

**PAYSON GENERAL PLAN UPDATE 2014-2024
DRAFT – CHAPTER VII
GROWTH AREA ELEMENT**

*Prepared for:
Town of Payson, Arizona*



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7 GROWTH AREA ELEMENT

Enact effective growth management policies and sustainable economic development

7.1 OVERVIEW

Growth Area Vision

The Payson community supports a managed growth program designed to increase employment opportunities in Town while directing development to growth areas with capacity to absorb change. Encouraged development will address at least two principles from the Arizona Growing Smarter legislation, including incorporating multi-modal transportation, existing infrastructure, and a mix of land uses in each area identified for growth. The guiding principle is to create economically vibrant and environmentally sustainable districts at the intersection of residential, commercial, professional, and recreational activity.

One of Payson’s defining characteristics is the feel of a “small town” even as it grows in population, and serves a growing number of pass-through tourists to the Rim Country of northern Arizona. Directing development towards the core of defined growth areas fosters a sense of community by anchoring neighborhoods with public gathering space, by providing housing diversity and services for people at varied stages in life, and by providing an economic market to sustain commercial activity.

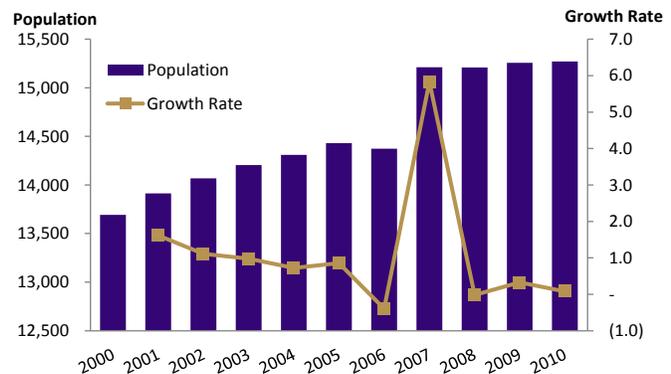
A growth area with a strong sense of place, is created by the kinds of uses combined in a defined space, and how the structures that house those uses look, as well as how the uses interconnect with the environment and one another. Architectural design, landscaping, and scale matter in development. Appropriately screening or buffering some uses from others, while building interconnections between land use types is essential to creating a dynamic neighborhood district. It is how a quality of place supports the quality of life Payson residents and guests value. The Town’s growth areas, through a careful mixture of uses and design elements, provide this balance.

Existing Conditions

Population Shifts

In the decade between 2000 and 2010, Payson added approximately 1,500 residents. According to the Arizona Department of Administration annual population estimates, annual population growth peaked in 2007, when the Town gained over 800 residents between the summers of 2006 and 2007.

Figure 31: Town Population Growth



Source: Arizona Department of Administration, Interim intercensal Population Estimates, 2000-2010.

According to analysis conducted by TischlerBise, as of 2013 the Town’s year-round population was approximately 15,350; seasonal population can add as many as 3,000 additional residents. Payson is adding population. Net population growth, while important, is only part of the context in which The Town plans for growth. According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2010 Decennial Census, the median age of Payson’s residents was 53 making it the highest median of the peer geographies (see Section 2.3 for more information). Between 2000 and 2010 Payson’s gains in shares of the population over age 45, and between ages 18 and 24, were balanced by losses of primary school-aged children, and the primary workforce ages of 25 to 45

Figure 32: Town Population By Age Cohort

	2000	2010	Net Change	Percentage of Total
Total Population	13,620	15,301	1,681	
Under 18 Years Old	2,739	2,679	-60	18%
18 to 24 Years Old	761	901	140	6%
25 to 44 Years Old	2,622	2,404	-218	16%
45 to 64 Years Old	3,524	4,641	1,117	30%
65 Years and Olders	3,974	4,676	702	31%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Decennial Census Summary File 1, Table PCT12; and 2000 Decennial Census Summary File 1, PCT012.

Plans for growth in the Town will work to define a sense of place attractive to the primary workforce cohort and their families, while also considering development design that will accommodate the retirees who call Payson home.

Residential Inventory

The Town of Payson had 8,417 housing units in 2011, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Ninety percent of the housing inventory is single family units, of which almost a quarter are manufactured homes. The majority of current housing stock was constructed between 1980 and 1999. On average, the Town added 44 homes each year since 2007.

Growth of housing units between the 2000 and 2010 decennial census counts was more than double population growth for the same period. In 2000, the Town’s persons per housing unit factor was 1.93. It dropped to 1.70 according to 2010 data. Households are shrinking, and the Town seeks to diversify the housing stock to accommodate smaller households, and a more community-oriented workforce.

