

# The Verde Valley Regional Land Use Plan

Adopted November 20, 2006

Prepared for Yavapai County by:

**community  
sciences  
corporation**

*In Association with:  
Dava & Associates; Lima & Associates*

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The Verde Valley Regional Land Use Plan was developed through citizen determination and input received at community meetings. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met on a regular basis to refine the Plan. The Verde Valley Regional Land Use Plan was officially adopted by Yavapai County Board of Supervisors on November 20, 2006.

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During the Regional Land Use Plan process, numerous citizens participated in workshops, providing insights into their particular community. Residents from several Valley communities (Sedona, Cottonwood, Camp Verde, Clarkdale, Jerome, Big Park, Cornville, Lake Montezuma, Verde Village, as well as the Beaver Creek and Red Rock/Dry Creek areas) attended planning events in their neighborhood.

There are more than 150 residents we'd like to thank for participating in the process; but, these select few followed the process from inception to adoption -- providing input, photos, community profiles, draft Plan refinement and the like. The following are commended and acknowledged for their continuing assistance:

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**YAVAPAI-APACHE NATION**

Representatives of the Yavapai-Apache Nation reviewed the Final Draft Plan, provided commentary by refining a descriptive paragraph about the Yavapai-Apache Nation and preparing a full-page profile for including the Nation in Section III, Community Profiles.

**VERDE VALLEY REGIONAL LAND USE PLAN**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Verde Valley citizens are committed to preserving the qualities of friendliness, outdoor living and spaciousness that attract people to this place. Protecting these values as plans for the future are developed is the principal theme in each of the Valley’s community plans. Planning together provides opportunity to support implementation of common local goals.

Yavapai County, with assistance from the incorporated municipalities of Sedona, Cottonwood, Camp Verde, Clarkdale and Jerome, sponsored this cooperative, regional planning approach -- believed to be the first of its kind in Arizona. Other communities participating in the Verde Valley Regional Land Use Plan process include: Bridgeport; Big Park; Cornville; Red Rock/Dry Creek Area; and the Beaver Creek Area (Montezuma, Rimrock, McGuireville).

### Regional Plan Focus

Vast open spaces managed by various public agencies surround cities, towns and unincorporated communities that constitute the Valley’s population centers. Ranches, farms and mines that anchored the region’s early settlement are now absorbing growth on the small percentage of land area that is represented by private holdings. High desert, forest and riparian corridors are constant reminders of the region's natural environment.

The Verde Valley Region is separated from Central Yavapai County by the Prescott National Forest and by the high range of the Black Hills. The Prescott National Forest wraps around the Verde Valley Region on the south, west and part of the north, where it

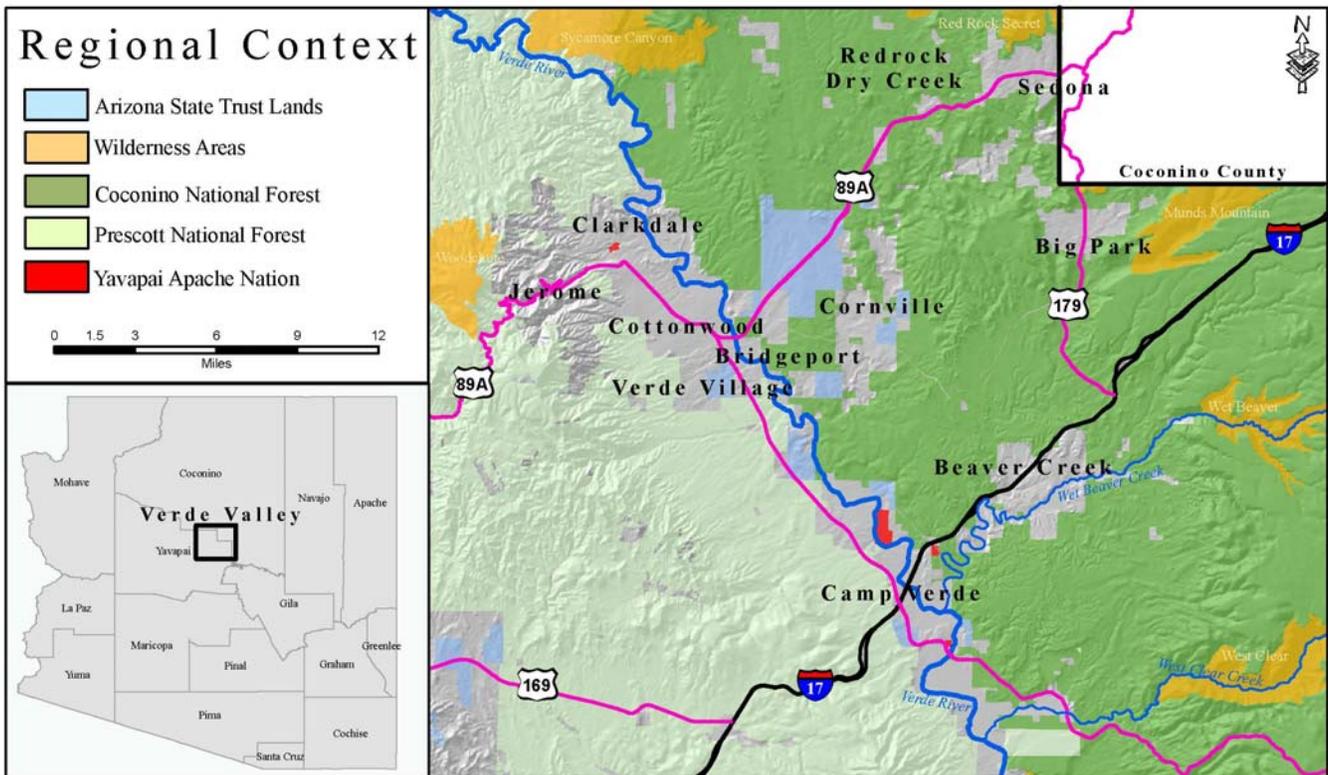


Figure 1

abuts the Coconino National Forest. The Coconino completes the north forest edge and continues south, framing the eastern areas of the Region. From headwaters in the Big Chino Valley area, west of the Prescott National Forest, the Verde River flows through communities and open areas to its confluence with the Salt River on the Fort McDowell Indian Reservation in Maricopa County.

Clustered by topography and connected by the River as well as early trails that have become highways, places in the Verde where people live, work and play have their shared natural setting in common. Maintaining individual distinctiveness is important, as acknowledged in a special section of the Plan, "Community Profiles." However, the Verde Valley's greatest promise for continued living excellence will derive from considering neighbors' needs through: cooperation, mutual respect, interdependence and land use balance among its communities. Ways that these diverse places relate together, not jurisdictional boundaries, represents the region's focus. Native American lands, National Forests and other Federal holdings, State Lands, as well as a portion of adjacent Coconino County are all part of this region.

Residents at community meetings provided input for the Plan's Focus Statement as follows:

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>VERDE VALLEY REGIONAL LAND USE PLAN</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>FOCUS STATEMENT</b></p> <p>Yavapai County, participating municipal jurisdictions and, especially, the citizens of Verde Valley commit to establishing a Regional Plan that enhances the shared qualities of these special places to live, enjoy the outdoor environment and prosper with our neighbors. Maintaining distinct community character is a high priority that encourages diverse living opportunities in a small town atmosphere.</p> <p>Open space preservation, a variety of housing choices, appropriate use of public lands and transportation connections that complement the region's spaciousness are key components for a balanced land-use pattern. Verde Valley communities prefer to accommodate growth on their own terms, residents respecting one another, so as not to be impacted by development pressures.</p>
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Four subcomponents to the Regional Plan's land use emphasis were established in the County's scope of work. They are: Transportation, Open Space, Housing and Land Management Agencies. Each is addressed in a separate section. Two other subject areas, however, were cited frequently by citizens participating in the planning process: the availability of water resources and economic development. These issues are referred to throughout the Plan document in connection with other components.

### **Relating to County, State, Southwest Region**

Location defines the Valley's context. It is placed in the eastern part of Yavapai County, the midsection of Arizona; and, in many ways, the spiritual heart of the southwestern United States. First mining, then ranching, now living quality and tourism attraction are factors contributing to the region's worldwide recognition, reminders of the "Old Ones," the Red Rocks, the vortex and much more contribute to a timeless regional mystique.

Traffic generation, use of water resources, increasing housing costs and commercialization of highway corridors are among the impacts created by population expansion in the County's interior. Some of Yavapai County's growth (167,517 in 2000; projected 232,757 by the Arizona Department of Economic Security in 2010: see page VI-3 for individual community projections) will be absorbed in the Verde Valley; however, most residents of the region prefer that their communities continue at the slower, well-managed pace.

The Verde Valley, on Interstate 17 midway between I-40 and I-10, is at the crossroads of the State of Arizona. State Routes 260, 89A and 179 link communities together and are experiencing congestion and safety problems. The Verde Valley Regional Transportation Plan is currently being updated. Its preliminary recommendations, particularly as they will influence development patterns, are integrated into this Plan. Efficient access throughout the Valley is essential to maintain connectivity among communities. Particular emphasis is placed on transit and alternate transportation modes to reduce traffic and prevent the region from becoming a thoroughfare for ever-increasing traffic.

The Verde Valley presents a strong image of the American Southwest. Over four generations, its scenery has served as the backdrop for western movies and television series. The Verde River and its tributaries such as Oak Creek, mountains, forests and foothills, distinctive geological outcroppings, high desert expanses, spectacular sunrises and sunsets constitute a photogenic composite of the larger region of which the Verde Valley is a part.

### **Plan Guidance**

This Regional Land Use Plan establishes a mid-level statement of policies and principles. It recognizes the more specific directions in municipal and community plans while responding to the Yavapai County General Plan's broad goals. The Plan is not mandatory. But it will encourage interjurisdictional communication and cooperation.

To the community, the Regional Plan provides advice for strengthening relationships with the land and people beyond its borders. A Valley-wide "code of land use ethics" emphasizes shared values, respects local self-determination and is sensitive to personal property rights.

To the County, residents in the Verde Valley have declared their desire to keep growth within the manageable limits of available resources. They support efforts to maintain spaciousness through continued coordination with land management agencies.

In the spirit of the State's "Growing Smarter" legislation, land use decisions in the Verde Valley are expected to be consistent with Regional Plan principles. Some of those principles are: open space preservation, separations between communities, water stewardship, housing choice, safe transportation alternatives, complementary economic development, cooperative planning with land management agencies, and many other citizen priorities recorded in this document.

## **II. VERDE VALLEY REGIONAL LAND USE**

Only a small percentage of the Valley has been -- or is currently available to be -- developed. But there is ample land, nonetheless, to completely change the region if it were all to be used for urban purposes. The mix of essential activities, from housing to employment, must be fit into relatively restricted areas. The critical nature of land use decisions that reflect shared community concerns therefore, is recognized by citizens and governmental leadership, alike. The Verde Valley Regional Resolutions, adopted by the County and municipalities in 1998, underscore commitment to coordinated, multi-jurisdiction stewardship of the Valley's land resource.

