s, the "Old Tom Fast Ranch", located adjacent to I-19 and south of Old Ruby Road, was sold and planning began for the Las Minas subdivision. The land remained undeveloped for a number of years until the property was purchased by Peña Blanca

Properties in 1988, at which time a master plan was developed consisting of residential, commercial and industrial uses.

The Nogales Unified School District #1 purchased approximately sixty acres and built two schools on the southern end of the property, which facilitated development of a new subdivision, Ruby Heights (Coronado Estates), within Peña Blanca Highlands. Approximately 260 acres south of SR 289 (Ruby Road) adjacent to the west frontage road is planned for light industrial development.



Transportation planning for the area envisions a truck bypass from the Mariposa Port of Entry, west of the City of Nogales, extending north to Ruby Road along the Coronado National Forest boundary enabling trucks to bypass the City and access I-19 at the Ruby Road/Interstate 19 interchange.



The character of this area can be described as suitable for campus-style industrial parks, regional services, quality residential development, and supporting commercial services.

To the west away from the I-19 corridor influence, are the federal lands of the Coronado National Forest along with a very few privately held in holdings. In 1957, the Arizona Game & Fish Department built the

Peña Blanca Lake located approximately 9 miles west of I-19. The Forest Service assisted in the development of a lodge/restaurant, cabins, picnic and camping areas and boat dock. As a result of the development of this recreational area, electricity and telephone service were made available from the Old Tucson-Nogales Highway to the lake and to ranchers in that area. The original buildings have been demolished and new facilities are planned to enhance the recreational value of the lake that is currently well visited for bird-watching, fishing, camping and picnicking.

The history of this area is shaped by those who settled here and stayed even after the forest reserve was created. One family's story is illustrative: The Clarke Ranch, which begins 6 miles west of I-19, consists of two homesteads created under the Homestead Act of 1862. It is owned by William "Sonny" H. Clarke, Jr. and his wife, Virginia. Mr. Clarke's great-grandfather built the first home in the canyon, originally named "Craigborne", and now known as Walker Canyon, in the early 1870s prior to the creation of the Forestry



Photo credit: Scott Bell

Department/USDA Forest Service. The elder Clarke's wife and two of his sons are buried near what is now known as the "61" ranch house.

The main ranch headquarters was built in the 1940s by Mr. Clarke's father less than a mile down canyon from the original home site, which was razed in the early 1900's by the Forest Service. The other homestead is in Calabasas Canyon and was homesteaded by Mr. Clarke's grandfather. That home and outbuildings still stand at Milepost 6 of Ruby Road. The two homesteads were acquired by Mr. Clarke's father in the early 1940's and improvements were made to both the private and federal lands, a practice that continues today. Mr. Clarke represents the fourth-generation to inhabit this area and he and his reside at the main headquarters in Walker Canyon while his daughter (and fifth-generation of Clarkes) and her family live in Calabasas Canyon. Seven generations of Clarkes have operated a cattle ranch in this area totaling over 100 consecutive years of ranching tradition. The ranching operation includes federal grazing permits that border Rio Rico to the north, the Mexican border to the south and Peña Blanca Lake to the west.

Past the Peña Blanca Lake, the Bear Valley Ranch continues to operate as a working cattle ranch as it has been for decades.

Sycamore Canyon, approximately 27 miles west of Interstate 19 on the National Forest is a renowned bird-watching and tourist destination. Sycamore Canyon has gained international recognition for its plant life of which some species' existence in the canyon keep botanists speculating. The Gooding Research Center is also located in this area providing research opportunities to scientists.



The mining ghost town of Ruby is also located on Ruby Road (SR 289) and is a reminder of the healthy mining industry that once thrived throughout the County.

Oro Blanco, which is primarily outside the forest boundary, has been owned by the same family for generations. Much of the forest land is subject to federal grazing permits held by area ranchers.

GOALS

This area defies a unifying set of goals due to its complexity. The first five goals relate to the area under the I-19 corridor influence. The last two are specific to the forest region.

GOAL 3: RETAIL, COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IS SUITABLY LOCATED, ACCESSIBLE, ATTRACTIVELY DESIGNED, APPROPRIATELY LIGHTED AND COMPATIBLE WITH ADJACENT LAND USES.

Growth from the Nogales urban area will expand to the north. It is imperative this growth be managed in a way that is visually attractive and cohesive. This is the major transportation corridor for people passing through the County. An attractive, well-planned transition from Rio Rico into Nogales is key. The east side will see new development along the north and the potential for redevelopment closer to the City. On the west side, development in the Peña Blanca Highlands area and north to Ruby Road will need to be undertaken with



sensitivity to the terrain. It is important to focus development where access and visibility is good, and services, such as sewer, water and power, are readily available. In this urban transition area, utilities should be underground.

GOAL 11: QUALITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS SUPPORTED AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES ARE PLENTIFUL.

This plan envisions the I-19 corridor as being the primary economic engine for the County. As such, it is this character area that has the potential for being the economic development and employment center. The County should foster and encourage diversity so economic health is robust and can weather down times in certain sectors. A diverse economy will also bring a mixture of job opportunities for County residents. The County should actively foster economic development through support of the efforts of the Nogales-Santa Cruz Economic Development Foundation and the Chambers of Commerce.



GOAL 24: AN EFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM IS DEVELOPED AND MAINTAINED THAT SUPPORTS THE ECONOMY AND MEETS THE TRANSPORTATION NEEDS OF COUNTY RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.

Interstate 19 is the backbone of the transportation system. Since access is restricted, development needs to proceed in a manner that does not overtax either the Ruby Road interchange or any future rebuilt interchange to the south at Grand Avenue/Country Club Drive in Nogales. Planning for this area also needs to carefully weigh the eventuality of a western bypass from the port of entry to I-19, which is part of the overall transportation plan. Adequate rights-of-way to accommodate that bypass and a potential eastern interconnect from State Route 82 may have to be obtained as part of future development approvals. Mixed use development that minimizes the need for more and wider roads should be encouraged.



GOAL 17: OUR AIR AND WATER ARE CLEAN AND MEET OR EXCEED ALL NATIONAL STANDARDS.

It goes without saying that all existing and new commercial or industrial land uses shall be required to comply with federal law as regard air and water quality. In this core area, however, new development needs to be held to the highest standard. Sanitary sewers must be required for new development. Paved traffic circulation areas also must be a requirement. Mixed use development can also assist with air quality by permitting people to live close to their work so that alternatives to the automobile are realistic.



GOAL 19: WATER SUPPLIES ARE PROTECTED AND CONSERVED.

The precious nature of water cannot be overemphasized. Wasting water is not an option. New development should be required to recharge, conserve and reuse water to the maximum extent practical. Drought management plans should be required for new development. Those land uses not subject to the 100-year assured water supply requirements of the Santa Cruz Active Management Area should be required to provide water budgets prior to approval.

GOAL 1: THE HISTORIC, CULTURAL, RANCH AND AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY IS PRESERVED THROUGH LAND USE PATTERNS AND DEVELOPMENT STYLES.

In its early history, the County's major industries were mining, farming and ranching. In all areas of the County, there still exist pioneer families who have maintained the integrity of their heritage through perseverance, conservation and commitment to the fulfillment of Man's dreams under the will of Nature. The continued policy of multiple-use sustained yield in the National Forest areas should be encouraged and the long history of cattle ranching and mining on the National Forest should be preserved.

GOAL 5: THE COUNTY ACTIVELY WORKS AND COOPERATES WITH ITS NEIGHBORS RESOLVING LAND USE COMPATIBILITY AND OTHER RELATED ISSUES.

The west area shares a border with the Republic of Mexico, the County's largest neighbor, separated only by the international boundary fence. The region's relative isolation makes it an attractive area for illegal border crossings. This creates security problems for residents, ranchers and National Forest users, tragic loss of life for undocumented aliens who succumb to the harsh elements and enormous costs for law enforcement and border patrol agencies. For all these reasons, the preservation of open spaces and viewsheds and conservation of sensitive species should be secondary to providing adequate access to the area so that appropriate agencies can interdict illegal border crossers and, by heightening their presence, reduce the number of crossings and save lives.

Challenges

- Ensuring that development along the I-19 corridor has adequate infrastructure to serve future needs.
- Coordinating closely on new interconnects from State Routes and the port-of-entry to I-19 and ensuring that new development is consistent with future transportation corridors.
- Encouraging the redevelopment of properties to mitigate land use conflicts.
- Ensuring that the traditional uses of National Forest land and private property within the forest boundaries continues.

Land Use Element

Introduction

The Santa Cruz County Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element and Land Use Plan Map is the County's blueprint for development over the next decade. Its purpose is to guide the County in making land use changes to achieve the goals described in this Plan. The Land Use Element contains goals, objectives, and policies that provide direction on how residents of the County envision future development. This element includes a Land Use Map that describes the location, intensity, and density of land uses that residents desire for their community. This element is in conformance with A.R.S. §11-821(I) and was prepared in conformance with A.R.S. §11-824 (C).

The Land Use Map is presented in a portable document format for ease in presentation via electronic and paper media. The Map is maintained in a geographic information system (GIS) environment. Interpretation of the Map relative to any specific property will be the responsibility of the Department of Community Development, Planning Division.

Past, Present, and Future Trends

Development in Santa Cruz County has historically been located along the Santa Cruz River, and later, along I-19, after it was constructed. Since 1990, approximately 93% of the population growth in Santa Cruz County has occurred along the I-19 corridor in the communities of Amado, Tubac, Rio Rico and south to the Nogales City limits. Proposals for new development and for enhancements to existing development indicate that over the next decade new development will continue to predominantly locate along this corridor.

The U.S. Census projects the County's 2003 population at 40,035 persons, an increase of 1.8% per year. Based on building permit information and historic trends, the County projects that it will continue to grow at a rate substantially higher than projected by the Census (approximately 6.5% per annum through 2010).

It is likely that the source of the County's growth will be from natural increase and in-migration from other areas in the state. Santa Cruz County residents, at a higher rate than the rest of Arizona, are seeking to stay in the County as they mature and establish new households. Compared to other counties, Santa Cruz County captures more than its share of intra-state movement, and that it captures less than its share of migrants from out of State.

The State is projected to continue to increase in population. Santa Cruz County population will reflect state population increases, as well as increases from internal growth. This County land use element and map provides for new development that enables current residents to move within the County and start new households, as well as for some in-migration.

Approximately 5.8% Santa Cruz County residents work at home as compared with 3.5% of all residents statewide³. As the population in the County continues to increase, it is possible the percentage of persons working at home may decline. Because the County has limited infrastructure, it is unlikely that changes in technology (such as digital communications) will support an increase in the number of at-home workers over the next decade. Consequently, as the County continues to experience population increases, it may need to consider appropriate locations for employment centers or actions to support at-home employment.