Figure 33: Current Housing Stock by Units in Structure

Structure	Type of Unit	Estimate
Total:		8,417
Single Family		90%
	Detached	5,668
	Attached	147
	Mobile Home	1,738
Multifamily		10%
	2 Units	122
	3 or 4	147
	5 to 9	183
	10 to 19	68
	20 to 49	99
	50 or more	221
Other		0%
	Boat, RV, van, etc.	24

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2007-2011.

The 2011 median value of homes in Payson was \$213,000. In comparison, the median home value in Gila County was \$154,200. Given the large inventory of single family detached homes in Payson, higher median home values is to be expected, but the current inventory prices out much of the crucial workforce needed to attract growth-oriented employers.

Increasing the housing stock as part of a planned district design supports the sense of place, and the small town feel expressed by stakeholders as an important characteristic of Payson. Offering smaller units, close to open space, service providers and retail creates an opportunity to walk and bike rather than relying on motorized transport for each trip. As the current population continues to age, the Town wishes to offer retirees the option to down-size into defined neighborhoods with a strong sense of place.

Identifying Growth Areas

The 2003 Payson General Plan Update identified four growth areas shown below in **Map 11** in which:

- Infrastructure exists with excess capacity;
- There is sufficient land available to develop mixed-use master planned areas;
- Economic vitality would benefit from infill development; and
- There exists a diversity of land uses.

Over the past decade investments were made in each of the identified growth areas.

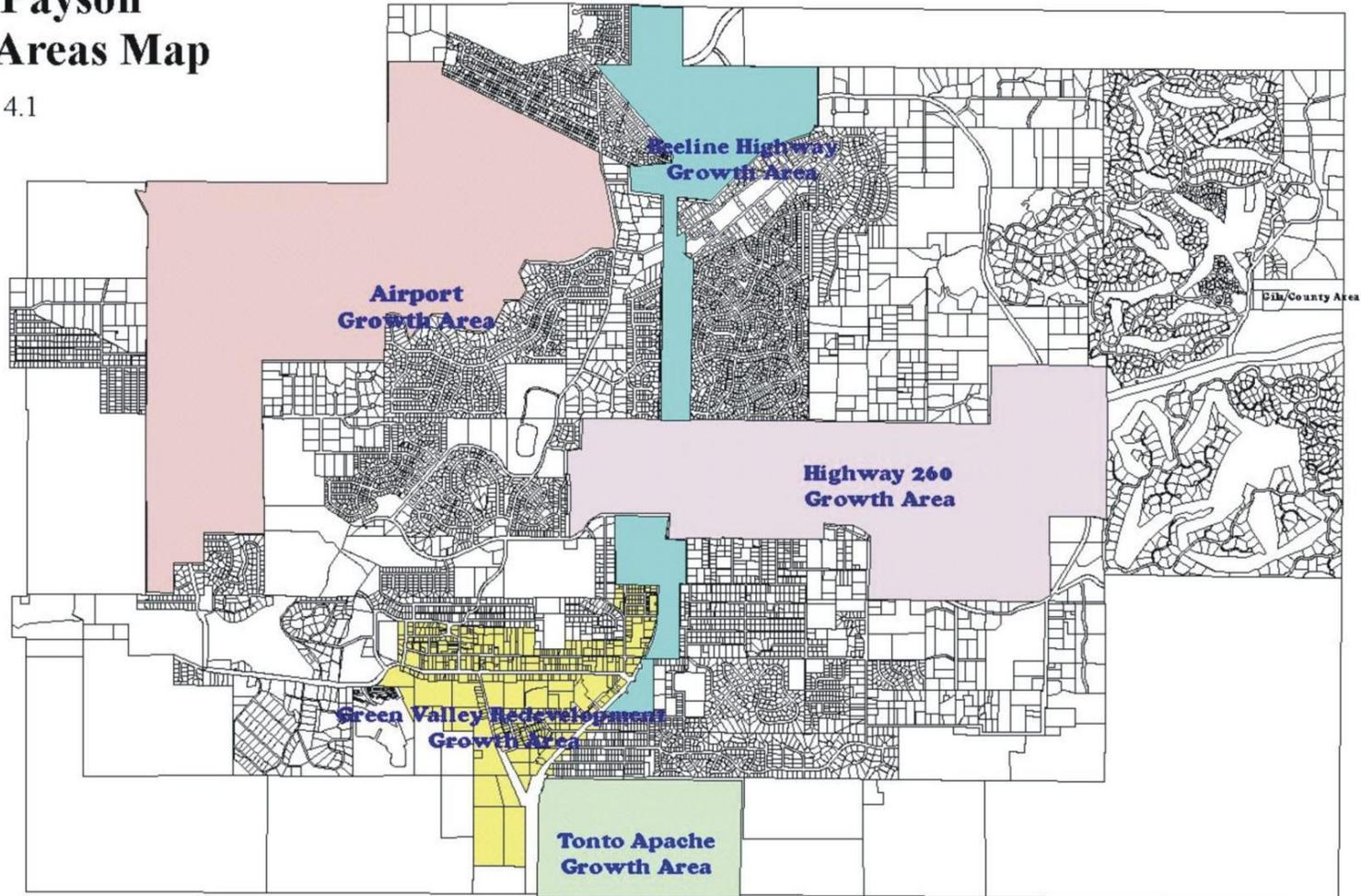
The 2003 *Beeline Highway* and *State Road 260* growth areas focused attention primarily on development immediately adjacent to the state roadways that carry large volumes of daily and seasonal traffic. The 2003 *Highway 260* and *Airport* growth areas identified under-developed areas, adjacent to open space and residential neighborhoods, in which to concentrate business development. *Beeline Highway* and *Green Valley* growth areas each defined areas ripe for commercial redevelopment and infill.