Historically, there has been a place for compact, relatively dense construction in Verde Valley communities. Clarkdale was Arizona's first truly planned town. Jerome's historic structures cling together on the mountainside. More recently, clustered development has created attractive neighborhoods in Sedona, Cottonwood and Big Park.

### **Compatible Balance**

Strategic location of land uses is key to cost beneficial infrastructure. Where improved roadways and utility systems are in place, or near enough for feasible municipal service extensions, moderately intense development may be considered. More remote sites would be expected to maintain the Valley's predominantly rural character. If a proposed project is of sufficient significance to the area, use of land in unincorporated portions of the County could be considered. There is, however, a desire to prevent "wall-to-wall" land use -- so gaps should be planned between developments.

Mixed-used development would be especially appropriate in the Verde Valley. Larger tracts are ideal for combining housing of various types with employment, commercial, public and leisure time activities. Even smaller, multiple use sites may be developed with value-added benefits such as convenience, shorter trips to work or shop, active open space and joint-use community facilities.

**Spaciousness** can be promoted through careful placement of structures that allow for view corridors and buffering between different types or intensities of land use. Lineal open space, planned into each development, fosters pathway connections for bicycle and pedestrian transportation alternatives.

Rural character can be preserved best by protecting the backdrops, with views of foothills and mountains. The numerous natural drainage washes that intersect highways provide desired visual relief between developed clusters. It is regarded as essential to maintain the sense of openness, particularly where transportation and land use are concentrated.

As expanded upon in the Housing section of this Plan, residential balance derives from encouraging -- or requiring -- a variety of different housing types that respond to market demand by offering a wide range of household sizes and pricing that accommodates various economic levels. "Work force housing" opportunities need to be promoted and shared among all communities to match local wage earners' incomes with available shelter.

Residential variety results from the planned inclusion of different elevation designs, siting arrangements, house sizes and lot areas. Proposed housing construction, whether in the County or incorporated municipalities, should be encouraged to provide broad choice in terms of appearance, floor plans, building materials, pricing and amenities. Where they can be made compatible with surrounding single-family homes, townhouses, condominiums and apartments can be included to house empty-nesters, young families or working singles.

Generally, larger lot homes would be sited at the periphery of new, planned communities or neighborhoods, blending with open space buffers. More compact development, on the other hand, can be clustered around interior activity centers such as parks, shopping, schools or employment. Infill properties within built-up areas ought not to be overlooked; however, new dwellings should be fully compatible with existing homes.

Growth in Yavapai County in recent years has been housing-driven. Living quality, comparatively reasonable residential cost for retirees and other factors have contributed to the home building boom. Consideration should be given to attracting additional employment into the Verde Valley for the purpose of achieving a more positive jobs-to-housing balance.

**Economic Development**, although neither considered as an Element in the Yavapai County General Plan nor specified as a subcomponent in the regional planning workscope, is regarded as an important objective by the majority of Verde Valley communities. County policy has delegated most economic development responsibility to the incorporated municipalities. Two economic factors, therefore, are evaluated in the regional planning context. They are: 1) job creation; and 2) generating revenue for public improvements.

Quality of life advantages in the Valley can attract employees for companies who wish to build and retain a skilled workforce. Creating employment will vary according to differences in community character, size and workforce potential. For example: Cottonwood might support production, manufacturing and assembly activities as well as health care and retail expansion; research and development "think tank" enterprises would fit well into Sedona's resort/residential living; Camp Verde can develop a full-service economy with its access to the transportation system at SR260 and I-17.

Well-paying jobs in technical, health care, research and manufacturing industries should be especially sought. Service jobs for retail, hospitality and other tourism-related businesses also help contribute to growing local economies, but they are more dependent on housing choice matched to workers' incomes -- as well as affordable transportation to and from the job.

Some Valley locations have specific ideas for economic development. Cottonwood sees itself as the Valley's retail and health care hub. Industrial uses and rail head facilities for mining and the cement plant are provided in Clarkdale. Jerome emphasizes creative arts. Catering to visitors is important for several communities: Sedona, ecotourism; Camp Verde and Yavapai-Apache gaming venues; Beaver Creek's two National Monuments --

Montezuma's Castle and Montezuma's Well. Others, such as Cornville and Bridgeport, are predominantly residential in character. These communities, too, need shopping and job opportunities; and they provide housing for employees working in other nearby Valley communities.

### **Ownership/Development Patterns**

Future growth will be determined by public policy. The State of Arizona has delegated planning and zoning authority over privately-held real estate, allowing the County and/or municipal governments to regulate land use in the interests of protecting public health, safety and welfare. Above all, it should be remembered that no landowner -- whether the property is located in an incorporated municipality or in an unincorporated area of the County -- is automatically entitled to rezoning. First, the proposed use must be consistent with the adopted city or county General Plan. Second, the applicant must show that the suggested development benefits the community and does not overburden the infrastructure. Also, the project should be demonstrated to be in accord with the principles of this Regional Plan.

The direction property not held by private individuals will take depends on other entities' policies some of which are much broader in scope than the Verde Valley. Federal lands, Native American Nations, the Arizona State Trust Land objectives, if they are to mesh with the best interests of Yavapai County's Verde Valley communities, must share in benefits from Regional Plan vision. Their participation in Plan implementation will result from voluntary support derived from mutual interest.

**Growth pressures** drive development demand and, therefore, land prices. Even though the Valley share of Yavapai County's population will probably decrease from its current 36 percent, even relatively low homebuilding rates will absorb hundreds of acres of land every year, converted from vacant or agricultural categories into housing use. One thousand dwelling units at current average densities, for instance, could utilize 300 acres in a given year. Supporting uses -- commercial, public, employment -- would potentially increase this acreage absorption by half.

**Private lands** including development rights for State Trust Land, although representing a small proportion of the Verde Valley land area, are most immediately available to meet short-term market demand for development. The current privately-owned inventory includes land appropriate for subdivisions, institutional, industrial and commercial uses as well as planned developments, ranging from large rural lots to prospective mixed-use projects.

Regional perspective suggests that future entitlements for development should encourage municipalities (as well as unincorporated County areas) to accommodate growth in manageable quantities, in disparate locations. In particular, land use decisions must respect other communities' goals by exercising restraint in approving placement, extent and intensity of new developments that may subject nearby Valley areas to undesirable impacts (such as traffic congestion).

## *VERDE VALLEY REGIONAL LAND USE PLAN*

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The principal corollary for development mix, timing and intensity is requiring adequate infrastructure to be provided. Construction on private lands should be required to demonstrate cost benefit for the community or County. The developer must pay a fair share to assure necessary water, wastewater, transportation circulation, necessary public services and amenities commensurate with prevailing standards.

**Land management agencies** control the large majority of property in the Verde Valley. Federal and State stewardship is vital to maintaining the region's scenic, outdoor character. Changes in agency policy, however, can drastically alter land development potential. Cooperative planning should support land agencies' missions together with municipal/County General Plan goals.

National Forests, National Monuments and other Federal assets can be exchanged for lands located elsewhere to serve government purposes such as consolidating wilderness areas. Recent National administrations have worked assertively to preserve unspoiled lands in western states. These actions have inspired widespread instances of land exchange proposals, including some in the Verde Valley.

Land sales or trades create both positive and negative consequences affecting orderly development. Expanded land inventory (See: Section VII, Land Management Agencies) may help to reduce escalating prices and bring new areas under local government regulation. On the other hand, releases that haven't been coordinated with the "receiving" jurisdiction may challenge Valley governments' capability to provide adequate public services.

The Arizona State Land Department, responsible for the administration of State Trust Land, has also become more proactive in considering new uses for its open land holdings. Income from these properties, in the main, accrues to the principal Trust beneficiaries: Arizona's public schools. These lands could be sold for residential purposes; but non-residential uses generally are the subject of long-term leases. During the past several years, the State Land Department has prepared conceptual plans for sale or lease of Trust Land -- including some of its holdings in Yavapai County.

**Native American sovereign land** plays a significant role in the Verde Valley with regard to land use in the present and future. A popular gaming establishment near Camp Verde attracts numerous visitors to the area from the Phoenix metro and elsewhere. The tribe owns and operates businesses, such as mining sand and rock, an RV park and convenience store with a gas station and fast food restaurant along I-17. Tribal members reside on the sovereign land and the local towns contributing to the economy and growth of the Verde Valley.

Key locations along the Verde River and the main highways can play an important and productive part in managing the Valley's regional growth. Some of these locations are owned by the Yavapai-Apache Nation and the Nation should be consulted when planning is considered in the Verde Valley. The Regional Land Use Plan intends to incorporate Native American property stewardship values as a significant, contributing philosophy in preserving the Verde Valley for the benefit of all its residents.

**Sites available for development** can be found in, around and between communities. Types of land use, with varying densities and improvement standards, will be determined according to applicable General Plans, zoning ordinances, subdivision codes. As noted, use designations and regulations, by law, must be consistent with the adopted General Plans -- or the codes/plans must be amended.

Valley municipalities currently have prospective revisions to their land use programs under study, including a comprehensive update to the Town of Jerome's Plan. Unincorporated communities (Cornville, Bridgeport, Big Park, the Beaver Creek area) call on the County to exercise land use authority in furtherance of stated local goals.

Water assurances are prerequisite to site development feasibility. Expanded wet utilities (water, wastewater) systems will be needed for planned development along interstate I-17 in Camp Verde and SR260 in Camp Verde and Cottonwood. Cottonwood growth areas could include properties with improved Mingus extension access if utility service can be economically feasible. Infill projects in Sedona, Clarkdale and Jerome may also depend, in part, on water availability. Because the Verde Valley water resource is not subject to Active Management Area (AMA) regulations, such as those that are applied by the Arizona Department of Water Resources to metropolitan areas, there is a lack of regional coordination in water use. Since much of the Valley's water distribution is by private water companies, service area boundaries and private sector capital investment decisions further complicate local water supply issues.

Ample open space separations are expected in designing new developments so as to avoid man-made barriers to the Valley's scenic appeal. The forthcoming Regional Transportation Plan roadway capacity analysis will suggest limiting traffic generation and, therefore, the size of developments. Housing initiatives, too, are likely to influence location, mix and density of development.

### **Community Linkages**

Connection, while maintaining diversity, is the central theme in this Regional Land Use Plan. Character preservation depends on the ability to achieve transportation efficiency without being overcome with automobile and truck traffic. Managed growth, to fit well with individual communities' plans, requires increased variety in travel options, such as the Sedona-Cottonwood transit service, as well as appropriate sizing of facilities. Maximum speeds and lane capacities are not regarded as the answer for bringing Verde Valley communities together.

**Roadway access** improvements are vital to the region's future well-being. Although forecasts anticipate faster growth in western portions of Yavapai County, the Verde Valley must be considered as a distinct, separate destination. Safety, particularly at I-17 ramps and major intersections, rates highest priority consideration. Traffic calming measures should be adopted to maintain scenic by-way character on State Routes 260, 179, 89A and others.