The County currently has substantial, privately owned and undeveloped land easily accessible by I-19 and SR 82. While existing zoning provides more than adequate land to accommodate the projected population, development could have substantial impacts on the

County's natural resources and existing pattern of development. New development within the County is beginning to shift from individual homes constructed on private lots to production housing. In the past five years approximately 30% of requests for residential rezoning were for parcels larger than 100 acres. Of these, over 40% are at densities exceeding 4 residences per acre (RAC). To maintain the rural and unique development patterns of the County, land use densities and patterns should reinforce current development patterns, densities and intensities.

The Santa Cruz County Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map

To accommodate projected future growth and development, and accomplish the goals of this Plan, the Santa Cruz County Land Use Map includes adequate opportunity for new development while conserving traditional development patterns and densities. The Plan specifically encourages maintenance of the existing land use intensities and densities in the Sonoita/Elgin area, allows for urban style development in the Rio Rico area and, to some extent, around Tubac and Kino Springs. Employment is focused south of Rio Rico along the I-19 corridor and employment and commercial uses specific to the County's tourism industry are encouraged at the Sonoita crossroads of SR 82 and SR 83.

To clearly demarcate the differences in the I-19 corridor and other locations throughout the County, the Land Use Plan Map includes two general types of land use intensities and densities: urban and rural. These groups of land uses are described below in the section titled Comprehensive Plan Land Use Categories.

The Santa Cruz County Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map (see Table 1) provides for the following development at build out:

TABLE 1 – COMPREHENSIVE PLAN LAND USE BUILD-OUT

Comprehensive Plan Land Use Category	Residences per Acre (RAC)	Total Acres	Total Dwelling Units
Ranch 40 - R-40	.025	5,460	136
Ranch - R	.25	196,570	49,142
Public Land - PL		519,491	
Preservation - PSV		6,146	
Local Services - LS		540	
Low-Density Residential - LDR	1	25,038	25,038
Medium-Density Residential - MDR	3	9,814	29,442
High-Density Residential - HDR	10	593	5,930
Mixed Use - MU	80	11,907	952,560
Regional Services - RS		557	
Enterprise - ENT		214	

Comprehensive Plan Land Use Categories

TABLE 2 – COMPREHENSIVE PLAN LAND USE CATEGORIES

Rural

Ranch 40 - R40	The principal land uses in this category are extremely low-density residential (1/40 residential units per acre [RAC] or less), ranching, agriculture, viticulture, low-impact tourism, resource conservation, and accessory uses.	Zoning Districts permitted include GR-40 (<i>Policy 1.5.1</i>). Other Zoning Districts may be permitted only as part of a Planned Area Development (PAD), provided the densities of the category are not exceeded within the PAD.
Ranch - R	The principal land uses in this category are very low-density residential (¼ RAC or less), ranching, agriculture, viticulture, low intensity/low traffic tourism, resource conservation and accessory uses.	Zoning Districts permitted include GR-40 and GR. Other Zoning Districts may be permitted only as part of a PAD, provided the densities of the category are not exceeded within the PAD.
Public Lands - PL	The principal land uses in this category are established in accordance with applicable law and regulation of the managing agency. The Public Lands category includes all federal public land managed by the Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior and State lands managed by the State Parks Department and State Land Department. ⁴	Zoning Districts permitted, while lands remain public, include GR-40 and GR. When public lands are converted to private property, regardless of means, a PAD shall be required for development.
Preservation - PSV	The principal land uses in this category are historic sites, museums, research study areas, permanent open space and, generally, areas to be preserved in a natural and/or scientifically managed manner. Residential and light commercial uses accessory to the principal preservation function are also permitted. This category applies to private property.	Zoning Districts permitted include P. Other Zoning Districts may be permitted only as part of a PAD.
Local Services - LS	The principal land uses in this category are retail, restaurant, tourism services, and low impact neighborhood services.	Zoning Districts permitted are B-1 and B-2. Other Zoning Districts may be permitted only as part of a PAD.

Urban

Low Density Residential - LDR	The principal land uses in this category are residential (1 Residence Per Acre [RAC] or less) and low-intensity tourism services, restaurants, and neighborhood services.	Zoning Districts permitted are GR, SR, R-1 and B-1. Other Zoning Districts may be permitted only as part of a Planned Area Development (PAD), provided the densities of the category are not exceeded within the PAD.
Medium Density Residential - MDR	The principal land uses in this category are residential (3 RAC or less) and retail, office and commercial services.	Zoning Districts permitted are R-1, R-2, R-3, B-1 and B-2. Other Zoning Districts may be permitted only as part of a PAD, provided the densities of the category are not exceeded within the PAD.
High Density Residential - HDR	The principal land uses in this category are single and multi-family residential (10 RAC or less), and retail, office and commercial services.	Zoning Districts permitted are R-4, R-5, MF, B-1 and B-2. Other Zoning Districts may be permitted only as part of a PAD, provided the densities of the category are not exceeded within the PAD.
Mixed Use - MU	The principal land uses in this category are high-density residential (80 RAC or less) integrated with retail, services and employment uses in areas accessible to infrastructure and public services.	Zoning Districts permitted are P, R-4, R-5, HR, MF, MH, MFR, B-1 and B-2. Industrial zoning may be permitted only as part of a PAD, provided the densities of the category are not exceeded within the PAD.
Regional Services - RS	The principal land uses in this category are high-intensity commercial, employment, and retail uses that have regional significance and are situated to take advantage of major transportation corridors and population centers.	Zoning Districts permitted are B-2 and M-1. Other Zoning Districts may be permitted only as part of a PAD.
Enterprise - ENT	The principal land uses in this category are heavy commercial and industrial enterprises with significant employment potential and are situated to take advantage of facilities and major transportation corridors.	Zoning Districts permitted are B-2, M-1 and M-2. Other Zoning Districts may be permitted only as part of a PAD.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

GOAL 1: THE HISTORIC, CULTURAL, RANCH AND AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY IS PRESERVED THROUGH LAND USE PATTERNS AND DEVELOPMENT STYLES.

Santa Cruz County has a rich historic, cultural, ranching and farming heritage that remains active today in the eastern and western areas of the County. Through the conservation of this important heritage, the open vistas, predominance of the landscape, grassland, and vegetation that are integral to the County's history will remain evident into the future.

Objective 1.1 Identify, inventory, preserve and protect important cultural and historic sites and the archaeological resources of the County.

Policy 1.1.1 The County will continue to use the Historic Zone Overlay ordinance as a tool for conservation of historic resources within the County.

Policy 1.1.2 The County will assist in identifying cultural sites, posting warnings and enforcing appropriate penalties for vandals and polluters.

Policy 1.1.3 The County will codify regulations requiring that new developments identify archaeologically and historically significant sites and provide appropriate conservation, preservation and/or interpretation as a condition of development.

Policy 1.1.4 The County will establish archaeological survey guidelines and regulations as part of the development review process to aide in identifying and protecting ancient sites.

Objective 1.2 Educate residents and visitors about the history and culture of Santa Cruz County.

Policy 1.2.1 The County will through support of local Chambers of Commerce and other organizations, publish and provide easily accessible, accurate information about the history and culture of Santa Cruz County.

Policy 1.2.2 The County will work with state and federal governments to provide interpretative centers at appropriate locations in public parks, at trailheads and public facilities.

Policy 1.2.3 The County will establish an Historic Commission and encourage liaison between all area historical societies.

Policy 1.2.4 The County will coordinate with the Historic Commission to develop and adopt an Historic Resources Conservation, Protection and Education Plan.

Policy 1.2.5 The County, in coordination with the State Historical Preservation Office, will perform the necessary tasks to qualify as a Certified Local Government in order to receive pass-through historical preservation funds to fund and map historic resources in the County.

Objective 1.3 Encourage traditional ranching, dude ranches and farming.

Policy 1.3.1 The County will work with private landowners, organization and entities to identify opportunities for the conservation and continuation of working ranches and farms.

Objective 1.4 Preserve historic barrios.

Policy 1.4.1 The County will support and encourage policies to revitalize and preserve historic barrios and communities and discourage their gentrification.

Objective 1.5 Discourage "wildcat" subdivisions.

Policy 1.5.1 The County will develop and adopt a zoning district classification consistent with the Ranch 40 land use designation.

GOAL 3: RETAIL, COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IS SUITABLY LOCATED, ACCESSIBLE, ATTRACTIVELY DESIGNED, APPROPRIATELY LIGHTED AND COMPATIBLE WITH ADJACENT LAND USES.

Attractive, suitably located commercial and industrial areas benefit the County by improving the work environment for the employees. Industry's compliance with State and County lighting regulations improves safety and protects the night sky for all to enjoy. By being compatible with adjacent land uses, the community at large benefits in overall improvement in the quality of life.

Objective 3.1 Establish the Interstate 19 corridor from Nogales through Rio Rico as the core of the County's commerce activities.

Policy 3.1.1: The County will focus retail and commercial development in areas with adequate access, support services and visibility.

Policy 3.1.2 The County will update the sign regulations and expand to include sign lighting.

Policy 3.1.3 The County will work closely with ADOT to ensure adequate arterial and collector road infrastructure in available.

Policy 3.1.4 The County will coordinate with all agencies to establish the new CANAMEX corridor facility.

Objective 3.2: Encourage pedestrian-friendly retail "Main Streets" within commercial cores and village centers.

Policy 3.2.1 The County will locate the development of high-intensity mixed use town centers within central and southern Rio Rico and Kino Springs.

Objective 3.3: Encourage the integration of residential, resort and other complementary land uses.

Policy 3.3.1 The County will update the Planned Area Development regulations to facilitate their usage for the development community.

Objective 3.4: Encourage the development of tourist facilities in appropriate locations throughout the County.

Policy 3.4.1: The County will encourage commercial development designs that enhance and complement tourist experience.

Policy 3.4.2: The County will encourage artist-related and tourist-focused commercial development through partnerships with local organizations and other agencies.

Objective 3.5: Buffer and mitigate the impacts of different intensities of land uses.

Policy 3.5.1: The County will review the Zoning and Development Code to ensure that adequate buffers, to include landscaping, are required to mitigate the impacts of higher intensity uses.

Objective 3.6: Encourage agricultural brokerage and processing activities.

Policy 3.6.1: The County will work collaboratively with local produce organizations to ensure infrastructure needs are met.

Policy 3.6.2: The County will support a new Cyberport facility in Nogales.

Objective 3.7: Encourage appropriately scaled mixed uses that contribute to the overall functioning and success of the Nogales International Airport.

Policy 3.7.1: The County will implement the Airport Master Plan.

Policy 3.7.2: The County will encourage mixed uses on adjacent lands that contribute to the self-sufficiency of the airport.

Policy 3.7.3: The County will continue to encourage establishing dual customs operations at the airport.

