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## CHAPTER 10

### CHARACTER AREAS



*Heritage District*

#### **V**ision Statement

Gilbert desires to create and protect unique areas of Town by identifying and providing guidance through the use of Character Areas and guidelines.



*Morrison Ranch*



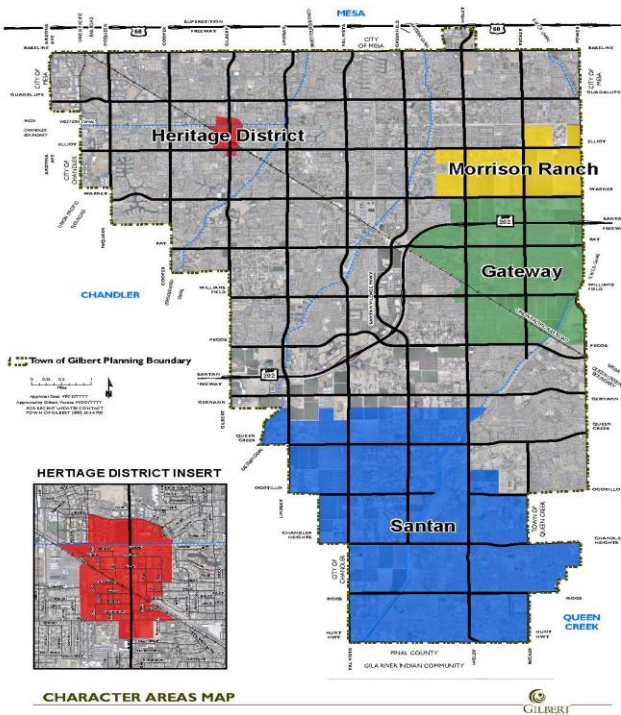
## INTRODUCTION

Character Areas are specific geographic areas that possess unique or special characteristics or have the potential to evolve into a unique area, unlike any other in the Town. The areas may also have certain development issues which make the area unique, for example, ASU Polytechnic and the original downtown area.

The following Character Areas are intended to define unique areas of the Gilbert Planning Area. Each of the following Character Areas has been previously adopted as a General Plan Amendment or specific area plan. The areas were done separately from each other and contain different goals and policies. Additionally, since these were not created as one document, the formatting and layout for each Area is slightly different.

Guidelines for each Character Area are specific to each area. These do not replace the land use policies or map designations in other parts of the General Plan, but merely provide definition and detail.

A larger version of the Character Areas Map is located in the exhibits.



- Heritage District Character Area
- Gateway Character Area
- Morrison Ranch Character Area
- Santan Character Area



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## CHARACTER AREAS

### 10.1 Heritage District

The Gilbert Heritage District is the historic and symbolic center of the community. It offers opportunity for the adaptation of significant properties to uses that will have a positive impact on the adjacent residential and commercial sectors. By maintaining appropriate uses, design and architecture in the District, the area will remain the community's link with the past and future.

Guided by the Redevelopment Plan and the Heritage District Design Guidelines, development and reinvestment is highly encouraged in the Heritage District in order to maximize the economic potential of properties, rehabilitate substandard buildings, eliminate blighting influences, improve parking, beautify streetscapes and allow the assembly of land for new development. As new construction and rehabilitation activities occur, the Redevelopment Plan and Design Guidelines will serve as a catalyst for the improvement of other properties. Together, this will help to attract more businesses and customers, thereby increasing the economic vitality of the area. Both documents should be referenced for comprehensive information regarding the Heritage District Character Area.

The Gilbert Redevelopment Plan was first adopted in 1991 and updated in 2001 and 2008. The plan builds upon the foundation that was established during the original visioning process and provides new insights that will enhance the initial goals and guidelines. Through the coordinated efforts of both the public and private sectors, the continued redevelopment of the Heritage District will be a major contributing factor in Gilbert's continuing quest to be a *Community of Excellence*.

The Heritage District Design Guidelines were adopted in 2010. The purpose of the guidelines is to:

- Communicate to the development community in advance the design expectations for projects within Gilbert's Heritage District to facilitate the review process. Heritage District projects are those proposed within the Heritage Village Center, Single and Multi-Family Residential and Public Facility/Institutional zoning districts.
- Facilitate the fair and consistent application of design objectives.

- Protect investment in the community by encouraging consistently high quality development.
- Foster a sense of place and pride in visiting, working and living in the district.
- Facilitate safe, comfortable, functional and attractive development.
- Encourage projects that are adaptable to the desert environment.
- Provide residents with a connection to the community's roots and history.
- Encourage development of shaded outdoor spaces for the use and benefit of residents, employees and visitors.
- Encourage sustainable site and building design to reduce negative impacts and conserve energy.

### **Heritage District Character Area Goals**

- Promote quality urban design with emphasis on small town historical character.
- Improve the economic viability of downtown.
- Promote reinvestment and attract new development.
- Improve pedestrian and vehicular circulation to ensure a pedestrian friendly and safe environment.
- Promote downtown as the symbolic and cultural center of the Community.

### **Heritage District Boundary**

The district contains approximately 0.3 square miles (192 acres) and includes the original town site core, the commercial areas on both sides of Gilbert Road from Juniper Avenue to 600 feet south of Elliot Road and the residential neighborhoods one quarter mile east and west of Gilbert Road between the Western Canal and Elliot Road.

The northern boundary is Juniper Avenue, extending approximately 1,000 feet east and west of Gilbert Road. The southern boundary follows an imaginary line south of the Gilbert Historical Society facility, 600 feet south of Elliot Road. The eastern boundary follows a north-south alignment at approximately 250 feet east of Palm Street, shifts west along Cullumber Avenue and then south along the east side of Palm Street. The remainder of the east boundary lies along the Railroad tracks to Elliot Road and then shifts 700 feet to the west. Finally, the district boundary turns south to meet the southern boundary. The western boundary aligns with Catalina Road from Elliot Road north to the RR tracks, west 1,400 feet to the Western Canal and then north to Juniper Avenue.