Growth areas express the community's desire for a balance of land uses. Land use management tools like zoning, open space preservation, master development plans, and incentives will be used to facilitate change in the identified areas. Growth areas, and land use management tools, work in unison to facilitate private and public sector communications by clearly identifying the desired uses for particular areas. As individual parcels, or clusters of parcels become available, the private sector knows, in advance, what investment the Payson community envisions.

Map 11: 2003 Payson General Plan Update Growth Areas

Town of Payson Growth Areas Map

Figure 4.1



Source: Town of Payson. 2003 General Plan Update

2014 Town of Payson Growth Areas

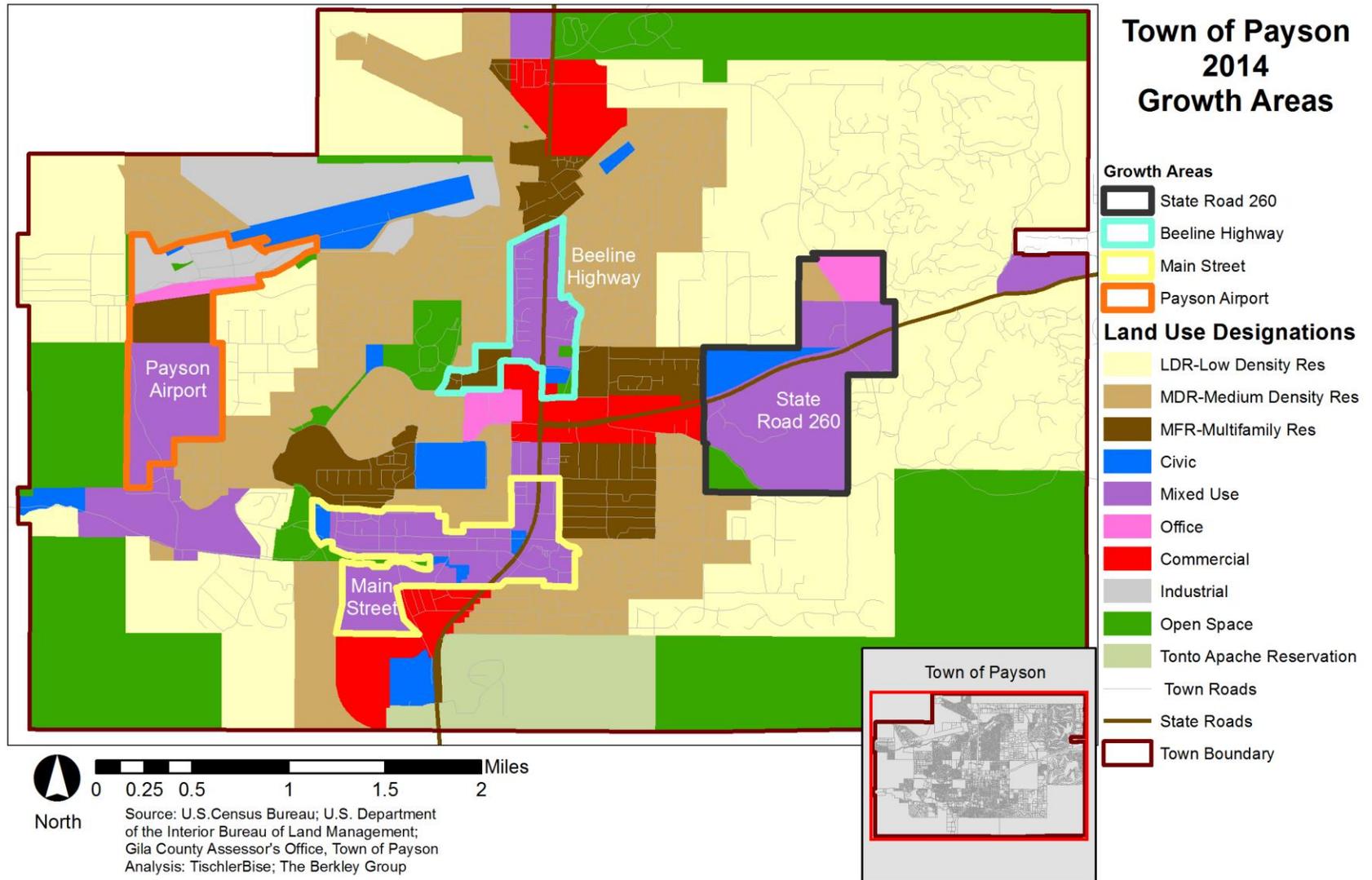
The General Plan Update 2014-2024 process included careful review of previous development activity and planning including local and regional land use plans, transportation studies, growth area master plans, and other Town studies. Stakeholders were engaged in the process through the General Plan Steering Committee, a community survey, three community facilitation workshops, and two open houses. Each of these steps brought to light areas of Town ripe for change based on what the Payson community identified as critical issues and land use preferences.