Transit services can alleviate traffic congestion, accommodating workers' commutes, residents' trips and visitors' convenience. A transportation hub near Camp Verde, for

example, might provide regularly-scheduled connections among Valley communities, work places, shopping centers and tourist attractions. Shuttle services between Cottonwood/Clarkdale and Jerome, accessing the Beaver Creek communities and making frequent runs into the Phoenix metro area or to Flagstaff could promote transit ridership.

**Natural corridors** constitute ideal community-linkage options for leisure time enjoyment as well as for short shopping or community trips. The Transportation and Open Space sections of this Regional Plan address possibilities for non-vehicular trails along the banks of the Verde and its tributaries. Also, connecting population cores with new planned community destinations via pathway systems paralleling natural drainage courses would establish meaningful transportation/recreation alternatives.

Citizen-driven plans to create and adopt a comprehensive bikeway system throughout the Verde Valley deserve strong support from communities, the County and ADOT. Implementation would assure national recognition of the region as a bicycle-friendly environment.

### **Population Accommodation**

All predictions indicate that the arrival of more residents in the Verde Valley is inevitable. The extent of housing growth, however, depends not only on demand, but, also, on the region's receptivity to development. Local plans range from larger-scale homebuilding opportunities in Camp Verde, Clarkdale and Cottonwood to more limited, infill construction in Big Park, Sedona, Jerome, Rimrock, McGuireville, Lake Montezuma and preferred, restricted growth for Cornville, Bridgeport and elsewhere.

**Service capacity** limitations, as well as land and water resource availability, will determine the number, placement and type of households that could be added in the various communities. Access may be constrained by slope or drainage impediments. Groundwater modeling studies may indicate areas that can be developed at higher and more efficient densities than permitted by individual wells and septic tanks. Larger, planned developments could achieve sufficient economies of scale to support financing feasibility for investing in freestanding infrastructure, such as separate sewage treatment and water distribution facilities, or lengthy extension distances to link with existing utility systems.

Decisions for resource allocation to other parts of the County or State can affect assignment of water rights, distribution of power/cable or funding for roads by ADOT. The Verde Valley will need to compete with other locations for these prerequisites to growth -- or be satisfied with slower growth and lesser infrastructure assistance.

**Traffic reduction** methods must be factored into the Verde region growth equation. Preferences for a slower pace have to assume comparatively less highway investment. Or, from another perspective, failure to gain funding support for Verde Valley roads underscores the necessity for careful planning here. Safety issues, in any case, should receive highest priority. Better access to Beaver Creek, for instance, should be addressed notwithstanding the scale of local development. Mixing uses, bringing in more

employment and shopping opportunities, can shorten trip lengths for residents of less-populous places. New housing projects in these locations could be evaluated, in part, by their creative contributions to traffic management.

Public transportation options might be joint-ventured through a consortium of local governments, businesses, institutions, developers and major landholders. Exactions from large scale projects, as contribution to solving regional traffic problems, could help to subsidize ridership from smaller, unincorporated places. Tourism destinations (e.g., casinos, Verde River railway, State Parks, national monuments) could assist through surcharges to their patrons.

New resident demographics likely will exert major influence on the region's capability to handle a larger population base. Family living implies more persons per household, higher cost demands on public services (e.g., schools), need for more local jobs and, depending on wage levels, probably lower per capita incomes. Retirement housing, by way of contrast, "imports" disposable income buying power, often with greater household income, less costly public servicing, support for more local jobs and reduced peak hour traffic generation.

Although retirement housing produces economic advantages, citizens in the region seem to favor a blend of new families and empty nesters in non-exclusionary (particularly non-gated) subdivisions. Higher educational levels of adult in-migrants, too, make a positive difference, contributing to local workforce attraction of new employers.

### **Preservation/Growth Sectors**

Future regional land use opportunities emphasize development prospects along major roadway corridors and municipalities' adopted General Plan "Growth Areas" Elements. The Regional Plan, however, also recognizes the importance of enhancing the use of open lands by preserving them. As stated in the Cottonwood General Plan, "communities in the Valley exist as a series of islands in the National Forest connected by State highways." The surrounding environment has the respect of Verde Valley residents and visitors as the region's overriding land condition.

A central presumption of this Plan is any land not specifically designated for growth is intended to be preserved in its current, open, agricultural or rural density condition. The County recognizes, through zoning policy, the need to protect large lot areas.

Growth areas, given the importance of preservation, also require strategic planning for optimum land utilization. Because impacts on other land uses can be severe, development projects that are approved should make the most of their potential to provide housing, jobs, shopping and other needs of an expanding population.

Lands becoming available for development as a result of land trades with public agencies, together with subdivisions/site plans that have already obtained approval, could represent, already, a high proportion of the Valley's growth potential for the coming decade. Future decisions pertaining to large-scale development proposals should look to parts of the

Valley where demand is not being met, as a first priority. Additional projects in high growth areas should be called upon to show positive benefits such as: responding to particular needs of the local residents, providing exceptional public amenities and contributing to infrastructure financing.

Highway growth nodes likely will occur in major highway corridors, as along State Route 260 between Cottonwood and Camp Verde. Citizen planners strongly urge that conscious effort is made to develop in such a way as to prevent the appearance of continuous strip development use.

89A Highway access, as well, is inspiring mixed-use construction. Cottonwood considers North Block, 340 acres straddling 89A before crossing into Clarkdale, and the 144-acre Groseta Ranch Master Plan, on the north side of 89A between Verde Heights Drive and the entry to the Pine Shadows development, as growth areas.

Each municipal General Plan calls out several locations where new development could best be accommodated. Clarkdale's, for example, calls for a Master Plan approach for the Highway 89A Corridor, which, by coordinating with Cottonwood, can exemplify Growing Smarter Plus goals for efficient, shared growth patterns. The ideal implementation of local intent, therefore, would be to address these pre-defined opportunity areas before creating new ones through the annual Plan amendment process.

**Natural and cultural resources** dating from the earliest native settlements played the leading role in the area's evolution. The mining heritage has left behind reminders -- mine shafts, talings, historical buildings and machinery -- of the quest for copper and other ores. Today, some extractive industries, such as the mining of sand and gravel, contribute to the local economy. Visual and recreation values in the Valley's natural resources (beginning with the Verde River, itself, and the surrounding mountains) require protection from encroaching development. Viewsheds and geological formations, such as Sedona's Red Rocks, are distinguishing characteristics for the entire region.

The aforementioned parks, national monuments and forests are reserved in abundance; however, as discussed in the Open Space and sub-component, the manner in which they are accessed, used or restricted must be considered carefully to maintain their special attributes for future generations.

**Agricultural assets**, perhaps best represented in the Valley's Bridgeport, Camp Verde and Cornville communities, require assured water availability. Draw down of the water table in traditional, agrarian basins must be prevented through management policies that apportion some of the surface and groundwater supply for rural living uses.

**Historic districts**, too, represent the preservation counterpart to growth. In such locations as the entire Town of Jerome or Cottonwood Old Town, land use policies are applied to prevent incursions on sectors that exemplify a community's past.

Maintaining structures and facilities that remind residents and tourists of the area's heritage constitutes a valuable tourism attraction, as in the case of Clarkdale's historic railroad district, the terminus for Verde Canyon Railroad excursions.

**Environmental excellence**, stressing clean air and water, is a high priority in the Verde Valley. Positive economic contributions offered by proposed development have to be evaluated in terms of minimizing detrimental impacts on neighboring properties as well as the Valley in its entirety. Water stewardship directly affects development policy; and, therefore, requires consideration from a regional perspective.

Clustering land use to keep from infringing on natural assets is desirable, overcrowding is not. Land, water and air quality monitoring on a continuing basis is a must.

### **Land Use Summaries**

Regional land use planning in the Verde Valley adapts to community character and development goals expressed by local residents. In many cases, desired patterns, intensities and types of use have been articulated in adopted General Plans or Community Plans. The series of input meetings and survey responses provided further insight regarding citizen preferences about land utilization.

Respecting local determination, the Regional Land Use Plan recognizes these stated future development directions. The accompanying Land Use Plan map illustrates municipal and community allocations of existing and desired uses. The following brief summaries highlight particular emphases for individual areas.

**Sedona** -- The land use vision for this area is to maintain the value of the scenic and natural resources, which is important to the economics of the City. One of the City's key growth policies is to prohibit urban sprawl by retaining the existing geographic limits of the private lands within the City by building out the existing private land base without expanding into National Forest lands. Community Plan policies also limit the increase of residential density and expansion of commercial acreage, with a commitment to exploring development/re-development options that do not significantly change the total commercial and residential land base. One result of the "infilling" of existing commercial land on a highly visible highway corridor has been some residents' concerns that "over-commercialization" is degrading the community's scenic quality. Sedona's vision for development, however, is intended to ensure that future development occurs in a manner that promotes a high level of design, environmental sensitivity and social interaction.

The City also limits building high-density housing and commercial development next to National Forest lands, preferring to keep more intense uses to the center of the community. The Community Plan also discourages unregulated access to the National Forest lands through residential areas and supports access according to the adopted Trails and Urban pathways Plan to help mitigate impacts to the urban interface with the National Forest.

Sedona's Focused Activity Centers (FAC's) identify mixed-use areas that consist of intensive commercial activity, with high-density residential and lodging sectors in a compact setting. These sectors reflect areas that have better traffic management and pedestrian access that will be conducive to vehicular trips oriented to a single destination, rather than making several trips up and down the highway.

By limiting the impact of growth on the region's natural resources while promoting small-town community character and quality of life, Sedona hopes to preserve a human-scale environment that is both enjoyable and historic for future citizens and visitors.

**Cottonwood** -- The City of Cottonwood vision welcomes change and prosperity. The riverside community, surrounded by pristine vistas of mountains, canyons and red rocks, relies upon the unique historic character of its geographic setting. Adjoining the City is the unincorporated subdivision of Verde Village, the Town of Clarkdale, Jerome and other unincorporated residential areas.

Cottonwood contains the Verde Valley Medical Center which has continued to expand and develop state-of-the-art medical facilities attracting physicians and support services to the community. Its commercial core and retail center is located along the intersection of two state highways (Hwy 89A and SR 260). This area is home to busy shopping centers as well as smaller retail and service businesses. It attracts shoppers from smaller communities surrounding Cottonwood.

Cottonwood's Land Use Element's goal is to strive for a balanced community complete with a good mix of housing types and styles, a strong economic base, abundant parks and open space, appropriate public facilities and a well-designed circulation system. By setting high standards for all new development, Cottonwood is contributing to regional balance between the Verde Valley's historic and contemporary districts.

**Camp Verde** -- Camp Verde is an ideal blend of old and new, of strong traditions and progressive ideas. Camp Verde will have a strong and viable economic base attracting families, retirees, diverse business including industry. Employment opportunities with competitive salaries and benefits will provide residents opportunities to secure attractive housing and obtain an enhanced standard of living. The Town will retain its rural lifestyle as influenced by its historic identity and continue to welcome visitors and potential residents alike. All citizens will be highly regarded and included in community planning.