Objective 3.8 Ensure that neighborhoods are peaceful and quiet and their integrity is preserved.

Policy 3.8.1 The County will adopt ordinances limiting excessive noise in residential areas.

GOAL 4: NEW DEVELOPMENT SHALL BE DESIGNED TO ENHANCE THE CHARACTER OF THE SURROUNDING AREA

Distinctive character areas have been identified as contributing to the County's diversity and ambiance. New development reflecting those attributes of character further set the tone for what is to come. While it is recognized that there is always room for improvement, the character area descriptions encompassed in this Plan shall guide the design and the type of development appropriate for an area.

Objective 4.1 Guide development type and design consistent with the Character Area Descriptions.

Policy 4.1.1 The County will coordinate with developers early in the project planning process to ensure the purposes of the Character Area Descriptions are achieved.

Policy 4.1.2 The County will establish and maintain Scenic Gateways at the entrances into the County on Interstate 19, State Route 83 and State Route 82.

Policy 4.1.3 The County will concentrate residential densities near existing communities and infrastructure.

Policy 4.1.4 The County will support in-fill for developed communities.

Policy 4.1.5 The County will review and revise applicable ordinances including the Zoning and Development Code for consistency with the purposes of the Character Area Descriptions.

Objective 4.2 Encourage well-designed affordable housing.

Policy 4.2.1 The County will establish an Affordable Housing Council, which will participate in developing incentives and guidelines to encourage affordable housing.

Policy 4.2.2 The County will work with incorporated cities and towns to coordinate a countywide affordable housing program.

Policy 4.2.3 The County will apply for grants, aid and funding from regional, state and federal agencies and non-governmental organizations to support the affordable housing program.

GOAL 5: THE COUNTY ACTIVELY WORKS AND COOPERATES WITH ITS NEIGHBORS TO RESOLVE LAND USE COMPATIBILITY AND OTHER RELATED ISSUES.

Partnership building and strong working relationships with all jurisdictions, groups and individuals will result in improving the quality of life in our County.

Objective 5.1 Position the County as a leader in solving regional issues and promoting the goals of this Plan.

Policy 5.1.1 The County will seek the cooperation of neighboring cities and towns in developing annexation agreements as they relate to rezonings in newly annexed areas and the interface of comprehensive/general plans.

Policy 5.1.2 The County will identify overlapping government functions and will seek intergovernmental agreements to redefine responsibilities, eliminate redundancy and reduce the cost of government services.

Objective 5.2 Encourage respect for the goals of this plan at the state, national and international levels.

Policy 5.2.1 The County will distribute this plan to state, national and international elected officials, office holders and decision-making bodies.

Policy 5.2.2 The County will participate proactively on state, national and international task forces, committees and other organization in order to represent the County's interest and further the goals of this plan.

GOAL 20: DARK NIGHT SKIES ARE PROTECTED.

Little inspires more awe than the view of the cosmos on a dark moonless night. It is an experience that is shared by every human being at one time or another. The encroachment of development threatens that experience with every new floodlight, streetlight and lighted sign. We are fortunate to still have dark night skies and to be able to share the wonder of what's beyond.

Objective 20.1 Preserve for the benefit of all residents, visitors and the environment the historically dark night skies.

Policy 20.1.1 The County will adopt a rigorous light pollution code that will be applied to all types of development including street and sign lighting.

Objective 20.2 Support professional and amateur astronomical research at existing and future observatory sites.

Policy 20.2.1 The County will consult with the astronomy community on strategies to reduce and mitigate the effects of all types of outdoor lighting.

Plan Amendments

The Comprehensive Plan may be amended through either a major or minor amendment. The County shall determine if a request to change the Comprehensive Plan is a major amendment or a minor amendment. In accordance with A.R.S. § 11-824(C), changes to the Plan are to be considered major amendments if the change resulting from the amendment is a “substantial alteration of the County’s existing comprehensive plan land use element for that area of the County.” Amendments to this Plan may be initiated by the County or may be requested by private individuals and/or agencies in accordance with the procedures set forth in Arizona State law.

In accordance with A.R.S. § 11-824(C), major amendments to this Plan (i) may only be considered by the County Board of Supervisors at a single public hearing each year, (ii) must be submitted, and (iii) must receive a two-thirds majority vote of the Board of Supervisors for approval. Applications for major plan amendments will only be accepted by the Santa Cruz County Department of Community Development Planning Division from January 1 until March 31 to facilitate compliance with the law.

Minor amendments may be considered by the Board of Supervisors at any time during the year. Minor amendments shall be all amendments determined not to be major amendments.

The minor/major plan amendment process shall include a County staff review, analysis, findings, and recommendation to the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Board of Supervisors for approval, denial, or modification and referral back to the Commission in accordance with A.R.S. § 11-823(B).

Major and Minor Amendment Criteria

The Comprehensive Plan Amendment Criteria Flow Chart describes the process whereby requests for changes to the Comprehensive Plan are determined to be major or minor amendments.

Major Plan Amendments

There are six types of changes to this Plan that qualify as major amendments:

1. The proposed land use is not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and is for an area greater than 160 acres;
2. The proposed land use is for an area between 40 and 160 acres in size and would increase the intensity of use by more than the next land use designation according to the *Hierarchy of Land Use Designations From Least Intense to Most Intense* (Table 3);
3. Any request to change the definitions of the intensity, density, land uses or zoning categories determined to be appropriate to the land use categories described in the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map or Comprehensive Plan elements;
4. Any request to change the alignment of, delete, add or reclassify a County, State or Federal road;
5. Any request to delete, change, or modify the Comprehensive Plan text that is determined by County staff to be inconsistent with the Plan Vision or a goal, objective or policy in the Plan; and
6. Any request to delete, change or modify the open spaces described in the Comprehensive Plan Open Space Map or delete or change the areas described as open spaces in the Comprehensive Plan Open Space Element.

Minor Plan Amendments

There are three types of changes to this Plan that qualify as a minor amendment:

1. The proposed land use is less than 40 acres and is not consistent with the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Map;
2. Any request to update the estimates or projections contained in the Plan; and
3. Any request to change the text of the Comprehensive Plan that is determined by staff to qualify as a minor amendment.

Major and Minor Comprehensive Plan Amendment Review and Analysis

The Department of Community Development Planning Division's review and analysis of major and minor amendments shall include an analysis of the following:

- Comparison of the proposed land use with the Plan's designated land use, according to the *Hierarchy of Land Use Designations From Least Intense to Most Intense* (Table 3);
- Projected off-site impacts, including traffic, public safety and parks impacts and options available to mitigate such impacts;
- Impacts to the conservation, protection and sustainability of natural environment, including, but not limited to, hillsides, riparian areas, public lands, night sky, public lands access, surface and subsurface water and floodways;
- Identifying projected conflicts or consistencies with the goals of the appropriate character area within which it is located and whether any amendments to character area goals should be included in considering the proposed plan amendment;
- The extent to which the proposed amendment accomplishes the goals and objectives of this Plan, as set forth in Appendix I;
- Community outreach efforts undertaken by the applicant; and
- Any other element relevant to proper analysis of the proposed amendment.

Public Hearings

The above staff review and analysis should be available for public review at the time that any public hearing, either before the Commission or the Board, is noticed by publication in the newspaper. To facilitate maximum public participation in the public hearings process, the Department of Community Development Planning Division shall maintain a database of interested persons and entities for each character area, and shall mail notice of public hearings, together with the staff analysis, to each such person or entity. Persons or entities requesting such notice may be charged a reasonable fee to offset the cost of such notice and reproduction of staff reports.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT CRITERIA FLOW CHART

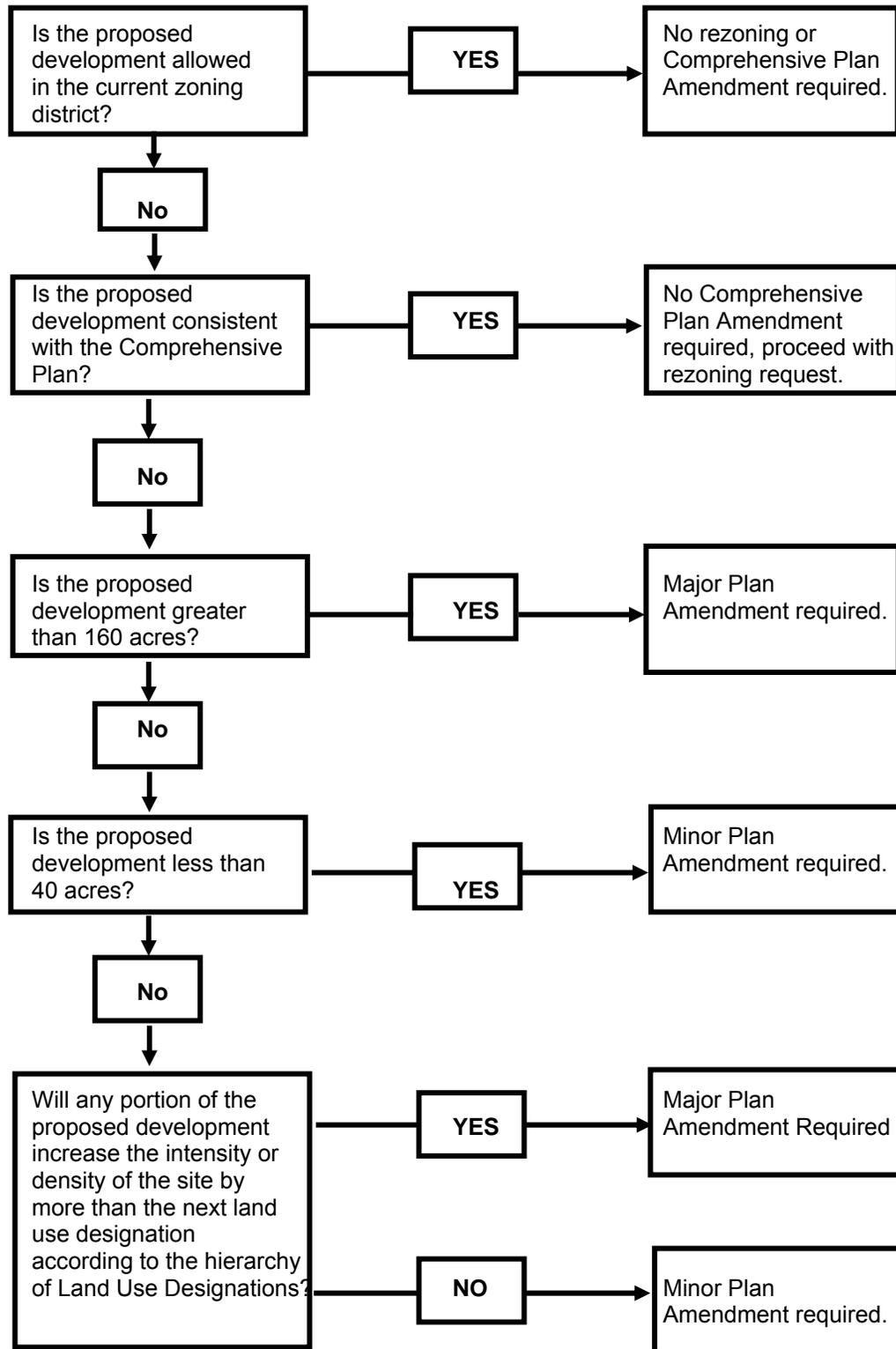


TABLE 3 – HIERARCHY OF LAND USE DESIGNATIONS FROM LEAST INTENSE TO MOST INTENSE

<u>CLASSIFICATION</u>	<u>DESIGNATION</u>
RURAL	Public Lands
	Preservation
	Ranch 40
	Ranch
	Local Services
URBAN	Low-Density Residential
	Medium-Density Residential
	High-Density Residential
	Mixed Use
	Regional Services
	Enterprise