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## CHARACTER AREAS

### **10.2 Gateway**

#### **Design**

Purpose: The Gateway Character Area identifies desirable physical characteristics that will enhance Gilbert's unique identity and encourage development of traditional neighborhoods. It provides traditional village/neighborhood design concepts, which are reminiscent of the heritage of Gilbert. It promotes pedestrian, bicycle, transit-oriented design and integrates residential, commercial, employment land uses. It also affords an opportunity for small-scale urban agriculture.

A majority of the Gateway Character Area is undeveloped; however, capital projects are currently underway in the anticipation of development. Several master plans have been approved in the area. The Gateway Character Area is approximately 4,300 acres (7 square miles) in size.

Design Policies for areas within this Character Area are listed below.

#### **Village Center Design Policies**

1. Provide for a classic mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented village center configuration surrounded by traditional residential neighborhoods.
2. Design varied and interesting building facades, with ground floor retail and entertainment uses and upper floor office and residential units.
3. Discourage auto-oriented uses and other uses with drive-up, drive-through, or drive-in facilities.
4. Design a pedestrian/transit-oriented "Main Street" along Williams Field Road. Minimal setbacks will bring buildings close to the street and promote pedestrian activity, window-shopping and street-side dining.

5. Design the Village Center to allow for standard and shared parking and access. Parking garages should contain retail at the street level with plaza exposure. Rear surface parking and under building or structure parking is encouraged.
6. Allow for limited on-street parking separated by landscape islands at intervals.
7. Provide for shuttle bus street-side pullouts.
8. Provide for pedestrian-oriented plazas fronting and opening onto Williams Field Road, with secondary openings to Recker Road and adjacent residential neighborhoods.
9. Design sidewalks and plazas on Williams Field Road with pedestrian oriented amenities, including shade structures and covered walkways, benches, bicycle parking, seat walls, decorative surface treatments, artistic features, outdoor cafes, water features, pedestrian scale lighting, canopy trees and landscape planters separating pedestrians from automobiles.
10. Provide for attractive and urban-oriented signage that may include projecting, neon and brightly colored components.

### **Village Center Residential Design Policies**

1. Develop a high quality residential environment within the Village Center to include lofts, townhouses, condominiums and apartments.
2. Provide on-site amenities for residents, including swimming pools, recreational facilities, clubhouses and other services. Provide covered, private outdoor space for all units, where applicable.
3. Encourage patios and balconies as part of the design of the residential units.
4. Promote varied and interesting architectural design for building facades and rooflines.
5. Encourage a minimum of ten (10%) percent of the residential sites for on-site open space and landscaping.
6. Encourage service areas and secured-shared parking, in the form of surface, under building and/or structure parking.

7. Create a safe and attractive open space and pedestrian/bicycle system to connect the mixed uses in the Village Center to parks, schools, commercial and employment services and neighborhoods.
8. Provide densities ranging from twenty-two (22) to fifty (50) dwelling units per acre within the Village Center.

### **Neighborhood Residential Design Policies**

1. Design high quality residential neighborhoods that utilize the neo-traditional (contemporary architecture and design that borrows from the past and includes compact development aimed at pedestrian movements) concept and principles. Provide for safe and convenient circulation, open space and recreational opportunities and a pedestrian network in the residential neighborhoods. Include adequate open space that will be linked to schools, commercial and employment services, parks and neighborhoods by safe and attractive pedestrian ways, bicycle paths, trail systems and residential scale streets. Provide a residential lot layout and home architecture that provides street character and various housing styles consistent with the neo-traditional concept.
2. Encourage and design neighborhood parks adjacent to high-density residential developments.
3. Design varied and human-scale house facades to make neighborhoods pedestrian-friendly.
4. Enhance visual interest and provide a sense of security along the streets. Incorporate visual relief, detail and interest along all sides of structures.
5. Design developments with small front yard setbacks and provide all elevations of homes with a high level of visual interest, including porches or patios, courtyards, bay windows, or porte-cocheres. Vary architecture from one home to the next. Discourage staggered front yard setbacks.
6. Provide narrow streets with separated sidewalks and landscape planters.
7. Provide recessed, side entry, or rear garages accessed by side driveways or alleys.
8. Minimize the amount of fencing to create a more open feel in the neighborhoods. Encourage low profile, attractive, open fencing adjacent to local and collector streets. A combination of solid view walls and landscaping is encouraged along arterials.

## **Open Space and Park Policies**

1. Design a variety of facilities in the open space and park areas to meet the required recreation and cultural needs of the entire Gateway Area.
2. Plan and design public and private parks to be a focal point of community and neighborhood activity.
3. Link open spaces to schools, commercial and employment services and neighborhoods by safe and attractive pedestrian ways, bicycle paths, trail systems, narrow residential streets and short blocks.

## **Neighborhood Parks Design Policies**

1. Design neighborhood parks to provide a suitable number of recreation facilities to accommodate each neighborhood.
2. Design neighborhood parks to be the focal point of neighborhood activity. Design for views into parks from public streets.
3. Design neighborhood parks with grassy play fields and play equipment, where appropriate. Provide shade structures, trees and plants that make a comfortable and safe environment.

## **Transit Design Policies**

1. Provide transit-oriented design for the Village Center to fully integrate transit with all land uses and open spaces.
2. Provide transit-oriented design of the Village Center, including a bus system, bus pullouts, shelters and seating.
3. Design transit-oriented residential neighborhoods, including pedestrian, bicycle and bus systems, with shelters and seating.
4. Promote and plan for a commuter-rail, a bus transit station with a park-and-ride lot along the side of the Union Pacific railroad tracks, near the Village Center within Gilbert.

