



## PLAN ELEMENTS

The Rio Verde Foothills Area Plan establishes comprehensive goals, objectives, and policies that are derived from input obtained from community workshops, stakeholder meetings, surveys, telephone conversations, letters, and electronic mail. The goals, objectives, and policies help support and implement *Eye to the Future 2020*, the Maricopa County Comprehensive Plan.

Using the Comprehensive Plan's format, the area plan elements are organized within eight subject areas.

- ◆ Land Use
- ◆ Transportation
- ◆ Environment/Environmental Effects
- ◆ Economic Development
- ◆ Growth Areas
- ◆ Open Space
- ◆ Water Resources
- ◆ Cost of Development

Several general definitions are included to help explain their purpose:

*Goal:* A concise statement describing a condition to be achieved. It does not suggest specific actions, but describes a desired outcome.

*Objective:* An achievable step towards a goal. Progress towards an objective can be measured and is generally time dependent.

*Policy:* A specific statement to guide public and private decision-making. It is derived from the goals and objectives of the plan.

The goals, objectives, and policies are the action components of this area plan. Therefore, determination of land use on any specific parcel must be in conformance with the goals, objectives, and policies contained in this plan.

### Goals, Objectives, and Policies

The following goals, objectives, and policies are designed to achieve specific outcomes in the Rio Verde Foothills Area Plan.



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### Land Use

#### Goal L1:

*Promote efficient land development that is compatible with adjacent land uses, is well integrated with the transportation system, and is sensitive to the natural environment.*

**Objective L1.1:** Encourage orderly, efficient, and functional development patterns.

Policy L1.1.1: Encourage continued densities no greater than one dwelling unit per acre; minimum lot size is one acre; clustered development is discouraged.

Policy L1.1.2: Encourage federal, state, and local agency cooperation and coordination for area planning efforts.

Policy L1.1.3 Encourage county inter-agency cooperation and coordination for area planning efforts.

**Objective L1.2:** Promote high quality residential development that is sensitive to the natural environment and compatible with adjacent land uses.

Policy L1.2.1: Encourage developers to cooperate and communicate with residents and local associations during the development review process. In addition, encourage subdivision developers to notify potential homebuyers that the new development is adjacent to a growing equestrian community.

Policy L1.2.2: Besides normal site plan review, development proposals along major streets and adjacent to existing and approved land uses will be reviewed to determine compatibility with those uses.

Policy L1.2.3: Support enforcement of existing real estate disclosure requirements for status of public services, flooding and drainage hazards, roads and access, and other information when parcel splitting and sales occur.

Policy L1.2.4: Encourage property owners to contact Maricopa County Environmental Services Department to obtain septic system requirements prior to land division.

Policy L1.2.5: Encourage property owners to contact the Maricopa County Planning and Development Department for drainage requirements prior to land division.



**Objective L1.3:** Allow high quality special use permits that are consistent with adjacent land uses.

Policy L1.3.1: Allow land uses that are compatible with the rural residential and equestrian character of the Rio Verde Foothills planning area and that are sensitive to the natural environment.

Policy L1.3.2: Encourage adequate buffers between land uses to protect adjacent or affected residents from potentially incompatible uses.

Policy L1.3.3: Consider existing transportation corridors when determining allowable land uses.

**Objective L1.4:** Preserve the scenic, rural, and residential equestrian character of the Rio Verde Foothills planning area.

Policy L1.4.1: Discourage commercial, retail, or industrial development in the Rio Verde Foothills planning area for the current 10 to 15 year planning horizon.

Policy L1.4.2: Minimize roadway lighting to preserve rural character and dark night skies.

Policy L1.4.3: Work with the Rio Verde Foothills community to prepare rural development guidelines for landscaping, lighting, and/or signage that reflect the rural community and regional character.

Policy L1.4.4: Encourage continued agricultural uses of land in the Rio Verde Foothills planning area.

