

**PAYSON GENERAL PLAN UPDATE 2014-2024
DRAFT – CHAPTER VI
LAND USE ELEMENT**

*Prepared for:
Town of Payson, Arizona*



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TischlerBise
Fiscal, Economic & Planning Consultants



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	General Plan and Planning Framework	8
1.1	Town of Payson Planning Process.....	8
1.2	General Plan Development Process	9
2	Introduction: Payson Arizona	14
2.1	Town of Payson in Context	14
2.2	Payson Planning Area	14
2.3	Population and Households.....	16
2.4	Population Demographics	18
2.5	Housing Demographics	21
2.6	Household Demographics.....	23
2.7	Industry and Occupation Employment.....	23
2.8	Payson Workforce.....	29
2.9	Travel and Tourism Industry	33
2.10	Retail Industry	35
3	Environmental Planning Element.....	39
3.1	Overview	39
3.2	Critical Issues.....	44
3.3	Goals and Strategies	44
4	Water Resources Element	46
4.1	Overview	46
4.2	Critical Issues.....	52
4.3	Goals and Strategies	53
5	Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element.....	54
5.1	Overview.....	54
5.2	Parkland and Amenities	56
5.3	Open Space	58
5.4	Multi-Modal Trails.....	59
5.5	Critical Issues.....	62
5.6	Goals and Strategies	66
6	Land Use Element	67
6.1	Overview	67
6.2	Land Use Controls	71
6.3	Future Land Use Map.....	71
6.4	Land Use Designations	74
6.5	Critical Issues.....	77
6.6	Development Design Standards	78
6.7	Goals and Strategies	82

7	Growth Area Element.....	83
	7.1 Overview.....	83
	7.2 Critical Issues.....	94
	7.3 Goals and Strategies.....	97
8	Circulation/Transportation Element.....	98
	8.1 Overview.....	98
	8.2 Critical Issues.....	102
	8.3 Transportation Design Components.....	103
	8.4 Goals and Strategies.....	110
9	Cost of Development Element.....	111
	9.1 Overview.....	111
	9.2 Critical Issues.....	113
	9.3 Factors to Consider in a Fiscal Impact Analysis.....	113
	9.4 Goals and Strategies.....	116
10	Implementation Plan.....	117
	10.1 General Plan Process.....	117
	10.2 Adoption.....	117
	10.3 Amendment Procedure.....	118
	10.4 Implementation Process.....	120
	10.5 Implementation Matrix.....	121
11	Appendices.....	129
	11.1 2012 Payson Community Survey.....	129
	11.2 Urban Land Institute – Definitions of Retail.....	131

6 LAND USE ELEMENT

Enhance Payson’s small-town atmosphere and economic development opportunities with strategic land use policies for new development and redevelopment areas.

6.1 OVERVIEW

Land Use Vision

The Town of Payson benefits from bountiful natural amenities, significant protected forest and open space, vibrant commercial corridors, and easy access to state transportation networks. Natural features like the Mogollon Rim and Tonto National Forest naturally define the Payson area. Early development of Payson began along Main Street. Development in the east and northwest sections of Payson followed slowly. Tools like the General Plan, a Parks, Recreation, and Tourism master plan, and land use ordinances will help direct and control future development.

The key to Payson’s future success in high-quality planning and development is an effective implementation of the *Goals and Strategies* to achieve the *Vision*. Each strategy helps to implement a key element of the *Vision* by addressing an identified goal. For example, the rezoning of a property within an identified area for growth will be evaluated on how well the proposed project meets the *Vision* set forth in the General Plan. Each application will be carefully considered by the Town to see



if the proposed development is well planned, particularly within the context of the immediate surroundings. Rezoning applications that do not reflect the community’s *Vision* and values, nor effectively addresses anticipated adverse impacts from the project, will receive added scrutiny. Applicants are encouraged to meet with the

community and Town officials well in advance of application submittal so that they can design the best possible projects. This process will benefit their projects as well as the existing community, and will result in higher quality development that will improve the overall quality of life within Payson.

This proactive approach to development is intended to catalyze first-class economic development to diversify the Town’s tax base, allow the population to increase at sustainable levels, minimize the impact on existing infrastructure, and account for the typical impacts associated with development such as stormwater runoff, traffic, public safety, schools, and water and sewer capacity, among other issues. The careful planning and placement of development will create a diverse mixed-use and mixed-income community that emphasizes accessible housing options, defined neighborhoods, distinctive public gathering space, and Town-wide connectivity.

A principal element in ensuring integrated development is the placement and utilization of open space. The effective use of green infrastructure within and between developments can provide needed buffers. Parks define a sense of place within the neighborhood and strengthening the overall character of the Town. Trails and parks should be accessible within the developed areas, and serve to tie



each individual neighborhood together within the larger community. The recreational opportunities that these green amenities provide also enhance the overall health and livability of the citizenry, and have a positive impact on public safety. The extensive provision and use of parks and open space is a critical component of Payson’s well-designed community.

Land-use policies direct local government action regarding growth and development. The way a community chooses to grow, or not grow, directly affects the tax base, and therefore, the taxes paid by existing citizens. Responsible land-use policies focuses on fiscally self-sustaining development that will have a positive impact on quality of life. Proposed development should demonstrate through growth models how a project will create a healthy, balanced mixture of business and residential uses that will provide a net gain to the community.