Payson stakeholders identified progress made in the growth areas throughout the General Plan process, and expressed interest to continue investment in each of the growth areas. The community participation process identified critical issues to be addressed through district-centered development strategies, and slightly reshaped to refocus each growth area. The *Beeline Highway* and *Main Street* Growth Areas will emphasize nonresidential infill development. The *Payson Airport* and *State Road 260* Growth Areas plan for development of large greenfield parcels through managed growth and complimentary land use designations. **Map 12** identifies the 2014 Town of Payson Growth Areas.

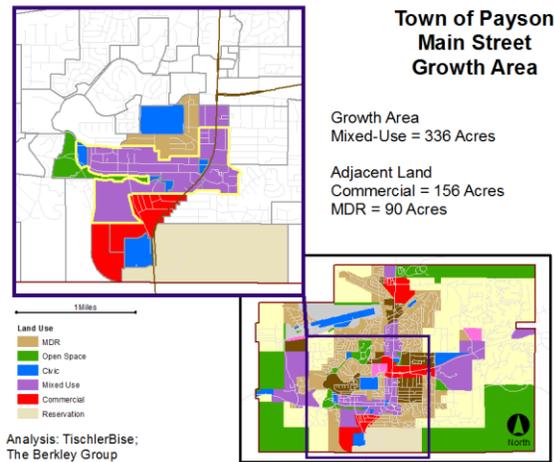
Each Growth Area serves to:

- protect green infrastructure and access to open space;
- encourage commercial vibrancy;
- promote multi-modal circulation;
- define community gathering space; and
- efficiently use current infrastructure.

Map 12: Growth Areas Map



Main Street Growth Area



Main Street, extending west from Beeline Highway to Green Valley Park was discussed throughout the General Plan process as an area with overwhelming community support for redevelopment. Large-scale retail development along Beeline Highway and State Road 260, in combination with the economic recession, hurt the bypassed the Main Street corridor. Small independent shops closed, incremental efforts have been made to develop green space along the American Gulch, but increasingly Main Street serves as a pass-through rather than the destination and community center of a traditional “main street”.

Through the community participation process residents expressed support for the redevelopment of Main Street, including traffic calming infrastructure improvements, pedestrian amenities like wide, defined sidewalks with tree canopies, upper floor residential units above street-level commercial space, and increased links to green space like the American Gulch and Green Valley Park.

The Julia Randall Elementary school at the western edge of the Main Street Growth Area can serve as a District anchor. It, in combination with the Payson middle and high school campus just north of the Main Street Growth Area, primes the entire area for *safe routes to school* transportation improvements like sidewalks along the residential local streets, and additional traffic calming street designs.

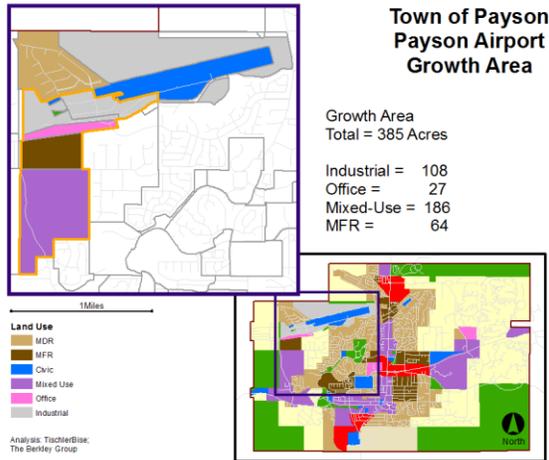
The Main Street Growth Area includes more than just Main Street and the adjacent parcels. As public and private investments create districts anchored by development on Main Street the larger Growth Area will continue to evolve. The Main Street Growth Area includes a one-mile stretch of Main Street. At present the roadway varies in width from 61 to 125 feet. There are sidewalks (of not more than 4 feet wide) on each side for the full mile. However, there is no landscape buffer between lanes of travel and sidewalks. Sidewalks are subject to frequent curb cuts serving fronting commercial buildings and off-street parking between buildings and sidewalks. Design changes to Main Street should include incremental efforts to define three types of areas between buildings fronting on Main Street. Pedestrians will be buffered from travel lanes by landscaping like tree canopies, and areas of on-street parking. Sidewalks will vary in width where appropriate. As property owners choose to make changes to existing buildings they will be encouraged to negotiate with neighboring properties to provide shared parking and access routes. New buildings will be encouraged to shorten setbacks and hide parking. Where space allows, outdoor café seating along Main Street is encouraged.