## **Power, Higley, Warner, Ray and Pecos Road Design Policies**

1. Design for ultimate roadway pavement widths of six (6) travel lanes to adequately and safely carry traffic demand.
2. Provide planted medians down the middle of each roadway.
3. Through plan review, enforce the Gateway Area Right-of-Way Improvement Standards and Streetscape Design Guidelines for these major arterial roads to provide an agricultural vernacular. Canopy trees and other plants and elements should be installed in the medians and along both sides of each roadway between back of curb and sidewalks creating landscape planters. Coordinate a consistent theme for Power Road with the City of Mesa and Maricopa County Department of Transportation to ensure roadways are consistent through each jurisdiction.
4. Provide street lighting along both sides of each roadway (refer to the Gateway Area Right of Way Improvement Standards).
5. Provide traffic signals, signage and special pavement crosswalks at each key roadway intersection.

## **Williams Field (within the Village Center) and Recker Roads Design Policies**

1. Design for roadway pavement widths of four (4) travel lanes to adequately and safely meet traffic demand.
2. Provide planted medians within the middle of each roadway.
3. Provide painted bike lanes on each side of the roadway.
4. Provide for a minimum of fifteen (15) feet wide sidewalks on both sides of each roadway inside the Village Center.
5. Provide for minimum six (6) feet wide sidewalks on both sides of each roadway outside the Village Center, separated from the curb by landscape planting areas.
6. Through plan review, enforce the Gateway Area Right of Way Improvement Standards and Streetscape Design Guidelines on Williams Field and Recker Roads to provide an agricultural vernacular. Canopy trees and other plants and elements should be installed in the medians and along both sides of each roadway between back of curb and sidewalks creating landscape planters.

7. Promote undergrounding of all existing and future overhead utility lines within rights-of-way.
8. Provide street and sidewalk lighting along both sides of each roadway between curbs and sidewalks.
9. Provide traffic signals, signage and special pavement crosswalks at each key roadway intersection.

### **Neighborhood Streets/Alleys Design Policies**

1. Design for minimum roadway pavement widths and travel lanes required to adequately and safely carry traffic demand.
2. Design alleys for rear garages and trash pickup.
3. Design a grid or modified grid street network, with maximum street connections. Minimize curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs, when possible. Minimize block length to encourage pedestrian activity and to reduce excessive vehicular trips.
4. Provide painted bike lanes on each side of collector and arterial roadways, unless other alternative bikeways are available.
5. Provide sidewalks on both sides of the street, separated from the curb by landscape strips.
6. Provide agricultural vernacular and, canopy trees along both sides of each street. The trees should be planted between the back of the curb and the sidewalk creating landscape strips.
7. Provide low scale, street lighting along both sides of each roadway, located in the landscape strips between curbs and walkways.
8. Provide stop signs and special pavement crosswalks at each street intersection, as appropriate.

## **Multi-Use Trails Design Policies**

Provide for a multi-use trail system for convenient and safe access along the Railroad right-of-way, on the south side of the Santan Freeway, the East Maricopa Floodway and the Roosevelt Water Conservation District Canal, with connections to schools, parks, commercial and employment centers and recreational facilities. Landscaping, shelters, benches and other amenities should be provided.

## **GATEWAY AREA LAND USES**

Purpose: The Gateway Area will consist of a traditional, mixed-used pedestrian friendly village center, with commercial shops, offices and loft apartments at the core of the village center, surrounded by traditional residential neighborhoods, schools and parks, as well as nearby major commercial and employment areas including the Arizona State University (ASU) Polytechnic Campus, the Chandler-Gilbert Community College/Williams Campus, the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport and the Santan Freeway.

Land use classifications in the Gateway Character Area are the same as those used elsewhere in the Town. In the Gateway area, mixed land uses are encouraged since they contribute to the desired traditional neighborhood character.

## **Land Use Policies**

### **Village Center Land Use Policies (core)**

1. Develop a Village Center at Williams Field Road and Recker Road to include a mix of retail shops, restaurants, offices, hotels, entertainment and residential units, all fostering pedestrian interaction.
2. Develop retail uses at the ground level and mixed uses above the first floor.
3. Prohibit auto-oriented uses and other uses with drive-up, drive-through, or drive-in facilities in the village core.
4. Maintain a minimum floor area ratio (FAR) of 0.10 in the early phases of the Village Center while demonstrating at build-out, that a minimum of 0.75 FAR will be reached.
5. Promote the development of mid-rise buildings to accommodate mixed-use development in accordance with the standards of the Vertical Development Overlay Area 3 and limit the height of single story buildings with arterial frontage to 25% of the block's streetscape.

6. Provide for pedestrian-oriented plazas and courtyards fronting and opening onto Williams Field Road, with secondary openings to Recker Road and pedestrian connections to adjacent residential uses.
7. Encourage art in public places. Promote cultural development, special events and activities for all ages.
8. Limited or no off-street surface parking should be provided along the arterial streets in the Village Center.
9. Develop shared parking and service areas to serve core uses. Limit on-site surface parking. Veneer the first floor of parking structures with retail space to enliven the street level.
10. Allow for limited on-street parking separated by landscape islands at intervals along Williams Field Road.
11. Make the Village Center fully accessible by bus along Williams Field Road and Recker Road.