Moving forward into the 21st Century, Payson will be vigilant in growth management to ensure the Town remains attractive to current residents, welcoming to newcomers, and accommodating to visitors. Payson is committed to managed growth intended to strengthen and diversify the community, and to protect those areas identified for preservation.

Existing Conditions

Payson is just over 130 years old. Evidence of the earliest development patterns still exist and are folded in to modern day Payson with an effort to preserve and celebrate the Town’s history. The Town covers 19.5 square miles of incorporated land, which includes U.S. Forest Service land serving as a development border on each edge of the Town.

Development is most dense along the north/south running State Road 87 and the east/west running State Road 260. No developed parcel is further than three miles from the intersection of the two State roads. Shown in **Map 8** is an aerial photo, taken from Google Earth®, of Town of Payson development.

Current Inventory

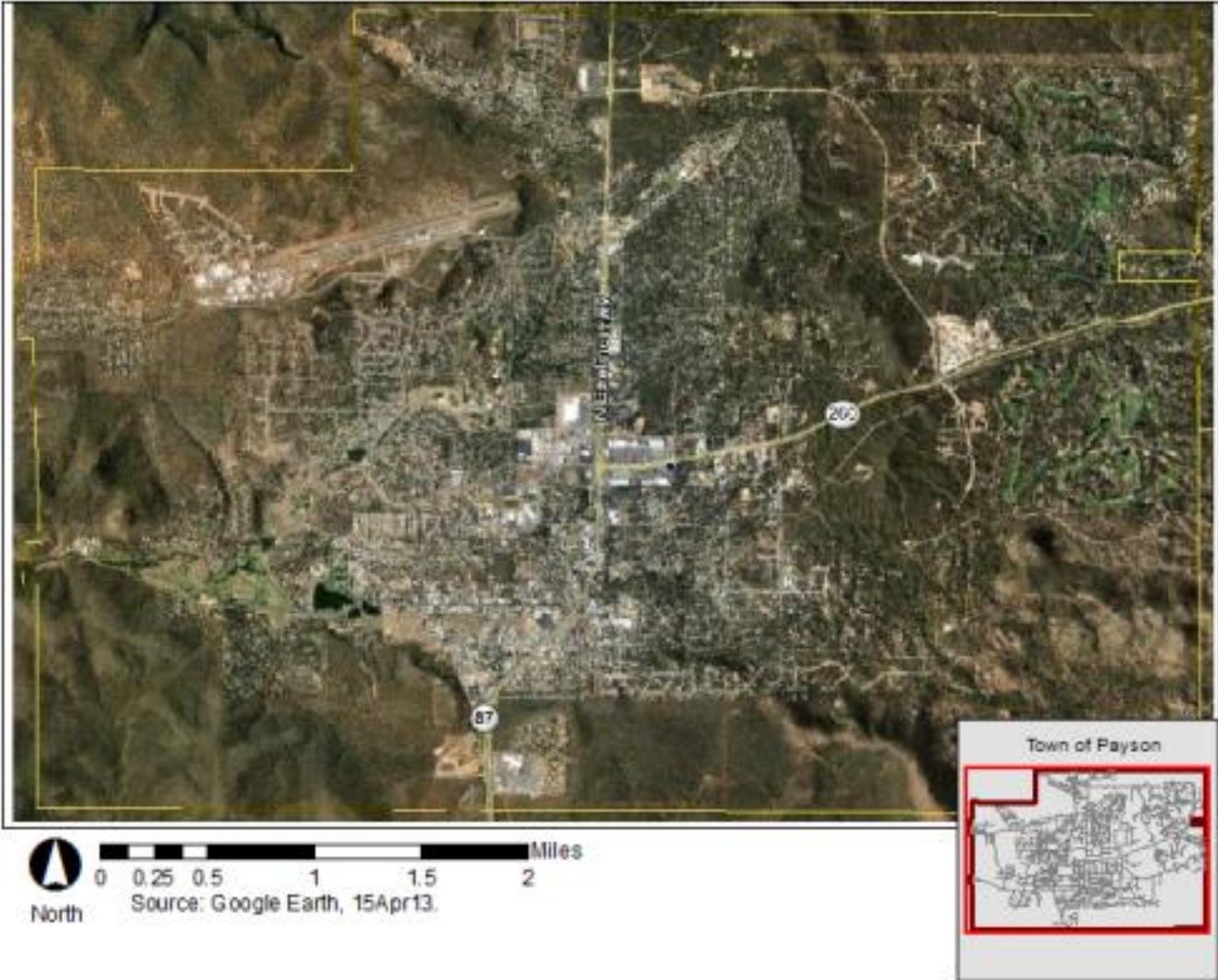
The Town of Payson includes over 10,000 designated parcels, as catalogued by the Gila County Assessor’s office, and shown in **Map 9**. An estimated distribution of 2013 land uses in Payson is detailed in Figure 29.