An important Payson destination is the Payson Multi-Event Center on the western side of Beeline Highway at Payson’s southern border. The Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Department manages these grounds and plans continued investments to the property. As a piece of the southern gateway into Payson the event center will serve to anchor a commercial area extending along the western edge of Beeline Highway from the Tonto Apache Reservation to the southern edge of the Main Street Growth Area. The entertainment and commercial area will be an important driver for the mixed-use and residential components of Main Street. The workforce necessary to support an entertainment district will need housing options. Locating large numbers of smaller units within walking distance of the entertainment district will help to alleviate congestion and pressures on the transportation infrastructure.

The Arizona Department of Transportation considered the feasibility of constructing an alternate route to the State Road 87 (Beeline Highway) through Payson. The Payson community recognizes such a route could alleviate some of the peak season traffic congestion experienced in Town. However, if Payson is bypassed by all travelers, the commercial corridors of Beeline Highway and State Road 260 could suffer a similar fate experienced by Main Street. The Town of Payson takes an active position on the location and design of any alternate route plans. The Main Street Growth Area is one example of Payson affecting change within the municipal boundary to ensure the Town remains connected to any alternate route access points should ADOT construct a route west of Payson.

Payson Airport Growth Area



The Payson Airport Growth Area will host the greatest diversity of land uses of any District. The increase of lands classified for industrial use presents expanded economic opportunity for Payson and Payson Airport.

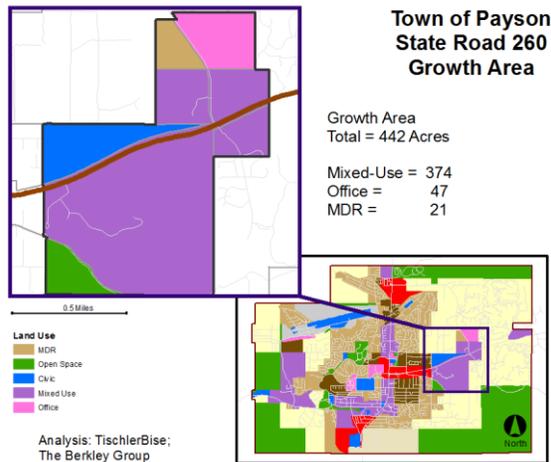
During the 2003 General Plan Update process, the Payson Airport Growth Area was designed to protect the viability of the airport by protecting it from residential encroachment. The 2014 Payson Airport Growth Area recognizes the economic importance of Payson Airport. The reshaped Airport Growth Area tapers land intensity from the airport and surrounding industrial areas, to areas designated for office, mixed-use, and multifamily residential land uses.

Payson stakeholders identified the Payson Airport Growth Area as full of potential to spur economic development, to increase Town linkages to regional recreation, and to provide local services to residential development on the west side of Town. The area has the potential to attract private investment with large undeveloped parcels available for green field development. There is potential for economic development in, and adjacent to, the industrial classified lands. Greenfield district-centered development, defined by the enjoyment of the outdoors and Mogollon Rim country recreation, is strongly encouraged.

The southern portion of the Growth Area is designated for mixed-use development. It is bordered to the west by U.S. Forest Service Land not in the base for exchange, and is accessed by Vista Road. This large green development site offers 186 acres to design from the ground-up. It is intended to encourage neighborhood-oriented shops and restaurants. As employment is funneled to the office and industrial areas included in the Growth Area, the mixed-use, and multifamily residential, will diversify the workforce housing options in the Growth Area and Town as a whole.