### **Village Center Residential Land Use Policies**

1. Develop very high density residential uses within the Village Center, to include townhouses, lofts, condominiums and apartments.
2. Provide densities ranging from twenty-two (22) dwelling units per acre to fifty (50) dwelling units per acre.
3. Provide on-site amenities for residents and occupants, including swimming pools, recreational facilities, clubhouses and other services.
4. Provide private outdoor spaces for more than fifty percent (50%) of the units.
5. Provide service areas and secure under-building or structure parking. Allow temporary surface parking until sufficient development occurs to require structured parking.
6. Create a safe and attractive open space and pedestrian linkage to connect the residential areas to parks, schools, commercial and employment services and other neighborhoods.

## **Railroad Areas Employment and Commercial Land Use Policies**

1. Promote uses in the SC (Shopping Center), CC (Community Commercial) and NC (Neighborhood Commercial) areas that will provide for the commercial needs of the surrounding area.
2. Provide for a future commuter-rail transit station and park and ride lot that will be fully accessible along Williams Field Road.

## **Santan Freeway/Power Road Interchange Area Land Use Policies**

1. Develop regional commercial uses and power centers, including major stores, offices, hotel and motel uses and major entertainment centers in the RC (Regional Commercial) areas.
2. Provide for a future express bus transit station and park and ride lot at the Santan Freeway/Power Road interchange.

## **Santan Freeway/Higley Road Interchange Area Land Use Policies**

1. Allow integrated campus-style office, office and light industrial uses.
2. Develop uses in the SC (Shopping Center) areas that will serve commercial needs of the surrounding neighborhoods and communities.
3. Provide for a future express bus transit station and park and ride lot at the Santan Freeway/Higley Road intersection.

## **Power Road/Williams Field Road Intersection Land Use Policies**

1. Promote retail commercial uses, including offices in SC (Shopping Center) areas.
2. Provide for fully accessible bus shelters along Williams Field Road, where appropriate.
3. Coordinate entry features with the City of Mesa, ASU Polytechnic, Chandler-Gilbert Community College/Williams Campus and Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport.

## **Higley Road/Williams Field Road Intersection Land Use Area Policies**

1. Encourage commercial development to transition within the architectural context of the Village Center.
2. Provide for fully accessible bus service along Williams Field Road, where appropriate.

## **Neighborhood Residential Land Use Policies**

1. Create high quality traditional residential neighborhoods throughout Gateway area, with safe and convenient circulation, open space and recreational opportunities and a pedestrian network. Link open spaces to schools, commercial and employment services and neighborhoods by safe and attractive pedestrian ways, bicycle paths, trail systems and small-scale, narrow residential streets.
2. Encourage development of a range of housing types and densities with orderly development patterns.
3. In residential areas that allow 14-25 du/acre, develop apartments, condominiums and townhouse areas in the manner of mid-rise buildings. Design and provide usable outdoor spaces to serve the multi-story developments.
4. Allow single-family attached and detached homes in Residential densities 5-8 du/acre neighborhoods. Ancillary units may be allowed for guest housing or extended family.
5. Allow single-family detached homes in Residential densities 3.5-5 du/acre neighborhoods. Ancillary units may be allowed for guest housing or extended family.
6. Provide for on-site amenities for residents in Residential densities 3.5-5 du/acre neighborhoods, including swimming pools, recreational facilities, clubhouses and other services. Provide covered private outdoor space for all units.
7. Design neighborhood streets with canopy trees, separated sidewalks and landscape planters or planting strips.
8. Design a grid or modified grid street network with no or few cul-de-sacs.
9. Provide recessed, side entry, or back side garages accessed by side driveways or rear alleys.

10. Design developments with small front yard setbacks and provide all elevations of homes with a high level of visual interest, including porches or patios, courtyards, bay windows, or porte cocheres.
11. Minimize the amount of fencing to create a more open feel in the neighborhoods. Encourage the installation of low profile, attractive, open fencing adjacent to local and collector streets.
12. Encourage the design of homes to include design principles and materials appropriate for the desert environment.

### **Neighborhood Parks Land Use policies**

1. Design private neighborhood parks to provide for a suitable number of recreation facilities for each neighborhood.
2. Encourage location of neighborhood parks adjacent to schools, accessible from the neighborhood by safe and attractive walking and bicycle trails.
3. Link public open spaces along the Roosevelt Canal via trails in the Gateway Area.

### **Open Space and Park Policies**

1. Provide for a variety of facilities for the required recreation and cultural needs of the entire Gateway Area within open space and park areas.
2. Provide a safe and attractive walking and bicycle trail network connecting the public parks and open spaces to various locations in the Gateway Area.

## **CIRCULATION/TRANSPORTATION**

Purpose: The Gateway Area will include a network of multi-modal circulation/transportation systems, providing access to, and interconnection with; the Village Center, schools, parks, commercial and employment areas, as well as the adjacent ASU Polytechnic Campus, Chandler-Gilbert Community College/Williams Campus, Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport, SanTan regional mall and the Loop 202 Santan freeway.

### **Railroad Circulation/Transportation Policies**

1. Plan for future commuter-rail transit use of the Railroad line for the Gateway Area, including a rail transit station and a park and ride lot near the Village Center.

2. Promote rail-oriented development around the future rail transit station so that commuter-rail transit will be feasible and implemented for the East Valley and the Gateway Area.
3. Provide safe rail crossings for pedestrians, bicycles and vehicles at locations indicated on the land use plan.

### **Bus Circulation/Transportation Policies**

1. Provide for bus transit service along Williams Field Road, from the Santan regional mall to the ASU Polytechnic Campus, with stops at the Gateway Village Center and the rail transit station/park and ride lot.
2. Provide convenient bus transit service along Recker Road, from Morrison Ranch to Power Ranch, with stops at the Gateway Village Center, the Higley High School and other key public places.
3. Provide for future express-bus service on the Santan Freeway and Power Road, including park and ride lots.
4. Provide for fixed-route bus service on major arterial roadways within Gateway Area.