## Transportation

### Goal T1:

*Provide an efficient, cost-effective, integrated, accessible, environmentally sensitive, and safe countywide multi-modal system that addresses existing and future roadway networks, as well as promotes transit, bikeways, equestrian and pedestrian travel.*

**Objective T1.1:** Establish a safe, convenient, and efficient system for existing and future roadways while considering the need for equestrian and multi-use trails in the Rio Verde Foothills planning area.

Policy T1.1.1: Develop an arterial street system along the existing grid-based section line pattern. Use Maricopa County's Major Streets and Routes Plan to determine the functional classification of roads.

Policy T1.1.2: Support MCDOT efforts to ensure that new or improved transportation facilities within the community are designed and constructed in a manner consistent with County standards.



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- Policy T1.1.3: In coordination with MCDOT, explore alternative road standards due to unique drainage conditions in the Rio Verde Foothills area.
- Policy T1.1.4: Support the continued maintenance of existing County roadways and the paving of future roads consistent with adopted County design standards, EPA, and MAG standards. Unpaved county-maintained roads will be evaluated for paving if 150 vehicles or more per day use the road, per the County's PM-10 program.
- Policy T1.1.5: Preserve necessary right of way (ROW) for roads per current policy as listed in the Major Streets and Routes Plan. ROW is open to the public for use by equestrians, bicyclists, and pedestrians.
- Policy T1.1.6: Equestrian crossings and access should be considered in future roadway improvement projects.
- Policy T1.1.7: Support efforts to have the community provide all-weather crossings of washes, including low-water crossings, where justified.
- Policy T1.1.8: Encourage adequate access for fire and emergency vehicles for all new developments and for lot splits.
- Policy T1.1.9: Support efforts to develop scenic corridor design guidelines for Rio Verde Drive in conjunction with City of Scottsdale to protect the scenic environment and adjoining Sonoran desert vegetation.

### Environment/Environmental Effects

#### Goal E1:

*Promote development that considers adverse environmental impacts on the natural and cultural environment, preserves highly valued wildlife habitat, minimizes flooding and drainage problems, and protects historical and archaeological resources.*

**Objective E1.1:** Encourage development that is compatible with natural environmental features and which does not lead to their destruction.

- Policy E1.1.1: Encourage land uses and development designs that are compatible with environmentally sensitive areas such as the Palo Verde-Saguaro community, floodplains, significant washes, hillsides, wildlife habitat, scenic areas, and unstable geologic and soil conditions.
- Policy E1.1.2: Encourage building envelopes and localized grading to minimize blading and cut and fill in environmentally sensitive areas and leave the remaining portion of the lot undisturbed.



- Policy E1.1.3: Encourage the preservation of the scenic quality of Rio Verde Drive, McDowell Mountain foothills, and views of the Mazatzal Mountains, Four Peaks, and other prominent mountains in the review of applications for land development.
- Policy E1.1.4: To help protect mountain views in the Rio Verde Foothills area, promote the use of buffering, judicious placement of structures, as well as reasonable height on structures and signs associated with special use permit operations.
- Policy E1.1.5: Encourage under grounding of all utilities.
- Policy E1.1.6: Discourage new development in major 100-year floodplains.
- Policy E1.1.7: Support Maricopa County Planning & Development Drainage Review division efforts to help property owners minimize adverse impacts to existing natural washes, erodible soils, desert vegetation, and landforms through drainage guidelines developed for single-lot development in the planning area.
- Policy E1.1.8: Encourage the preservation of washes in a natural state by avoiding re-grading, realignment, or channelization of washes.
- Policy E1.1.9: Encourage property owners to consult with the Maricopa County Planning & Development Drainage Review division prior to land division to adequately plan for local washes and landforms.
- Policy E1.1.10: Encourage property owners to maintain local washes free of debris and to plan development of land so there will be no change of flow of water off the property.
- Policy E1.1.11: Discourage block wall perimeter fencing that can interfere with sheet flow characteristics of runoff in the planning area. Encourage open-style fencing.
- Policy E1.1.12: Support natural drainage corridors and protective buffering techniques along significant wash systems where new development is proposed, to provide flood control, preserve wildlife corridors, and protect open space.
- Policy E1.1.13: Prior to development, excavation, or grading, request that developers submit a letter from the Arizona Historic Preservation Officer stating that the proposed land development will have no effect on historical or cultural resources.



