

# Introduction

Peoria was established in 1886 as a humble agricultural community. Since incorporating on June 7, 1954, Peoria has blossomed as a rapidly-growing, modern city that offers a high quality of living in the natural beauty of the Sonoran Desert. Many diverse and positive characteristics contribute to make Peoria the special place it is today. The stunning natural environment, safe and clean neighborhoods, diversified employment opportunities, strong educational facilities, numerous quality outdoor recreation areas, and vibrant arts and culture venues are just some of the valued community attributes in Peoria.

This **PlanPeoriaAz 2040 General Plan** document (also referred to as “PlanPeoria 2040” or simply the “General Plan”) reflects the aspirational vision and goals of the community and builds on, celebrates, and advances these positive aspects of Peoria. The General Plan will be used by the City to guide Peoria’s future decisions relative to land use, public services, infrastructure and resource management, and provides a clear and defined program for implementation to achieve the shared community vision for Peoria’s future.

## 1.1 A GENERAL PLAN'S ROLE

A General Plan is a state-mandated document required of all cities and counties in Arizona. It is a visionary document that serves as the jurisdiction's roadmap, helping to guide all aspects of development and resource management. It typically has a time horizon of about 20 years, giving the city an opportunity to think long-term about what it wishes to preserve and what it wishes to change. Locally, General Plans have been in existence since the 1970s, and State law requires such plans to be periodically updated in response to changing conditions.

The Peoria General Plan is a comprehensive, long-range vision of Peoria's future development and preservation encompassing the built and natural environments as well as the community and economy. The Plan addresses all geographic areas within the City's jurisdictional limits, along with its sphere of influence known as its municipal planning area. The document includes both State law mandated elements, and optional elements designed to address high priority topics of City interest. The General Plan is kept up to date with current issues, trends, and community needs through periodic amendments. When an amendment occurs, special attention is given to make sure that all components work in harmony and the plan maintains its internal consistency as required by State law.

A general plan is not to be confused with zoning. Although both the general plan and the zoning ordinance designate how land may be developed, they do so in different ways. A general plan has a broad, long-term outlook. It identifies the types of development that will be allowed, the spatial relationships among land uses, and the general pattern of future development. A zoning ordinance regulates development through specific standards such as lot size, building setbacks, height, and allowable uses. However, the land uses shown on the general plan diagrams will typically be reflected in the local zoning maps as well and changes to the zoning map are required to be consistent with the adopted general plan map. Development must not only meet the specific requirements of the zoning ordinance but also the broader policies set forth in the general plan.

## 1.2 WHO USES THE PLAN?

The City Council and Planning Commission use the goals and policies of the General Plan as a basis upon which to make both long-term and short-term land use decisions. The City Council will also use the goals and policies of the General Plan to determine long-term objectives, generate and evaluate budgets, plan capital improvements, and prioritize tasks.

City staff throughout all of its departments will also reference the General Plan when considering development applications, capital improvements, service programming, and departmental budgeting. Individual residents, existing and prospective business owners, and the development community can also seek guidance for preserving and enhancing the community through the General Plan. Finally, other local and regional agencies will refer to the General Plan when projecting future needs and services. The General Plan is truly the City's collective guide to the future.



### 1.3 WHAT HAS CHANGED?

Although many of the positive and valued attributes of Peoria remain the same, many community conditions have changed in the decade since the adoption of the 2009 General Plan. Since the last substantive update in 2009, which was ratified by Peoria voters in 2010, the city has experienced an evolving economic landscape, along with meaningful growth and physical development. Additionally, advancements in technologies, and efforts in the areas of sustainability, diversification of the workforce, and quality of life are now topics at the forefront of the conversation, which impacts land use and other growth-related decisions.