Camp Verde's most significant land use needs, as expressed by residents, are creating job development, shopping opportunities and reasonably priced housing. The town demonstrates a great variety and diversity of housing. Rural residential accounts for only 20% of total land use in Camp Verde. Until recently, with construction of subdivisions, it has been unusual to drive down any street, and see two residences exactly alike.

**Clarkdale** -- The original townsite of a company town, Clarkdale, was designed as a planned community. The small town was originally built to support the copper smelting operations located adjacent to the Verde River. There are eight designated planning sub-areas. The goal of identifying these individual sectors is to consider the unique concerns and issues found within each area while recognizing its contribution to the entire town.

Clarkdale's central residential area is located south of the historic townsite, east of Highway 89A. The town also includes historic Centerville and Lower Clarkdale as well as foothills residential neighborhoods. These neighborhoods incorporate medium density housing (4-8 units/acre) on smaller lots. The compact central business district is located along the main street in downtown Clarkdale.

To preserve and enhance the unique aspects of Clarkdale, the town supports historic preservation of residential, commercial and institutional buildings throughout the municipality. With Clarkdale having one of the highest growth rates in the Verde Valley (59% between 1990 and 2000), new development, such as the mixed-use Highlands Subdivision, is intended to maintain a balance between quality residential neighborhoods and commercial development.

**Jerome** -- Land use in the historic Town is being revisited in a General Plan update that is expected to stress residential quality through continued restoration; and enhancement of the local economy through tourism attractions, such as the arts community and hospitality industry -- including food and fun establishments as well as bed and breakfast accommodations.

Residents want to prevent sprawl down the mountainside, favoring retention of the traditional, compact "mining town" core. Techniques for preserving open spaces are being sought. Transit connections with nearby Clarkdale are seen as a means to abate traffic and parking congestion in the densely-developed community.

Specialty commerce, with artisan/entrepreneur employment, can be encouraged through creative, mixed-use regulatory techniques.

**Cornville** -- The 2005 Cornville Community Plan, states that this is a "low-density area, with a rural atmosphere and an even more rural lifestyle." Land use consists of mostly residential, farming, recreation and rural residential acreages. Two small commercial areas are found within the core of the community. According to the new Community plan, the developed core is to be comprised of a compact center of commercial activity and multi-family homes. From the core moving outwards, density would then decrease.

Prime real estate, adjacent to environmentally-sensitive areas such as the riparian habitat along the Oak Creek and the Coconino National Forest, is appropriate for low density single family dwellings. The Community Plan suggests criteria for evaluating future, proposed subdivisions or Planned Area Developments to assure adequate and convenient spaces for traffic, utilities, recreation, and light and air.

The Cornville goal is to continue emphasis on a sustainable rural character. Support and incentives are provided for "country stores" and small businesses that have limited traffic. The mission of this community is to retain mostly low-density to very low-density residential areas with very few commercial businesses.

**Big Park** -- Although unincorporated, the community's land use decisions are highly participatory with grassroots advice provided to Yavapai County leadership through the auspices of the Big Park Regional Coordinating Council. Land uses compatible with the masterplanned, high quality housing, open space, solitude and scenic view assets are insisted upon by residents in this largely retirement community (median age 55+).

Shopping, professional offices and service businesses are located principally along State Route 179 and in the nearby community of Sedona. Open Space preservation is top priority with citizens. Rapid commercial, employment and housing growth is not advocated for maintaining the preferred, relatively compact, residential environment; however, the community is supportive of the need for workforce shelter and transit opportunities in this part of the Verde Valley.

**Beaver Creek** -- Three long-standing settlements -- Rimrock, Lake Montezuma, McGuireville -- provide a variety of living opportunities for families and active retirees. Each community takes pride in its unique attributes, but they share a planning vision that would continue the residential/open space enjoyment land use emphasis while adding shopping and employment opportunities in moderation.

Economic development can both help to justify and utilize improved access to I-17 -- cited as the Beaver Creek communities' principal need. Water supply and infrastructure issues, likewise, would benefit from economies of scale from mixed-use development planning. Small scale, strategically-located commercial and housing construction should be encouraged in the on-going Beaver Creek Community Plan Update.

**Bridgeport** -- A very rural lifestyle is preferred by local residents in this unincorporated community adjacent to and east of Cottonwood. Agriculture, raising animals, outdoor enjoyment, not growth or economic development, are primary pursuits for persons living in this low density housing enclave.

Jobs and shopping are accessible in Cottonwood, only limited convenience service/retail are desired in the community. There are stated concerns about maintaining water availability for agriculture, keeping housing (as well as property taxes) affordable, and particularly, protecting the Verde River's assets: allowing for public accessibility with sustainable, riparian wildlife habitat.

Strategies for buffering, connecting, complementing and distinguishing Verde Valley communities are indicated schematically on the map. Recommended techniques for achieving regional integration are addressed, briefly, in the following subsection and, in greater detail, as recommendations and implementation actions. Maintaining individual community identity through land use planning and regulation, however, is a local responsibility.

VERDE VALLEY REGIONAL LAND USE PLAN

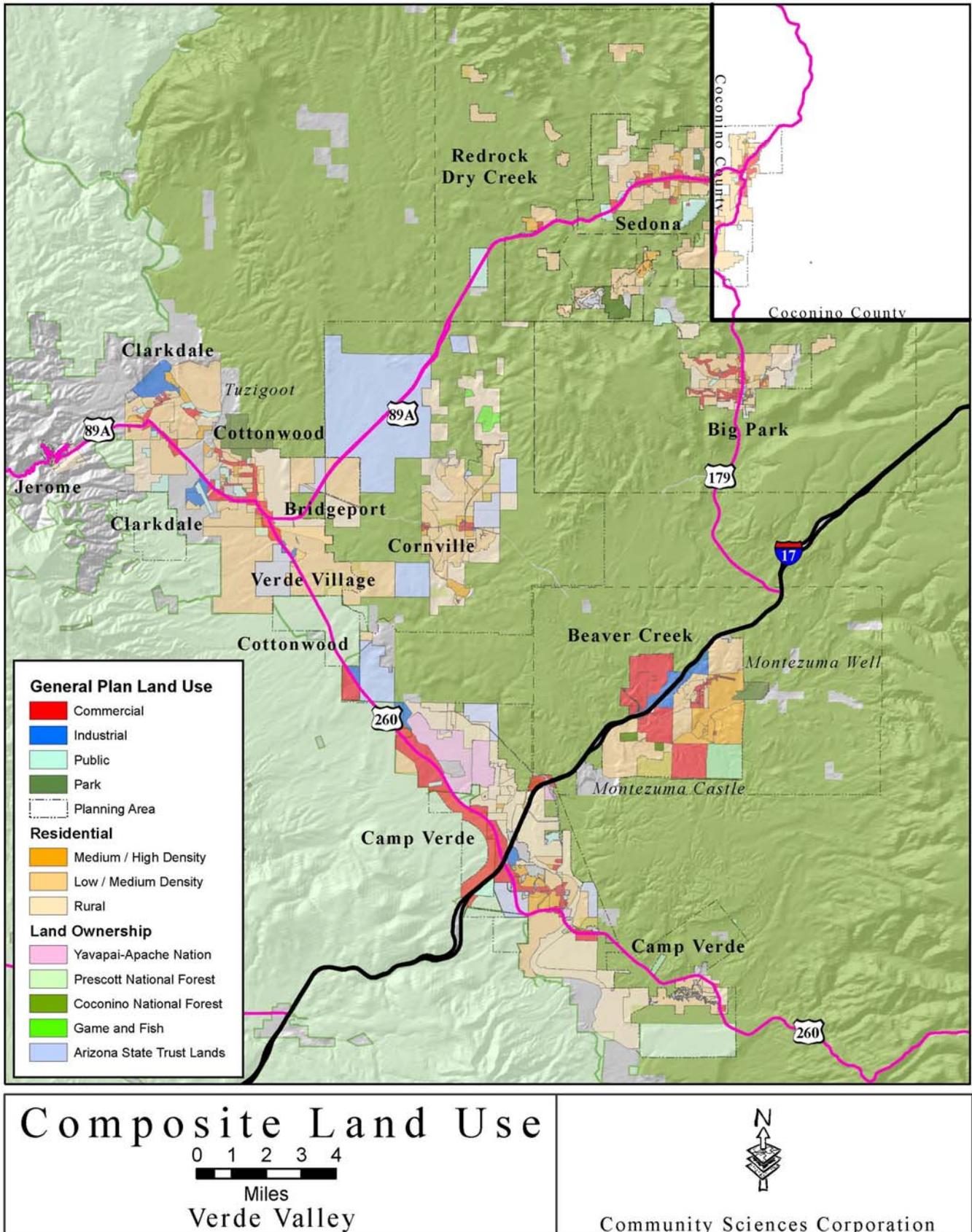


Figure 2

### **Regional Cohesion**

Three basic principles can help to assure the compatibility necessary to maintain strong, shared regional ties. These key objectives are: 1) cooperative support, rather than cutthroat competition for investment and funding assistance; 2) tactical prioritization in transportation system improvements; and 3) observing complementary land use among Verde Valley communities, including unincorporated Yavapai County areas.

**Resource sharing** begins with understanding and appreciating neighboring community objectives. For example, Sedona is considering ways to encourage worker housing so as not to place an undue burden on Cottonwood. Clarkdale, with its Yavapai College campus serving as a resource for exploring regional solutions, is cooperating with Cottonwood to facilitate access to Verde River scenic, recreational access for both communities. Camp Verde is cooperating with Cottonwood on creating a trails system along the Verde River for recreational activities.

Joint-venturing in providing utilities, social or recreational programs and public safety services could be extremely productive in making public revenues go farther. The importance of working together for fair-share water allocation has been emphasized. This includes maintaining common positions to prevent overuse of both surface water and groundwater locally or elsewhere.

**Transportation balance** in the Verde Valley means more than adding lane capacity on roadways designed to expedite traffic through the region to other destinations. Safety, traffic calming, Interstate ramp improvements are important to upgrade intra-Valley connections.

Alternatives for commuting, shopping, education, personal and recreational trips receive high priorities on residents' wish lists. Valley bus services, augmented by shuttle connections, could benefit many citizens who don't drive (e.g., seniors, youth) or workers and families who need to minimize transportation costs. Ride-sharing programs of all types reduce traffic congestion.

Enhanced pedestrian and/or bicycle facilities can accommodate more short trips, particularly in planned, compact, mixed-use neighborhoods. Also, these links should connect with transit stops to promote ridership and reduce dependence on driving to every destination.

**Complementary land use** is being encouraged at both the local and regional level. Where population growth occurs, shopping and employment opportunities should be planned in proximity to new housing. Lower density residential areas, such as Bridgeport or Cornville, ought to have convenient access to jobs, retail and services in nearby municipalities.

Larger cities and towns -- Cottonwood, Camp Verde, Sedona -- will continue to expand their central place roles for serving Valley residents' major healthcare and retail needs as

## *VERDE VALLEY REGIONAL LAND USE PLAN*

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well as tourist accommodations. Clarkdale shares with Jerome an attraction as a visitor destination through historic preservation and prevention of sprawl into natural resource areas; and with Cottonwood, its quality growth for jobs and housing.

