

Section Two—Introduction

2.1 Purpose

The county’s annual average population growth over the last decade has been 22.3 percent. If this growth rate remains constant, the character of the county will change in ways that reflect the ongoing urbanization and growth in all communities. This will include demographic changes, increased ethnic and cultural diversity, land use densities, land costs, traffic and a need to preserve the natural environment.

Arizona Department of Economic Security Yuma County Population Projections

- 2020 population 239,451
 - Or 43,700 new residents in ten years
 - Or 4,370 new residents per year
 - Or 364 new residents per month
 - Or 12 persons per day
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Given the trends and changes occurring in the county, maintaining and/or enhancing the quality of life will require considerable foresight, ongoing cooperative efforts and broad-based planning. Once development occurs, it cannot be easily reversed. The results of the decisions the community makes, or fails to make, will be with us for generations to come. Therefore, it the purpose of the Plan to be a basic document that provides a rational decision making framework to aid in these decisions.

2.2 Evolution of the Plan

The Plan is written to fulfill mandates of the State and the Growing Smarter legislation. The *Yuma County 2020 Comprehensive Plan* provides an updated foundation for long term growth and development in the county. The *Yuma County 2010 Comprehensive Plan* was adopted by the Board of Supervisors December 10, 2001. Arizona Revised Statutes §11-824B states as follows: “A county comprehensive plan, with any amendments, is effective for up to ten years from the date the plan was initially adopted or until the plan is readopted or a new plan is adopted pursuant to this subsection and becomes effective. On or before the tenth anniversary of the plan’s most recent adoption, the board shall either readopt the existing plan for an additional term of up to ten years or shall adopt a new county plan as provided by this article.”

The county was divided into Development Study Areas (DSAs) to handle the organization, allocation of resources and writing of the Plan. Ten of Development Study Areas Background Studies and Community Assessments were completed to provide a base of information for the development of the Plan.

The Plan further evolved through a series of public participation efforts conducted from the kick-off of the Plan's update that started with the creation of Citizen Advisory Groups (CAGs) from the first annual meeting held on November 16, 2006 in the Dome Valley/Wellton Planning Area. The last CAG meeting took place on May 25, 2011.

2.3 Public Participation Approach

Public participation was the single-most vital element in the creation of the *Yuma County 2020 Comprehensive Plan*. Multiple public meetings were held by Planning staff at locations all across the County at which the Plan was discussed. The Plan was structured around extensive citizen involvement in implementing Growing Smarter legislation. The Public Information/Public Participation (PI/PP) Program was a central focus to the overall efforts and was designed and coordinated in order to ensure the broadest possible base of citizen and group involvement. The Plan was then written to incorporate the needs, desires and issues county citizens felt are important and articulate the different visions expressed regarding growth and development.

Citizen Advisory Groups (CAGs) were fundamental to the public involvement component of the planning process. In the initial phase of the PI/PP, CAGs were formed for the designated planning areas. These CAGs met a number of times and were involved in a variety of tasks and exercises. This involved defining policies and priorities for their area and expressing concerns and opinions relative to the general content of the Plan. The results are contained within the final report written for each CAG. These reports, as well as all other supporting documents, are available upon request or on the Yuma County website at www.yumacountyaz.gov.

2.4 Designated Planning Areas

The county was divided into nine planning areas for analysis of county resources and growth trends. Additionally, as part of the Plan update, seven Citizen Advisory Group Studies were written to provide a base of information and an in-depth understanding of existing conditions and future development and infrastructure needs for each one of the planning areas.

These Planning Areas include the following:

- 1) North Gila
- 2) Yuma Mesa
- 3) Northwest Yuma
- 4) Gila Valley
- 5) Foothills
- 6) Yuma Valley
- 7) Martinez Lake
- 8) Dome Valley/Wellton
- 9) Dateland/East County

Planning Area Descriptions: The nine geographically assigned Planning Areas are described as follows: *(Refer to the Land Use Element for detailed maps of each planning area.)*

- 1. North Gila Planning Area:** The North Gila Planning Area is comprised of the area roughly bounded by California to the west, Yuma Proving Ground and the Gila Mountains to the east, Levee Road to the south and Imperial Dam to the north. The planning area is almost exclusively located in the Colorado and Gila River valley. The confluence of the Colorado and Gila Rivers is located along the southern boundary of the planning area.
- 2. Yuma Mesa Planning Area:** The Yuma Mesa Planning Area is comprised of the unincorporated portion of Yuma County that is roughly bounded by the East Main Canal and a small portion of the City of Somerton to the west, the Barry M. Goldwater Range and City of Yuma to the east, the City of San Luis and Mexico to the south and Interstate 8 and MCAS-Yuma to the north. A portion of the Cocopah Reservation is located within the planning area; however, it is part of a sovereign nation and not under the land use planning jurisdiction of Yuma County.
- 3. Northwest Yuma Planning Area:** The Northwest Yuma Planning Area is comprised of the unincorporated portion of Yuma County that is roughly bounded by Avenue D to the west, the City of Yuma to the south and east and the West Main Canal and 1st Street to the north.
- 4. Gila Valley Planning Area:** The Gila Valley Planning Area is comprised of the area roughly bounded by Pacific Avenue to the west, Fortuna Wash to the east, Levee Road to the north and the City of Yuma to the south. The planning area is almost exclusively located in the Colorado and Gila River valleys. The confluence of the Colorado and Gila Rivers is located along the northern boundary of the planning area.
- 5. Foothills Planning Area:** The Foothills Planning Area is comprised of the unincorporated portion of Yuma County that is roughly bounded by the City of Yuma to the west, the crest of the Gila Mountains to the east, the Barry M. Goldwater Range to the south and the Gila Gravity Main Canal and County 9th Street to the north. Fortuna Wash, which runs in a northeasterly direction, more or less bisects the planning area.
- 6. Yuma Valley Planning Area:** The Yuma Valley Planning Area is comprised of the unincorporated portion of Yuma County that is roughly bounded by Mexico to the west, the City of Yuma, Avenue D, the City of Somerton and the East Main Canal to the east, the City of San Luis to the south and California to the north. The planning area is located in the Yuma Valley close to the Colorado River.
- 7. Martinez Lake Planning Area:** The Martinez Lake Planning Area is comprised of two geographically separate areas that can be roughly defined as the portion of Yuma County that is located north of Imperial Dam and west of Yuma Proving Ground and the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge. The topography of the southern portion of the planning area is dominated by the Colorado River and Martinez Lake which forms the western boundary of the planning area and the County. Development in this area centers around the Martinez Lake shoreline. The northern portion of the Martinez Lake Planning Area is a sliver of land located between the La Paz County line and the Kofa Mountains and the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge.

- 8. Dome Valley/Wellton Area:** The Dome Valley/Wellton Planning Area is comprised of the unincorporated portion of Yuma County that is roughly bounded by the crest of the Gila Mountains to the west, the Barry M. Goldwater Range to the south, the crest of the Mohawk Mountains to the east and Yuma Proving Ground to the north. The Gila River runs from east to west, bisecting the planning area.
- 9. Dateland/East County Planning Area:** The Dateland/East County Planning Area is comprised of the unincorporated portion of Yuma County that is roughly bounded by the crest of the Mohawk Mountains and Yuma Proving Ground to the west, the Barry M. Goldwater Range to the south, Maricopa County to the east and La Paz County to the north. The Gila River runs from east to west bisecting the planning area. The Eagle Tail Mountains Wilderness Area covers 12 square miles. This area is managed by the Bureau of Land Management in a manner that minimizes as much as possible human impact on the land.