Other core issues and opportunities facing Peoria have changed and evolved, which were not reflected in the 2010 plan. For example, demographics, such as population age and composition of households have changed, and an updated long-range plan and vision is necessary to reflect changes in community characteristics. Additionally, local, regional and national economic changes have occurred over the past decade, which necessitate an updated economic development strategy to remain competitive with other jurisdictions for business sector development and expansion. The resulting PlanPeoriaAZ 2040 General Plan establishes goals, policies and strategies to define a targeted approach addressing what has changed within Peoria.

### 1.4 HOW WAS THE GENERAL PLAN PREPARED?

One of the primary factors in creating a relevant and effective General Plan is the involvement of community members and representatives. The PlanPeoriaAZ 2040 General Plan has been a community effort from the very beginning.

To guide community engagement, a Public Participation Program was prepared with the intent of providing multiple and diverse methods for community members to be involved and have a real voice in forming the plan. The goal of the process was to bring many voices together and provide opportunities to discuss, debate and listen to one another to appreciate all viewpoints, identify shared values and gain common understanding. Thus, residents, property owners, business owners and other interested parties were engaged in meaningful ways at multiple points in the process as the plan evolved from a broad vision statement to goals, policies and detailed implementation strategies. Outreach efforts include:

- **Project Website.** A website was created and maintained during the development of the plan update. The website allowed residents and other interested parties to download project documents and meeting materials, learn about upcoming events, and take online surveys.
- **Public Open Houses.** Four sets of public open houses were conducted during the process to gain public input and to provide for opportunities to review the draft plan.



- **Public Workshops.** Two sets of public workshops were held during which the public was invited to engage in activities that influenced the development of the General Plan.
- **Stakeholder Interviews.** Interviews were held with city staff members and key community leaders to garner input on trends and ideas for the future of the city.
- **In Person Events.** Staff attended various city events to answer questions and gather comments from the public.
- **Informational Brochures.** Several informational brochures were created to give the public relevant information regarding the process of updating the existing general plan.
- **Social Media and News Article Distribution.** News of upcoming outreach events were distributed through social media, email blasts, newsletters and print media.
- **City Council Updates.** During the preparation of the General Plan, several sessions were held to review and gain insight on developing ideas.
- **Board and Commission Updates.** During the preparation of the General Plan, several sessions were held to review and gain insight on developing ideas.



## Plan Guidance

The PlanPeoriaAZ 2040 General Plan was also developed under the direction of the Mayor and City Council, along with these stakeholder groups who played a significant and vital role in guiding development of the plan:

STAKEHOLDER GROUP	COMPOSITION
City Leadership	Mayor and City Council, City Leadership, and City Departments
General Plan Advisory Committee	Comprised of various Board and Commission members, as well as school district representatives
Technical Advisory Committee	City of Peoria technical staff from all City Departments
The Public	Peoria residents, property owners, business community, development community, public and all others



## 1.5 HOW IS THIS PLAN DIFFERENT?

The last General Plan was approved by the voters in 2010. Even before then, the elements of the existing General Plan have not been reorganized or comprehensively changed. Accordingly, one of the goals from the very beginning of the PlanPeoriaAZ project was to develop a General Plan that was much more user friendly than the current version. Additionally, between now and 2040, the City of Peoria is expected to grow by approximately 100,000 residents and 26,600 jobs.

The 2040 General Plan seeks to retain the character and values that make Peoria special, while accommodating population growth in a better way than simply continuing to expand the city outward. This is accomplished by incorporating the principles of Smart Growth and healthy community design, and also involves reinvesting in areas to create vibrant centers, providing housing close to jobs, promoting transit use and walking, conservation of natural resources, and minimizing traffic congestion.

### Document Organization

The State of Arizona requires municipalities address 17 different elements, or topics, in their general plans. PlanPeoriaAZ addresses those required elements, as well as five additional ones. All elements are interrelated and should be considered in tandem during the decision-making process. The 22 elements are organized in terms of six over-arching themes to highlight the relationships among topics, which also serve as plan chapters as shown in **Table 1** below. Each chapter includes introductory information related to the element and then details recommended goals and policies.