State Road 260 Growth Area



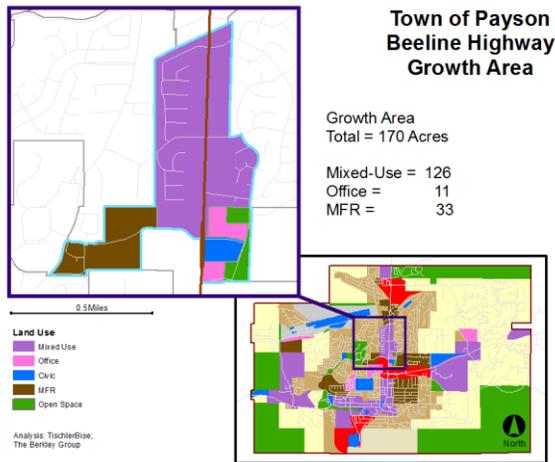
The State Road 260 Growth Area is focused on the intersection of the east/west running State Road 260 and north/south running Tyler Parkway. This intersection is defined on all four corners by large parcels, currently hosting different intensities of land use. The north west corner is home to Gila Community College. The south west corner includes a large area of land currently slated for sale by the USFS. Institutions of higher learning have expressed interest in purchasing this land for education services.

Payson actively supports development of this parcel by an academic institution. A higher education campus is a mixed-use development. It may host civic space, office and light industrial lab space, housing, open space, and commercial retail. As an extension of such development, the community identified the four corners intersection as prime for mixed-use development, and the larger State Road 260 Growth Area for complimentary development that lessens in intensity to the low density residential land uses north and east of the area. The State Road 260 Growth Area can develop to include commercial/retail at the street level and offer offices or residential units on upper floors. Extending along Tyler Parkway will be an area of Office, and an area of Medium Density Residential development.

The State Road 260 and Tyler Parkway intersection will serve as a Town gateway for those entering from the east. Traffic calming design elements may include wide sidewalks, clearly marked textured crosswalks, increased landscaping and tree canopies, all intended to define the area and slow traffic as it moves along State Road 260, or exits into residential neighborhoods. Development is encouraged to take advantage of pedestrian and traffic volume by reducing setbacks and coming up to the sidewalks; parking is expect to be hidden in exchange for design elements to encourage and protect bicyclists and pedestrians. The Growth Area includes large parcels of varying current land use intensities. The goal will be to define a district anchored by vibrant retail and commercial framing the core intersection and extending along both roadways. Gila Community College and any future higher education institutions will create demand for a young “hip” district focused on the public space. Small loft-style apartments will accommodate students and increase market feasibility.



Beeline Highway Corridor Growth Area



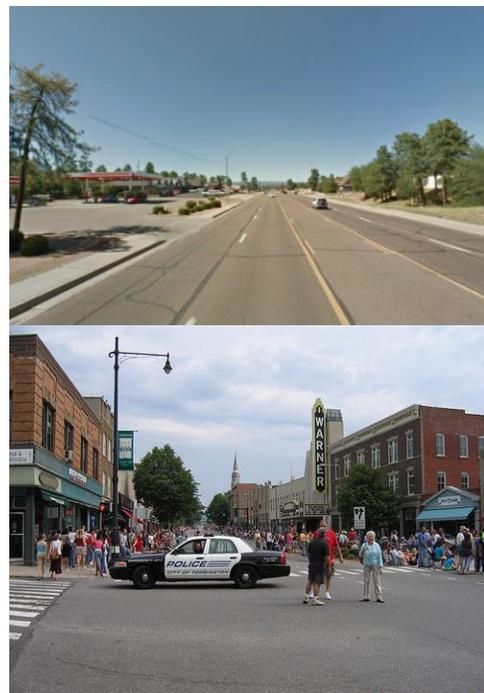
Beeline/State Road 87 is the spine of Payson. Average daily traffic counts for the section from State Road 260 north to the intersection with Airport Road varies from 2,000 to 2,800 vehicle trips and can exceed 20,000 trips during peak seasonal weekends. There are only two signalized intersections along the two-mile stretch of Beeline Highway from SR 260 to the northern municipal boundary. The signalized intersections at Rumsey Drive and Forest Drive are included in the Beeline Highway Corridor Growth Area to ensure these intersections accommodate pedestrian flow across the five-to-six-lane stretch of Beeline Highway. Improved pedestrian and bicyclist movement

across Beeline Highway can remove some local vehicle miles of travel from the road network. Additional traffic calming measures for Beeline Highway are discussed in the Circulation/Transportation Element chapter.

The Beeline Highway Corridor Growth Area will include mixed-use commercial developments on the east and west sides of Beeline Highway as well as Office, Civic, and Multifamily Residential land use areas. The mixed-use areas along Beeline Highway, as defined in the Map 10: Future Land Use Map, will promote redevelopment of adjacent parcels to shorten setbacks for buildings. The areas will include wide sidewalks, and tree canopies to buffer pedestrians from traffic.

