

Executive Summary

The Greater Airpark Existing Conditions Report provides background information detailing the existing conditions and projected future conditions of the Greater Airpark Community Planning Area. Coupled with community input, the report provides recommendations for the vision, goals and policies of the Greater Airpark Community Area Plan and explains the plan's relationship to the General Plan and other city-adopted plans and policies.

Key Facts, Findings and Policy Considerations

The following are some of the key facts and findings from the Greater Airpark Existing Conditions Report and 2009 Economic Analysis of the Greater Airpark conducted by Gruen Gruen + Associates (Appendix VIII) organized by report chapter or theme, followed by potential policy considerations related to each topic:

Environs

Key Facts:

- The Greater Airpark (or study area) comprises five percent of Scottsdale's total land area, or 5,409 acres;
- It is the largest employment center serving a growing sub-region, north and east of Paradise Valley, that will more than double in population by 2030; and
- It is centrally located between two Mayo Hospitals and two Scottsdale Healthcare Campuses.

Policy Consideration:

Recognize the Greater Airpark as a key asset to the regional economy and the City of Scottsdale.

Regional competition will endanger the Greater Airpark's strategic advantage in the near future. Policies should focus on the retention, attraction and support of area businesses.

Implementation programs, such as enhancing the existing industrial and general commercial zoning districts to supply employment now and in the future, as well as attraction of regional employment, such as bio-sciences, corporate offices and research and development, will be important to maintaining the area as a major employment center.

Demographics

Key Facts:

- There are 2,600 residents in the Greater Airpark and more than 41,000 residents in a one-mile radius, of which 60% have a college degree;
- The population is aging, with approximately 63% at or near retirement; and
- Greater Airpark residents have higher median incomes than most of Maricopa County.

Policy Consideration:

Maintain and expand social services and facilities to accommodate future demographic shifts.

Additional social services, programs and community facilities will be necessary as the population in the vicinity of the Greater Airpark ages. Senior centers, assisted and independent living facilities, group homes, medical clinics and adult daycares are examples of potential future facilities. Services for workers with young children, such as daycares and after school programs, will also be important.

Housing and Neighborhoods

Key Facts:

- The Greater Airpark contains only 1.2% of Scottsdale's housing stock;
- It is surrounded by residential neighborhoods; and
- Residential neighborhoods that abut the area to the south are primarily rural in character.

Policy Consideration:

Sustain and enhance sensitive transitions between single-family residential neighborhoods and more intense commercial and employment areas.

The continued protection of residential neighborhoods in close proximity to the study area should be a primary goal of the Greater Airpark Community Area Plan. Policies should be established that promote effective transitions through the design and form of buildings in close proximity to residential neighborhoods, as well as proper land use compatibility between the two areas. Appropriate buffering, building setbacks and building step-backs from employment areas to residential areas will help to achieve this goal. The provision of pedestrian connections through appropriate site design and street elements will increase compatibility between residential neighborhoods and neighboring commercial and employment areas.

Noise, odors, traffic and lighting impact residential areas and other sensitive land uses, such as schools, potentially reducing the overall quality of life in the city. Policies should focus on minimizing land uses that produce nuisance noise, odors and lighting close to residential areas. At the same time, residential land uses should not impede upon land uses that provide employment opportunities in the community. Policies should also discourage cut-through traffic on neighborhood-serving streets, such as Thunderbird Road east of Hayden Road.

Employment and Economics

Key Facts:

- The Greater Scottsdale Airpark is the second largest employment center in Arizona, employing approximately 50,000 people as of 2006;
- The area employs more than one in four, or 28%, Scottsdale workers;
- Private sector employment in the area grew by 112%, or 6.5% annually, from 1995 to 2007;
- The area's economic base has shifted away from traditional manufacturing over the past twelve years;
- Nearly one-quarter of Scottsdale's tax revenues are generated in the Greater Airpark annually;
- Nine of Scottsdale's 30 largest employers are located in the area;
- Commercial building in the area increased 193% from 1997 to 2007; and
- Sixteen percent, or 1,499, of Scottsdale's hotel rooms are located in the Greater Airpark.

Policy Considerations:

The Greater Airpark should focus on becoming a premier office agglomeration.

According to Gruen Gruen + Associates, and given the supply competition in Phoenix and on the lands of the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, policies should encourage diverse and new types of office development. The design, height, amenities, and products developed or redeveloped should reflect the image of a premier office agglomeration. Adequate site planning, landscaping, parking, and access areas should be incorporated into these developments.

Sustain and expand business diversity within the Greater Airpark.