**Table 1** ARS Compliance

Theme	State Law Required Topic	Optional Topic
 <b>Economic Prosperity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rehabilitation &amp; Redevelopment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic Development</li> </ul>
 <b>Smart Growth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land Use</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Growth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost of Development</li> </ul>
 <b>Integrated Transportation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circulation</li> <li>• Bicycling</li> </ul>	
 <b>Healthy Neighborhoods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighborhood Preservation</li> <li>• Open Space</li> <li>• Environmental Planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Wellness</li> </ul>
 <b>Arts, Cultural and Recreational Enrichment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historic Preservation</li> <li>• Recreation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arts and Culture</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Library</li> </ul>
 <b>Superior Public Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Safety &amp; Facilities</li> <li>• Public Buildings</li> <li>• Safety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water Resources</li> <li>• Energy</li> </ul>

## 1.6 A VISION FOR PEORIA'S FUTURE

At present, the City of Peoria is a dynamic growing community of more than 170,000 residents, with a reputation as a friendly, safe and stable place to live, educate and raise a family, invest, establish and grow a business, pursue a career and retire.

Looking towards the year 2040, the community developed a vision statement that describes a future ideal state and articulates shared aspirations for the future. It answers the question “What should Peoria be like in 2040?”. This vision statement will serve as the foundational principle which guides the construction and overall direction and content of this General Plan. Likewise, the goals, policies and implementation strategies were developed to support realization of this envisioned future for Peoria.

*In 2040, Peoria is a safe, connected, engaged, vibrant, and livable community that emphasizes fiscal responsibility and thoughtful growth to ensure a healthy city for all citizens.*

## 1.7 A READER'S GUIDE

While the narrative frames the key concepts and proposals of the Peoria General Plan, the essence of the Plan lies in its goals, policies, and implementation program. These declarative statements set forth the City's approach to various issues. Goals, policies, and implementation programs are described below.

### Goals

A goal is a concise statement that describes the desired future condition or “end” state to be achieved. A goal is not quantifiable, time dependent or suggestive of specific actions for achievement.

### Policies

A policy is a clear statement that guides a specific course of action for decision-makers to achieve a desired goal. Information about the intent of the policy is described in the text preceding the policy.

### Implementation Program

In the General Plan, the proposed implementation program is located in Chapter 8. An implementation program is a proposed action, procedure, program, or technique that may be utilized to further progress the City towards the ultimate vision of the General Plan. Decisions to implement specific programs are discretionary and governed by program cost, available funding, staffing, feasibility and similar considerations.



Peoria was established in the 1880s when William J. Murphy's vision of fertile farm lands fed by water from the Salt River became reality with the completion of the Arizona Canal in 1885. Once this canal was completed, Murphy went East to interest people in settling in this new community. Mr. Murphy was successful in catching people's attention - over 5,000 acres of land in the new district was purchased by citizens from Peoria, Illinois. Four families from Peoria, Illinois were among the first to move to Arizona to occupy and work their land.

Residences in the new community sprang up and a school and Post Office were established by 1889. More people followed the original families and Peoria continued to grow as a farming community. The farmlands were fertile and the people made a good living, despite having to battle swarms of red ants and the occasional rattlesnake in the kitchen.

The modern-day City of Peoria began near the current intersection of Peoria Avenue and Grand Avenue. The original town site was officially platted in 1897, and the early center of Peoria would begin to form on the south side of Grand Avenue where some of the earliest businesses and residences were constructed. However, most of Peoria's early settlers actually lived outside of the town, spread out on large tracts of agricultural land. The young town was well served by its location along Grand Avenue, as a railroad line soon paralleled this major roadway, allowing for goods and people to flow into the town, and for the agricultural products of the area to make their way to larger markets.