Growth Area Element

Introduction

As large-scale developments occur throughout the County, opportunities for economies of scale (the reduction in cost due to larger production) in infrastructure construction can be easily missed. The definition of growth areas helps to focus the County's resources on those areas of the County most appropriate for future development. They also send a signal to the development community concerning the County's priorities, helping to induce optimal and appropriate development activity in the County. Targeting growth in this manner will help to ensure that public facilities can be located where they are best able to serve the population. This element identifies and describes where the County expects to encourage the most intense development to occur, and where to expect the most intense use of County services and infrastructure.

Past, Present, and Future Trends

Growth has occurred in Santa Cruz County along the major transportation corridors, which were, to a large extent, defined by the topography of the region. Most existing higher intensity development in the County is in close proximity to Interstate 19 or State Route 82, and to a lesser extent State Route 83. In general, these patterns will be encouraged to continue in order to preserve the natural environment located away from these corridors. However, the intensity and location of development will be targeted to meet the goals of the community.

Between 1990 and 2000, the unincorporated areas of the County grew by 79%, while the City of Nogales grew by only 7% and the Town of Patagonia had nearly zero growth. Of this total growth in the unincorporated County 93% occurred on the western side of the County.

Feelings about growth vary widely among the six Character Areas, but mostly match what is actually occurring today. Slow to no growth ideals tend to dominate on the eastern side of the County, while moderate growth is the dominant feeling on the western side. In both cases, responsible and targeted growth that respects the cultural and natural heritage of the region is desired.

Therefore, we would like to see the same overall development trends, which occurred in the past, continue into the future in the six Character Areas. Each district has evolved to contain a unique mixture of residential and commercial development distinct from the others, and offering its own self-defined quality of life. Maintaining this quality of life is the challenge facing the County government and those interested in building in these areas. In defining this quality of life there are inherent development tradeoffs, with each striking a balance between urbanization and maintaining a rural atmosphere.

While this Plan directly addresses planning efforts in Santa Cruz County, the activities in neighboring Pima and Cochise Counties and Sonora, Mexico will likely impact Santa Cruz County. As this Plan attempts to protect much of the natural environment in Santa Cruz County, there are even more restrictive planning efforts occurring in the neighboring counties. The Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan and the environmental challenges related to the San Pedro River both have the potential of bringing dramatic development restrictions in Pima and Cochise Counties. If extremely restrictive policies are adopted related to the protection of these areas, Santa Cruz County may eventually see growing demand as developers opt for more flexible areas to build.

The County's long relationship with Mexico is likely to change as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) becomes more fully implemented. As Mexican trucks are allowed to transport goods further into the United States, the need for large warehousing operations along the border could diminish. However, it is unknown if NAFTA will bring with it a net increase or decrease in jobs to the County.

Growth Areas

Seven growth areas have been identified in the County. All of these areas are located west of the Santa Rita Mountains in recognition of the interest for limited to no growth in the east. The following is a brief description of each area, with Table 4 summarizing appropriate land uses for each.

Airport

The Nogales International Airport is located along SR 82, northeast of the City of Nogales. The Airport itself, and the land surrounding it, are ideal locations for industrial and commercial land uses. Any development occurring near the airport should be complimentary to long term expansion opportunities at the Airport, including restricting noise sensitive developments. Growth of industry at the Airport will continue to be limited by the lack of a major road linking SR 82 and I-19.

Amado

The Amado area has begun to develop on either side of I-19 with commercial and retail uses. Its proximity to Pima County may be a factor, in increasing demand for land in the area over time. The current zoning intensity and land uses should remain in this area.

I-19 Corridor (Rio Rico Drive to Nogales)

The I-19 corridor is a significant residential and commercial area for the County. Warehousing and other industrial and commercial activities occur along both sides of the highway with residential development beyond that. This growth area recognizes the desire of many businesses to be located along a highway to improve their accessibility and visibility.

Kino Springs Village Center

The Kino Springs Village Center is a 2,000 acre master planned development area. It will serve the growing residential and tourism activities there with commercial uses.

Rio Rico Drive East

The growing residential and tourism market in the Rio Rico area will continue to support an increasing amount of commercial development. Grocery stores, large retail and other smaller development are envisioned to be located along Rio Rico Drive, east of I-19.

Ruby Road

Ruby Road is relatively a mid-point between the populations of Nogales and Rio Rico. As growth continues to occur in Rio Rico at a faster rate than in Nogales, the geographic center of the population in the west County will continue to move northward. The area south of Ruby Road is situated to serve both of these population centers. Retail and other commercial activities, including a regional mall or large retail development, would be appropriate uses in this area.

Tubac

The Tubac core area is a tourist destination and also provides services for local residents. This area, located along the east side of I-19, is home to a resort and various retail and commercial businesses. Maintaining the identity of this area is critical, so any new development should respect the current activities. There should be no intensification of existing zoning, and new development should support the tourism core that already exists.

TABLE 4 – ACTIVITIES APPROPRIATE TO GROWTH AREAS

Growth Area	Types of Activities Appropriate for the Growth Area
Airport	Aviation serving activities Heavy and light industrial Office Campus
Amado	Neighborhood retail and services Campus commercial
I-19 Corridor (Rio Rico Drive to Nogales)	Warehousing Highway commercial Neighborhood retail and services Hotel, motel and tourism support activities Moderate and high-density residential
Kino Springs Village Center	Grocery store Hotel, motel and tourism support activities Neighborhood retail and services Moderate-density residential
Rio Rico Drive East	Large retail Grocery store Neighborhood retail and services Office Campus Hotel, motel and tourism support activities Destination entertainment and cultural activities Moderate and high-density residential
Ruby Road West	Large retail Regional mall Grocery store Office Campus Warehousing and industrial Destination entertainment and cultural activities Moderate and high-density residential
Tubac	Tourist, entertainment and service-oriented retail Neighborhood retail and services

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

GOAL 11: QUALITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS SUPPORTED AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES ARE PLENTIFUL.

Economic development and good employment opportunities are the engines that run the County. They must be encouraged as part of the overall fabric of land use decisions. It is not enough to just have jobs; we must strive to have good jobs that encourage young people to stay in the area and raise their families. Diverse economic development will result in a diversity of employment opportunities.

Objective 11.1 Guide economic development to appropriate locations within the County consistent with the Character Area Descriptions.

Policy 11.1.1 The County will strive to make Nogales International Airport economically viable and will encourage airport-related industry.

Policy 11.1.2 The County will encourage produce industry, light commercial and manufacturing industries in the 1-19 corridor from South Rio Rico to Nogales.

Policy 11.1.3 The County will encourage tourism-related businesses throughout the County.

Objective 11.2 Encourage diversification in employment opportunities and wage scales.

Policy 11.2.1 The County will pursue a diversity of development options for the Nogales International Airport business park.

Policy 11.2.2 The County will support local organizations that seek to bring in new employers that pay at a family wage scale at a minimum.

GOAL 13: THE COUNTY'S NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES CONTRIBUTE TO TOURISM.

Our greatest asset, aside from our citizens, is our cultural and natural resources. They can be used to best advantage economically by encouraging appropriate types of tourism. All communities are searching for "clean" industry that brings the benefit of prosperity without the cost of damaged or destroyed resources. The Plan recognizes that tourism should play a big role in realizing our vision.

Objective 13.1 Support tourism activities throughout the County.

Policy 13.1.1 The County will encourage tourist facility development along major and minor arterials that provide access to eco-tourist and other destinations.

Policy 13.1.2 The County will coordinate with and advise the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) regarding the need for signage, rest areas, pull-outs and scenic overlooks.

Policy 2.1.3 The County will improve public access to natural areas and historic sites and support the development of additional interpretive sites and facilities.

Objective 13.2 Acknowledge the scenic values of County maintained roads.

Policy 13.2.1 The County will work to establish and promote a scenic byways system for County roads.

Cost Of Development Element

Introduction

This element includes goals, objectives, and policies to assist the County in conserving its unique environment through open spaces, recreation opportunities and the mitigation of those impacts from development on air, water and natural resource quality that are unavoidable.

Past, Present, and Future Trends

Santa Cruz County has recently taken a new direction in how it plans for growth. During 2002, the County adopted its first Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), and committed to actively funding its CIP. Serious consideration has been given to adopting impact fees for development. These items, along with this Plan, will guide the County as it allocates its resources to pay for growth.

The County generally takes a conservative approach to its fiscal matters and has rarely used debt financing to fund its activities. Currently, the County has only one outstanding general obligation bond, which is for the construction of the County Complex. The implementation of development fees would help maintain this trend by bringing in revenue to pay for new infrastructure as new development is brought on line. The development fees would help pay for parks, transportation improvements, and for public safety improvements.

Goals, Objectives and Policies

GOAL 9: INFRASTRUCTURE IS AT A SCALE THAT CONTRIBUTES TO THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES AND THE COUNTY'S ECONOMY.

Infrastructure changes in the County will improve sustainability of our resources for future generations. Careful routing of utilities will reduce impacts on environmentally sensitive, scenic and developed areas in the County. Underground utilities best meet this goal.

Objective 9.1 Locate and scale public facilities and utilities appropriately to maximize efficiency and minimize adverse impacts to wildlife, views, natural areas and existing developments.

Policy 9.1.1 The County will scale and locate public service facilities in a manner appropriate to existing and planned development.

Policy 9.1.2 The County will locate wireless communications facilities with sensitivity to the visual qualities of the area.

Policy 9.1.3 The County will adopt an ordinance to require that all new utility lines, including power lines rated less than 115 kV, within new residential and commercial developments be placed underground.

Policy 9.1.4 The County will utilize existing underground utility easements before adding new easements

Objective 9.2 Build appropriate infrastructure to support the County’s growth.