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**Objective E1.2:** Improve air quality, water quality, and reduce noise impacts.

Policy E1.2.1: Support and encourage local and region-wide efforts to preserve air quality.

Policy E1.2.2: Support and foster federal, state, and local surface water and groundwater quality management programs to reduce pollutants in wash/drainage systems and groundwater.

Policy E1.2.3: Discourage the construction of new dirt roads where feasible by encouraging common access that is agreed to by end users. Encourage revegetation of abandoned dirt roads. Support resident efforts to establish improvement districts for heavily used local roads.

**Objective E1.3:** Preserve significant habitat areas for wildlife and desert plant species.

Policy E1.3.1: In conjunction with new development, encourage cooperation with the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to help prevent encroachment on riparian scrub habitat and/or channels associated with significant local wash systems.

Policy E1.3.2: Support Maricopa County Planning & Development Drainage Review efforts to encourage open fencing (where fencing is needed) across washes.

Policy E1.3.3: Encourage the use of replacement vegetation that is indigenous to the Sonoran desert plant community for development that disturbs that community.

Policy E1.3.4: In conjunction with new development, encourage and support voluntary citizen efforts to salvage and replant cactuses and other desert plants in public spaces, neighborhoods, and abandoned roads.

Policy E1.3.5: Encourage cooperation with the AGFD to protect desert tortoise and other wildlife habitat and minimize disturbance of desert tortoises from development, all-terrain vehicles, and illegal collectors.



## Economic Development

### Goal ED1:

*Promote a growing, balanced, efficient, and diversified economy, consistent with available resources, that enhances quality employment opportunities, improves quality of life, and is sensitive to the natural and cultural environment.*

**Objective ED1.1:** Encourage rural, low-density residential, and equestrian oriented development during the 10 to 15 year horizon of the Rio Verde Foothills Area Plan update, to retain the quality of life and land values enjoyed by this community.

Policy ED1.1.1: Discourage commercial or industrial development.

Policy ED1.1.2: Encourage rural and residential development that is sensitive to the environment, maintains connections to open space, and preserves amenities that attract families and retirees to the planning area.

Policy ED1.1.3: Develop land use guidelines that encourage suitable locations for new residences and help ensure that appropriate access and services are provided.

Policy ED1.1.4: Support the continuation of equestrian-related activities that are compatible with existing uses in the community and that produce income and/or contribute to the economy through direct and indirect expenditures.

Policy ED1.1.5: Encourage special use permit applicants to work with the community to obtain input on the proposal, to help ensure compatible development.

## Growth Areas

### Goal G.1:

*Promote orderly, timely, and fiscally responsible growth in Maricopa County.*

**Objective G.1.1:** Encourage timely, orderly, and fiscally responsible growth within any approved mixed use Development Master Plans.

Policy G1.1.1: Residential development with gross densities greater than 1.0 dwelling unit per acre will be discouraged.

Policy G1.1.2: New Development Master Plan development shall provide evidence of community water and sanitary sewer system, and other necessary public services to meet the needs of future residents.



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Policy G1.1.3: New development should demonstrate conservation of significant natural resources and open space areas and coordinate their location with adjacent open space areas.

**Objective G.1.2:** Ensure that future growth is coordinated in an efficient manner with stakeholder input.

Policy G.1.2.1: Work with residents and other stakeholders in the review of future growth and development.

Policy G.1.2.2: Encourage coordination between developers and school districts for future school site planning.

Policy G1.2.3: Continue to update the Rio Verde Foothills Area Plan with input from local organizations and area residents to determine appropriate growth areas, if any, and make changes as necessary.