Figure 34: Auto-Centric or Pedestrian-Oriented Streetscape

Beeline Highway is the commercial lifeblood of Payson, it offers the greatest visibility for retail, dining, and commercial activity. However, development over the past decades has resulted in inconsistent facades and setbacks, excessive curb cuts, loss of tree canopy, and lack of gateways defining the Beeline Highway as part of a community. Designating areas for mixed-use development/redevelopment along Beeline Highway helps to define the corridor as a destination. Bringing buildings closer to the road sends a signal to drivers to slow down. They begin to pay closer attention to what the area has to offer, rather than just the road ahead. The mixed-use districts could allow four story buildings, which will help to provide shading on sidewalks and offer additional sound buffers to the adjacent residential neighborhoods. Upper floors of buildings may include residential or professional offices, both of which increase the demand for pedestrian amenities along Beeline Highway.

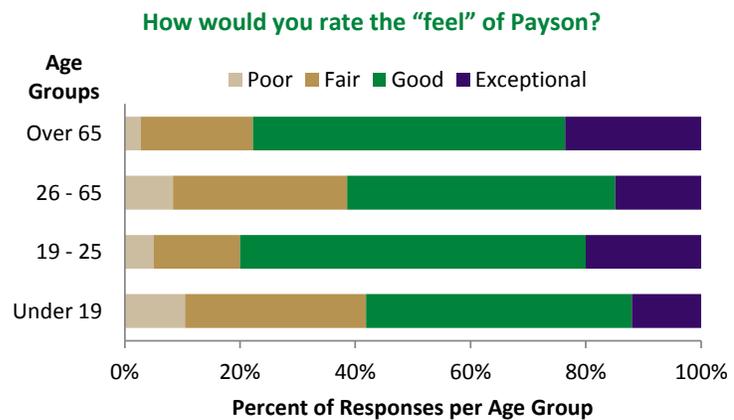


7.2 CRITICAL ISSUES

- 7.2.1 A large number of commercial vacancies contribute to a stagnant local economy
- 7.2.2 The current development process is reactive to change
- 7.2.3 Preserve the small-town character while improving economic activity levels
- 7.2.4 Increase the quality and quantity of affordable workforce housing
- 7.2.5 Economic and industrial diversity needs significant improvement

Discussion

An engaged citizenry, staff and stakeholders of Payson contest the effects of strip-oriented commercial development, low-density and auto-centric residential growth, and employment limitations. During the General Plan process, stakeholder opinion consistently celebrated a vibrant sense of place. Participants in the General Plan process expressed strong support for preservation of open space. They desire solutions for auto dependency and traffic congestion in Town. They expressed support for traffic calming measures to be implemented along the commercial corridors of State Road 87 (Beeline Highway) and State Road 260, along with other arterial and collector roads throughout Town. These measures are intended to define Payson as a destination for employers, residents and visitors. As the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) discusses a long-range plan to provide traffic volume relief for Payson by constructing an alternate route connecting state roads north and south of Payson, Town stakeholders expressed support in the context of designing Payson to be a welcoming and important destination in the Mogollon Rim Country. The four identified growth areas will include design elements that showcase the best characteristics of Payson.



Source: Town of Payson. (2012). Payson Community Survey.

District-Centered Development

The district-centered, mixed-use development presented in this chapter seeks to help Payson stakeholders implement the *Vision*. By employing traditional neighborhood design standards, form-based zoning changes and place-making strategies, district development works to build community connections, residential and commercial vibrancy, employment diversity, and open space preservation. District-centered design focuses on form rather than use, so that the physical look of an area is consistent and scaled to the pedestrian. Commercial development within a defined district employs a “park-once” strategy, which accommodates employees and visitors but encourages pedestrian circulation.



District-centered development identifies an area, roughly a quarter mile in radius. Community space (neighborhood school, community recreation facility, theater) serves as an anchor for each district and often helps to define a district’s character. The design encourages community connections by providing ample space for public interaction and encourages walking or biking as an alternative to short-trip vehicle usage. District-centered development accommodates the automobile; but most of the daily life activities are available within a safe and comfortable walking distance. Providing

housing options for all types of residents and creating living streets with vibrant, unique commercial and essential services defines a sense of place welcoming to all members of the community.

District-centered development embraces the small-town feel of Payson while providing civic, commercial, recreational, and residential vibrancy. The identified districts will help Town staff guide and spur private investment necessary to accommodate future growth. By designating areas with capacity to absorb higher development densities, the Town can protect open space, promote multi-modal circulation, and advance the already strong sense of community. Designating concentrated development districts addresses each of the identified critical issues.

Residential

Each growth area includes at least one district with a residential component. The vision for district-centered residential development is to offer a diverse mix of housing options connected by community open, civic and commercial space. Payson’s housing stock is dominated by single family



units (both stick built and manufactured), on lots of varying sizes and setbacks. Residential diversity encouraged by the district-centered development scenarios will increase population densities where infrastructure exists to absorb growth and where the community has expressed an interest in, and tolerance for, increased densities. The residential component seeks to increase residential variety and affordability by encouraging development of smaller detached and attached single family units, and units in multifamily structures, not to exceed four stories in height.

