

# Introduction

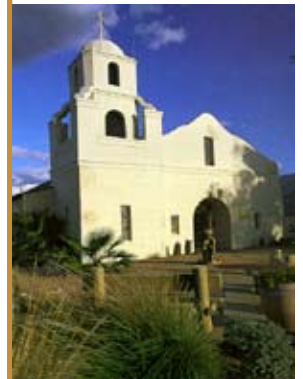
## Scottsdale's Past

When incorporated in 1951, Scottsdale was a small community of 2,000 residents situated on about two square miles of land. The community developed as a commerce center for local agricultural activity. There were few paved roads, and daily activities focused on citrus groves, cotton fields, dairy farms, and shopping in the downtown area around Main Street and Scottsdale Road.

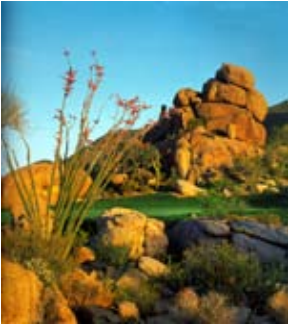
As a small community, much of the first 60 years of Scottsdale's business activity focused around the needs and functions of an agricultural community. Some of the seeds for future economic growth evolved out of local residents' and visitors' interests in art and hospitality, creating small art communities and galleries, dude and guest ranches and equestrian breeding ranches. In part due to the exposure the area got during World War II as the location of training bases, new businesses moved facilities to the area in the 1950's.

In the early to mid-1950's a number of events took place that would set the growth and character of the city in motion. First, the Chamber of Commerce recognized the benefit and potential growth of the winter visitor and tourist market. A number of distinctive and lasting events began, from the "Parada Del Sol", Spring training baseball, the opening of the Safari and Valley Ho hotels, and apartment housing for winter visitors, to the adoption of "The West's Most Western Town" slogan and western retrofit of the original downtown area and 5th Avenue shopping districts. Second, Motorola opened major plants at the south end of the community and in nearby east Phoenix. This brought strong population growth, drawing primarily well-educated and skilled employees from the upper Midwest. This along with the expansion of Arizona State University into a major university brought about the first major growth period to the area in the late 1950s and early 1960's. Third, in response to the population growth, the community saw the beginning of single-family tract housing south of the downtown area.

From 1958 to 1965 the city experienced explosive growth in housing and population. The population grew many times over, from less than 10,000 to 65,000. The typical family had four or five members, and the head of the family usually had at least some college education, if not a degree. Housing for this population was predominantly single-family homes on modest sized lots, not unlike housing growth occurring at the same time in suburbs across the country. The city annexed rapidly, first southward from downtown and later northward to Deer Valley Road, growing in area from about two square miles to over 60 square miles. With the notable exception of a few major industrial



plants and resorts, this early growth did not include a strong balance of services, mixed employment, or public amenities.



Subsequently, key decisions made in collaboration by the residents and business owners in the 1960's further spurred the growth of the community as well as the nature and high quality of this growth. One was a decision to encourage the community as a full service resort destination, which led to many new resorts and the maturing of specialty and high end retail areas. The other was the decision to turn the airport into a vital facility surrounded by a major center of business activity. These decisions and actions have led to a high quality of development and a favorable setting for small and innovative businesses.

During the late 1960's, major service uses were established with Los Arcos Mall, Fashion Square, and the growth of small businesses in and around downtown. Public amenities were developed with the beginnings of a strong public park system and creation of Civic Center. Diversity in housing began to occur with the introduction of townhomes and the first apartments not oriented to winter visitors. In the early 1970's another growth spurt occurred, and with it, the first master planned development in the city, McCormick Ranch. This project would inspire many subsequent developments throughout the Phoenix metropolitan area. With the advent of master planned development came new concepts and policies, such as developer-built public improvements, contributions to the infrastructure, and amenities to support the newly created neighborhoods. Prior to this time, most of the infrastructure had been built through the use of public funds from Maricopa County bonds, Federal Government grant sources, and local improvement districts. The city of Phoenix provided water services. In addition to providing public amenities, McCormick Ranch introduced private amenities and strong property owner associations. To absorb the costs of these amenities, new housing became noticeably more expensive, establishing a trend for upper-middle and high-end housing costs that still persists in the community.