### Open Space

#### Goal O1:

*Maintain and, where necessary, encourage expanding the open space system for Maricopa County to address public access, connectivity, education, preservation, buffering, quantity, quality, and diversity for regionally significant open spaces.*

**Objective O1.1:** Promote physical and visual public access to natural open space resources.

Policy O1.1.1: Encourage efforts to protect and improve public access to natural open space resources such as the Tonto National Forest, McDowell Mountain Regional Park, the planned McDowell Sonoran Preserve, and the adopted Maricopa County Regional Trail.

Policy O1.1.2: Support efforts to protect and establish points of access to existing and proposed equestrian, hiking, and bicycle trails.

Policy O1.1.3: Promote development that preserves mountain views.

**Objective O1.2:** Establish regional natural open space connectivity and linkages for both recreation and wildlife purposes.

Policy O1.2.1: Where feasible, work with the Rio Verde Foothills community to establish local trail linkages in new developments.

Policy O1.2.2: Coordinate trail linkages in new developments with drainage easements and other open space projects and/or resources.

Policy O1.2.3: Investigate opportunities for development of trails adjacent to





major washes as interconnected linkages throughout the region.

Policy O1.2.4: Where roads must cross washes, design all road crossings to minimize disturbance to the natural environment, and to accommodate identified trails.

Policy O1.2.5: Encourage preservation of Palo Verde-Saguaro plant communities to serve as major links between regionally significant open space resources and, where appropriate, smaller areas of foothills and flatlands to provide connectivity and transition functions.

Policy O1.2.6: Coordinate with the City of Scottsdale, the Tonto National Forest, McDowell Sonoran Land Trust, Maricopa County Parks Department, and other jurisdictions in planning for future local and regional trails.

Policy O1.2.7: Encourage integration and consideration of the Maricopa County Regional Trail system into future development.

Policy O1.2.8: Promote interconnected trail/natural open space systems as wildlife corridors and for use by hikers, bicyclists, and equestrians while respecting and protecting personal property rights.

**Objective O1.3:** Protect and enhance environmentally sensitive areas, including existing natural washes, steep slopes, historic, cultural, and archaeological resources; view corridors; sensitive desert; and significant wildlife habitat and ecosystems.

Policy O1.3.1: Discourage development in environmentally sensitive areas, natural washes, identified wildlife corridors, or in densely vegetated Palo Verde-Saguaro habitat.

Policy O1.3.2: Encourage the use of native plant material for all types of landscaping in environmentally sensitive areas, including the Palo Verde-Saguaro plant community.

Policy O1.3.3: Encourage effective buffers between development and washes.

Policy O1.3.4: Discourage creation of informal trails.

Policy O1.3.5: Identify and implement an open space trails system that is coordinated with the Maricopa County regional trail system.

Policy O1.3.6: Where feasible, encourage trail alignments to correspond to existing trails, paths, utility easements, or roads that have already disturbed the environment.



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**Objective O1.4:** Encourage appropriate natural open space between communities and other land uses.

Policy O1.4.1: Promote transitional land uses around McDowell Mountain Regional Park, the McDowell Sonoran Preserve, the Tonto National Forest, and include open space linkages and public access points.

Policy O1.4.2: Maintain low-density residential land use (not to exceed one dwelling unit per net acre) adjacent to the Tonto National Forest, McDowell Mountain Regional Park, and the planned McDowell Sonoran Preserve, to buffer these public park and preserve areas.

**Objective O1.5:** Improve quantity, quality, and diversity of open space and recreational opportunities where public access is protected and preservation is encouraged.

Policy O1.5.1: Protect significant cultural resources from degradation by encouraging sensitive development or public acquisition.

Policy O1.5.2: Monitor and coordinate with the Tonto National Forest, State Land Department, and the McDowell Sonoran Land Trust regarding classification, exchange, disposal, and acquisition of lands under their management.