Figure 29: Town of Payson Land Use, 2013

Land Use	Units	Square Feet
Residential	9,037	
Single Family	8,116	
Multifamily	921	
Nonresidential (1,000 square feet)		3,479
Commercial		1,620
Office/Institutional		1,160
Industrial/Flex		699

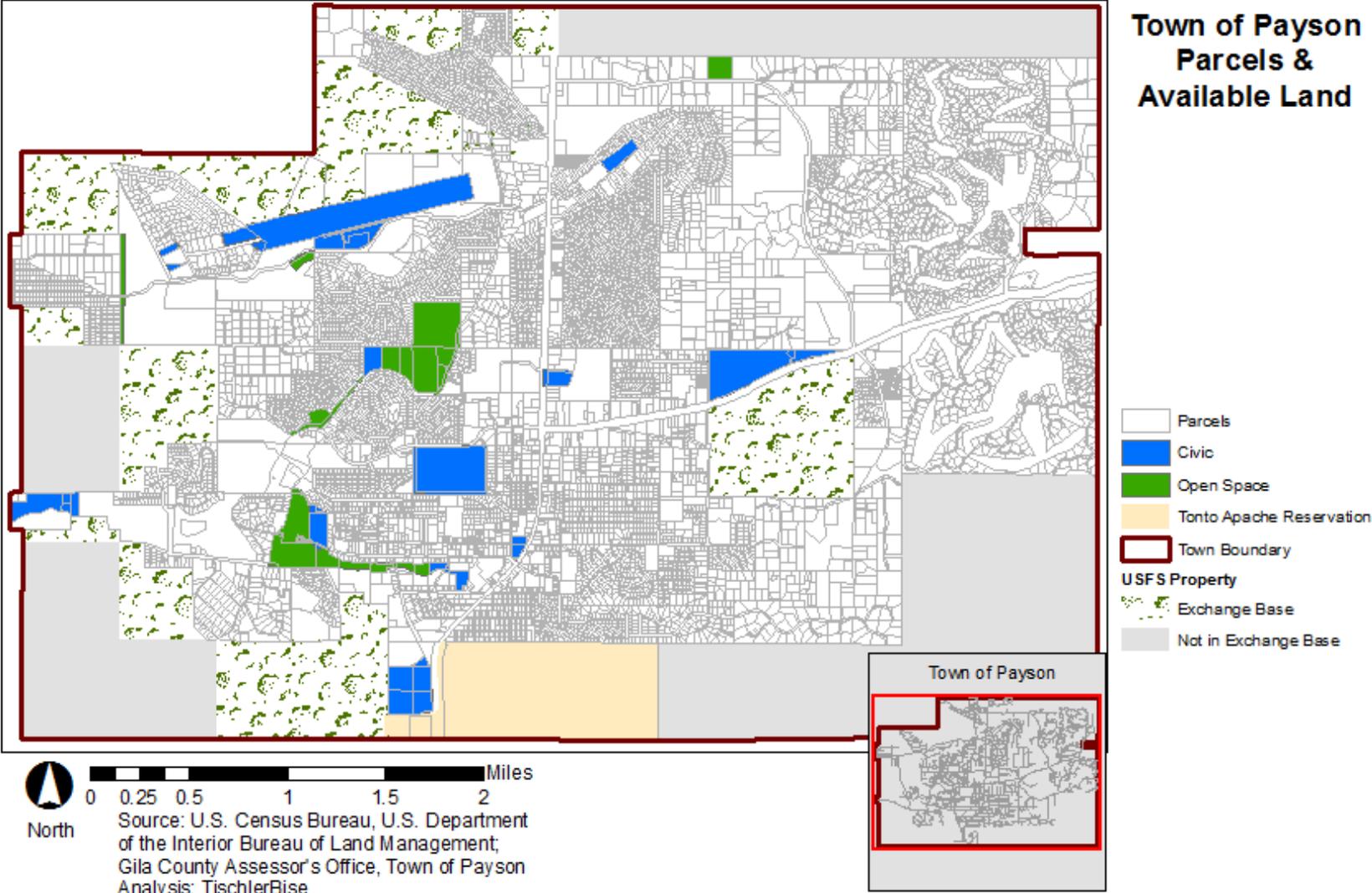
Source: TischlerBise. (2013). Town of Payson Land Use Assumptions.

Map 8: 2013 Google Earth®, Aerial Photo: Town of Payson Development



**Town of Payson
Development
as seen by
Google Earth**

Map 9: Town of Payson Available Land



6.2 LAND USE CONTROLS

The Town of Payson has a Town Council/Manager form of government; and places final legislation of zoning regulations with the Council. The Council reviews, adopts, and amends the General Plan Update 2014-2024 for the Town of Payson.

The Payson Unified Development Code (UDC) sets forth the procedure for deciding and implementing development decisions. In addition to the Town Council, the Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of Adjustments, Development Services Committee, and Town Community Development and Public Works Departments inform all planning and zoning consideration in the Town.

The Town of Payson organizes land use controls into five primary categories, each detailed in the UDC, and listed below:

1. Landscaping, screening, buffering and lighting;
2. Off-street parking and loading;
3. Signs;
4. Minor Land Divisions; and
5. Subdivisions.