### **Campus/Airport Entries Circulation/Transportation Policies**

1. At the time of development of these entrances, recognize the main visitor entrance for ASU Polytechnic Campus and the gateway entrance designation for the Town.

### **Major Arterial Streets Circulation/Transportation Policies**

1. Design Power, Higley, Warner, Ray and Pecos Roads as major arterial roadways of six (6) travel lanes.
2. Provide a safe pedestrian/bicycle crossing of Power Road at Williams Field Road and the ASU Polytechnic Campus Entry.
3. Provide improved rail crossings over the Railroad tracks.
4. Plan to convert the Rittenhouse Road right-of-way, from Williams Field Road to Power Road, to a multi-use trail.

## **Williams Field and Recker Roads Circulation/Transportation Policies**

1. Design Williams Field Road, 1/8<sup>th</sup> mile west and 1/2 mile east of Recker Road as a minor arterial roadways of four travel lanes and with a bus transit line and bicycle lanes.
2. Along Williams Field Road, allow for limited on-street parking stalls and bus pullouts, separated by landscape islands within the Village Center.
3. Where possible provide for street shade trees, lighting and sidewalks on both sides of the entire length of each roadway per the Gateway Area Right-of-Way Improvement Standards and Streetscape Design Guidelines.

## **Neighborhood Streets/Trails**

1. Develop neighborhood streets with minimal curvilinear layout and minimal pavement width.
2. Provide frequent intersection of neighborhood streets and fewer cul-de-sacs.
3. Include street shade trees, pedestrian lighting and walkways and bicycle lanes on both sides of each neighborhood street.
4. Provide each neighborhood with attractive, convenient and safe bicycle/pedestrian access ways to its neighborhood park and school, other neighborhoods, employment and commercial facilities and the Village Center.

## **Rittenhouse Road, Railroad and RWCD Canal Multi-Use Trails**

1. Establish an equestrian/bicycle/pedestrian multi-use trail system along the Rittenhouse Road right-of-way and the Railroad right-of-way, connecting to the East Maricopa Floodway.



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## CHARACTER AREAS

### **10.3 Morrison Ranch**

#### **Summary**

The Morrison Ranch Character Area is a 1,527 acre (2.3 square miles) mixed-use master planned community that incorporates the functional, aesthetic, economic and social factors associated with livable communities. The development plan for Morrison Ranch was originally adopted on November 3, 1988 and has been amended over time as conditions warrant. Development of the area continues today.

Morrison Ranch reflects the historic rural atmosphere associated with the Town of Gilbert. It utilizes reclaimed water to enable the landscaping to include turf, trees and wide setbacks to establish a rural agricultural community theme. Within Morrison Ranch, multiple rows of trees line the streets, sidewalks and parks, creating a shaded environment for pedestrians and vehicles. All landscape, recreation and open spaces within common areas are to be maintained by the Homeowners Association. A network of trails and sidewalks within the landscaped open spaces connect homes, schools, community facilities and workplaces. Elementary schools are located in central locations adjacent to greenbelts and recreational facilities. A variety of residential densities are provided throughout the community.

Morrison Town Center features a multi-use combination of retail, commercial, office, restaurant and recreational services linked to the existing Morrison Ranch headquarters and grain storage tanks, which set the rural theme. The Power Technology Center offers a variety of multi-use commercial, business park and industrial sites along Power Road.

Automobile speeds are intentionally reduced to encourage safe pedestrian and bicycle movement.

## **Parks, Open Space and Trail System**

The Eastern and Roosevelt Canals are significant multi-use trails that intersect Morrison Ranch. There are several municipal parks planned near Morrison Ranch but not located within the boundaries of the Ranch. Morrison Ranch has a full range of private internal parks, open spaces, trails and recreation facilities for its residents.

## **Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport**

Morrison Ranch is influenced by airport operations envisioned in the Airport Master Plan and Part 150 Noise Compatibility Study. Noise, land use compatibility, economic and educational impacts are significant factors. Proposed development will comply with the Town's policy for the over flight areas.

## **Goals**

### **Cultural Heritage**

- Include historic and cultural elements from the Morrison Family heritage such as farm machinery.
- Include historic and cultural elements from the Town of Gilbert such as items from the Gilbert Historical Society.
- Create a physical character that recalls the rural farming heritage.
- Create landscape elements that recall the valley's agricultural environment.

### **Community Environment**

- Create a total community plan, which integrates and connects all uses.
- Create a community character that integrates rural farming elements and agrarian characteristics, a livable residential lifestyle, a varied Town Center and an attractive employment center.
- Create a landscape environment reminiscent of early Gilbert rural residential landscapes.
- Provide a rural character which accommodates functions such as open space preservation, recreation, drainage and flood control.
- Provide programs emphasizing conservation of resources and urban sustainability.

### **Open Space and Recreation**

- Create a balance of active and passive recreational amenities throughout the community.

- Provide an open space and recreation system throughout the community that connects all areas via pedestrian ways, bicycle paths and trails.
- Connect the open space and trail system to all educational facilities, places of employment and commercial establishments in an inviting fashion.

## **Education**

- Locate an elementary school(s) adjacent to greenbelts and recreation facilities so that students can walk or bicycle safely from the community.
- Connect the community trail systems to the existing elementary schools and high school.

## **Conservation of Resources**

- Design the physical form of Morrison Ranch to optimize north/south lot orientation for energy conservation.
- Provide shade throughout the development, including along streets, within open spaces and recreation areas and along the east and west sides of individual homes.
- Use reclaimed water to irrigate all public and Association owned landscaped areas, including turf, trees and recreation areas.

## **Technology**

- Plan to accommodate current and future state of the art technology services.