From the mid-1970's through the mid-1980's, the city experienced periods of slow growth followed by major growth upswings. Through these cycles the predominant growth focus was on master planned developments like McCormick Ranch, Scottsdale Ranch, and Gainey Ranch. Substantial multifamily housing filled in "leftover" parcels in the southern portions of the city. Two periods of resort growth also occurred. The first in the mid-1970's resulted in a resort corridor along Scottsdale Road from Chaparral Road to McCormick Parkway. The second brought full service luxury resorts, such as the Gainey Hyatt, and Scottsdale Princess. The Scottsdale Airport grew in activity, and the surrounding employment areas began to take form during this period. Also, the Mayo Clinic branch opened, bringing new interest in biomedical uses to the community. Household sizes declined rapidly and then stabilized, resulting in school closures and increasing awareness of the need to

see Reference  
Guide map of Major  
Developments

provide health services and programs for a growing elderly segment of the population. Part-time resident growth continued, but more in low-density single-family housing than in townhomes and apartments. In the late 1980's, a growth slowdown occurred, followed in the early and mid-1990's by the strongest growth the city had experienced since the mid-1950's. While the dominance of growth in master planned communities continued, this growth period broadly diversified the geography of where development occurred.

Reflecting strong community sentiment to protect the McDowell Mountains and retain areas of natural desert, the city adopted zoning regulations in 1977 called the Hillside Ordinance. This ordinance established where development could occur on desert and mountain lands and focused on no development on high mountain slopes. The ordinance was challenged soon after it was adopted in November 1977. The case went to Appeals Court in 1985 where the Hillside Ordinance was declared unconstitutional. The Arizona Supreme Court upheld the Court of Appeals decision in July 1986. Scottsdale used interim ordinances giving landowners the option of continuing to use the Hillside District standards while the city worked on a new ordinance between 1986 and 1991. The Environmentally Sensitive Lands Ordinance (ESLO) was adopted by Scottsdale in February 1991.



The city doubled in size with annexations that took place from 1982 to 1984. In these new parts of the city there had been a number of large projects approved under the prior Maricopa County jurisdiction. These projects were restructured in the city in the mid-1980's, and by the 1990's were beginning final planning and construction. Many of these projects were within the Hillside and ESLO zoning overlay districts. This created a new sense of character with the protection of native plants, desert open spaces, and hillsides concurrent with density transfer and clustering development patterns. Overall densities declined substantially from prior development periods in the city. By the mid-1990's, virtually all of the new housing occurred north of Shea Boulevard, with the majority being north of Bell Road. Beginning in the mid-



1980's, increasing percentages of housing were low-density custom homes in the north. By 1999 nearly 80% of residential building was for custom homes.

As the community has matured it has become a major center of business services activity while retaining strong tourism and retail business sectors. The growing diversity of the local business activity has allowed the area to better adjust as the regional and national economy has evolved and has created a more stable economic and revenue environment.

### History of Planning in Scottsdale

In 1960, the Scottsdale City Council, Chamber of Commerce, Maricopa County Board of Supervisors, and County Planning Commission were key participants in the preparation of a Comprehensive Plan for Scottsdale, Arizona. The study, initiated by Maricopa County, included a land use element and street plans and covered an area of about 15 square miles between McKellips Road on the south, Indian Bend Road on the north, Pima Road on the east, and 64th Street on the west.

In 1966, the Scottsdale Town Enrichment Program (S.T.E.P.) forums, which involved 300 citizen participants and numerous civic organizations, provided the impetus for another comprehensive General Plan study. The city's planning department and Eisner-Stewart and Associates conducted this study. This Plan included land use, circulation, and public facilities elements, and covered an area of about 80 square miles from Deer Valley Road to McKellips Road. The General Plan recommended reinforcement of Civic Center/Old Town as the city's governmental, civic, and cultural hub, the concentration of employment uses in the Airpark area, residential uses to the east of the Airpark area to support the employment uses in the area, and a system of parks and recreation uses including the Indian Bend Wash.