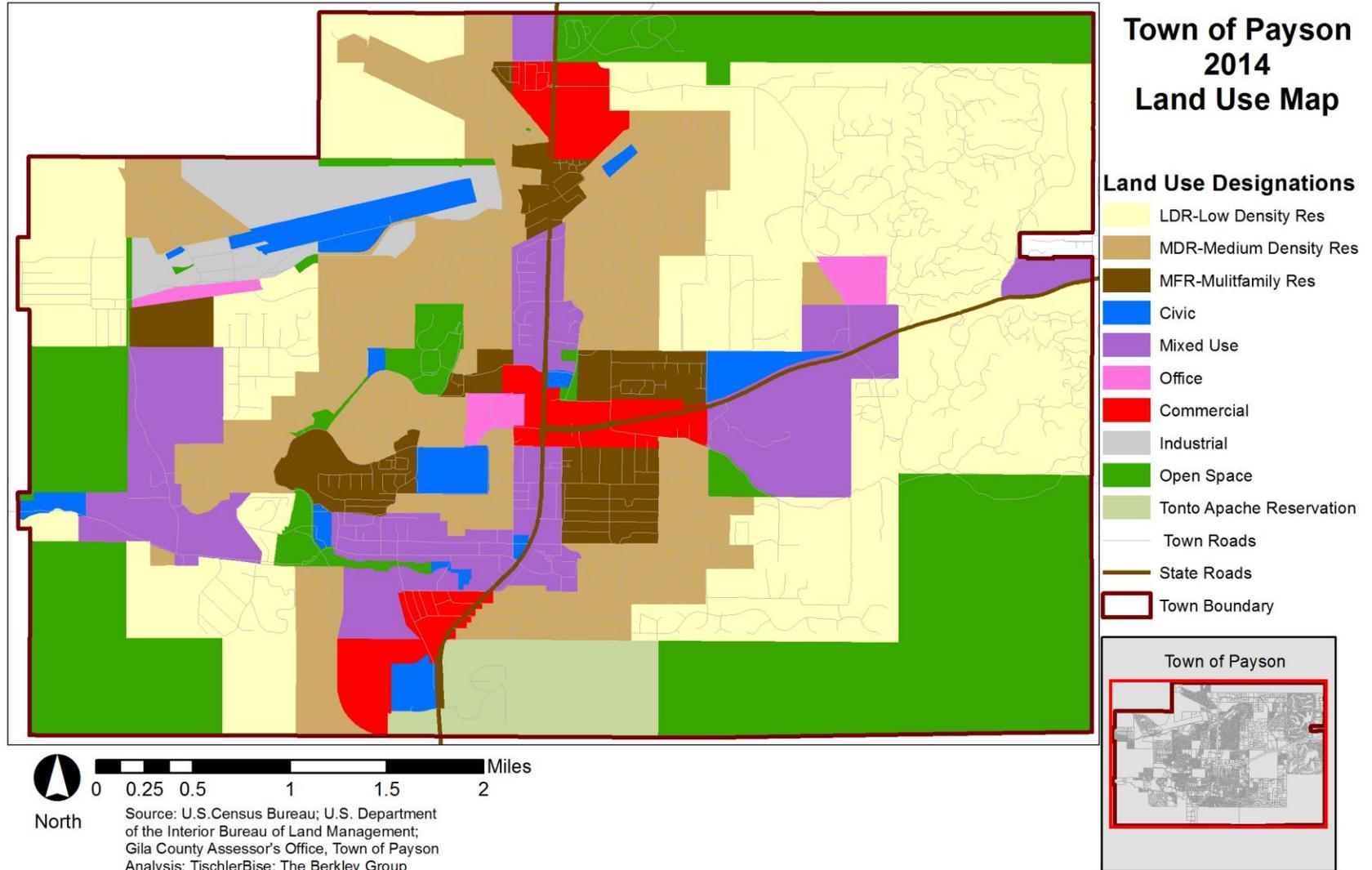
The UDC is the regulation guide with which Town officials/staff will examine applications for change and development within the Town boundary. The guidelines set forth by the UDC are intended to mitigate negative impacts of development such as stress to public utilities, public services, water and sewer systems, natural habitats, and the transportation infrastructure.

6.3 FUTURE LAND USE MAP

The Town of Payson Future Land Use Map shows the recommended future land use classifications within the Town. The Future Land Use Map does not reflect current land use, and may not reflect current zoning designations. The Future Land Use Map depicts how Payson envisions different land uses will be distributed in the future. Any policy developed to reflect the future land use vision, would be applied to affected parcels only when an individual property owner chooses to make changes to current land uses. Zoning Districts are how the various future land use classifications are implemented, and they regulate specific uses with associated development standards.

This map is an important tool for Town officials/staff, as it lays the foundation for zoning decisions and districts. It serves to reaffirm and strengthen the location of zoning districts. The Future Land Use Map shows open space that is either currently protected or is planned for protection or public use. It may include environmentally sensitive areas, and federal, local or private ownership. The Tonto Apache Reservation is also depicted on the map even though it is not a Town land use classification. This map and the General Plan serves as the guiding documents for subsequent zoning map amendments.

Map 10: Future Land Use Map



The Future Land Use Map classifies 12,355 acres of land into three residential classifications, one mixed use classification, three nonresidential classifications, and others including civic space and open space (both Town and U.S. Forest Service managed), and recognizes the Tonto Apache Reservation. Open Space covers 21 percent of the land area within the Town. Land designated for residential use is 54 percent of the total Town acreage. Figure 30 provides additional details regarding acreage included in each of the future land use designations. The “Parcel Acres” column is data provided by the Gila County Assessor’s Office, and is a sum of acres on record for the parcels included in each land use designation.