Policy O1.5.3: Support additional monitoring programs of natural open space areas to reduce damage from uncontrolled off-road activities, shooting, and illegal dumping.

Policy O1.5.4: Support community efforts to pursue acquisition of additional natural open space resources via techniques that respect personal property rights.

**Objective O1.6:** Promote the economic, environmental, and quality of life benefits of natural open space.

Policy O1.6.1: Encourage communication efforts with stakeholders to share information and discussion on current issues and/or projects.

Policy O1.6.2: Discuss and encourage open space preservation with applicants during the land entitlement process.

Policy O1.6.3: Cooperate with neighboring jurisdictions to develop shared natural open space and outdoor recreation amenities.

Policy O1.6.4: Support efforts to educate residents on the economic benefits of natural open space.

Policy O1.6.5: Support efforts to educate residents on the environmental and quality of life benefits of natural open space.



## Water Resources

### Goal W1:

*Promote development that makes conservative use of renewable water supplies such as effluent, surface water, and Central Arizona Project water when feasible, and that uses groundwater as the primary water source only in the absence of renewable sources.*

**Objective W1.1:** Encourage protection and enhancement of renewable water and groundwater supplies within the framework of state and federal laws, regulations, and guidelines for existing and future needs.

Policy W1.1.1: Support Arizona Department of Water Resources programs, rules, and regulations for new development and for water conservation.

Policy W1.1.2: Support Arizona Department of Environmental Quality standards for effluent treatment and reuse.

Policy W1.1.3: Support citizen efforts to develop a sustainable alternative supply of water in the planning area.

Policy W1.1.4: Support efforts to assure that no underground water supplies are transported out of the Rio Verde Foothills planning area.

Policy W1.1.5: Support the existing practice of hauling potable water as an acceptable water supply in the Rio Verde Foothills planning area.

### Goal W2:

*Reduce the impacts of development on water quality, land subsidence, and riparian habitat.*

**Objective W2.1:** Encourage voluntary actions and support federal, state, and local regulations and guidelines that protect and preserve the watershed, to safeguard current and future groundwater quality in the planning area.

Policy W2.1.1: Consider incentives and options for preservation of Sonoran desert vegetation and other land conservation practices, to maximize penetration and filtering of surface water runoff into the soil to replenish the local aquifer.

Policy W2.1.2: Support ongoing depth to groundwater monitoring conducted by the Arizona Department of Water Resources to assess water levels and water quality throughout the Phoenix Active Management Area and encourage additional monitoring wells in the planning area.



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- Policy W2.1.3: Support existing drainage guidelines for single-lot development that help property owners minimize adverse impacts to existing natural washes, erodible soils, desert vegetation, and landforms in the planning area.
- Policy W2.1.4: Support existing state aquifer protection rules and county regulations that ban seepage pits and require shallow wastewater disposal systems (shallow trenches) in the planning area, to prevent potential contamination of the aquifer.
- Policy W2.1.5: Encourage development that complies with the Arizona aquifer protection program.
- Policy W2.1.6: Encourage the use of animal waste disposal methods, pest management practices, and landscape/pasture fertilization methods that reduce the risk of groundwater and surface water contamination.

### Cost of Development

#### Goal C1:

*Ensure that new development pays its fair and proportional share of the cost of additional public facility and service needs generated by new development.*

**Objective C1.1:** Develop a method to determine the need for, and assess costs of, new facilities and services required to serve new development in order to maintain service levels.

Policy C1.1.1: Work with other County agencies and affected stakeholders to establish cost sharing programs.

Policy C1.1.2: Seek regional coordination to promote cost sharing for regional services and infrastructure.

**Objective C1.2:** Adopt and implement level of service standards for new development to help promote consistency and certainty in the cost sharing process.

Policy C1.2.1: Maintain and support Maricopa County's capital improvement programs that help promote service needs and standards.

Policy C1.2.2: Adopt and periodically update level of service standards for new development to maintain viability.