Between 1972 and 1975, the comprehensive General Plan process included updates to the land use and circulation elements and the McCormick Ranch Center General Plan Amendment. In addition, the city's Zoning Ordinance was revised to accommodate master planned projects, sign controls, landscape, and parking requirements, and development and design review.

In 1976, the Northeast Area Plan was prepared for an area covering 25 square miles north and east of the Central Arizona Project (C.A.P.) canal to Deer Valley Road and the eastern corporate boundary. This planning project, which encompassed land use, environment, transportation, public services and facilities, and housing elements, involved twelve months of dialogue among a variety of study groups, public hearings, and the participation of the City Council, Planning Commission, and city staff. It designated a "future development line" beyond which development would not occur for ten years.

In 1981, the city staff reformatted reports of General Plan policies that had been approved over the preceding ten years. This project included an update of the land use, environmental design, circulation, and public facilities elements of the General Plan. During the 1980's, numerous public hearings were held on area studies throughout the community.



see Area Study  
listing in Reference  
Guide

During the 1990's, the four General Plan Elements were updated and several more area studies were undertaken. The Land Use Element was updated in 1989 and then reprinted with City Council amendments in 1994 and again in 1999. The Circulation Element was reviewed and updated in 1991. The Public Facilities and the Environmental Design Elements were updated in 1992. Following recommendations from the CityShape 2020 process the Economic Element was added to the General Plan in 1998. The CAP Corridor, the Cactus Corridor, the Shea Area, the Dynamite Area, the Los Arcos Area, and the Desert Foothills and Dynamite Foothills Character Area studies were undertaken and plans adopted during the 1990's.

The 1998 Growing Smarter and 2000 Growing Smarter Plus ACTS required all Arizona cities and towns to update their General Plans by December 2001 and have such plans ratified by a vote of the public. This legislation provided the impetus for the review and update of Scottsdale's General Plan beginning in the summer of 1999. The new plan included new State-mandated elements, the recommendations from CityShape 2020, and three community-created elements, Character and Design, Economic Vitality, and Community Involvement. The Plan was adopted by the City Council in 2001 and ratified by the voters in 2002.

### **A Legacy of Citizen Involvement**

The formulation of the S.T.E.P. forums was likely the most significant event in the history of the city. This involvement of interested, creative, and collaborative citizens is what made Scottsdale different from the multitude of similarly situated suburbs across the nation. This process was brought together in the late 1960's, early 1970's and again in the early 1980's to focus on important issues facing the city.

In the early 1990's, another citizen involvement program called "Scottsdale Visioning" was formed. Inspired by the original S.T.E.P. forums, this process brought together a broad group of citizens to evaluate the direction of the city's evolution and propose a new collaborative vision for the city. This visioning process resulted in a number of suggestions, which focused on broad and specific, city and private initiatives for the community. Given this renewed and revised statement of vision, the City Council formed the CityShape 2020 program in 1994. Its purpose was to recommend ways to improve the Scottsdale General Plan as an expression of the Shared Vision. The recommendations from CityShape 2020 focused on changes to the General Plan structure and the formalization of the philosophies behind policy decisions in the city.



see the Scottsdale  
Values and Vision  
section



The 2000 Future in Focus process strove to validate the Scottsdale Visioning and CityShape 2020 visions through a public process that included members of the community that are seldom heard from like teens and minority populations. The process provided a comprehensive perspective from many facets of the community about the future that citizens would like to see for the community.

Unlike many communities, Scottsdale has established a tradition of community involvement. Characterizing this involvement are numerous standing and ad hoc committees, commissions, and boards addressing a wide range of subjects. This history has raised the level of expectation for citizen involvement to virtually a mandate.

### Key Community Decisions

A number of the key decisions that have shaped the unique character of Scottsdale have resulted from constraints or issues driven by forces outside the city. Significant national issues that led to key Scottsdale actions were the environmental movement, the decision to build the C.A.P., and the regional decision to not expand the freeway system. In particular, during the early 1960's a number of proposals by other government bodies helped to form the impetus to create the S.T.E.P. forums. Among these were:

- 1) The Army Corps of Engineers proposal to create a 300 feet wide concrete channel down the Indian Bend Wash to control flooding;
- 2) Maricopa County proposals to divide the city by freeways along the Indian Bend Wash and Lincoln and McDowell Roads;
- 3) Maricopa County approval of a large number of major projects to the north of the city; and
- 4) Phoenix annexation proposals that would have surrounded Scottsdale.