## **Circulation**

- Create pedestrian and bicycle trails linking all land uses throughout the community and region.
- Encourage small vehicle (i.e. golf carts and service vehicles) access throughout the community. Create a network of small rural residential roads throughout the community. Accent these roads with traffic calming devices that enable pedestrian priority on streets.
- Cooperate with the Town's effort to link neighborhoods.
- Distribute traffic from neighborhoods to arterials so that neighborhood streets remain small and more rural in character.
- Arterial road landscapes should establish a strong rural community character.

## **Land Use**

- Create a series of neighborhoods, with a variety of different land uses and densities, which blend together with the overall community rural ranch character.
- Provide a variety of housing products.
- Provide a mixture of jobs and services for the community.
- Create a Town Center that becomes the focus for Morrison Ranch and the surrounding communities.

## **Infrastructure**

- Provide the community with all required public improvements.
- Provide homes with all required and desirable services.

## **Community Services**

- Provide a full range of community services.

## **Economic Feasibility**

- Create an atmosphere and physical presence that is conducive to commercial and employment activities.
- Locate commercial and employment activities in areas that optimize access from existing roads and the freeway system.
- Optimize commercial and employment development that contributes tax revenues to the Town of Gilbert.



## CHARACTER AREAS

### 10.4 Santan

The basic attributes that make the Santan area unique, such as the heritage in farming, respect for the land and family atmosphere, should be retained. The rural lifestyle and open spaces that characterize the Santan area are part of the attraction that brings people to the area. A priority should be placed on quality neighborhood development with recreational open space and outdoor enjoyment. A rural residential lifestyle which recognizes the agricultural heritage of the area, mixed with quality suburban neighborhoods, some neighborhood convenience commercial and carefully selected locations for regional shopping and entertainment is the ultimate goal for this area. The Santan Character Area is approximately 10,300 acres (16 square miles) in size.

#### Purpose

The Santan Area is envisioned as a combination of rural residential and suburban neighborhoods that can enjoy a rural environment and small scale agricultural activities. Emphasis is placed on outdoor living enjoyment and ability for people to live and play in a unique environment. Multi-use trails, desert washes and proximity to the Santan Mountains make the area unique. The following goals and policies reflect the desired character for this area.

#### Maintain existing small-scale agricultural uses.

- Promote new development that is compatible with noncommercial or small scale agriculture.
- Use large-lot residential areas that integrate with the agricultural character as relief from more intense suburban development. Connect developments with a rural theme greenbelt buffer that includes multi-use trails.

#### Maintain existing low density, rural residential neighborhoods.

- Land to be used for one-acre-minimum lots and custom-built homes as identified in the land use map.
- Work with existing water providers to develop residential areas with irrigated yards.

- Encourage the development of unique, low-density projects mixed with open space or agriculture.
- Use open space areas to buffer residential development and public facilities.

**Promote a safe, livable environment for raising families.**

- Encourage development with residential streets designed to avoid heavy traffic and promote the creation of a collector street system.
- Minimize large-scale commercial and intense employment development near very low density residential land uses.
- Preserve and enhance the scenic beauty and natural desert in open space and public areas.

**Encourage development of small-scale businesses that complement a rural lifestyle.**

- Allow for development of neighborhood-scale commercial activity.
- Limit commercial development from occurring on every corner, directing it to the areas identified on the land use map.
- Encourage development of expanded communications infrastructure to allow for home occupations.
- Encourage master planned communities to create village centers with small business opportunities.

**Provide substantial buffering between different land uses and densities.**

- Utilize distance separation, walls, drought tolerant landscaping and streets to buffer dissimilar land uses.
- Encourage agricultural themes within the buffer area for residential and commercial development.

**Circulation**

**Promote a circulation system that minimizes excessive hard surface and utilizes traditional rural road alignment.**

- Plan roadway improvements to minimize disruption and scalloped roadways.
- Plan for traffic control devices when warranted.
- Plan for narrower streets where appropriate on local streets. Use rural cross-section streets in large-lot areas.

**Provide alternative modes of transportation (pedestrian, equestrian and non motorized vehicles) along the trail system throughout the Santan Area.**

- Utilize canals, desert washes and roadway buffer areas as part of the trail system.
- Continue development of the trail system as illustrated on the Parks, Open Space, Trails and Recreation Plan map.

**Design aesthetic, rural themed streetscapes.**

- Provide landscaped medians on major arterials.
- Limit the number of streetlights along local streets in very low density areas to preserve the rural character.
- Limit perimeter block walls visible from public streets and open spaces areas. Use low walls, view walls, landscaping and agricultural themed fencing, where appropriate.

**Public Facilities and Services**

**Encourage development of expanded communications and natural gas service.**

- Encourage communication companies to provide the most up to date technology in communication services to the Santan area.
- Coordinate with natural gas companies to expand service in Santan. Extend service when arterial streets are improved.

**Open Space and Trails**

**Encourage the incorporation of existing agricultural areas as open space and buffers between developments.**

- Integrate existing citrus groves into new residential development.
- Maintain irrigation systems for agricultural uses when new development occurs.
- Consider using the natural desert and agricultural areas as a buffer between rural residential homes (0-1 per acre) and denser residential developments.

**Adapt canals, laterals, washes and floodways for recreation and trails.**

- Utilize natural and manmade corridors for open space areas.
- Maintain and enhance native landscape along floodways to reduce erosion and preserve the natural environment.
- Utilize flood plain areas and washes for parks and open space.

### **Plan an area-wide trail/pathway system.**

- Provide links and access trails to equestrian and hiking areas.
- Promote a multi-use trail connection from the Santan Area to Santan Regional Park.
- Design corridors utilizing existing washes canals and arterials.
- Coordinate the trail system with neighboring communities.
- Locate private parks and open spaces with adequate access to trails and canals.