A sustainable, diversified economy will provide the foundation for accomplishing Verde Valley growth that emphasizes "better", not just bigger. Various economic development forums have emphasized the necessity of multi-community cooperation, open to new, creative business concepts, to accomplish shared, regional economic objectives.

Future land use patterns receive direction from common criteria that manage the placement of commercial, employment, institutional and various residential densities among municipal zoning/subdivision ordinances as well as County development codes. Mixed-use, masterplanned projects are preferred, supported with bonus incentives tailored to respective General Plan goals. Regional land use plan recommendations (see: Section VIII) suggest Development Guidelines that are specifically adapted to the Valley's individual communities.

### **III. COMMUNITY PROFILES**

The Verde Valley's appeal is, in large part, due to its diversity -- in its scenery, its people and the distinctive places where they live, work and enjoy the outdoors. The Regional Plan is meant to unify purpose, not to promote similarity among communities.

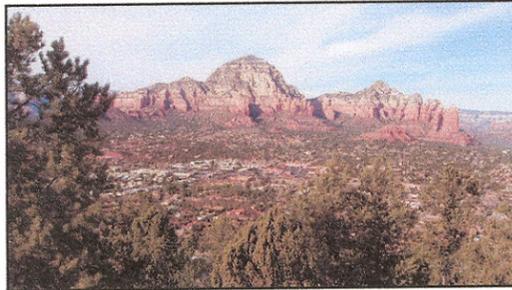
Citizens have prepared or contributed to the following portfolio that documents the special identity of places in the Verde Valley. History, physical features, local attitudes shape the nature of the Valley's communities. Differences are revealed, such as on issues of growth and economic development; but there is, also, clearcut consensus on key values: open space, water stewardship, transportation improvements.



From different beginnings, each place takes pride in its character and, together, they share aspirations to maintain living quality in the Valley.



# SEDONA



Sedona is nestled among scenic red rock formations which took Nature 350 million years to create through earth thrusts, sea changes and erosion forces.

About 1000 years ago, ancient hunter-gatherers had evolved into the pueblans and cliff house builders we call Sinagua and Anasazi.

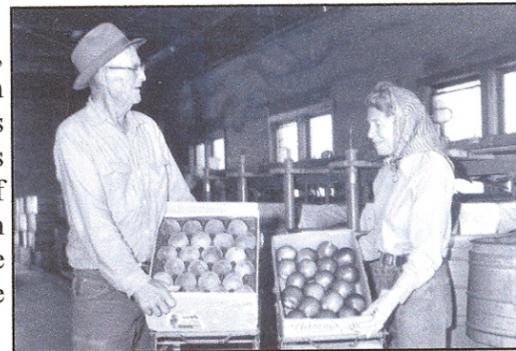
Today's residents and visitors enjoy a rich cultural heritage which might be defined in five parts.

## The pioneers

Sedona's beautiful Oak Creek is one of few streams in Arizona that flows year 'round. That attracted the Apache and Yavapai peoples, and after them the first white settlers in 1876. They raised crops and hunted game. In early 20th Century about 15 families called the area home.

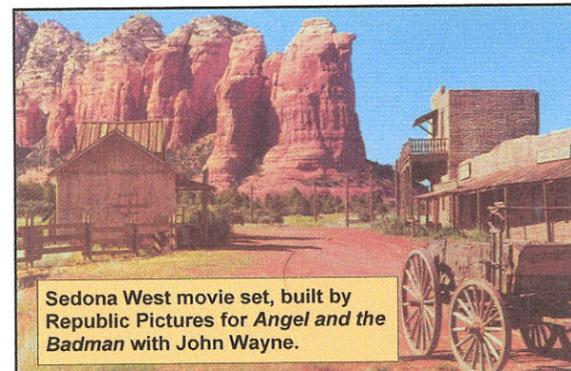
## The orchards

Some of the farmers began fruit orchards -- grapes, apples and peaches. When Walter and George Jordan moved their families here, Sedona's orchard business grew to a commercial scale. They harnessed waters of Oak Creek for irrigation. Today, the farmstead of Walter and Ruth Jordan is Sedona Heritage Museum and Jordan Historical park; George Jordan's barn is the Sedona Art Center. Other buildings from this time are being preserved as Historic Landmarks.



## The movies

In the Golden Age of Western motion pictures, Sedona's red rocks and green forests furnished a breathtaking backdrop, even in black-and-white. More than 92 movies have been filmed here in whole or part, beginning with Zane Grey's *Call of the Canyon* in 1923. Many major stars and directors worked here, and some returned to make Sedona their home. Sedonans worked as wranglers, set builders and location scouts. Today, the Sedona Film Office works with producers from around the world to continue this tradition.



Sedona West movie set, built by Republic Pictures for *Angel and the Badman* with John Wayne.

## The cowboys

The real cowboys are an important part of Sedona's heritage as well. Cattle ranching was a major part of the area's economy in the early days, and continues in a modern form today.

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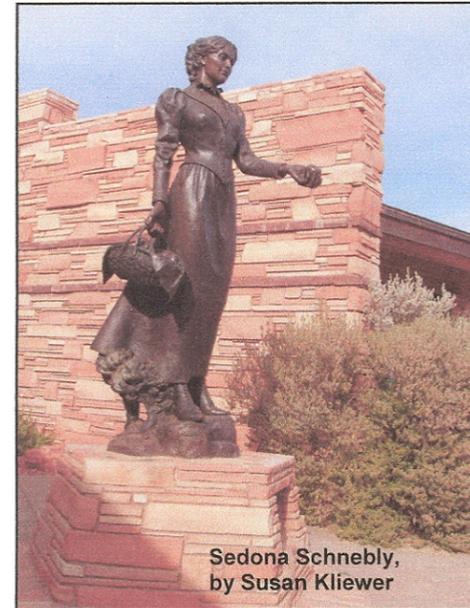
[www.sedonamuseum.org](http://www.sedonamuseum.org)

[www.sedonaaz.gov](http://www.sedonaaz.gov)

[www.sedonachamber.com](http://www.sedonachamber.com)

[www.sedonawebcam.com](http://www.sedonawebcam.com)

[www.keepsedonabeautiful.org](http://www.keepsedonabeautiful.org)

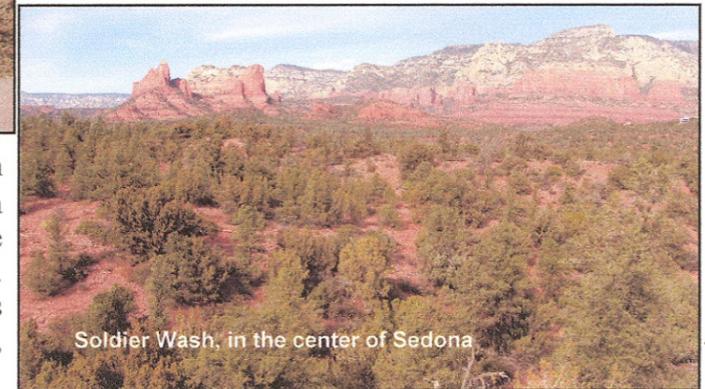


Sedona Schnebly, by Susan Kliewer

## The artists

Sedona's scenic grandeur is a magnet for artists from around the world. One of the first was Nassan Gobran, who helped to found the Sedona Arts Center in 1956. Max Ernst built a home and created some of his best-known works here -- as did many others.

Today, art galleries and shops form a large part of Sedona's business, and artistic people a large part of the population. Every form of art, from paintings and sculpture to performance and electronic works, is found here. With the scenic beauty which has inspired these artists, Sedona has become one of the top attractions for visitors from all walks of life.



Soldier Wash, in the center of Sedona

Sedona is a new city, incorporated in 1988. With its area divided between Coconino and Yavapai counties, the residents voted for local control. Now the community's economy is based on tourism, outdoor recreation, the arts, and retirement.

Half of the land inside the city limits is public, administered by the U. S. Forest Service in an excellent working relationship with residents. This assures protection of green open space and contributes to a high quality of life, and a fine experience for visitors..



Residents come from every corner of the world and every walk of life -- to raise their families, continue their work, seek new careers, or retire with the rewards of their careers. But "retirement" is just a word to the hundreds of volunteers who are involved in community affairs. Despite impacts of growth and tourism, Sedonans embrace a responsibility to the land.

People and ideas come together in groups

like the Verde Valley Forum for Public Affairs, to study issues of local importance and seek solutions. The Keep Sedona Beautiful organization works in many ways to achieve the promise of its name. The state-of-the-art Sedona Library is staffed and supported by volunteers. The Friends of the Forest build and maintain trails, staff the USFS visitor center, and patrol in times of fire hazard. Numerous other non-profit groups offer opportunities for residents to involve themselves in important and interesting pursuits.

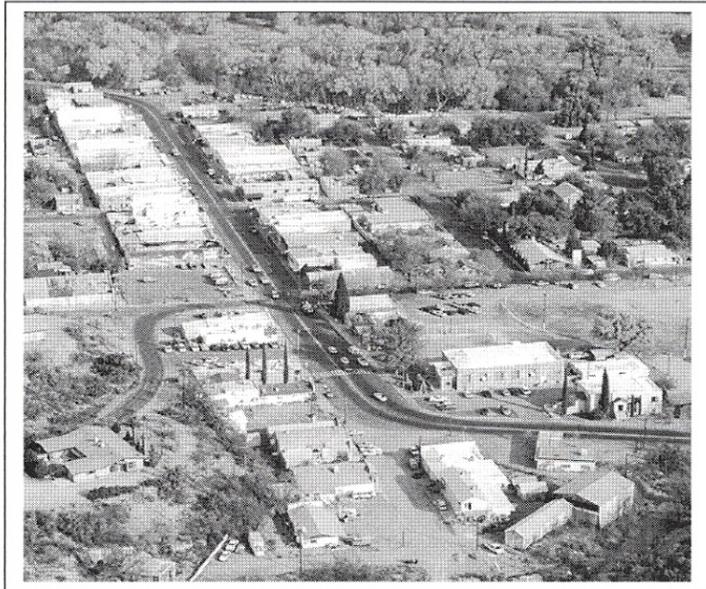
Verde Valley communities work with each other, the Forest Service and the State of Arizona in the common interest. In this 21st Century, the region vibrates with activity and possibilities.

# COTTONWOOD

“Cottonwood, the heart of the Verde Valley, is a progressive community with unique natural and historic surroundings that offers a quality lifestyle with many of the amenities of metropolitan areas, yet is a quiet, safe and prosperous place to live and visit.”

## History

The Verde Valley, long a home to Native Americans, particularly the Sinagua and later the Yavapai and Apache, was first visited by Europeans in 1583 when Antonio de Espejo, a Spanish explorer, arrived in the area of present-day Jerome searching for gold mines, which he had been told about by the Indians in present-day New Mexico. The first non-Native settlers arrived in the Cottonwood area to farm



and raise livestock in the late 1870's. In 1885, the first post office was established and named Cottonwood for the favorite camping area along the river under the big Cottonwood trees. The first business was the general store in connection with the Post Office and later two dairies supplied milk to Jerome. These early settlers found a market for their principle crops, hay and grain, at Camp Verde and later in Jerome. Before the smelters began operating, there were lots of fruit orchards and alfalfa fields in the area as well.