Key responses to these proposals/actions were:

- 1) Building a green, turfed, Indian Bend Wash park/flood control system;
- 2) Creating an infrastructure and growth management line at the C.A.P.;
- 3) Eliminating freeways on the city's street plans; and
- 4) Annexing northward to the Tonto National Forest to better manage infrastructure provision and control the destiny and quality of nearby growth.

Also, as a result of the desire for a high quality physical environment for Scottsdale, decisions that contribute to the identity and form of the surrounding environment were made by the city. These include design review, sign control, strong landscaping standards, the Old Town Scottsdale Character Area Plan, the Hillside Ordinance and the Environmentally Sensitive Lands Ordinance, and mountain and desert preservation.

## Scottsdale Today

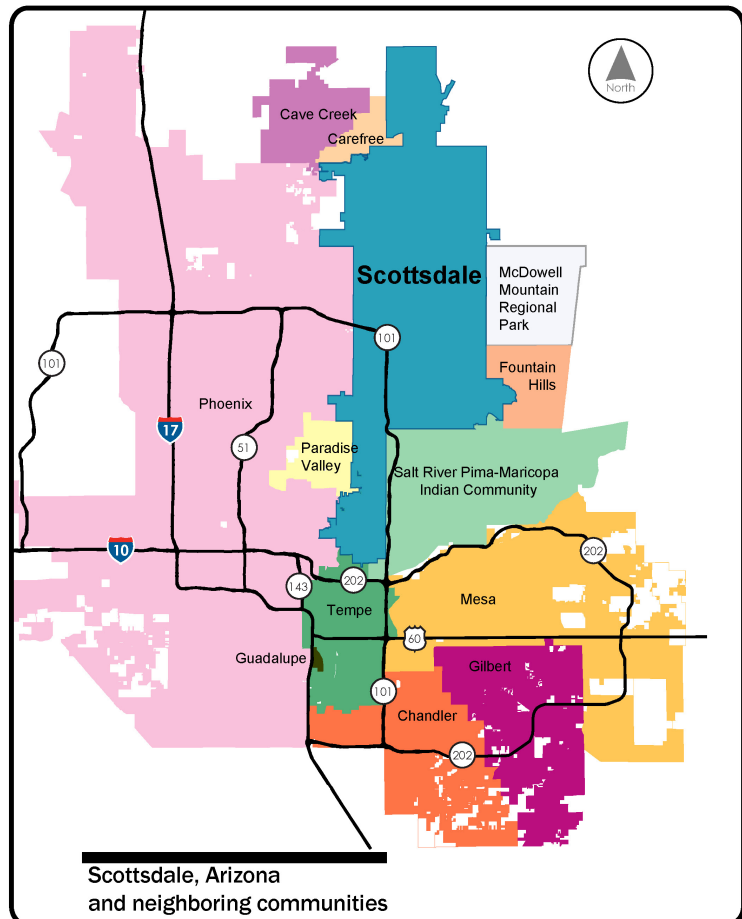
*Scottsdale, in Arizona's Valley of the Sun, has grown from a tiny farming cluster of 2,000 persons occupying one square mile in 1951, to a vibrant community of more than 180,000 persons spread over an area of 185 square miles. Founded by Army Chaplain Winfield Scott in 1888, Scottsdale, long known as the "West's Most Western Town," has matured into one of the premier examples of the new west - urbane, sophisticated, and cultured. Scottsdale's quality lifestyle includes well-planned living, working and shopping areas. The city's emphasis on mountain preservation and protection of its rich desert areas is recognized nationally. Scottsdale is also known for its architectural and landscape design excellence and rich cultural, business and recreational environments.*

- Arizona Department of Commerce, Community Profiles

## Scottsdale's Place in the Region

The city of Scottsdale is located in the northeast quadrant of the Phoenix metropolitan area. The southern end of the city is near the metropolitan area's geographical population center.