Policy 9.2.1 The County will form an infrastructure advisory committee to review options for financing infrastructure development and maintenance including such options as community facilities districts, bonding, private sector financing, low-interest loans, improvement districts and property tax and sales tax increases.

Policy 9.2.2 The County will evaluate infrastructure capacity in relation to local needs on a regular basis.

Objective 9.3 Apply new technologies where possible.

Policy 9.3.1 The County will encourage solid waste recycling, reuse and reduction programs to prolong landfill life.

Policy 9.3.2 The County will encourage new developments to provide wastewater treatment facilities and discourage the use of conventional septic systems.

Policy 9.3.3 The County will adopt a wireless communications facility ordinance.

GOAL 12: LAND USE PLANNING AND DESIGN CONSIDERS THE POTENTIAL DANGERS FROM NATURAL AND HUMAN-CAUSED DISASTERS.

Land use planning has always been about public health and welfare. In this regard, where we choose to develop is critical. Land use decisions can literally be life or death decisions as has been witnessed with flood prone areas, seismic zones and development at the urban wildland interface.

Objective 12.1 Protect the public from natural and human disasters.

Policy 12.1.1 The County will continually update its Hazard Mitigation and Emergency Response and Recovery Plan.

Policy 12.1.2 The County will develop guidelines to protect the public at the urban wildland interface including encouraging fire resistant building and landscaping.

Policy 12.1.3 The County will continue to enforce the conditions of the Airport District Overlay zone in order to minimize risk to the public.

GOAL 14: THE COUNTY CONSIDERS THE COST OF GROWTH.

Cost of community services studies throughout the west have consistently shown that some types of land uses result in a net drain on government coffers. Sound public policy requires that land use decisions be based on factual data on the impact of new development on the County’s financial resources. Information regarding the costs of growth will inform policy decision makers and benefit the public.

Objective 14.1 Evaluate land use proposals based on the public cost of the development.

Policy 14.1.1 The County will develop a cost of growth model to assist in forecasting the public costs and revenues associated with planned levels of growth and development.

Objective 14.2 Evaluate capital improvement priorities based on the short-term and long- term impacts on the residents of the County.

Policy 14.2.1 The County will review and update the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) on an annual basis.

Objective 14.3 Plan public sector investment to take advantage of private sector activities.

Policy 14.3.1 The County will cultivate public-private partnerships to assist in infrastructure financing.

Objective 14.4 Maintain or improve the level of public services as the County grows.

Policy 14.4.1 The County will adopt development impact fees in order to offset the costs of growth.

Objective 14.5 Establish rates for development reviews and permits commensurate with the cost for those services.

Policy 14.5.1 The County will annually review and update as appropriate the development fee schedules.

Environmental/Open Space Element

Introduction

Public and private open space resources provide some of the most significant views, recreation opportunities, and wildlife habitat in the County. Maintaining the quality of the County's environment – its air and water quality, as well as the quality of other natural resources is also fundamental to residents and businesses whose lifestyles and economic activities depend on them.

This element identifies important open space and environmental resources within the County. It contains goals, objectives, and policies addressing the impact of development on the conservation of the County's air and water quality and other natural resources located within the County. This element also identifies future needs and methods to conserve, protect, and promote these areas and their connectivity to other important open spaces and natural resources regionally, nationally and internationally.

In accordance with the requirements of A.R.S. §11-824.F, the following subsection is hereby incorporated into the Plan: *In applying an open space element or a growth element of a comprehensive plan a county shall not designate private or state land as open space, recreation, conservation or agriculture unless the county receives the written consent of the landowner or provides an alternative, economically viable designation in the comprehensive plan or zoning ordinance, allowing at least one residential dwelling per acre. If the landowner is the prevailing party in any action brought to enforce this subsection, a court shall award fees and other expenses to the landowner.*

Landowners who perceive a discrepancy between this subsection and the Plan may file to resolve the discrepancy in accordance with the process described in Appendix IV.

Past, Present, and Future Trends

The vast majority of the County's open spaces and recreation areas are publicly owned, managed and located within the boundaries of the Coronado National Forest. Over 450,000 acres of land in Santa Cruz County is publicly owned and used for open space and public recreation. The Arizona State Land Trust owns an additional approximately 62,000 acres (portions of which are leased for grazing). In addition, the low development densities in central and eastern Santa Cruz County provide substantial private open spaces in which residents take special effort to conserve and support natural vegetation and wildlife movement patterns. The diversity and wealth of natural resources in the County have become the focus of a variety of national and local resource conservation and protection groups, including the Audubon Society of Arizona, the Nature Conservancy, the Sky Islands Alliance, the Wildlands Project and the Sonoran Institute.

Santa Cruz County supports a diversity of landforms and soil types, vegetation communities, and associated wildlife habitats. Three major soils categories have been defined based on their position in the landscape and provide a framework for description of the biotic characteristics within the County.⁵ The three broad categories are floodplains, uplands, and mountains. Each of these areas is described in detail below with regard to past and present conditions, as well as anticipated future trends.

Goals, Objectives and Policies

GOAL 2: OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL TERRAIN REMAIN DOMINANT FEATURES OF THE LANDSCAPE AND VIEWSHEDS ARE PROTECTED.

One of the most outstanding features of Santa Cruz County is its unspoiled vistas and “big country” feel. Natural landscape dominates even in the more urbanized areas. There is a sense that one can go forever across the terrain and not see another footprint. Preserving this feature is critical.

Objective 2.1 Facilitate the use of Transfer of Development Rights, Conservation Easements and other methods for preserving open space.

Policy 2.1.1 The County will develop and adopt an Open Space component for its subdivision and development plan regulations that will establish open space requirements and encourage connectivity of open spaces with recreation areas, wildlife corridors, trails and scenic routes.

Policy 2.1.2 The County will consider acquiring land to preserve areas of natural and visual significance for open space preservation and wildlife corridors.

Objective 2.2 Encourage voluntary conservation of land for open spaces in order to retain the natural characteristics of the County.

Policy 2.2.1 The County will encourage and support the National Park Service, the Coronado National Forest, Arizona State Parks, the Nature Conservancy and other similar organizations to seek gifts or acquisition of private lands and conservation easements.

Policy 2.2.2 The County will develop and adopt additional density bonus provisions for conservation of open space associated with development.

Objective 2.3 Require that new construction and development reduce adverse impacts upon the environment and between potentially incompatible land uses by use of natural landscape preservation, site re-vegetation and buffering.

Policy 2.3.1 The County will annually review and, as necessary, revise the landscape and approved plant codes, which will then be provided to each commercial and residential development plan applicant.

Policy 2.3.2 The County will require and review a landscape plan for each new development as applicable per code.

GOAL 6: LAND USES WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROTECTION OF NATIONAL AND STATE PARKS, CONSERVATION AREAS, PRESERVES AND OTHER SPECIAL NATURAL RESOURCE AREAS.

Santa Cruz County is blessed with more than 450,000 acres of national forest, park and conservation areas, state parks and natural areas, scenic roads and private preserves. By assuming a stewardship role in protecting these invaluable resources, the County will be actively working to preserve our quality of life.

Objective 6.1 Coordinate international, federal, state, and local recreation and resource plans with County plans and policies.

Policy 6.1.1 The County will integrate its planning actions with international, federal, state and local land management agencies for developments that may impact lands they administer.

Policy 6.1.2 The County will revise this Plan to protect these areas as changes occur in the County.

Objective 6.2 Assist in implementing approved federal and state management plans.⁶

Policy 6.2.1 The County will confer with the appropriate management agencies and other partners on developments that may have an impact on the purpose and implementation of these management plans.

Policy 6.2.2 The County will assist management agencies and other partners to obtain, through easements, dedications and other means, corridor view protections, trail easements, access and other resource considerations.

Policy 6.2.3 The County will require, as part of the rezoning process and development plan approvals, identification of and provisions for established trails and other classified land resources as appropriate.

Policy 6.2.4 The County will encourage the maintenance and improvement of support services and facilities that further the goals of these plans.

Objective 6.3 Assist federal and state agencies in developing and implementing new management plans.⁷

Policy 6.3.1 The County will participate in new planning efforts with federal and state agencies.

Policy 6.3.2 The County will closely monitor land uses in areas in proximity to new parks and other special status areas prior to adoption of management plans to mitigate adverse impacts before protections can be implemented.

GOAL 7: WILDLIFE HABITAT AND WILDLIFE MOVEMENT CORRIDORS ARE RECOGNIZED AND PRESERVED THROUGH THE USE OF ESTABLISHED AND INNOVATIVE LAND USE MANAGEMENT TOOLS.

Protected wildlife habitat and movement corridors are essential to preserving wildlife populations. Thoughtless encroachment by development can undermine both reproduction and recruitment of wildlife populations. Protective measures to preserve habitat will assist at-risk wildlife populations and ensure other populations do not decline.

Objective 7.1 Encourage development patterns that safeguard habitat resources and natural movement of native wildlife while accommodating growth.

Policy 7.1.1 The County will develop and implement a wildlife habitat and corridor plan and ordinance to protect those resources from development.

Policy 7.1.2 The County will work to preserve natural vegetation in buffer areas adjacent to the 100-year floodplains of the Santa Cruz River and Sonoita Creek except for limited purposes such as trail extensions and for wildfire protection.

Policy 7.1.3 The County will investigate options for the construction of wildlife crossings, such as oversized culverts along major drainages, fund and install on designated County roads and they shall coordinate with ADOT for their installation along state roads.

Policy 7.1.4 The County, when approving developments, will ensure that structures or man-made objects will not form barriers to wildlife movement.

Policy 7.1.5 The County will confirm that appropriate State and federal permits have been obtained for new subdivisions and development plans.

Objective 7.2 Protect pronghorn fawning areas and habitat.

Policy 7.2.1 The County will consult with the Arizona Game and Fish Department on developments that may impact fawning areas and habitat and will require implementation of mitigation strategies.

Objective 7.3 Identify and preserve ecologically significant areas within the County.

Policy 7.3.1 The County will seek to develop an inventory of ecologically significant areas and shall work together with conservation organizations, private individuals, landowners and other entities to protect and conserve them.

Policy 7.3.2 The County will develop regulations that require a survey and, if appropriate, a Mitigation Plan that meets federal, state and county requirements for protecting rare, endangered, threatened or listed species before approval of any subdivision or development plan.

GOAL 8: THE SANTA CRUZ RIVER AND ITS WATERSHED ARE CONSERVED AND MANAGED AS “LIVING RIVER” ECOSYSTEMS.

The Santa Cruz River and its tributaries form a unique riparian eco-system that supports native deciduous riparian vegetation typified by cottonwood gallery forests that also include alder, sycamore, and willow. This “Living River” supports high numbers of bird species, making it attractive as an eco-tourism destination. The river, its tributaries and its watershed are at risk unless strong protective measures are implemented and rigorously enforced.