The Greater Airpark has historically been a hub for diverse business types, from start-ups to national headquarters. Goals and policies in the Community Area Plan should focus on maintaining and enhancing clusters of diverse business types and sizes.

Land Use

Key Facts:

- Eighty percent of Scottsdale’s General Plan-designated employment areas are in the Greater Airpark;
- The area contains the largest industrial-zoned area within Scottsdale;
- The 2001 General Plan designated a large portion of the area as a Growth Area, or an area most appropriate for development focus, multi-modal transportation, and concentration of a variety of uses to discourage sprawl;
- Twenty-five percent of the area is undeveloped; and
- One unique land use feature, not typically found throughout the rest of the city, is the cluster of recreational facilities, such as rock climbing, dance studios and ice rinks, located in the area.

Policy Consideration:

Maintain and enhance the diversity of land uses within the Greater Airpark.

As identified by the community, the diversity of land uses in the area is what makes the Greater Airpark special. The land use categories of the 2001 General Plan should be examined and/or streamlined to better fit the future needs of this diverse area.

In community visioning exercises in 2008, employers explained that they generally have a hard time recruiting and retaining entry-level employees because of long and expensive commutes from areas where housing costs are lower. In the end, these commuters contribute to the overall traffic congestion in the area. Given the intense competition for office and retail uses that can be expected in the region, coupled with traffic concerns, encouraging relatively high-density housing integrated into mixed-use developments may facilitate efficient development patterns, encourage replacement of obsolete building spaces, and reduce automobile reliance.

Public Services and Facilities

Key Facts:

- The Greater Airpark lies within two school districts: Paradise Valley Unified and Scottsdale Unified;
- The area currently contains two parks, encompassing 89 acres of park land, or 10% of total Scottsdale park land;
- Code enforcement violations related to illegal signs, usually A-Frame signs, is common in the area because of sign ordinance restrictions and little street visibility for some businesses;
- The area will require additional water and wastewater capacity if additional intensification occurs; and
- There is increasing demand for additional electric and communications service in the area south of the CAP Canal.

Policy Considerations:

Identify and meet the needs of infrastructure requirements in advance of new development.

Infrastructure requirements should be identified and met in advance of the next market cycle and should be improved to, at a minimum, keep pace with development and the needs of space users. Additional water, sewer, electric and communications capacity will be required for increases in population and commercial intensity. Policies should also focus on the continued enhancement of the Greater Airpark's street infrastructure. The plan should incorporate and support the planned street network outlined in the 2008 Transportation Master Plan.

Policies should also encourage stormwater detention to prevent environmental hazards; however, the costs associated with on-site detention (particularly for small lots) can be detrimental to property and business owners. Revised drainage requirements, incentives and public-private partnerships will be necessary to maintain and improve stormwater infrastructure in the future while still enabling investment in the area.

Ensure a safe environment for all residents, employees and visitors of the area.

Public safety is important to the community, and policies that maintain current safety levels should subsequently be incorporated into the Plan. Following established Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR), building heights should not penetrate the FAR Part 77 boundaries, and sensitive land uses—such as housing and schools—should not locate within the Part 150 noise contours. In addition, emergency service levels should be sustained in accordance with increases in population and workforce.

Mobility and Parking

Key Facts:

- The Greater Airpark is served by a regional street network, including the Loop 101 Freeway, Scottsdale Road and Bell Road/Frank Lloyd Wright Boulevard;
- The area is forecast to experience an increase in traffic volumes in 2030, with anticipated problem areas of Scottsdale Road, from Thunderbird Road to Loop 101, and Frank Lloyd Wright Boulevard, from Hayden Road to Loop 101;
- The Greater Airpark currently lacks internal bicycle and pedestrian connectivity;
- The physical orientation of the Scottsdale Airport breaks up the traditional street grid found in the rest of the city, thus limiting the number of east-to-west street linkages south of the CAP Canal;
- Four fixed-route bus lines and two express bus routes serve the area and have all experienced ridership increases since 2006; and
- There are 26,320 surface (parking lot) parking spaces south of the CAP Canal, which is approximately 9.2 million square feet of asphalt dedicated to parking lots alone.

Policy Consideration:

Continue to reduce traffic congestion and increase public transportation options through public-private partnerships and accessibility.

Traffic congestion in certain areas of the Greater Airpark is not just a peak hour concern, but is one that occurs throughout much of the day. In order to make transportation viable and capable of adjusting to changing conditions in the area, it will be important to enlist the support of local businesses and property owners. One example, recommended by the 2008 Transportation Master Plan, is the development of Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) that could maintain or improve employee access to certain areas, improve transportation choices for

commuters, and/or reduce the demand for parking. TMAs are typically city-assisted groups of businesses or non-profit corporations that form to improve mobility in a district.