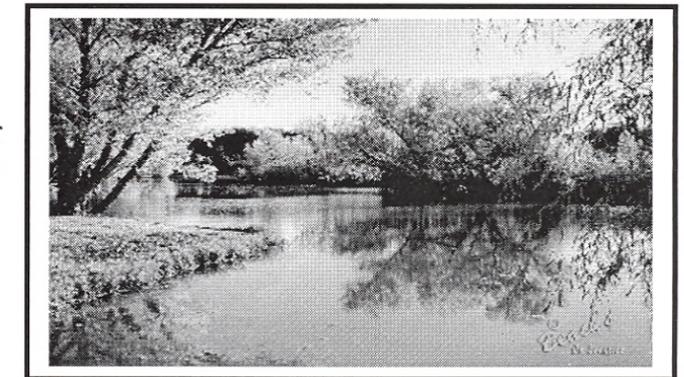
Following mining development in nearby Jerome, Clarkdale and Clemenceau, about the time WWI, Old Town and nearby Main Street blossomed as the burgeoning commercial center of the valley and an alternative to the company owned mining towns. In the Spring of 1917, there was a minor land boom as people from around the area flocked to Cottonwood to buy residential lots and prospective business sites. The town of Clemenceau had been swallowed up by Cottonwood, about the only reminder is the name on the façade of the Clemenceau Building now housing the school district offices and Cottonwood Historical Society Museum. When United Verde Extension Mining Company built a smelter in 1917, the VP of United Verde suggested naming the town after the French premier. This prompted Lewis W. Douglas to present a bust of Clemenceau to the school, which remains on display in the museum. During this period the growing town was governed by a deputy sheriff and the Cottonwood Progressive Association, which was a cross between a board of trade and a city council.

In the Fall of 1937, a group of ladies organized the Cottonwood Civic Club and took on the project of creating the Civic Center building, a distinctive two-story, stone building located in the heart of Old Town Cottonwood. With two-thirds of the cost furnished by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and the balance raised by the Civic Club and Progressive Association, the building was finished in August of 1939, and is still in use today for community events, dances and gatherings.

In the 1940's Cottonwood had a sawmill at Main and Cottonwood Streets, which prospered and grew until by 1948 it was the largest industry in town covering 40 acres and employing 70 people. Timber was cut from Schnebley Hill to Munds Park, trucked to Cottonwood for milling and used in the mines at Jerome and for home construction. This area is now home to Sawmill Village, Sawmill Square and Sawmill Cove.

## Natural Setting

Cottonwood is located adjacent to the Verde River in north central Arizona and got its name from the majestic cottonwood trees that grow along the riparian corridor. Located at an elevation ranging from 3,300 feet to 3,900 feet above sea level, Cottonwood experiences a mild climate through most of the year. An abundance of natural and historic amenities are located in the area, including Cottonwood's Riverfront Park, Dead Horse Ranch State Park, the Coconino and Prescott National Forests, Tuzigoot National Monument, and Mingus Mountain, as well as being nearby to Red Rock country and the historic mining community of Jerome.



## Community

Cottonwood offers a diversity of friendly, quality neighborhoods ranging from the unique historic Old Town area to well established, modern subdivisions, such as Verde Heights and the newer planned developments, like Cottonwood Ranch. Cottonwood is the economic hub of the Verde Valley and serves as a center of retail, commercial, medical, educational and government services.

# CAMP VERDE



Arriving to the first view of Camp Verde will instill a deep sense of awe to the most experienced traveler. Camp Verde located at the heart of Arizona is its geographical center, and boasts more than 18 miles of the Verde River within its town limits. This lush riparian area serves not only the farms and ranches along the river basin, but also attracts various migrating fowl and indigenous wildlife, who have established their habitat there. Imagine this scene framed with big blue skies, high mountain peaks, red rock canyons and craggy mesas creating a picturesque oasis that people have called home since the ancient Sinagua.

## TOURISM

Tourists come year round to Camp Verde not only because of this great beauty and near perfect year round climate, but also because of the Fort Verde Historic State Park and the Montezuma Castle National Park's Cliff Dwelling, dating back to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. This National Monument is one of the best preserved pueblo dwellings found anywhere and along with a number of other state and national parks attracts more than a million visitors from around the world to this special area of Arizona.



## HISTORY

Camp Verde is the oldest settlement in the Verde Valley established in 1865 to protect the settlers from Indian raids. The Fort Verde State Park contains military artifacts, Indian relics and articles used by both the settlers and Indians. Four of the original fort buildings still stand and represent the best preserved Calvary fort in America.



## VERDE RIVER

Uniquely, Camp Verde is Upper Sonoran Desert with a permanent river, supporting verdant riparian vegetation, our very own emerald-green jewel in the desert. A source of recreation for old and young, with fishing, canoeing, swimming and bird watching along its banks.

## FARMING

Farming appeared here in about 700 A.D. Large level fields near pueblos were used to cultivate corn, beans, and cotton by irrigation. Farming is still evident today using historic irrigation ditches with vegetable stands found dotted along local roads, pecan orchards and even vineyards popping up on hillsides.



## WESTERN LIVING

Camp Verde is known for its western flavor. Horse lovers live here with their equine friends and rodeos are a common event in a town that still carries its old west character in the buildings themselves as well as the folks that dwell here. Community is established with the many festivals held throughout the year. From the Crawdad Festival, Pecan, Wine & Antique Festival, Main Street Stampede, Highland Games, Pioneer Days, Ft. Verde Days and Cornfest to name a few.



## NEW ATTRACTIONS



At Out of Africa Wildlife Park you will see and interact with animals from around the world that live in natural, spacious habitats and share a unique and special relationship with their caregivers. Ride safari vehicles among giraffe, wildebeest, zebra and other animals of the African plains.

Cliff Castle Casino here in Camp Verde has made a positive impact on the Yavapai Apache Nation's people. Programs created as a result of the casino have helped supply services to the elderly, provide educational opportunities, and foster long-term economic development. The Yavapai-Apache Nation is a federally recognized sovereign Indian Nation with a long and ancient history tied to the Red Rock Country.



Coming Attractions include the EnviroZeum which will integrate elements such as aquariums, a nature preserve, environmental anthropology, natural science, archeological sites, technology and scientific research into a family-friendly research and educational facility.

# CLARKDALE



The Town of Clarkdale is located on the banks of the Verde River in the north central part of Arizona. It is a thriving community and is the gateway to the Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Area in the beautiful Verde Valley. Founded in 1911, Clarkdale is renowned as the first master planned community in the State of Arizona.

## HISTORY

Originally a “company town,” Clarkdale was founded by the United Verde Copper Company to provide housing and services for the employees of their copper smelter. The extensive smelter complex was located near the Verde River and processed copper ore that was brought down from the mines in Jerome from 1913-1953.

Unlike other company towns of the period that grew haphazardly, Clarkdale was designed and built from a unified master plan. The main town site was located on a ridge overlooking the industrial smelter complex and was developed with residential homes, including upper- and lower-income housing, a commercial area, an administrative center, schools, recreational and cultural facilities, and parks. The founders intended to include all the parts typically found in a small town within a comprehensive planned design. Today, the original town site of Clarkdale is recognized as an Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places.

Clarkdale’s historic Downtown Business District boasts many treasured historic assets, and is the center of Clarkdale’s government, cultural, and historic core. The Town and the business owners in the downtown area have invested heavily to keep the town core thriving. The Downtown Business District provides a little of everything from a business perspective: restaurants, taverns, coffee house, antique store, service station, light manufacturing, a beauty shop, and several internet based businesses. Two museums and the Clarkdale Chamber of Commerce information center will also open in the downtown district in 2006.



## POINTS OF PRIDE

The original rail line that served the smelter is now host to a scenic excursion train, the Verde Canyon Railroad, which allows travelers a four-hour round trip ride to view the protected ecosystem of the Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Area and Verde River firsthand. In addition to the excursion branch, the Arizona Central Railroad (the parent company of the Verde Canyon Railroad) ships materials by rail to Salt River Materials Group, a local cement manufacturer.

On the northeast border of Clarkdale, the National Park Service operates the 42-acre Tuzigoot National Monument, an 800-year old Sinagua pueblo, which is surrounded by hiking trails and hosts a complete museum. Tavasci Marsh, also maintained by the National Park Service, borders Tuzigoot National Monument and has been designated as an Important Birding Area by the North American Audubon Society. Arizona State Parks also manages portions of the Verde River Greenway along the Verde River in Clarkdale. The Town is surrounded by lands of the Prescott National Forest to the west and lands of the Coconino National Forest to the east. In addition, trust lands of the Yavapai-Apache Nation are located within the town boundary.

## COMMUNITY CHARACTER

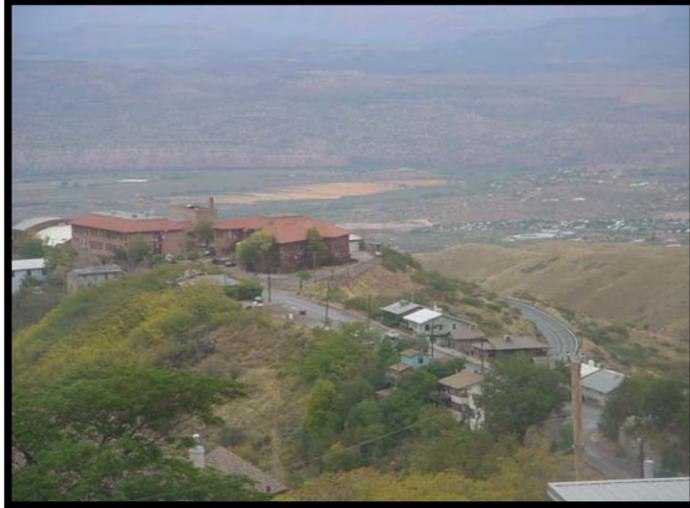
The Town of Clarkdale still possess a home-town feel which is exemplified in the number of events celebrated by the Town, such as Clarkdale’s Old Fashion 4th of July. The Town-sponsored 4th of July activities are celebrated with a Liberty Run, a pancake breakfast, a children’s parade, and festivities at the Town Park. The Made in Clarkdale show, Halloween in Clarkdale, as well as other events are all celebrated with large turnouts of local residents and visitors.



## WHO LIVES HERE TODAY?

Clarkdale is a thriving community with a small town feel. Residents are involved in maintaining their neighborhoods. Citizen volunteers serve on various Boards and Commissions and all are encouraged to actively engage in community issues.

# JEROME



Overlooking the spectacular Verde Valley from the Black Hills, Jerome is situated in what some consider the perfect location, surrounded by the Prescott National Forest lands. Its rich history as a mining center gives this small town its unique flavor, and today it is also known as a growing artistic community.