The northern end of the city abuts the Tonto National Forest, unincorporated Maricopa County, and the communities of Carefree and Cave Creek. Much of the southern portion is bordered on the east by the Salt River-Pima-Maricopa Indian Community. Another large part of the eastern edge of the city borders the town of Fountain Hills and the McDowell Mountain Regional Park. Tempe is located along the southern boundary and Phoenix, Paradise Valley, and Maricopa County are located along the western boundary. This limits the extent to which ongoing development can occur on the outer edges of Scottsdale.



Scottsdale is a suburb of Phoenix, but unlike the typical suburban community, it is a net importer of employment and serves as a regional retail center. Household sizes are typically smaller than in other communities in the Valley, and household incomes are higher than most communities in the area. Because of the lack of services in many areas adjacent to the city, residents outside of the city heavily use Scottsdale's retail centers, parks, employment centers, and libraries.

Scottsdale is the major resort center of the metropolitan area. Although not all local major resorts are located in the city, Scottsdale contains the core of specialty shopping, art galleries, and recreational facilities, and many of the cultural and sporting events that attract and sustain the local tourism industry. The high quality of the city's visual environment is an important component of maintaining this industry.

Scottsdale, by way of pioneering such things as the Indian Bend Wash, Civic Center, sign controls, significant open space and landscaping standards, planned community development, and design review, has achieved a quality of development that has been emulated by communities across the metropolitan area as well as around the country.

### Demographics

Scottsdale is a diverse community where all residents enjoy a standard and quality of life that is unsurpassed. With its world-class resorts, unique retail and dining experiences, and year-round recreational opportunities, and its historically positive approach to business, this community is one of the most desirable "addresses" available.

Within this setting, community composition continues to evolve. The 2000 Federal Decennial Census counted 202,705 full-time residents in Scottsdale occupying 104,974 dwelling units. This reflects an overall population increase of 31.4% since the 1990 Federal Census. About 70% of Scottsdale residents own a detached single-family dwelling, patio home, or townhouse. Most of the remaining 30% choose apartment living. The average citizen of Scottsdale is 39.7 years old, college-educated, married with 0.32 children in school, a professional or middle-manager who owns 1.7 automobiles, lives in a single-family detached residence with a market value of nearly \$250,000, and has an annual household income approaching \$62,000. Scottsdale, like the rest of the country, has experienced a decline in the average household size since it was incorporated in 1951. The 1960 Census reported an average of 3.6 people per dwelling unit. The recent Federal Census showed an average of 2.26 people per dwelling unit. The falling trend in household size in Scottsdale is easily explained: it is a combination of the "baby boomer" tendency to marry later and have fewer children than their parents, and the significant inflow of retirees to this community. There appears to be a trend for the children of the "boomer" generation to have larger families, so the average household size may increase over the next 20-25 years.





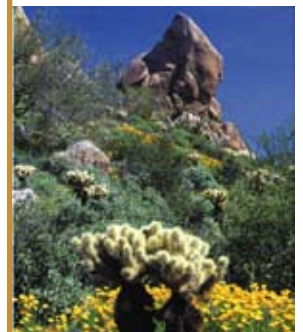
As of 2018, our population and total housing stock were estimated to be 245,417 people and 133,570 housing units (Source: MAG Population and Housing Unit Update 2018). Our build-out population is expected to approach 316,700 by 2055 (Source: MAG Socioeconomic Projections 2019). The city is now transitioning from a developing to a maturing city. Opportunities for revitalization and new construction in established areas will be increasing in the future.

In 1960, the incorporated area of Scottsdale was only 3.9 square miles. As of 2019, the city now includes 184.5 square miles within its corporate boundaries. Approximately one hundred eighteen (118) square miles are developed, twenty (20) square miles are undeveloped, and the balance, approximately forty-six and five-tenths (46.5) square miles, is within the McDowell Sonoran Preserve (Source: Maricopa County Assessor Parcel Data 2019). A priority facing the community is finding the resources needed to provide the same high quality of life current residents enjoy to the numbers of new residents expected in the future while maintaining that high quality of life for current residents.