### **Community Design**

#### **Promote the agricultural atmosphere of the community.**

- Require new developments to notify new residents of existing agricultural uses and their impacts.
- Encourage new development to reflect an agricultural character of this area.
- Support existing and on-going agricultural activities in the area.

#### **Emphasize the visual quality and rural residential nature of the community.**

- Adopt zoning regulations that permit traditional rural activities such as the raising of farm animals, boarding stables, hobby farms and similar uses.
- Place utilities underground for all development.
- Encourage the design of custom homes with a rural residential character.

#### **Encourage small-scale commercial uses convenient to residents.**

- Where commercial uses are proposed next to the canals, encourage the integration of the canals into their site design.
- Limit high traffic commercial activity in the interior of residential areas.

### **Economic Development**

#### **Consider the unique aspects of this Character Area when selecting sites for commercial development.**

- Carefully select the sites where regional commercial and entertainment will occur in this area.
- Locate Shopping Center, General Commercial and Regional Commercial uses with convenient access to arterials. Buffer adjacent land uses with local streets, landscaping, higher density or large lot residential development.

- Discourage strip malls and gas station/mini-marts on every intersection.
- Encourage development of agribusiness to support existing agricultural uses.

### **Encourage residential development that allows agricultural uses.**

- Encourage new development to adequately buffer non-residential uses with large lots or open space areas.
- Encourage subdivision design to optimize open space areas for community gathering, connections to other open spaces and buffers to adjacent uses.

The Elements for the Santan Area listed below were selected to provide a balance for future development that will meet the needs of residents, both current and future and landowners. Protection of an existing lifestyle, open space and the natural environment and basic services for the area residents are key issues that have been introduced. Elements for this Plan include:

- Land Use
- Circulation
- Public Facilities and Services
- Open Space
- Community Design
- Economic Development

### **Land Use**

Current land use in the planning area includes agricultural uses with concentrations of low-density residential and one home on one-to five-acre lots. Housing ranges from modest to custom homes and manufactured housing. More than half of the Santan area has received approval for master planned communities with a range of residential zoning districts. These communities among others include: Layton Lakes, Freeman Farms, Shamrock Estates, Seville, Country Shadows, Mirabella Vineyards and Adora Trails. Remaining acreage in the Santan area includes large lot development in the County, natural desert, agricultural uses, retention areas and vacant land. Santan’s location at the metropolitan edge suggests that the development character will continue to be rural residential in nature. Large expanses of land are owned by the Maricopa County Flood Control District and the Roosevelt Water Conservation District, mainly along existing canals. Some of these holdings are proposed to serve as part of the desired open space system. Future land use will accommodate planned growth for residential and commercial development — in keeping with the Santan rural image.

## **Housing**

The majority of the Santan area is planned for residential development ranging from 0-1 dwelling unit/acres and 2- 3.5 dwelling units/acre.

## **Commercial**

Current commercial operations include businesses with Special Use Permits (issued by Maricopa County) and activities related to agriculture. Commercial parcels are located on arterials and will provide commercial uses to satisfy daily needs of nearby residents. As new development is proposed, there may be opportunities for additional commercial uses to provide services, retail and employment for residents and nearby communities.

Certain types of low intensity, accessory farm uses, such as Bed-and-Breakfasts or U-pick-it operations, are encouraged, together with seasonal festivals, to highlight Santan's status as one of the region's few remaining agricultural production areas. Destination commercial uses will be reviewed to correspond with the area's character, such as farmers' markets, rural resorts and trail rides.

## **Employment**

Expanded communication technology allows for more home-based occupations. The Santan Area's principal employment will be retail and commercial in nature. Many of the residents commute to jobs in other parts in Gilbert, neighboring communities, or the Phoenix metropolitan area.

## **Open Space**

Maintaining the open desert is desirable to residents in the area. As new development occurs, preservation or enhancement of natural open space will be evaluated.

## **Recommendations**

Maintaining the existing lifestyle, preserving agricultural production, yet allowing for new development to occur can be accomplished through creative long-range planning. Setting the parameters for appropriate land uses throughout the Santan Area will have a positive influence on how the area grows and maintains its character. These recommendations are offered to strengthen the Land Use section:

- All levels of commercial uses should be considered in the Santan area. Higley Road and Val Vista Road are the major arterials carrying northbound and southbound traffic. Chandler Heights, Riggs Road and Hunt Highway are major arterials for east-west traffic. Intersections of these major arterials may be

- appropriate locations for all levels of commercial uses that offer retail, personal services, offices and regional commercial uses.
- Community leaders should work with farmers and Gilbert Business Development staff to attract industrial opportunities, especially for agri-business, that may be compatible with the Plan through existing agricultural classifications or overlay district designations.
  - Design guidelines should be established that strongly encourage a mix of housing styles for variety in accord with the existing lifestyle and character.
  - Residents should explore programs for preservation of agriculture and acquisition of open space preserves to assure retention of these areas as desired by the community.
  - Residents should also look beyond the Planning Area boundaries and assist with preservation of the Santan Mountains and surrounding open desert.

## **Circulation**

Safety, including rural improvement and maintenance standards, for the area's roadway transportation systems is the greatest concern for area residents. Alternative modes for traveling and trail systems for non-motorized vehicles are primary goals.

Major Arterial Development - Current roads need to be upgraded, reconstructed and in some cases extended. Traffic safety devices, such as signals and stop signs, need to be put in place.

Internal Circulation - Minimal street lighting is preferred to preserve views of stars and reduce light pollution. Rural street standards, not requiring curb, gutter and sidewalk are encouraged for new development, where appropriate. Where standard local streets are required, detached sidewalks are preferred.