Figure 30: Land Use Designations by Acreage

Land Use	Acreage [1]	Percent of Land Area	Parcel Acres [2]
Residential Land Use		55%	
Low Density	3,985	32%	3,061
Medium Density	2,167	18%	1,701
Multifamily	583	5%	505
Mixed Use	1,309	11%	925
Nonresidential Land Use		8%	
Office	114	1%	136
Commercial	462	4%	315
Industrial	359	3%	150
Other Land Uses		27%	
Civic	345	3%	
Open Space	2,649	21%	
Tonto Apache Reservation	383	3%	
Total	12,355	100%	6,793

[1] Town of Payson. 2014 Future Land Use Map

[2] Gila County Assessor's Office. Parcel Acres is the sum of acres per parcel with a centroid (as determined in Esri ArcGIS) in each land use designation.

6.4 LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

The Town of Payson General Plan service area includes all lands within the 19.5 square miles of the incorporated municipal boundary. The future land use classifications are an important tool to assist with guiding growth and development according to the community's vision.

Residential densities and nonresidential floor area ratio (FAR) intensities shall be calculated for all proposed residential projects, nonresidential projects, and mixed-use projects.

Residential Densities

The General Plan establishes minimum or maximum densities for residential uses. Residential density is a computation expressing number of dwelling units per acre based on the gross lot area prior to the dedication of any rights-of-way, parkland or other public areas. In cases where a project site encompasses more than one lot, the density may be averaged over the entire project site.

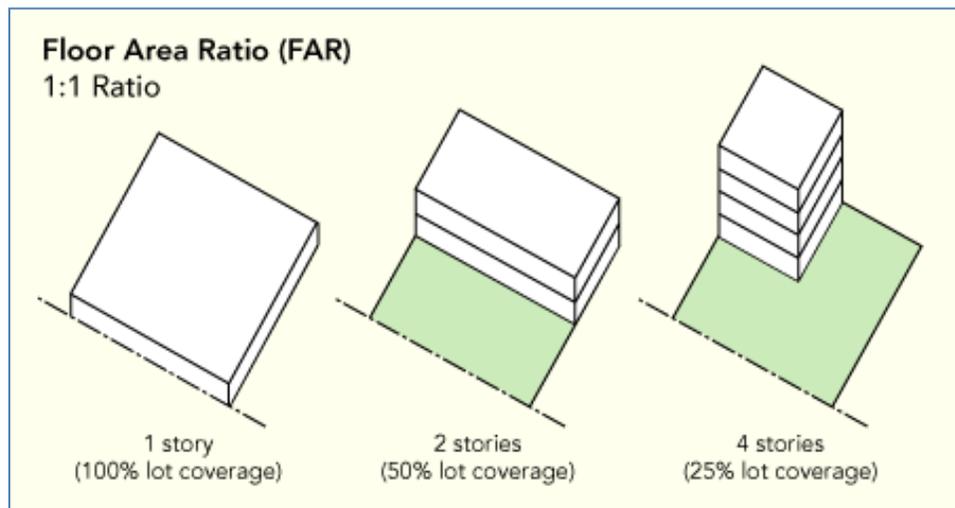
Floor Area Ratios (FARs)

The General Plan establishes floor area ratios as the measure for nonresidential intensity in Town. The floor area ratio is a computation determined by dividing the total gross building floor area (square feet) by the land area of the lot. In cases where a project site encompasses several buildings on several lots, the floor area ratio may be combined and averaged over the entire project site.

To calculate the maximum floor area ratio, the General Plan FAR is multiplied by the lot square footage. The total gross floor area (square feet) of all floors of the building shall not exceed this amount.

Floor Area Ratio (FAR) Calculation Example:

- General Plan FAR = 0.50
- Lot size: 20,000 square feet
- $0.50 \times 20,000 = 10,000$ maximum building size



Higher densities promote vibrancy and allow more people to access community amenities, employment centers, and services without relying on a personal automobile. A primary way to increase development densities is to increase the allowable FAR. In the identified growth areas (discussed in the **Growth Area Element**), the commercial area FAR should be at least 1.0 and in office and mixed-use areas it should be at least 1.25.

Other factors in the **Unified Development Code** will control how buildings relate to the street and locate on a given site. Setbacks, open space and screening/buffer requirements, height limits, and similar regulations should work together with residential density and floor area ratio requirements to maximize high quality development potential throughout the Town, but particularly in the growth areas.

LDR – Low Density Residential

Designates areas for single family residential development at a maximum density of 5.0 dwelling units per acre. This classification is mainly intended for detached single family dwellings, but attached single family and accessory dwelling units may be permitted.

MDR – Medium Density Residential

Designates areas of attached single family and multifamily unit developments. This designation would allow for dwelling units ranging from 5.1 – 12.0 dwelling units per acre. Development in this classification may include small lot or clustered single family development, accessory dwelling units, or townhouse type development.

MFR – Multifamily Residential

Designates areas for multifamily developments. This designation would allow for dwelling units such as apartments, condominiums, and townhome complexes of 12.1 units per acre or more.

Mixed-Use

Designates areas where a vertical mix of uses is encouraged (e.g., buildings with retail or restaurants/cafes on the ground floor with office or residential units above). The buildings will range in density and intensity with the highest density of development focused at district cores or major intersections. Minimum FAR of 1.25 recommended.

Commercial

Designates areas primarily for retail and dining establishments with supporting or complementary office uses in any mix. Residential uses are not preferred on the ground floor. Minimum FAR of 1.0 in growth areas is recommended.

There are three sub-types of commercial areas that are shown as Commercial in the Future Land Use Map. As development and redevelopment occurs within the Commercial areas, preference will be given to proposals that present a uniform look and feel to localized areas.