Policies and implementation strategies in the Community Area Plan should promote the development of TMAs which will be essential to reductions in traffic congestion. Implementation strategies to alleviate traffic congestion and increase transit present opportunities for public-private partnerships to provide internal transit and other solutions, such as car and van pooling, telecommuting and staggered work hours. Pedestrian and bicycle connections, along with mixed land uses, should also be considered as potential congestion-reducing strategies in the plan.

The business community identified accessibility as one of the areas' greatest assets, even though traffic congestion was listed as one of the greatest issues in the area. Policies should ensure that connections to the Loop 101 Freeway, regional arterial streets and regional transit services are maintained and enhanced wherever possible as outlined in the 2008 Transportation Master Plan.

Design and Character

Key Facts:

- The character and identity of the Greater Scottsdale Airpark is derived from the Scottsdale Airport, residential areas, the McDowell Mountains, Sonoran Desert, Frank Lloyd Wright and the Central Arizona Canal;
- The majority of the area has been built under development standards which have limited design flexibility; and
- Many buildings are becoming obsolete because of age and inadequate size to meet everyday business needs.

Policy Consideration:

Encourage development character that reflects the urban, economic and technological environment of the Greater Airpark, and that promotes community health and history.

Goals and policies should ensure that the character of future development is attuned to the economic and technological environment of the next two decades. Design that contributes to community health, such as pedestrian-oriented streets, bicycle lanes, fitness facilities, medical clinics and safe places for relaxation; takes advantage of primary view corridors (which may be identified as a part of the Plan); and provides public space should be encouraged. Designs of public art, buildings, and open space should also consider promoting aviation and its history in the community. The 2001 General Plan streetscape categories in the area should be examined and potentially revised to meet future development character goals. Recommended programs may include design guidelines or incentive programs for designs that meet the Community Area Plan's goals.

In order to avoid physical and economic obsolescence, it will be important to encourage the appropriate scale and type of development in the Greater Airpark. If development is too small or inappropriately designed to be viable for a variety of land uses, future owners will not have the economic strength to properly maintain either the physical structures or the activities they contain.

Areas suitable for increased building intensity, along with appropriate building types, will be explored as a part of the Community Area Plan. The usefulness of the Industrial and General

Commercial Zoning Districts, to support revitalization and encourage appropriate development scales, may be considered as recommended implementation strategies of the plan. For example, building height standards could be revised to reflect current and future market needs.

Natural Environment

Key Facts:

- The elevation of the area rises 241 feet from south to north, creating interesting views; and
- Historically, green building designs and features have not been practiced in the area.

Policy Consideration:

Encourage energy and resource conservation through green building, environmental stewardship and proper site design.

Energy conservation through green building, environmental stewardship, and proper site design will reduce the amount of utilities required for new developments. Encouraging proper building design that conserves energy and other resources could significantly reduce the amount of infrastructure that needs to be added or upgraded in the Greater Airpark in the future.

Aviation

Key Facts:

- A defining feature of the area is that it contains the Scottsdale Airport, one of the busiest single-runway facilities in the nation;
- The area south of the Central Arizona Canal boasts a unique situation, in that several lots have direct taxilane access to the airfield, which most, if not all, U.S. Airports do not allow; and
- Land uses, building heights, and construction standards in certain vicinities of the Airport are subject to Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Regulations.

Policy Consideration:

Sustain aviation as an identifiable characteristic of the area.

Airport-related goals should focus on the safe and efficient operations of the Scottsdale Airport. Noise mitigation measures for buildings within certain distances of the Airport, special aviation-use standards, and discouragement of incompatible land uses should all be examined to further protect the health and safety of area residents and visitors.

Policies should encourage Airport facility maintenance and improvements that reflect an upscale image. “Through-the-fence” operations, or businesses with taxilane access from their lots, should be considered in policies, in addition to being considered as opportunities and defining features of the Greater Scottsdale Airpark.

Report Preface

The aforementioned items for consideration do not represent an exhaustive list of issues for the Greater Airpark; they represent ideas, opportunities and concerns for the future and may be addressed as a part of the Community Area Plan. Information in this report is derived from a variety of sources and projections, thus the city does not attest to its complete accuracy. The figures in this report are intended to provide a general basis for existing and future conditions in and around the Greater Airpark. The Appendices provide additional technical information, community input summaries, case studies and references.