Alternative Modes of Transportation - Plans call for continuous equestrian and pedestrian trails that utilize existing canal rights-of-way and natural washes throughout the Planning Area. Riding and hiking connections to the Santan Mountains is a desired feature of the future trails system (Refer to the Bicycle and Canal Trail Plan Map).

## **Public Facilities and Services**

High priorities are excellent schools and continued adequacy and economy in water service. Infrastructure improvement recommendations are kept simple, making sure that proposed facilities will be affordable and will contribute to quality of life.

Facilities - Apart from schools, publicly maintained facilities include the South Area Service Center, South Area Wastewater Treatment Plant, South Recharge Site and several Town owned sites to be utilized for parks and open space.

Services - System capacity – from roads to water lines – should be a determinant in evaluating development proposals, making certain that new construction pays its own way.

## **Recommendations**

Park facilities should offer passive and active recreational opportunities.

## **Open Space and Trails**

Trail System - Equestrian trails are proposed as a Santan character feature. Multi-purpose pathway linkages from individual neighborhoods to connect with major trail corridors will increase system access.

Open Space - Sensitive areas such as animal habitats, archeological sites, washes, natural desert and views need to be considered with new development. The area's spaciousness is enhanced by the continued presence of working farms. Public access for use of such natural features as Queen Creek Wash and the San Tan Regional Park is important.

Recreation - Park land and improvements may be provided, as the Area continues to develop, to meet the community's need for playing fields/courts and other recreational facilities for residents of all ages. Portions of publicly held land could be dedicated to low-maintenance park usage.

## **Recommendations**

The Town, Maricopa County Flood Control District and the Roosevelt Water Conservation District should identify areas of public land and canal systems that are suitable to use for trails and determine where funding would come from to upgrade these areas. These features could serve as the start of a system to which master planned developments could link their trails systems.

Master plan criteria should include expectations of the trail system connections and specified percentages of the development to remain in natural open space preservation.

## **Community Design**

### **Goals**

Santan Character - To distinguish from more urban areas, rustic entry yards and street signage is advocated. Enhanced landscaping that incorporates native trees and low water consumptive plants should be encouraged along rights-of-way and to sustain the Area's visual image.

Architectural Emphasis - Low, ranch-style housing is preferred, avoiding sameness. Traditional styles and earth tone colors are favored for commercial, institutional and residential structures.

Regional Identity - The Santan Area is a unique place in the East Valley, still maintaining the rural character and heritage of the farm history that established communities in this part of Maricopa County.

## **Economic Development**

Agriculture is a declining element of the economic base for the Santan Area. For many residents, Santan is a "bedroom" community. Some additional employment and shopping opportunities may occur.

## **Goals**

Employment - Small business development, especially related to agriculture, equestrian uses and destination tourism, could allow area residents to become entrepreneurs and/or find unique local work opportunities.

Attraction - Encouraging the open desert and working farms to be considered as a resource for education and recreation might allow Santan to fill a family tourism niche – offering day trips, trail rides and farm experience.

Neighborhood Commercial Services - Encouraging "village centers" to develop where child care, small retail businesses and groceries could locate. These centers might also include public services such as fire, police and post office.

## **Development Criteria**

Criteria to assist with the evaluation of development applications by staff, the Design Review Board, the Planning Commission and Town Council are offered as means to mitigate possible negative impacts and to maintain consistency with community character.

Applicants for rezoning are expected to meet with Area residents, particularly those within one-eighth mile (660') of the subject property, for the purposes of informing the public and integrating concerns prior to public hearings. Development criteria may be modified, added to and further refined as the Santan area develops.

## Density

The land use map designates the majority of the Santan Area as Residential 0-1 du/acre and Residential 2-3.5. Densities for other land use categories shall comply with the land use map. All proposed development shall demonstrate a response to:

- Subdivision design that provides ample open space as a community focal point and buffers existing adjacent large lots with similar lot sizes.
- Provide a minimum ten percent (10%) open space or acceptable alternatives, which meet the spirit and goals of the Santan Character Area.
- Peripheral lots adjacent to existing development 1 acre or greater should buffer those existing large lots with subdivision design including: open space areas, separation between the existing and new development with a local street and lot size similar to existing adjacent lot size. New lot sizes are not required to be 1 acre or larger.
- Rural design themes, such as open fencing, country entry treatments; and response to Santan Character Area objectives, including retention of farm irrigation, incorporating mature citrus into new development, enhancing native landscape and utilizing existing natural washes in the trails system.
- Lots less than 15,000 square feet in area should be screened from arterial roadway view. Trail systems throughout the project, totaling twenty-five lineal feet for each acre in the development, with connection points to community-wide trails should be incorporated

## Non-Residential

Retail and service establishments are to be located on appropriately sized parcels at major roadway intersections. Neighborhood retail/service centers may be appropriate at the intersection of two major arterials in addition to shopping facilities master planned in a core.

## Circulation

Land use should be scaled to planned transportation facilities. Commuter traffic is discouraged through low-density neighborhoods.

Master planned residential communities should be designed so as to disperse peak hour traffic, with a minimum of one point of ingress/egress to an arterial road for each forty acres of development.

## Environmental Issues

Lands should be assessed for sensitive physical or cultural sites prior to application for rezoning or preliminary subdivision map approval. Requests for development entitlements must be accompanied by a list of mitigation measures for any sensitive condition found. Mitigation measures must be translated into conditions of development approval. Areas of investigation include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Wildlife habitat or travel corridors, riparian and other distinctive vegetation;
- Potentially hazardous geologic or soil conditions, such as fissuring as a result of land subsidence; and
- Sites of archaeological, cultural or historic significance.



*Riparian Preserve*



*Riparian Preserve*