Objective 8.1 Maintain the integrity of waterway corridors.

Policy 8.1.1 The County will encourage the establishment of conservation easements in riparian zones and associated floodplain and buffer areas.

Policy 8.1.2 The County will continue to require retention/detention measures throughout the watershed to minimize the negative impacts of increased runoff and erosion and to increase recharge.

Policy 8.1.3 The County will encourage existing development implement measures to mitigate the impacts of excessive surface water runoff.

Objective 8.2 Ensure that development adjacent to the Santa Cruz River and its tributaries is compatible with and supports its function as a “living river” system.

Policy 8.2.1 The County will adopt measures to protect the largest natural cottonwood willow forest in the country.

GOAL 10: OPPORTUNITIES EXIST FOR EASY ACCESS TO TRADITIONAL AND NON-TRADITIONAL ENERGY SOURCES.

New technologies challenge jurisdictions to minimize reliance on traditional and diminishing energy sources. Ideal climatic conditions in the County provide the opportunity for solar alternatives and wind power generation.

Objective 10.1 Encourage the use of alternative energy sources including active and passive solar power.

Policy 10.1.1 The County will develop and implement a voluntary Green Building Program.

Objective 10.2 Encourage energy efficient building practices.

Policy 10.2.2 The County will continue to set the example for responsible energy use by beginning a program of energy use reduction for all of its public facilities through coordination with the Arizona Department of Commerce Solar Energy Advisory Council.

Policy 10.2.3 The County will codify single family solar water heating requirements per A.R.S. §11-861.01.

GOAL 15: RESIDENTS AND VISITORS ARE AFFORDED A RANGE OF RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.

Recreation and parkland are always key criteria in rating “best places to live”. The quality of life will be enhanced and enriched by the convenient availability of a variety of recreation and leisure opportunities ranging from the dispersed recreational opportunities afforded on our public lands to organized sports facilities.

Objective 15.1 Provide quality recreation opportunities for all youth and adults throughout the County.

Policy 15.1.1 The County will establish regular evaluations of its recreational facilities for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and will provide for incremental funding to achieve compliance.

Policy 15.1.2 The County will track utilization rates and measure user satisfaction for County parks and recreational facilities.

Policy 15.1.3 The County will work with school districts, sports leagues and other organizations to organize and offer, at minimal cost, team sport opportunities to County residents.

Policy 15.1.4 The County will develop and adopt a new, expanded recreation components to its subdivision and development plan regulations specifying recreational acreage requirements and outdoor play facilities for residential subdivisions.

Objective 15.2 Limit off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreational opportunities to appropriate locations.

Policy 15.2.1 The County will develop and adopt an ordinance restricting the use of OHVs to designated locations in order to eliminate OHV impacts on culturally or environmentally sensitive areas, such as the Anza Trail.

Policy 15.2.2 The County will work with the Coronado National Forest, BLM and the State to codify OHV prohibitions.

Objective 15.3 Ensure non-motorized multi-modal access to recreational and cultural areas throughout the County.

Policy 15.3.1 The County will develop and adopt a countywide non-motorized trail plan linking federal, state and County recreational and cultural facilities and sites.

Policy 15.3.2 The County will work with stakeholders to assist in completing construction of the Santa Cruz sections of the Anza National Historic Trail and the Arizona Trail.

GOAL 16: NATIVE PLANT SPECIES THRIVE FREE FROM HABITAT ENCROACHMENT BY NON-NATIVE PLANT SPECIES.

The riparian, high desert and mountain plant communities are resources worth protecting through appropriate regulations. Many non-native plants are especially invasive and may crowd out native species. Balanced use of regulatory authority and education to encourage voluntary use of native plants in landscaping help achieve this goal.

Objective 16.1 Encourage the use of native plants and drought tolerant plants in all new development.

Policy 16.1.1 The County will strengthen its landscape requirements for development plans to encourage the use of drought tolerant native plant materials.

Policy 16.1.2 The County, in conjunction with other organizations, will maintain native, recommended and prohibited plant lists and develop a public awareness and education program to encourage the use of these plants.

Policy 16.1.3 The County will evaluate its public facility landscaping and schedule the necessary plant conversions.

Circulation Element

Introduction

This element ties together land use and transportation planning to pro-actively ensure that as Santa Cruz County develops, vital transportation and circulation infrastructure needed to enhance the County will develop to support easy access to jobs, schools, and recreation areas as well as to facilitate regional travel. Historically, the road system has grown in response to development rather than through advanced planning efforts for future overall system needs. This element will identify existing deficiencies and lay out groundwork to provide safe and efficient circulation for both persons and commerce throughout the County. This element is in conformance with A.R.S. § 11-821 (C) 2.

The existing transportation facilities in Santa Cruz County are generally adequate to support the present circulation throughout the County. However, as population increases, these facilities need to be improved to ensure safe and free flowing traffic circulation

Past, Present, and Future Trends

Slightly over 40% of all Santa Cruz workers traveled more than twenty minutes to work (as compared to 54% of all people traveling to work Statewide). As development continues in the County, and increases in traffic with it, travel times may increase.

Roadways

Interstate 19 runs generally north/south through the County and connects Nogales and Mexico with Tucson at Interstate 10. It is the only Principal Arterial roadway in Santa Cruz County and is under the jurisdiction of the Arizona Department of Transportation.

State Routes 82 and 83 are considered by ADOT to be major collectors. SR 82 runs generally southwest to northeast from Nogales and Mexico to Sonoita and into Cochise County. SR 83 traverses the northeast corner of the County from the Parker Canyon area through Sonoita and into Pima County.

NAFTA

Interstate 19 and State Routes 82 and 83 have been affected by increases in the volume of international truck and tourist traffic that have occurred with the passage of the North American Free Trade Act (NAFTA). These increases are projected to continue. In addition, the increases in border crossings have created a bottleneck situation at the Mariposa port of entry.

Portions of SR 82 and SR 83 are designated as scenic roads and pass through unique natural resources and rural residential communities and play an important role in the County's tourist economy. Increases in their use by NAFTA-related truck traffic create unique impacts. Designation of I-19 as the main hazardous materials route through the County could reduce some of the truck traffic on this route and contribute to sustaining SR 82 and SR 83 as rural collectors.

Non-English speaking drivers have also increased with NAFTA. To increase the safety and convenience of this class of drivers, international symbol signs should be installed along I-19 and SR 82 and SR 83.

Bicycle Routes

No designated bicycle routes exist within Santa Cruz County. Pedestrian and bicycle routes have been proposed along the State Routes 82 and 83 corridor. As the County continues to improve its transportation facilities, bicycle routes could be considered on minor arterial and major collector roads.

Scenic Highways Designations

Portions of State Routes 82 and 83 are designated as scenic roads. Other routes within Santa Cruz County that have been proposed as candidates designated as scenic roads are Ruby Road, the I-19 frontage roads at Tubac, and the Anza Highway to Arivaca.

Impacts of Growth and Development

The I-19 corridor from Nogales to Rio Rico is the highest traffic growth area in the County. The traffic increases in this area is due to residential and industrial and commercial development. It is crucial that Santa Cruz County have approved development standards in place to address this growth and the resulting impacts to circulation. An example of the steps already being taken to address new development is the use of traffic impact analyses to determine impacts and the required level of improvement.

Large tracts of undeveloped platted subdivision lots presently exist in Rio Rico. As these develop and build out, the County needs to require the planning and construction of major and minor collector roads to ensure the circulation system can adequately maintain a high level of service. The County has been pro-active in this area by designating several roadways in the area as collectors although most are not yet constructed to that standard (see roadway sections under *Roadway Improvements* below). By including these in this plan, developers will know the standards necessary for development. In addition to those already identified, upgrades should also be made to collector status for connections from residential streets to I-19 and/or the state highways as applicable.

To reduce the impacts from the developing areas on traffic flow on I-19, limited access should be maintained. This can be facilitated with improvement to and increased use of the frontage roads and ensuring connectivity to established interchanges.

Presently, there are several instances of low water crossings on main County roads. As these roads are improved, all weather crossings should be incorporated into the design. This will not only improve circulation but will greatly aid in the safety of the public by ensuring these roads will be traversable at all times by emergency vehicles.

Another existing circulation problem is located at railroad crossings. In many places there are rail grade problems that create slowing and congestion at the crossings. As these roads are improved, the grade at crossings should be designed so that the alignment is smooth and causes minimal delay and disruption of traffic flow.

Roadway maintenance is an important aspect of good transportation planning. Historically, because of budget constraints, the County's approach to maintenance has been mainly reactive and performed on an as needed basis. The County has now begun working to implement a pavement management program which will aid in identifying roadway maintenance priorities based on true need with time to program scheduled maintenance into the budget process.

Transit

Because of the increase in commercial and industrial land uses occurring within the Rio Rico/Nogales corridor, the County should encourage establishment of transit bus service in this area. This service would be used for transport of workers from the growing residential areas to the commercial/industrial work centers and employment areas. Once this has been successfully implemented, the service could be expanded to accommodate tourists and other travelers to additional areas within the County to experience the scenic routes and tourist attractions such as Tubac.

Air Service

The Nogales International Airport does not currently provide commuter flights. Establishment of commercial commuter airline would enhance economic possibilities for Santa Cruz County by potentially importing tourists from Phoenix, Tucson and Mexico. This service could also open up opportunities for County residents and business owners to live in the County and commute to other areas to conduct business.