### **Desert and Mountain Preservation Efforts**

In 1990, Scottsdale citizens initiated the preservation of Scottsdale's McDowell Mountains and Sonoran Desert. The original Recommended Study Boundary for the McDowell Sonoran Preserve consisted of 16,460 acres of mountain and related desert land. In 1998, the City Council added an additional 19,940 acres to the Recommended Study Boundary desired for inclusion in the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. Nearly 17,000 acres of this area was State Trust land. When added to the original 16,460 acres, the total area proposed for preservation was 36,400 acres or 56 square miles. This is 30% of the city's land area.

By September 2000, the amount of land protected in the boundary included 9,673 acres city owned, 1,766 acres of privately preserved land, and 3,079 acres of State Trust Land classified as suitable for conservation by the State Land Commissioner under the Arizona Preserve Initiative (API). Since 2001, the City has continued its efforts in acquiring and preserving land within the Recommended Study Boundary. As of 2019, Scottsdale has acquired or protected 30,000 acres of desert and mountain land through preservation efforts and the implementation of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve.



see complete  
survey report in  
Appendices

## Community Attitudes and Opinions

Through the Future in Focus citizen participation effort, community input was sought to ensure the General Plan update was consistent with community attitudes and opinions. As part of this effort in summer 2000, the city commissioned WestGroup Research of Phoenix to conduct a telephone survey of Scottsdale residents. The purpose of the survey was to gain insights into community attitudes and opinions particularly as they relate to the growth and development of Scottsdale. This statistically valid survey discussed quality of life, issues of a growing and maturing city, housing, transportation, parks and recreational facilities, and more. Among the many findings of the survey were that safety and the appearance of the city are important contributors to Scottsdale citizens' quality of life. Residents rated public services, such as libraries, senior or youth centers, and public open spaces, as important to Scottsdale as it matures and grows. Residents were most optimistic that providing a bus shuttle service to and from facilities and activities would help Scottsdale residents move about the city better. And many residents agreed that developing alternative transportation modes, such as improved public transit or light rail and/or improving pedestrian accommodations with more sidewalks, paths, and shade, would be good solutions to the city's transportation problems. Citizens agreed that the city should investigate the development of multiple-use facilities or adapt existing facilities, such as schools, senior centers, and community centers, that can meet a variety of needs for the changing demographics in the community. Many Scottsdale residents think open spaces and parks, youth recreation centers, and public swimming pools should be a city priority.

Through a response card in the Winter 2000 Scottsdale Citizen magazine (75,000 distribution) some of the many reasons people state for living in Scottsdale are: the desert beauty; closeness to shopping, restaurants, activities and open space; quiet and easy going/friendly neighborhoods and a small town feel; high property values and good schools; attractive and well-maintained city facilities, and a quiet, clean and safe environment. This is consistent with the annual Citizen Survey conducted by the city each year.

For the last several years, the annual Citizen Survey has shown that Scottsdale citizens feel that the city does a good or very good job of providing services. Since 1994, the overall satisfaction rate has ranged between 94% and 98%. As recently as 2018, 96% of respondents gave high ratings for the overall quality of life within Scottsdale.

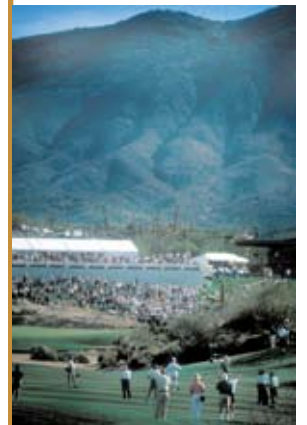


Citizens consistently give high marks to libraries, parks, recreational programs, community arts, police, fire and emergency services. City utilities - water and sewer services, refuse collection, and recycling services - also consistently receive high ratings. In open-ended questions about what people most like about living in Scottsdale, citizens responded: location and convenience, the weather, cleanliness and the atmosphere or ambiance of the community. The things citizens like least about living in Scottsdale are growth and traffic. These responses have been fairly consistent over time. In fact, in a survey done in 1971-1972 through the Brookings Institute Seminars, citizens said that the two most continuous critical problems facing Scottsdale were uncontrolled and rapid growth, and intensified traffic congestion.