Peoria was incorporated in 1954, with boundaries covering one square mile of land. The warm climate and small-town atmosphere of Peoria continued to attract people, and still do today. The dramatic vistas and scenic backdrop of the Sonoran Desert, Hieroglyphic Mountains, Lake Pleasant and the mountain ranges beyond, attract people seeking access to pristine natural areas for relaxation, recreation and enjoyment and contributes to the high-quality active lifestyle enjoyed by Peoria residents and visitors. Major League Spring Training, performing arts, cultural venues, first-rate educational facilities and numerous community parks provide for the recreation, enjoyment and enrichment of community residents and visitors.

## 1.8 REGIONAL SETTING

Peoria is located in the Phoenix Metropolitan area, about 20 miles northwest of central Phoenix, as shown on Figure 1. The one time farming community was founded by settlers from Peoria, Illinois, and was one of the nation’s fastest growing cities during the last growth boom.

Founded in 1886 and officially incorporated in 1954, the City of Peoria has grown from the original one square mile in Old Town to a city covering more than 179 square miles and a sphere of influence area covering over 233 square miles. Within the region, the City has the unique distinction of falling within both Maricopa and Yavapai Counties. While Peoria is considered a major suburb of Phoenix, it is technically the largest incorporated city in Yavapai County even though almost all of Peoria’s current population resides on the Maricopa County side of the City.

Regional access to and from Peoria is provided by Loop 101, Loop 303, US 60, Interstate 10 (I-10), and Interstate 17 (I-17). Peoria is approximately 45 minutes from the Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport and within driving distance to several other major cities in the region as shown in **Table 2**.

### Local Setting

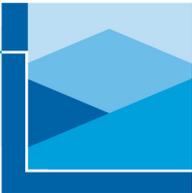
Peoria is situated on flat gently sloping desert terrain in the Salt River Valley, and extends into the foothills of the mountains to the north. The city covers some of the most beautiful and biologically diverse natural desert lands in Maricopa and Yavapai counties and is considered the “Gateway to Lake Pleasant”, one of the finest water recreation areas and the second largest lake in Arizona.

The city also extends into the foothills of the Hieroglyphic Mountains and is surrounded by some of the last vestiges of the Sonoran Desert in the Phoenix metropolitan area. The region is distinctive from the standpoint that two major water courses, the Agua Fria River and New River, run through the northern portions of the City. Along and between the river basins is a rich reserve of cultural resources.

**Table 2** Driving Distances from Peoria

Destination	Highway	Approx imate Driving Time
Albuquerque, NM	464	6 Hrs, 38 Mins
Denver, CO	817	12 Hrs, 42
El Paso, TX	444	6 Hrs, 30 Mins
Flagstaff, AZ	141	2 Hrs, 11 Mins
Las Vegas, NV	272	4 Hrs, 47 Mins
Los Angeles, CA	371	5 Hrs, 30 Mins
Phoenix, AZ	14	31 Mins
San Diego, CA	352	5 Hrs, 30 Mins
San Francisco, CA	750	11 Hrs
Tucson, AZ	131	2 Hrs, 11 Mins

Source: [www.distancebetweencities.net](http://www.distancebetweencities.net)