Street Class Definitions

The classifications listed here correspond to those detailed in the Santa Cruz County Roadway Design Manual:

Rural System:

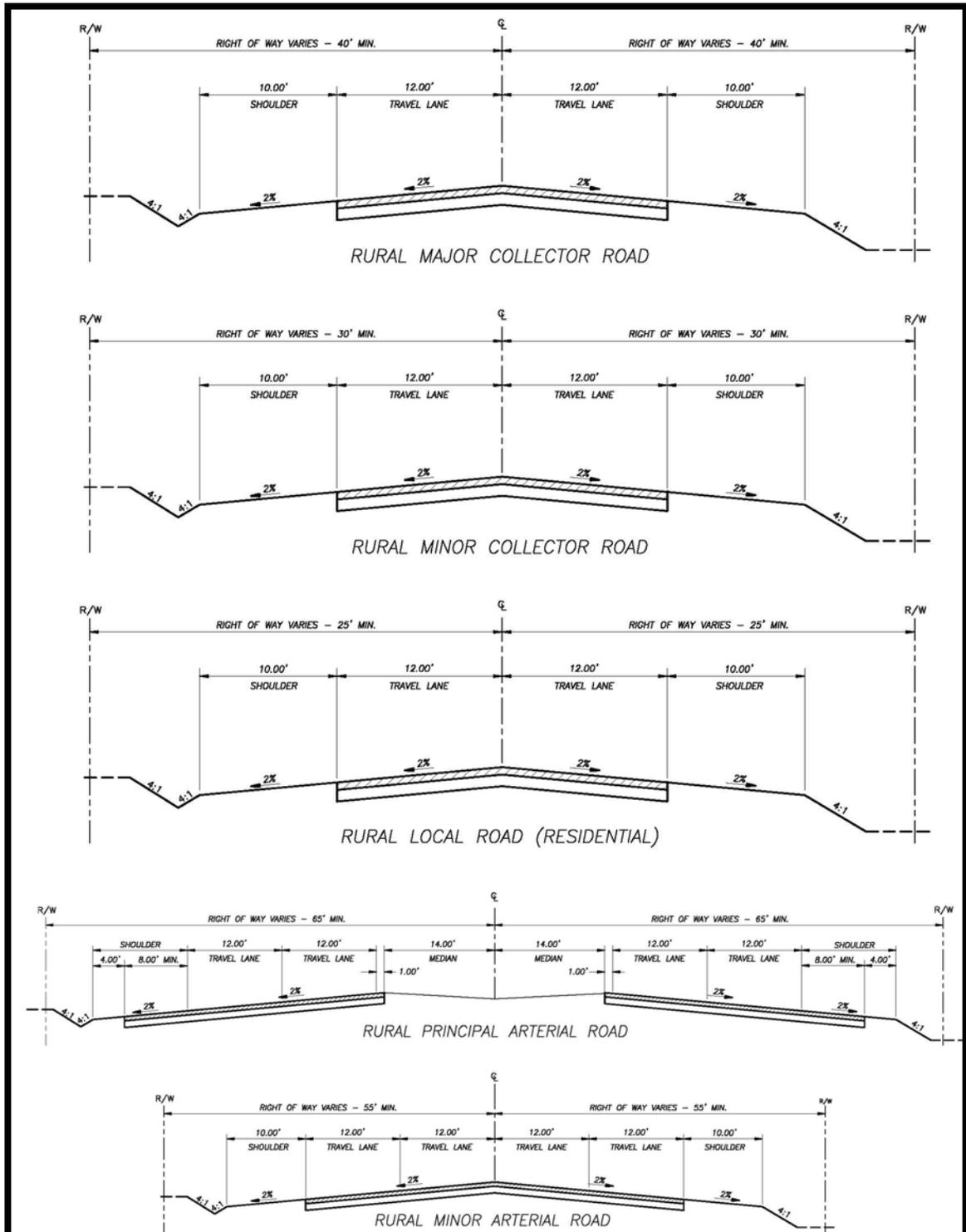
- Principal Arterial Road: four (4) thru lanes, 2-way divided roadway Average Daily Trips (ADT) range 10,000-40,000, minimum right of way 130'
- Minor Arterial Road: four (4) thru lanes, 2-way ADT range 6,000-36,000, minimum right of way 110'
- Major Collector Road: two (2) thru lanes, 2-way ADT range 1,000-8,000, minimum right of way 80'
- Minor Collector Road: two (2) thru lanes, 2-way ADT range 800-6,000, minimum right of way 60'
- Local Road (Residential): two (2) thru lanes, 2-way ADT range 50-1,000, minimum right of way 50'

Urban System:

- Principal Arterial Road: six (6) thru lanes, 2-way divided roadway ADT range 18,000-45,000, minimum right of way 130'
- Minor Arterial Road: four (4) thru lanes, 2-way ADT range 6,000-22,000, minimum right of way 110'
- Major Collector Road: two (2) thru lanes, 2-way ADT range 600-7,000, minimum right of way 80'
- Minor Collector Road: two (2) thru lanes, 2-way ADT range 500-5,000, minimum right of way 60'
- Local Road (Residential): two (2) thru lanes, 2-way ADT range 50-700, minimum right of way 50'
- Frontage Road: a road generally parallel to and adjoining arterial streets
- Parkways: may be any of the above roads intensively landscaped or in a park-like area
- Cul-de-sac: a road with only one outlet and a turnaround at one end with 50' radius right of way, no more than 660 feet in length and serving 20 or less lots
- Alley: a secondary point of access to property and which serves primarily as a way for utilities and sanitary services

Roadway Improvements

The desired future roadway sections by functional classification appear below. Figure 8 in Appendix V shows the currently planned roadway transportation improvements over the next ten years.



Goals, Objectives and Policies

GOAL 18: AN EFFICIENT AND ATTRACTIVE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM IS DEVELOPED AND MAINTAINED THAT SUPPORTS THE ECONOMY AND MEETS THE TRANSPORTATION NEEDS OF COUNTY RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.

For better or worse, we are a society of the automobile. In addition, we are a border County with one of the busiest ports of entry in the nation. A good, intermodal transportation system not only contributes to a robust economy, it reduces traffic miles, fossil fuel consumption and air pollution. Land use decisions and transportation issues are inextricably connected and must be considered holistically and with a liberal time horizon for planning and implementation.

Objective 18.1 Develop and maintain an efficient County-wide road transportation system.

Policy 18.1.1 The County will encourage mixed-use development in appropriate places in order to reduce the need for new roadways and roadway expansions, reduce travel miles and protect the quality of our air.

Policy 18.1.2 The County will coordinate with city, state, national and international agencies to ensure that traffic flows freely between Mexico and the County.

Policy 18.1.3 The County will require efficient traffic circulation in all new developments.

Policy 18.1.4 The County will establish criteria for prioritizing and budgeting for road improvement projects.

Policy 1.1.5 The County will support public transit options in heavy-use corridors.

Objective 18.2 Enhance the public safety on our road transportation system.

Policy 18.2.1 The County will develop road network use plans for the routing of emergency vehicles for medical, fire, animal rescue, and hazardous materials incidents and to assist neighboring areas, including Mexico.

Policy 18.2.2 The County will recommend that Interstate 19 or the future I-19 connector be designated as the main Hazardous Materials Route for the County.

Policy 18.2.3 The County will participate in local and regional efforts to eliminate conflicts and safety hazards between surface transportation uses and the railroad.

Policy 18.2.4 The County will ensure if practical that all-weather access exists throughout the County.

Policy 18.2.5 The County will work to reduce the potential for accidents between commercial trucks, passenger vehicles, pedestrians, pets and wildlife.

Objective 18.3 Provide infrastructure facilities for alternative modes of transportation.

Policy 18.3.1 The County will develop a County-wide bicycle plan that ensures facilities exist for bicycles and pedestrians along major and minor arterials, major collectors and other appropriate corridors.

Policy 18.3.2 The County will require bicycle and pedestrian circulation plans as part of rezoning requests and Development Plan submittals as appropriate.

Objective 18.4 Preserve the exceptional scenic vistas along designated roadways.

Policy 18.4.1 The County will develop transportation facilities in keeping with the Character Areas identified in this Plan.

Policy 18.4.2 The County will cooperate with individuals and organizations seeking to obtain Arizona Scenic Road designations from the State.

Policy 18.4.3 The County will enforce protection measures when roadway improvements and other development is planned or implemented along scenic corridors.

Policy 18.4.4 The County will encourage an expanded Adopt-A-Road program.

Water Resources Element

Introduction

Sufficient water supplies, along with effective and efficient water management and conservation programs, are crucial for all communities. To assist in long-term water planning, A.R.S. allows for an optional Water Resources element to be included in the County Comprehensive Plan. This element is not required for counties under 125,000 in population but was included in this Plan due to the critical importance of water in relation to growth potential in Santa Cruz County. The Water Resource element summarizes currently available water supplies, current and future water demands and the general impacts of future growth on water availability. This element does not include new independent hydrogeologic studies. It does include recommendations for water management and conservation.

Past, Present, and Future Trends

The existing condition of water resources (e.g., rivers, streams, wetlands, etc.) provide base line data used to determine if future population growth will exceed water availability for the unincorporated County area and what regulations apply to manage that growth. The Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) under two major programs regulates water resources in Santa Cruz County. The first and most complete authority, the Assured Water Supply Program was granted to ADWR in 1994 by creation of the Santa Cruz County Active Management Area (SCAMA). Maintaining a safe-yield condition and preventing long-term declines in local water tables are the management goals of the SCAMA (A.R.S. §45-562(c)). The geographic area of the SCAMA is about 716 square miles in the Upper Santa Cruz Valley River Basin. It is concentrated around a 45-mile long reach of the Santa Cruz River extending from the Mexican border to a few miles north of the Santa Cruz County/Pima County border. Detailed information regarding water resource conditions, water use characteristics, regulatory programs, future conditions and recommendations regarding future water management strategies are contained in “The Third Management Plan for the Santa Cruz Active Management Area” adopted on December 13, 1999. Any future residential subdivision development within this region must occur under the SCAMA regulations and, therefore, it is an important planning issue.

For the remainder of the County outside of the SCAMA, ADWR authority is primarily focused through the Water Adequacy Program, described in A.R.S. §45-108. This program requires developers to obtain a determination from the state regarding the availability of water supplies prior to marketing lots. For new subdivisions outside of the SCAMA, a determination of water adequacy by ADWR is required before the County can approve a plat. This can often be a determination that there is not adequate water for the development, but such a ruling does not preclude lot sales.

Groundwater

Water consumption, both domestic and commercial, within Santa Cruz County consists solely of groundwater extraction. The Santa Cruz River basin is the largest groundwater recharge facility for areas west of Patagonia Lake and feeds such populated areas as Nogales, Rio Rico, and Tubac. The O'Donnell Canyon and Sonoita and Turkey Creek basins are used by the populated regions of Sonoita and Elgin. The Patagonia region is served solely by the Sonoita Creek basin.

The Santa Cruz River basin has an average annual groundwater production range of 51,500 to 55,300 acre-feet. This range was concluded by a study performed in 1997 by ADWR. The largest demand for groundwater in this region is riparian with an estimated annual

consumption of 25,800 acre-feet. Other additional demands consist of municipal, agricultural and industrial. This region is regulated through the SCAMA management plan, as administered by ADWR, which requires the development of legislative and policy guidelines and educational programs relating to water resource use and conservation.

Municipal water demand within the Santa Cruz River basin, is provided mainly by four large providers: City of Nogales, Rio Rico Utilities, Valle Verde Water Company and Arizona American Water Company (formerly Citizens Utilities). Total water demand by these providers is approximately 7,043 acre-feet based on 1997 data. Smaller providers account for an additional demand of 400 acre-feet.