Over a billion dollars worth of copper, gold, silver and zinc were produced in Jerome in its heyday, when, for a time, Jerome was the most populous city in Arizona. In 1967 the town was named a National Historic Landmark.

Over the past four decades, the Town has fought back against its near ghost town status and regained its place as one of Arizona's historical treasures. The original bawdy houses, bars and public buildings have become hotels, galleries, food and fun establishments that charm and delight the growing throngs of visitors. Hankering back to its colorful past, many special events, including the springtime Garden Tour and the May Home Tour, give visitors an insider's peek at many areas that hosted the boisterous highlife of Jerome, during its mining days at the turn of the century.

Other unique events include its ghost town-themed festivities in October, such as Spook Weekend (a reunion of past residents), Ghost Walk, featuring residents in full ghoulish costumes, and the annual Fire Department Halloween Dance. And when you're there, ask any local about the real resident ghosts!

## HISTORY

Jerome's history is legendary. At its rough and tumble peak, Jerome flourished with a population of over 15,000 people. Leading citizens completed multi-story buildings and lavish homes, many of which still cling to the mountainside on steep streets. In 1953, copper prices fell and the Phelps Dodge Mine closed, making Jerome the world's biggest "ghost city."



## POINTS OF PRIDE

From spectacular views and a dramatic entry into town from either direction, Jerome's points of pride include historic landmarks, period architecture, museums, outdoor attractions and an overall artistic appeal.

The Jerome State Historic Park features the former Douglas Mansion, now a museum reflecting the area's past. Its exhibits include mining history, area geology, the town of Jerome's history, and information on the Douglas family, influential in

much of Jerome's past. The Jerome Historical Society Mine Museum displays ore collections and mining equipment from its past. And don't miss Jerome's legendary traveling jail, which moved 300' since it was constructed.

Artistic ingenuity is thriving in Jerome. The combination of lively creativity and compelling history has made Jerome one of the primary tourist destinations in all of Arizona. This was not always the case, but Jerome re-invented itself with the people it attracted for its rebirth. This talented group opened unique shops, restaurants and art galleries, transforming Jerome from the days not so long ago when the U. S. Post Office threatened to close its post office in Jerome. Today, Jerome is noted for its exclusive, original creations and is a great destination for ground-breaking artists.

## COMMUNITY CHARACTER

The Town's eclectic character reflects the free spirit of both its original settlers, who came west to make their fortunes, and its current residents, who relish the unique, friendly, hillside community experience. Jerome is a throwback – and proud of it. No franchise fast-food restaurants or tract subdivisions are found here.

The very geography – serpentine streets and stairs down the hillsides, and homes hanging out over the mountain drop-offs – demonstrates the will to live and thrive in a spectacular setting.

## WHO LIVES HERE TODAY?

A thriving artistic community, which resulted in a wide array of antique shops, craft stores, boutiques, art galleries and notable restaurants, has attracted new local residents who have moved here for the unique, creative environment. The community now appeals to active retirees, young families, and of course artists of all kinds, all of whom share an appreciation of Jerome's clean air, unbelievable views, strong sense of community, and an appreciation of informal western living – past and present.

# CORNVILLE

Excerpted from *Cornville Community Plan, III. Community Character, May 2005.*



CORNVILLE WITH MINGUS MOUNTAIN

A community’s character is defined by its history, culture and values. Cornville history is based on farming and ranching, due to the presence of Oak Creek and abundant springs in the area. Rural livelihoods first determined the culture of the area. Shared values included appreciation for the resources available, hard work and neighborliness. Those attributes are still valued by people in Cornville. Most like the slower pace and seem to find comfort in Cornville’s setting.

The unincorporated community of Cornville is located in the heart of the Verde Valley, surrounded by public lands, almost equidistant (as the crow flies) from Sedona and Camp Verde, and adjacent to Cottonwood. Some have dubbed Cornville a “cultural hub” because the area attracts a diversity of people who work and enjoy the amenities in nearby cities and towns, while choosing to live in a decidedly more rural place.

The physical setting of Cornville is defined by the meandering course of Oak Creek between Deer Pass and the Verde River. The creek that once attracted pioneer ranchers and farmers now attracts retirees and those retreating from busy careers or seeking a slower pace of life in a peaceful atmosphere. The topography and the public lands that surround the community provide a natural buffer and protection from the lights and sounds of nearby municipalities. Cornville has been described as a “rural oasis” because of its setting. The importance of the area’s “rural” values, however, they are defined, cannot be overstated. The creek itself, green valley, fertile land, open space, big views, quietness, clear air, dark skies are the key attributes that attract people to Cornville and keep them there.

## HISTORY

The ancient Hohokam people are thought to be the first Verde Valley inhabitants, migrating from the south as early as 700 A.D. Prehistoric farmers, known as the Sinagua, came from the north into the Valley between 1150 and 1325 A.D. and established large settlements, small pueblos and cliff dwellings. By 1450 A.D., the people disappeared. The area was later occupied by the Yavapai people, who were first contacted by Spanish explorers in the late 1500s.



HIDDEN VALLEY

Settlers first came to Cornville in the 1860s. They were attracted to Oak Creek. Cornville was also a stop along a post route from Fort Verde to Jerome. Large copper deposits were discovered in the 1870s near Jerome. Smelters in Jerome, Clarkdale and Clemenceau brought more settlers to the area.

The Cornville Post Office was established on July 9, 1885, and there are various stories about how Cornville got its name. One reference, “*Arizona Place Names* (Barnes, 1960), says the original name for the area was the Pitchner Place; and as settlement formed in the area, residents suggested that it be named Coaneville for a pioneer family named Coane. The name was submitted to the post office department in Washington, but was returned as Cornville.



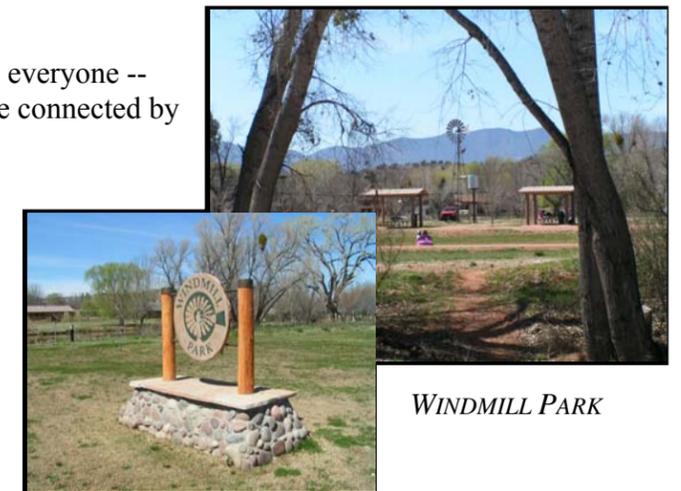
## POINTS OF PRIDE

The heart of Cornville lies along a one-mile stretch of Cornville Road, generally from the old Mercantile to Casey’s Corner. The area is described as “Cornville Center” in the award-winning Community Plan. The Post Office and a few businesses at one end are followed by Windmill Park, Cornville Bridge and eighty acres of National Forest land before reaching the junction of Page Springs Road, where the Fire Station and a few more businesses are located. It is along this stretch, between two business and service areas, that the potential exists to expand the park and develop a community focal point, which are desired by many residents. Traffic control, pedestrian safety and road improvements are key issues that must be addressed. Acquisition of the National Forest land could help connect the community and respond to public desires for park expansion, multi-use trail systems, a community events center, and an historical museum.

## Who Lives Here Today?

There is a neighborhood in Cornville to accommodate everyone -- young or old, employed or retired, rich or poor. All are connected by the presence of Oak Creek.

The area is home for many families who choose to raise their children in a rural atmosphere that includes agriculture and animals. Retirees are coming to Cornville in growing numbers after years of work in more urban settings. Further attractions are the facts that Cornville is within easy driving distance of shopping, medical facilities and tourist opportunities.



WINDMILL PARK

# BIG PARK



Flanked by Dickison Mesa on the southeast and House Mountain, a shield volcano, on the southwest, Big Park welcomes you to Red Rock Country. It is an area unique in America, one of the world's great destinations. At 4,200 feet, it enjoys a healthy climate with four mild seasons.

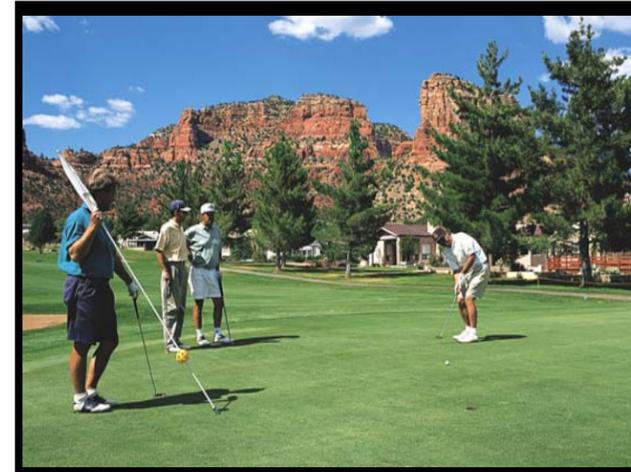
Formed by the receding Mogollon Rim over millions of years, Big Park contains 34,465 acres of land, only 3800 acres of which are private, the rest being part of the Coconino National Forest. Over the course of 350 million years, the area transitioned

from a broad river floodplain to a huge Sahara-like desert, then to the bottom of an ancient sea. Over those years mountains thrust up and eroded away as the seas formed and disappeared. The thin coating of iron oxide (rust) covering each individual grain of sand gives these magnificent monuments their red color. For the next million years Big Park rested and waited and waited to be discovered.

## HISTORY

Big Park's history is the history of the agrarian West. Settlement began as a series of homesteads and ranches in the 1920s and 1930s. Only the really hardy and strong-willed made it. In the late 1960s most of Big Park was still open range land which provided beautiful settings for the many western movies made here. The first well was drilled in the late 1930s and the second was drilled in 1948. The area was re-discovered in the 1960s and "red rock fever" soon caught on.

The Village of Oakcreek, the first major development in Big Park, was created and developed on 920 acres in 1967. The population of Big Park increased from fewer than 100 in 1971 to just under 6,000 in 2006.



Big Park is home to two 18-hole championship golf courses open to the public: Oakcreek Country Club and the Sedona Golf Resort, and one challenging public nine hole course: Canyon Mesa.

## COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Big Park residents are congenial, welcoming and non-judgmental. They greet visitors with a smile and friendly conversation. Newcomers soon become an integral part of the community. It is essentially a single family residential area with no industrial land. A modest commercial district borders State Route 179 through Big Park. In 2005, the Federal government awarded the coveted designation of "All American Road" to a 7.5 mile stretch of Highway 179 running through Big Park.