## Economics

This section summarizes information about Scottsdale's economy from the July 2000 Economic Trends report, published by the city's Economic Vitality Office. The full report is referenced in other sections of this General Plan.

- Median household income in Scottsdale was 36% higher than the average for the metro Phoenix area in 1995.
- Scottsdale has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the metropolitan area.
- Scottsdale has evolved from a bedroom community to a net importer of employees, with job growth exceeding labor force growth by a ratio of 1.3 to 1.
- Fiscal year 1999/00 showed a continuing decline of residential building permits for the housing market in Scottsdale.
- The value of Scottsdale's building permits in calendar year 1999 is 13.7% of all permit valuation in Maricopa County, even though Scottsdale has only 7% of the County's population.
- The total assessed value of Scottsdale property is second only to Phoenix in the state. Scottsdale has the highest assessed valuation per capita in the metro area.
- Property tax bills for the city of Scottsdale currently average about 33% lower than other cities' property tax bills in the metropolitan area.
- Sales tax collections per capita for Scottsdale are consistently the highest of all metro communities.
- Scottsdale's general obligation bond rating was upgraded to AAA by Fitch IBCA in 1999. Scottsdale is one of only three cities west of the Mississippi, and one of only thirteen cities across the nation with this rating.



## Scottsdale's Future

As of 2000, Scottsdale was roughly two-thirds built toward the ultimate planned land uses and population, based on the current General Plan. The current built-out population is estimated to approach 316,700 by 2055 (Source: MAG Socioeconomic Projections 2019). When looking to the future in 2001, there were a number of events, factors, and trends, both external and internal that were expected to mold the ongoing growth of the community.

In 2001, some of the external factors projected to affect the city were:

- the development expansion of the Rio Salado, and nearby Gateway East/ SRP employment centers in Tempe and east Phoenix;
- the development of the Desert Ridge and comparable mixed use centers in east Phoenix and other parts of the Valley;
- the phased completion of the Pima Freeway;
- the emergence of the freeway/CAP corridor as a major core of commerce and employment;
- the aging of the “baby boomer” segment of the nation’s population;
- the increasing ethnic and racial diversification of the nation’s population;
- ongoing structural shifts of global economy;
- technological changes to society; and,
- economic cycles and factors.



In 2001, internal factors expected to be significant were:

- an increasing average age of the city’s population with one possible effect of reduced mobility in the housing market;
- an increasingly broad range in the age of neighborhoods, with associated differences in character and lifestyle;
- the geographic size of the city, the size of residential lots, and traditional dependence on the automobile will be a challenge to providing efficient mass transit for residents;
- the ability to provide adequate services and facilities needed to maintain current quality of life;
- public infrastructure improvements will be approaching replacement time in their life cycle;
- increasing expectations for services and amenities;
- greater diversification of the economic structure within the community;
- fewer large property developments and more smaller developments, lot splits, etc. and;
- provision of public services and amenities without developer extractions.



Average citywide household sizes are expected to remain consistent with past trends, but household size will decline in some neighborhoods as those neighborhoods reach 10-20 years of age. On average household incomes will remain high. The geographic population center will shift northward, as will the geographic employment center. Some existing, small employers will likely



grow into major employers, and the city will tend to become more attractive for outside major employers to relocate or expand into the community. The resort industry will grow, with some expansion of existing cores and projected increased diversity in location and orientation for most new facilities.

Greater diversity in housing and population will likely occur over the next few decades. An increased age differential and wider geographic distribution in the housing stock will result in increased differences in lifestyle and neighborhood character. Ongoing combined efforts by the Scottsdale Area Chamber and the city to attract and support high quality and diverse businesses will enhance the stability and adaptability of the local economy.

Development in newer parts of the city will tend to become even less focused on master-planned communities, since most larger parcels will be committed. Assembling of smaller properties to accommodate a larger master planned community is also possible. Infill development will become more significant, and revitalization will become a major focus of activity in the community.