Infrastructure

Encouraging district-centered development mitigates sewer, water, and transportation capital expenses by concentrating development or upzoning where infrastructure exists with excess capacity. Transportation infrastructure is further spared by designing districts to be pedestrian and bicycle-friendly to remove at least some vehicle miles traveled from the network. The vision of district-centered development in the growth areas will require municipal and private investments in streetscape design features like minimal curb cuts, buffered on-street parking, larger sidewalks with bump-outs to shorten the distance necessary to cross streets, on-street striping of bicycle lanes and cross-walks.

Commercial/Civic Core

District-centered development fosters a sense of community by providing different types of gathering places; these include green space, schools, shops/markets, and civic or community centers. Increased feet on the street and eyes on the block builds a sense of place and community. It is the retired grandmother working a small garden plot in the community garden next to her townhouse while watching children walk safely home from school. It is providing the coffee shop or exercise facility that opens early for the young professional. It is a mixed-use corner building with an art gallery in a storefront and artist studio lofts in the upper floors. It is providing the entry-level job opportunities in the district so teenagers do not need to drive.

Form-Based Design

To implement a district-centered design pattern in the growth areas it is necessary to set a sliding scale of height and density radiating from a core point. Commercial and civic buildings are expected to complement residential intensities to promote the human scale of the built environment. District cores would host diverse small-scale retail and restaurant units. It encourages vibrant street-level activity with limited interruptions to the building facades and sidewalks.

District-centered development is designed for the pedestrian or bicyclist. It is designed to be small, and walkable, and is therefore not a transit-oriented development. However, participants in the General Plan process did express interest in limited trolley service to provide transit between existing neighborhoods, commercial districts, and open space. District-centered development helps to concentrate the critical mass necessary to make a trolley service viable. As population and activity increase within growth areas, the idea is to encourage multi-modal connections between district cores, commercial hubs, and growth areas.

Implementation Strategies

Using innovative place-making strategies to affect change within the Growth Areas, and to facilitate the design of district-centered development defines spaces in which to celebrate the Payson sense of community, spur economic growth through vibrancy and density, preserve the highly-valued open space, and to welcome visitors with defined Town gateways. *Goals and Strategies* to implement the vision for Growth Areas include both administrative (expedited design review) and zoning (like form-based districts or shared parking) considerations. Defined Growth Areas encourage infill and redevelopment, but any policy adopted would be applied to affected parcels only when the individual property owner chooses to make changes.

7.3 GOALS AND STRATEGIES

7.3.1 Participate in land management decisions inside and outside the Town

- 7.3.1.1 Continue the open dialogue with the U.S. Forest Service to ensure lands in the exchange base are developed in a manner consistent with Town's goals

7.3.2 Create a Main Street District

- 7.3.2.1 Designate Main Street as a district for mixed-use development
- 7.3.2.2 Promote a strong community identity with a Main Street District and Event Plan
- 7.3.2.3 Encourage development of residential units on upper floors of existing and new buildings
- 7.3.2.4 Provide protected and shaded sidewalks along Main Street from Beeline Highway to Green Valley Park
- 7.3.2.5 Attract dining, small retail, and entertainment business to increase the time spent by each visitor to the district
- 7.3.2.6 Incentivize infill investments in the district

7.3.3 Provide and implement a clear vision for the growth areas

- 7.3.3.1 Proactively refine the development codes and approval process to promote the growth area vision
- 7.3.3.2 Design mixed-use districts that encourage development within a quarter-mile walkable radius from a community gathering anchor
- 7.3.3.3 Provide affordable, workforce housing with higher density, mixed-use, mixed-income development
- 7.3.3.4 Ensure adequate public safety personnel and facilities to serve projected growth
- 7.3.3.5 Strengthen green and technology infrastructure

7.3.4 Concentrate uses to promote infill development and preserve open space

- 7.3.4.1 Invest in public infrastructure to meet the current and future needs of development while protecting the community's natural resources
- 7.3.4.2 Encourage pedestrian or bicycle movement between commercial destinations to reduce the number of pass-by trip ends per establishment

7.3.5 Create a vibrant and diverse economy with appropriately scaled businesses

- 7.3.5.1 Conduct a market feasibility study to identify needs and opportunities
- 7.3.5.2 Recruit a vibrant and diverse retail market
- 7.3.5.3 Target clean, light or medium intensity industrial development
- 7.3.5.4 Work with the Chamber of Commerce to promote, strengthen and recruit small independent shops
- 7.3.5.5 Capture a greater share of the retail expenditures by encouraging pass-through traffic to stop and frequent local business
- 7.3.5.6 Aggressively encourage infill opportunities for vacant or underutilized parcels