

Section One—Overview

1.1 Purpose

The Yuma County 2020 Comprehensive Plan, herein after referred to as the “Plan”, is intended to accomplish coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the unincorporated area of Yuma County. In accordance with Arizona Revised Statutes 11-804, the Plan was developed so as to conserve the natural resources of Yuma County, to ensure efficient expenditure of public monies and to promote the health, safety, convenience and general welfare of the public. The Plan is the official guide for the development of the unincorporated area of Yuma County.

1.2 Legislative Authority

The *Growing Smarter Act* was Arizona’s first growth management legislation and became effective August 21, 1998. In February 2000, part two of the Growing Smarter Act, *Growing Smarter Plus*, was passed and became effective May 18, 2000. Together, these laws form the basis of planned growth management legislation in the State.

Growing Smarter Plus attempts to address problems associated with growth. The legislation strengthened requirements for county planning. Under Growing Smarter Plus, each Arizona county is required to prepare and adopt a new ten-year comprehensive plan. Consequently, the legislation ensures regulated growth.

1.3 Scope

The Plan addresses a wide variety of countywide characteristics, concerns and issues that the impacts of growth will generate. Central to developing the components of the Plan are the core concepts set forth by the *Growing Smarter* legislation and recommended by the *Growing Smarter* Commission

Yuma County Context:

- Yuma County covers 5,500 square miles
- From 2000 to 2010, Yuma County has experienced a 22.3% increase in population
- Continued growth rates would result in county population increasing from 195,751 residents to a projected 239,451 residents by 2020.

1.6 Core Concepts

Public Participation—In updating the Plan, it was understood that uncoordinated and unplanned growth, combined with a lack of common goals, posed a threat to the future quality of life enjoyed by Yuma County residents. Hence, in adopting *Growing Smarter Plus*, broad-based citizen participation was required to ensure the public's interest was incorporated throughout the process. The Plan includes policies, priorities and actions proposed through extensive citizen participation and designed to be representative of county residents.

Yuma County Character—A primary intent of the Plan is to reflect the unique characteristics of the county and to enhance and preserve those qualities. These characteristics include its rural heritage, strategic location, river corridor and a diverse economy supported by bi-national activities including retirement communities, military facilities, government employment and tourism.

Important concepts and high priority items suggested by county residents to provide a framework for the Plan are as follows:

- **Agricultural Lands**—Preserve rural character, encourage the conservation of agricultural lands, and discourage uses that conflict.
- **Transportation**—Encourage efficient and effective transportation systems based on regional priorities and coordinated with county, municipal, State, military and Federal management agencies.
- **Growth Management**—Promote development in areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or could be provided in an efficient manner.
- **Open Space**— Encourage conservation of open space, retention of open space sites and expansion of recreational resources.
- **Property Rights**—Ensure the property rights of landowners are protected.
- **Environmental Resources**—Protect, conserve and enhance environmental resources, access to natural resource lands, air and water quality and availability of water.
- **Economic Development**—Encourage a stable and enduring economic base by planning for adequate land use development.
- **Financial Resources**—Ensure the efficient spending of public funds by analyzing the fiscal impacts of land use decisions.