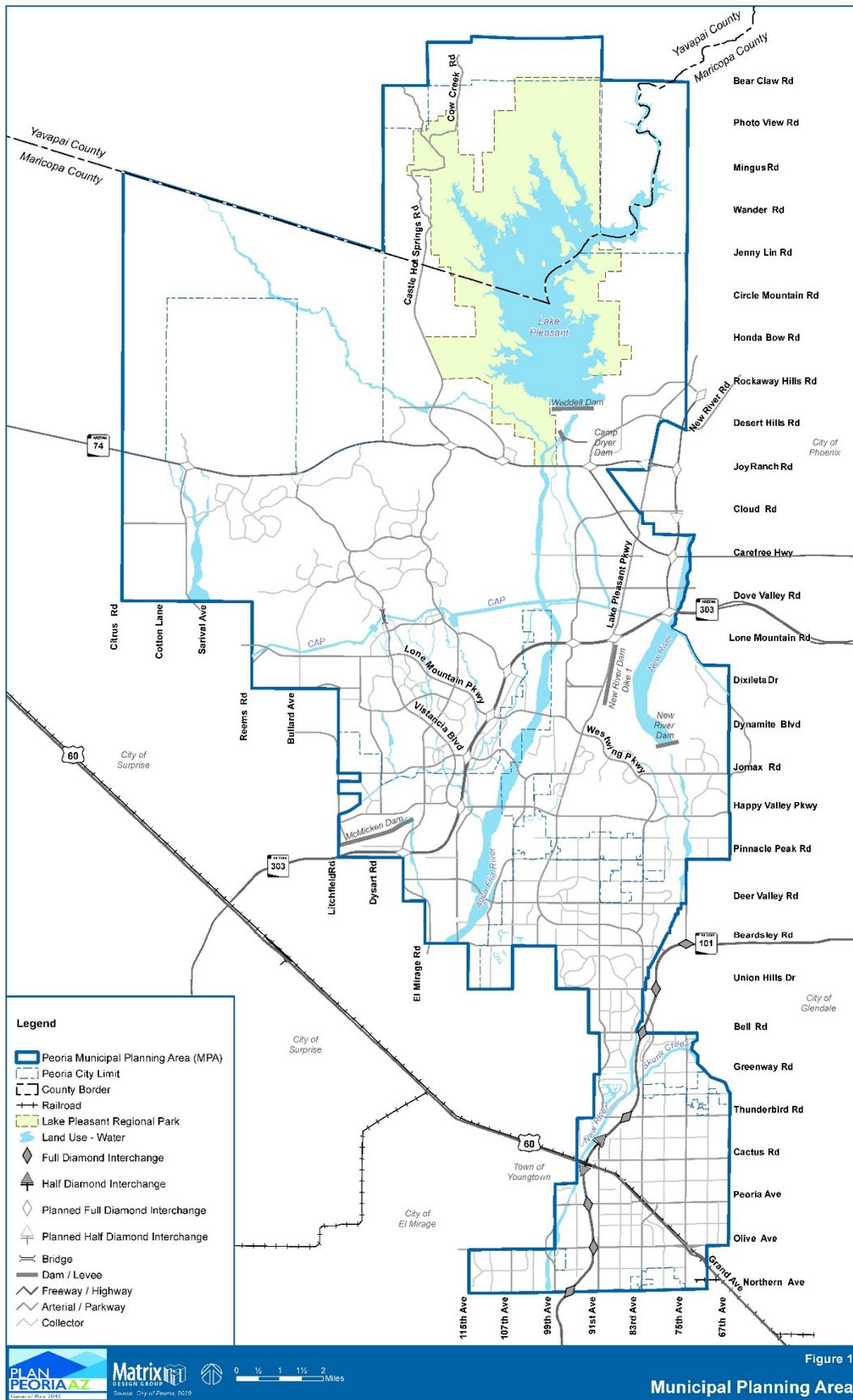
### Municipal Planning Area

The Municipal Planning Area (MPA) is the area of planning influence, which helps to plan for growth in areas adjacent to the city. The MPA covers approximately 233 square miles, 179 of which are within the Peoria city limits, as shown in **Figure 1**.

The City’s MPA is bounded on the north by Yavapai County and on the east by the City of Phoenix and City of Glendale. To the south is also the City of Glendale, and to the west are Sun City, Sun City West, City of Surprise and Maricopa County. The City of Peoria MPA is inclusive of the county islands located within the city, as well as other unincorporated property directly adjacent to the city but under Maricopa County or Yavapai County jurisdiction. County islands are unincorporated properties under county jurisdiction; however, they are often surrounded on multiple sides by the City of Peoria incorporated area.

# PLAN PEORIAAZ

General Plan 2040





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