Industrial water demand is met by individual user wells and permitted annual volumetric allotments based on industrial classification and use. The Santa Cruz AMA requires additional conservation practices above general conservation requirements. These additionally regulated uses are:

- Turf-related Facilities (≥ 10 acres)
- Sand and Gravel Facilities (> 100 acre-feet per year)
- New Large Landscape Users (10,000 square feet)
- New Large Industrial Users (> 100 acre-feet per year)

Industrial water demand fluctuates depending mostly on weather conditions. During 1997 industrial water demand was estimated at approximately 1,300 acre-feet.

Riparian uses currently make up the largest sector of demand. This demand consists of water consumed by dense vegetative tracts along the Santa Cruz River's effluent-dominated perennial reaches. Such tracts have increased in size overall from 6,200 acres in 1954 to 8,600 acres in 1995 based on preliminary estimates.

Agricultural demand within the SCAMA consists largely of irrigated croplands provided through Certificates of Irrigation Grandfathered Rights (IGFR) issued to farmers in the early 1980's. The estimated demand during 1997 for IGFR was approximately 12,500 acre-feet, the second largest water demand sector after riparian use.

The Sonoita and Elgin area domestic water is supplied largely by shared-use and individual user wells. The Patagonia area industrial and most municipal water demand is provided by the Town of Patagonia. Estimates of agricultural and riparian water demand cannot be established for these regions due to insufficient data, however agricultural demands are provided solely by individual user wells.

Reclaimed Water

Currently, no direct reuse of wastewater treatment plant effluent has occurred to any significant degree.

Effluent from the Nogales International Wastewater Treatment Plant (NIWTP), which serves the City, a portion of the most densely populated areas of Rio Rico, Peña Blanca Highlands and part of Kino Springs (Estancia Yerba Buena), is a major source of supply contributing to the maintenance of water levels downstream of the plant.

A community wastewater treatment facility is located in the in Patagonia and the Tubac Golf Resort (TGR) and Barrio de Tubac developments both have centralized wastewater systems and utilize wetlands for treatment. TGR reuses some of its effluent to irrigate the golf course. All other unincorporated regions are served via onsite systems (e.g., septic systems).

Other Supplies

The other known water supplies are allocations of the Central Arizona Project (CAP) water to Rio Rico and the City of Nogales. However, the cost of delivery facilities is prohibitive at this time and for the foreseeable future. Those allocations have historically been transferred to the City of Scottsdale.

The City of Nogales may use up to 4,200 acre-feet of surface water from Patagonia Lake, although only for emergency use. Again, due to the anticipated cost to delivery this water, the City does not use this source.

Peña Blanca Lake is not a viable source given recent contamination issues and the fact that the United States Forest Service and the Arizona Game and Fish Department own surface water rights.

Currently within the SCAMA it is estimated by ADWR that Municipal, Agricultural and Industrial demand for water is about 18,800 acre-feet annually. Using a population estimate of 30,000 living within the SCAMA yields a consumption rate of approximately 0.63 acre-feet per year per person. Current inflow to the SCAMA is estimated by ADWR to be between 39,600 and 142,900 acre-feet per year. Utilizing a conservative inflow rate of 45,000 acre-feet per year and a consumption rate of 0.63 acre-feet per year results in a population estimate of approximately 71,000 persons in the SCAMA before safe-yield is jeopardized.

There is less data available for review outside of the SCAMA. In "A Comprehensive Plan for Northeast Santa Cruz County" (CPNSCC) (2002, Sonoita Crossroads Community Forum), a summary of certain available hydrogeologic reports was accomplished to evaluate water supply. The summary concluded that a multi-agency groundwater study should be completed in order to more accurately determine future availability of water supply. Based on review of the CPNSCC and other limited information it is believed that sufficient water supply exists for near-term needs outside of the SCAMA. Adoption of the land use recommendations contained within this Comprehensive Plan and implementation of water resources policies in conjunction with conducting a detailed water resources evaluation for the area outside of the SCAMA will ensure adequate water supply for the Comprehensive Plan 10-year window.

Goals, Objectives and Policies

GOAL 17: OUR AIR AND WATER ARE CLEAN AND MEET OR EXCEED ALL NATIONAL STANDARDS.

With the advent of the Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act and Safe Drinking Water Act years ago, State and federal agencies were given the tools to begin to clean up our air and water. However, our location adjacent to areas outside County jurisdiction makes achieving national air and water quality standards difficult. Appropriate land use decisions and sound development standards are important to ensure that the PM₁₀ and aquifer and surface water quality standards exceedances that exist are not aggravated. Close cooperation with State, federal and international agencies will also move the County toward meeting this goal.

Objective 17.1 Prevent the expansion of the Nogales Non-attainment Area (NNA).

Policy 17.1.1 The County will develop ordinances requiring the use of appropriate dust control methods for clearing land for new development, roads, and other projects.

Policy 17.1.2 The County will develop a mitigation plan that addresses dust pollution.

Objective 17.2 Encourage proper treatment and disposal of wastewater

Policy 17.2.1 The County will restrict conventional septic systems in accordance with State law and regulation.

Policy 1.2.2 The County will provide information to communities on methods to fund sewer systems (sanitary and improvement districts, Water Infrastructure Finance Authority, USDA Rural Development Agency, etc.)

Objective 17.3 Reduce stormwater runoff pollution.

Policy 17.3.1 The County will ensure that new developments comply with the Arizona Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permitting requirements.

GOAL 19: WATER SUPPLIES ARE PROTECTED AND CONSERVED.

Water availability is key to our future. Because the County is susceptible to droughts, conservation and management of water are of major importance. In its review of new development as it applies land use regulations under its jurisdiction, the County can complement existing state and federal water management regulations administered by the Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) and other authorities, both inside the Santa Cruz Active Management Area (SCAMA) and outside of the SCAMA. Within the SCAMA, the Santa Cruz River constitutes a renewable and variable source in addition to other water supplies. Outside the SCAMA, this source is unavailable and certain parts of the County are believed to be more vulnerable to drought and other challenges for reconciling water supply with increased demand.

Objective 19.1 Review and encourage that conservation measures, reuse alternatives and drought management practices be planned and implemented for all new land developments.

Policy 19.1.1 The County will adopt the Wellhead Protection Program.

Policy 19.1.2 The County will encourage and facilitate gray water reuse.

Policy 19.1.3 The County in coordination with ADWR will assess the water demand that will result from the proposed new development added to the existing uses and how this will be served by the identified water supplies.

Objective 19.2 Encourage planned residential subdivision development to reduce wildcat subdivisions that involve lot splitting and proliferation of exempt wells.

Policy 19.2.1 The County will consider alternatives to denial of a rezoning application, when adverse water consequences may result.

Policy 19.2.2 The County will work in association with other counties to develop legislation designed to inhibit the growth of wildcat subdivisions by providing reasonable and attainable alternatives for land development.

Objective 19.3 Outside the SCAMA, develop watershed management plans that are consistent with existing state law.

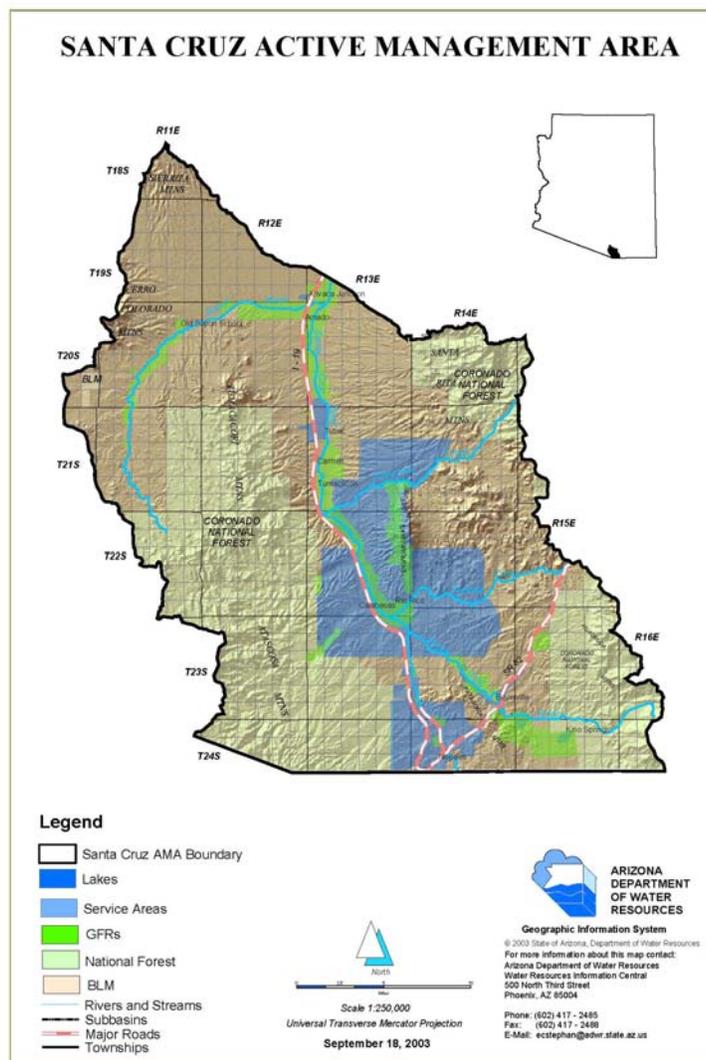
Policy 19.3.1 The County will encourage the formation of Rural Watershed Associations that would work with ADWR to implement programs of water conservation and voluntary management of water resources.

Objective 19.4 Outside the SCAMA, ensure that residential developers are in compliance with ADWR's Water Adequacy Program.

Policy 19.4.1 The County will require evidence of compliance with the Water Adequacy Program prior to final plat approval.

Objective 19.5 In concert with ADWR, scrutinize commercial and industrial development in view of available water resources to be supplied by an Industrial Use Permit, and encourage conservation, reuse and recharge of such water resources.

Policy 19.5.1 The County will require applicants for new commercial and industrial land uses that are to be supplied through an Industrial Use Permit to demonstrate, as a condition of approval, that ADWR has approved the requested water use as consistent with the management goals of the SCAMA.



Santa Cruz Active Management Area

End Notes

¹ A.R.S. §11-821 (A).

² Volunteer Citizen Area Teams are identified individually on the “Acknowledgements” page at the beginning of this document.

³ *ibid.*

⁴ Nothing in this Plan shall be construed to supercede or interfere with the constitutional requirements of the Arizona State Land Department as regards the disposition of State Trust Lands.

⁵ Richardson, M.L. 1971. General Soil Map: Santa Cruz County, Arizona. U.S.D.A. Soil Conservation Service and Pima Soil Conservation District.

⁶ Including, but not limited to, Las Cienegas National Conservation Area, Patagonia-Sonoita Scenic Road, Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail and National Highway, Arizona Trail, Coronado National Forest, Mount Wrightson & Pajarita Wildernesses, Lake Patagonia State Park, Presidio de Tubac State Park, San Rafael State Park

⁷ Including, but not limited to, the Sonoita Creek State Park