Light Commercial

Businesses in light commercial areas generate lower traffic than the other commercial districts. Where feasible, such uses will provide convenience and service to adjacent neighborhoods and/or host professional office space.

General Commercial

Establishments in the general commercial areas will be higher intensity traffic generators and include a wide variety of commercial retail and service uses. Care should be given toward access management, particularly regarding traffic along arterial and collector corridors (i.e., minimizing the number of ingress/egress points or entryways).

Entertainment Commercial

The southern entryway is designed to encourage businesses that support the existing casino, rodeo facility, and recreational amenities. Hotels, restaurants, specialty stores, entertainment venues, and tourism-oriented uses are particularly appropriate in this area.

Office

Designates areas primarily for office, professional, and institutional uses. Ancillary retail and dining may be permitted. This classification includes large scale office/business parks as well as small professional office spaces. Residential uses are not preferred on the ground floor. Minimum FAR of 1.25 recommended.

Industrial

Designates areas for industrial and manufacturing activities, preferably occurring within an enclosed building. This could include research and development facilities. Minimum FAR of 1.0 recommended.

Civic

Designates areas for governmental and/or quasi-public facilities. This classification includes schools, museums, hospitals, utility facilities, and government administration offices.

Open Space

Designates areas precluded from development except for parks, plazas and open space owned and maintained by the Town or other agencies. This classification includes lands reserved for open space uses such as lakes, trails, and organized recreation space. This classification also includes significant geological formations and sensitive ecological systems on public land, but does not include all federal land.

6.5 CRITICAL ISSUES

- 6.5.1 Support diversified economic activity through the Town's land use policy
- 6.5.2 Manage growth efficiently and effectively to avoid under-utilized space and sprawl
- 6.5.3 Integrate a higher-education campus into the Town's culture and desired land use pattern
- 6.5.4 Strengthen code enforcement to better resolve ordinance violations
- 6.5.5 Apply zoning ordinance uniformly within the Town
- 6.5.6 Modify overly restrictive land use regulations

Discussion

The Town wishes to maintain a healthy balance of land uses to serve the needs of residents and visitors while maximizing efficiencies and preserving the community's vision. Diversifying economic activities is a top priority for the Town and its citizenry. The Town of Payson lies along two popular traffic corridors, which provide links to Arizona's largest cities, and access to natural recreation destinations. This location positions Payson well to absorb mixed-use infill to help spark new economic development. However, without proactive protective measures to guide this change and others, the Town risks debilitating traffic problems, a potential increase in public safety issues, and unsafe corridors for residents and visitors.

This Land Use Element provides guidance in managing economic development and land use growth through uniform processes, ordinances, land use prescriptions and logical growth areas. Each major area of development will have a unique character; each will incorporate existing and anticipated land uses such as the airport or a higher-education campus.

Strategic land use planning directly addresses community desires for more reasonable and uniform regulations and zoning, and for their fair enforcement. When zoning changes are proposed without the benefit of a Town-wide guiding vision or strategy, the approved changes can mar the landscape and create lasting problems. This Land Use Element is one method of directing zoning decisions in any rezoning process. Spot zoning is the reclassification of a single parcel or adjacent parcels of land in an arbitrary, capricious, and unreasonable manner to allow a land use not allowed by surrounding properties in the area, and or that deviates from the accepted General Plan Land Use Element. There must be valid reasons for any rezoning request that is substantially related to the public welfare and need. It is not sufficient that an applicant merely show that there is no neighborhood objection to the requested application.

Three questions may be asked as a litmus test for spot zoning:

1. Is the proposed change contrary to the established land-use pattern?
2. Is the proposed land-use change in conformance with the General Plan?
3. Would the proposal create an isolated zoning district unrelated to similar districts?

Zoning applications for residential, commercial, or industrial development should be well planned and integrated with the future vision of the specific area and the Town. Critical items that will be examined include: buffers and screening between incompatible uses, connectivity and walkability, infrastructure impacts, sustainable and attractive design, fiscal responsibility, and value-added for the community. Applications that do not address a project's external costs to the community and provide a clear fiscal benefit to the Town may not be favorably received. Final decisions are based on many factors; the General Plan will be used as a reference in evaluating all such discretionary projects.

6.6 DEVELOPMENT DESIGN STANDARDS

Design considerations, whether in new development or redevelopment, should reinforce community character. Site design and design details have a profound impact on the look and feel of a community. Investments in Town must incorporate design details that reflect the sense of community and place.

Residential Infill Development

As a supplement to the existing [Unified Development Code](#) (UDC), a summary of residential infill guidelines is presented below. These guidelines apply to new development and redevelopment.

Residential “infill” development can range in size and scale, varying from the construction of one home on a single lot up to a larger subdivision development. Infill encompasses both new construction and redevelopment within the development boundary of the Town. Compatible infill development can help reinforce community character. In many cases, residential infill will require planning approvals, and these principles will guide the review and approval of planning applications.

The following is a summary of residential infill design principles:

Setback: Consistent front building setbacks create a uniform appearance along the street.

Building Orientation: Orienting buildings toward the street contributes to a pedestrian friendly street environment, provides a visually rich street edge, and contributes to resident safety by placing “eyes-on-the-street.”

Building Frontage/Entries: Landscaping in front of buildings and entry features, such as porches or steps, create visual interest and contributes to neighborhood identity.

Scale and Massing: Buildings designed to fit within the context of the surrounding structures help reinforce neighborhood character and create visual interest for pedestrians.

Architectural Features: Structures that are designed with architectural features similar to existing homes contribute to a sense of place and add to the character of the neighborhood.

Character and Context: Infill designs that are sensitive to the vernacular and traditional architecture found in Payson and the Southwest help to preserve community character.

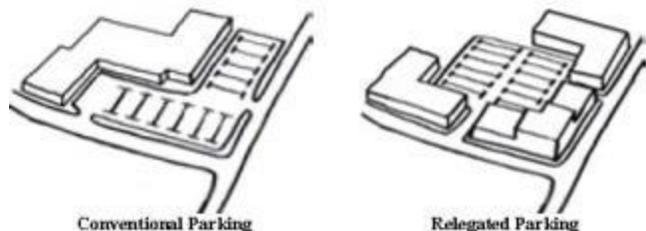
Streetscape: Streetscape designs including: trees, pedestrian-scaled lighting, benches, bicycle racks, or other pedestrian-oriented amenities help encourage pedestrian activity and promote safety and security.

Off-street Parking: Parking for residential areas that plays down the visual impact of cars, and respects the character of an existing neighborhood, creates pedestrian-friendly streets.

Planning for Parking: Shared structured parking can accommodate more parking than surface lots and can be designed so that the structures do not dominate the street frontage of a building.

Screening/Landscaping: Hedges, trees, shrubs, and fences can provide privacy, a transition between spaces, and can help buffer pedestrians from vehicle traffic.

Open Space: Comfortable outdoor places, particularly in multifamily developments, can provide a place for people to sit and interact, fostering a sense of community.



Connectivity: An interconnected street network and compact blocks provide the framework for a greater diversity of building types close to one another and promote pedestrian and bicycle activity by making connections between destinations accessible and convenient.

Bicycle Facilities: Streets that have been optimized for bicycle travel and bicycle parking facilities help support bicycle activity in a community.

Walkways: Internal walkways within larger residential developments promote pedestrian movement by connecting users from the public sidewalk network and parking areas to ultimate destinations within a site.

Sidewalks: Well-connected and maintained sidewalks contribute to the character of neighborhoods by providing safe places for people to travel and interact with one another.

Crosswalks: Crosswalks provide higher visibility to pedestrians at logical crossing points and can be basic white striping or can include other elements such as raised surfaces or aesthetic materials.

Complete Streets: Complete Streets provide an efficient and interconnected network for bicyclists, pedestrians, autos, and transit users of all ages and abilities.

Non-Residential Development Design

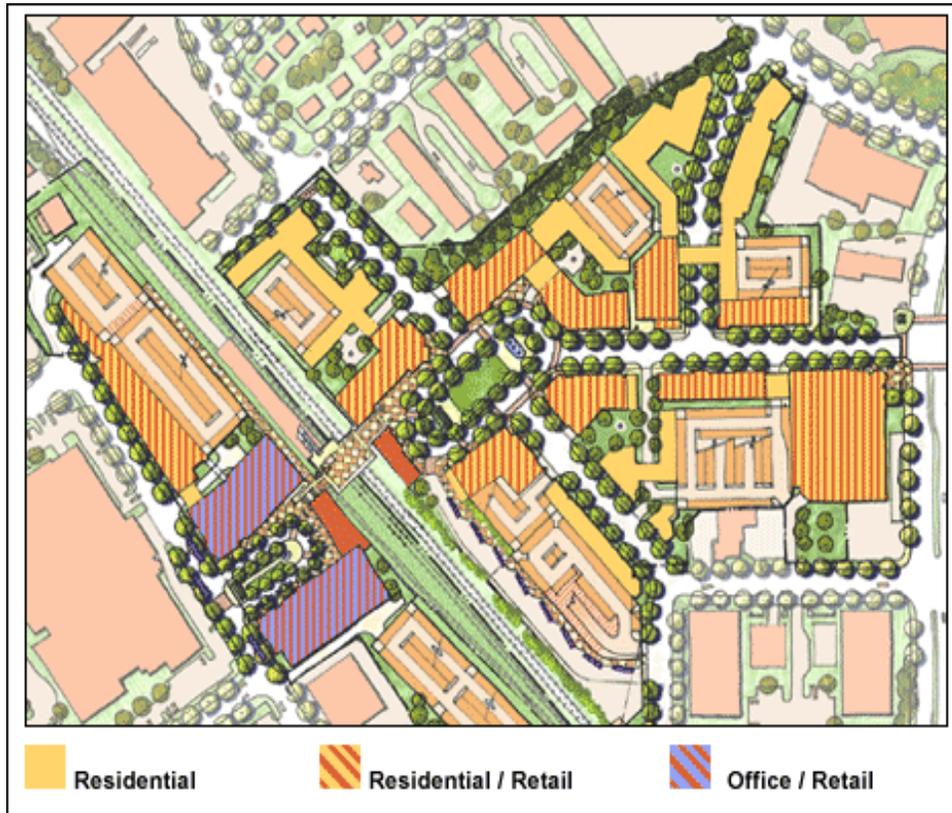
In addition to achieving the same design details as residential development, the two goals of any non-residential development should be:

1. Attractive, high quality projects that are compatible with surrounding areas and contribute to the Town's character.
2. Projects that are economically viable and allow the developer to meet the needs of identified tenets.

These two goals work together and are of mutual benefit for Payson to be a vibrant community with development and services that meet citizens' needs and expectations. The General Plan articulates important design considerations to be incorporated in non-residential projects. Development is also subject to the Town's regulatory structure that contains development design standards affecting how development occurs.



Mixed-Use Areas



Mixed-Use areas encourage a sustainable balance of residential and non-residential development. These areas are located on major roads served by public infrastructure, and encourage the critical mass necessary to facilitate transit connections between development areas.

Mixed-Use designated areas serve as a general guide of where mixed-use development is desired. If a property is bisected by a Mixed-Use area boundary line, features such as property lines, topography, streets, and site design shall guide if it is appropriate to extend the Mixed-Use designation. Individual development requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis if a property is bisected by a Mixed-Use area boundary.

Mixed-Use areas depict an area sufficient to host a mixture of land uses, however ultimate development densities will depend on parcel availability and market feasibility. Should property not be developed as mixed-use, it should be compatible in look and functionality with those areas and closely adhere to the development design principles discussed previously. The designation of Mixed-Use on the **Map 10: Future Land Use Map** does not affect existing zoning, but it will influence future rezoning requests based on the Future Land Use Map designation. The designation of Mixed-Use on the Future Land Use Map does not obligate the Town to approve a rezoning for a mixed-use development. The designation does not mandate a specific type or style of development on a property.

Mixed-Use areas encourage form-based zoning guidelines to create a visually consistent area with community vibrancy from residential, professional, and commercial activity. Mixed-use development stresses connectivity as well as complementary architecture and site design features. There is no prescribed ratio of residential and nonresidential uses as long as the development has a healthy mixture that supports vibrancy and quality of place.

Key features of any mixed-use area include:

- Vertically mixed-use buildings and, where feasible, a mix of uses horizontally throughout the entire site;
- Limited entrances to major arterial roads to help prevent additional traffic congestion and to avoid the appearance of strip commercial development;
- On-site vehicular parking accommodation with limited interruptions to the streetscape or landscape;
- Site design intended to complement all development within the same designated area, and to adjacent properties. While mixed-use developments may be designed independently of each other, they must function with surrounding developments;
- Arrangement and configuration of buildings, building setbacks, and streets that create a sense of spatial enclosure or “outdoor rooms” along key portions of street corridors. The result should be an inviting and attractive built environment that encourages and accommodates people living, working, shopping, and visiting these mixed-use areas;
- Low Impact Development (LID) techniques and the preservation of existing mature trees and the provision of landscaped buffers within each development;
- Providing adequate protection for historically and environmentally sensitive areas;
- Design styles that can accommodate the Town’s changing population, especially Payson residents who are aging in place;
- Space planned for transit stops with shelters located to strategically serve the area; and
- Internal pedestrian amenities and greenways that connect transportation modes such as trailheads and transit stops.



6.7 GOALS AND STRATEGIES

6.7.1 Adopt proactive growth management policies to direct development spatially and aesthetically

- 6.7.1.1 Incentivize development where infrastructure exists with excess capacity
- 6.7.1.2 Preserve and protect scenic line-of-sight views of the Rim through consideration of building height in low-lying areas of the Town
- 6.7.1.3 Encourage infill development/redevelopment to avoid sprawl and protect open space
- 6.7.1.4 Eliminate unsightly or dilapidated structures

6.7.2 Incorporate green infrastructure throughout Town including the growth areas

- 6.7.2.1 Encourage the development of neighborhood parks in each new development
- 6.7.2.2 Plan bicycle, pedestrian, and trail links between each new development and commercial centers of the Town
- 6.7.2.3 Encourage and facilitate negotiations between land owners to share parking and costs associated with providing parking to patrons of businesses
- 6.7.2.4 Preserve and augment existing vegetation, especially ponderosa pines, to create or enhance a streetscape
- 6.7.2.5 Incorporate sustainable development standards into zoning regulations

6.7.3 Improve sign standards, particularly along commercial corridors, to compliment Payson's small-town character

- 6.7.3.1 Identify Payson gateway(s) and install wayfinding elements at each
- 6.7.3.2 Consider wayfinding design variations to help define commercial areas of the Town

6.7.4 Modernize the land use regulatory process

- 6.7.4.1 Consistently apply and enforce regulations on all properties
- 6.7.4.2 Consistently apply requirements on all proposals for development
- 6.7.4.3 Provide sufficient resources to enforce current codes
- 6.7.4.4 Eliminate regulations that are not uniformly enforced
- 6.7.4.5 Proactively engage the development community by hosting periodic Roundtables
- 6.7.4.6 Evaluate catalysts for development including fee waivers, streamlined development reviews, and other strategies
- 6.7.4.7 Work with the development community to design and implement cost effective strategies to manage capital costs incurred by new growth
- 6.7.4.8 Establish administrative review and approval procedures for applications meeting clearly defined criteria
- 6.7.4.9 Establish design parameters for commercial development, which if met can be approved quickly by Town administration

6.7.5 Incorporate a variety of housing options in all mixed-use residential developments

- 6.7.5.1 Incentivize the inclusion of affordable housing with density bonuses
- 6.7.5.2 Adopt a recommended ratio of affordable, workforce, and market housing

6.7.6 Provide safe, modern communication infrastructure

- 6.7.6.1 Encourage new development to provide up-to-date technology and communications infrastructure
- 6.7.6.2 Promote both wireless and wired infrastructure as appropriate