## WHO LIVES HERE TODAY?

Most everyone has come here from somewhere else and brings with them many of the attributes and a few of the faults from other parts of the country. It is an eclectic mix of well-educated, sophisticated city folks with knowledgeable, down-to-earth country folks. They all appreciate the peace and splendor of this beautiful area. Thrown into the mix is the "New Age-New Wave" contingent that adds some spice to the overall community. Two of the "vortexes" exuding positive electro-magnetic energy are located in the Big Park area. Both Bell Rock and Cathedral Rock attract thousands of visitors each year, some believing in a psychic renewal and some just curious. Artists and artisans live and work in the area, and fine restaurants and unique shops offer their wares to locals and tourists.

It's a great place to visit and an ever greater place to live.

## POINTS OF PRIDE

The magnificent scenery is awe inspiring. USA Today in 2003 named Red Rock Country as "the most beautiful place in America."

Big Park is home to some of the more spectacular red rock monuments: Bell Rock, Castle Rock, Courthouse Butte and Cathedral Rock.

Scenic vistas are close to the road, with hiking and biking trails making the wilderness reachable. Big Park has become an international destination for mountain bikers.



# BEAVER CREEK COMMUNITY PLAN AREA

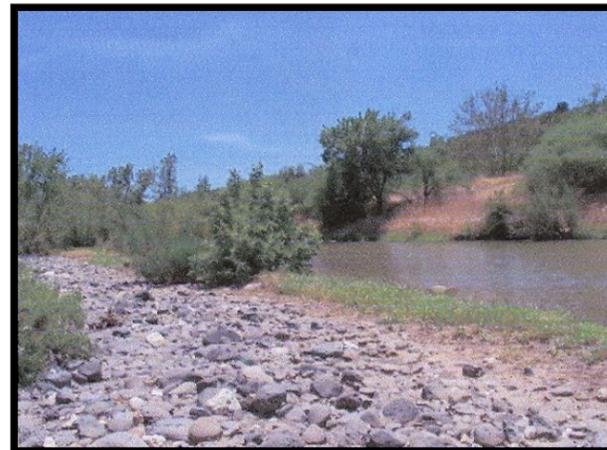


The Beaver Creek Plan Area is located in North Central Arizona at the base of the Mogollon Rim and is a part of District 3 in Yavapai County. The two postal zip codes are Rimrock, 86344 and Lake Montezuma, 86342. The Beaver Creek Community Plan Area comprises approximately 50 square miles. The communities of McGuireville, Rimrock and Lake Montezuma are nestled on the Beaver Creek watershed, along the northern edge of the Verde Valley, in central Arizona. The land elevation ranges between 3,350 and 3,700 feet. Beaver Creek meanders through the Planning Area forming a riparian area surrounded by higher desert ridges, steep hills, and washes that visually protect the community and separate the neighborhoods. This area is unique in that

it contains Montezuma Well, which is a National Monument and has been continuously inhabited for thousands of years. It is also centrally located, being approximately 45-50 miles from Flagstaff, Payson or Prescott and 80 miles north of Phoenix. Interstate 17 (Exits 293 and 298) provide access to the surrounding Verde Valley.

## HISTORY

The area was first inhabited over 8,000 years ago by archaic hunter-gatherers who hunted Mammoths and other now extinct game. Around 800AD, an agricultural-based culture known as the Sinagua settled here and built irrigation canals off Wet Beaver Creek to grow crops of corn, beans and squash. Evidence of the settlement can still be seen today at Montezuma Well, a National Monument preserving a Sinagua settlement who vanished about 1400 AD. Around 1500AD, the area was used by the nomadic Yavapai and Apache people who still call the area home. They were followed by European and then migrating Americans who settled the area after the Gadsden purchase.



Rimrock is historically a ranching community along the Yavapai Apache Reservation. The original Rimrock Post Office was located by Soda Springs Ranch. The other ranches in Rimrock now are Ward Ranch, Bar D, V-V (where the petroglyphs are located) and one managed by University of Arizona. At one time, Southwest Academy was a guest ranch located on Beaver Creek upstream from V-V Ranch and the old Beaver Creek Ranger Station and campground near Apache Maid trailhead.

## TRANSPORTATION

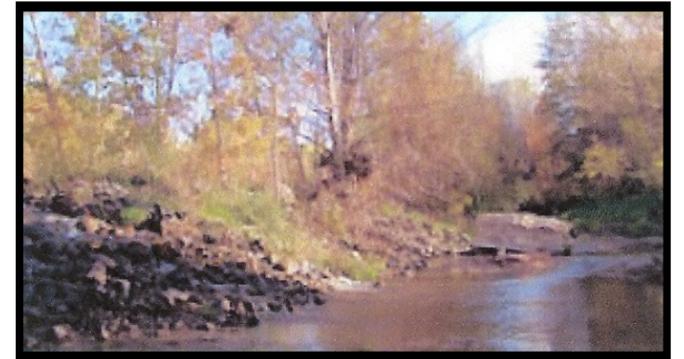
The Cornville and Beaver Creek Roads constitute the major internal connectors within the plan area, conducting up to 65,000 cars per day. The paved road continues through McGuireville from its original at US Highway 89A, near Cottonwood, to Beaver Creek School. At that point, it becomes the unimproved forest service road which connects the community to the Sedona interchange. Along that road exists a major traffic generator, Montezuma Well. This attraction generates over 200,000 visitors per year. The corridor's right-of-way varies in width from 100 feet to 40 feet between McGuireville and Beaver Creek School. This road provides the only path to internal and residential areas.

## AIRPORT

The Rimrock Airport (FAA identifier 48AZ) is one of the earliest airports in the country. It is privately-owned and is also available for transient and emergency use. Permission is requested prior to landing on its asphalt surface, lighting is available upon request. Twenty aircraft are based on the field; 19 single engine and one ultra light. Aircraft operations average 50 per month and twelve per week. Local aviation accounts for 83% of the traffic while 17% are transient. There are two runways: takeoffs are downhill via RWY23; landings are uphill via RWY50. Heavy twin engine planes are prohibited.

## POINTS OF PRIDE

This area is especially proud to be adjacent to the scenic beauty of Beaver Creek (as shown in the photo). Located nearby the area, is Montezuma Well, a detached unit of Montezuma Castle National Monument, located approximately 11 miles to the south.



## WHO LIVES HERE TODAY

The Beaver Creek Community Planning Area contains communities and neighborhoods, both rural and semi-rural. Our communities (Rimrock, Lake Montezuma and McGuireville) each have its own distinctive identity and character, yet they work together to achieve goals based on a feeling of understanding and respect. They see a quality of life that includes many opportunities for recreation, education, and enterprise in the form of small businesses and county programs that provide our basic services. The residents protect and promote our natural and historic points of interest. They see value in maintaining night skies and access to National Forests and State Trust Lands. They also value a quiet and safe environment for their children as well as their children's children.

Today's Beaver Creek Planning Area is home to retired and working people who enjoy the National Forest access, championship golf, equestrian activities and a relaxed lifestyle. Real estate, golf, construction, light industry, service and retail enterprises comprise the commercial sector.

# RED ROCK/DRY CREEK AREA

The Red Rock-Dry Creek Plan area consists of 60 square miles adjacent to the south and west boundaries of Sedona. It is made up of three areas: the Conservation Preservation District, the Red Rock Loop Rural District and the 89A Corridor District, which bisects the two larger districts. Each district has its own unique character.



COCKSCOMB (LEFT); SECRET MOUNTAIN (RIGHT)

## CONSERVATION PRESERVATION DISTRICT

The Conservation Preservation District comprises approximately 38 square miles and represents 63% of the plan area. Only 4% of the area is private, 96% being National Forest. The district includes some of the most spectacular rock formations, archaeological ruins and scenery in Red Rock Country. The impressive Palatki and Honanki ruins are here as well as many non-publicized archaeological sites. Dry Creek runs through the area and Secret Mountain Wilderness is on the northern border.

This area is largely pristine and scenic in character. There are scattered private parcel islands and two resorts: Enchantment Resort and 7 Canyons, which has a golf course. The plan emphasizes keeping this special area from being traded for more development and preserving its pristine character.

## RED ROCK LOOP RURAL DISTRICT

The Red Rock Loop Rural District is distinctly rural in character with only 19% of the land privately owned. National Forest comprises 77% of the land with the remaining 4% being State land. The district borders the environmentally-sensitive Oak Creek riparian zone with two large facilities within that zone: Red Rock State Park and Crescent Moon Ranch, administered by Arizona State Parks and the US Forest Service, respectively. Spectacular Red Rock Crossing, located near Crescent Moon, is one of the most photographed features in Arizona.



UPPER RED ROCK LOOP

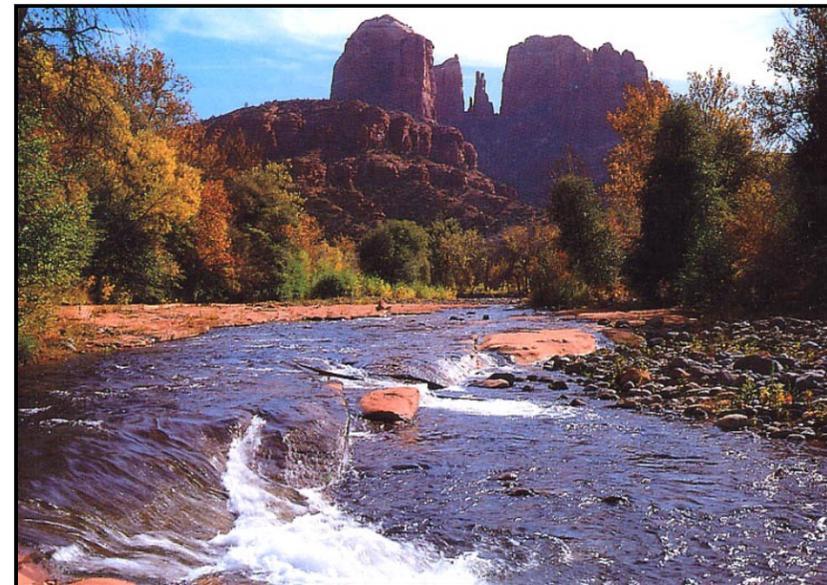
## 89A Corridor District

US 89A bisects this district. A distinct rural atmosphere is evident to travelers along this route. Sedona Shadows, a mobile home park, Sunset Hills, privately owned land designated for mobile homes, and Sedona Pines, a timeshare community, are adjacent to 89A. A 140-acre ranch is on the northern side of 89A along with three small ranchettes. A short distance south on the north side of 89A is the White Flat area which is the site of Sedona's waste disposal facility.

## COMMUNITY PROFILE

Although rich in history, the Red Rock-Dry Creek plan area was predominantly undeveloped until post World War II. Despite the proliferation of economic activity in Sedona, the Red Rock-Dry Creek area is nearly devoid of commercial and industrial activity. Fewer than 2,000 people live in the plan area and the bulk of those residents live in the Red Rock Loop area. Many are retired.

With the population growth in the City of Sedona and its escalating land prices, there are increasing pressures for development of the Red Rock-Dry Creek area. The Red Rock-Dry Creek Plan was a result of citizen concerns to provide orderly growth while protecting the environment, resources and rural character of the area.



RED ROCK CROSSING

# YAVAPAI-APACHE NATION



## COMMUNITY PROFILE

The Yavapai-Apache Nation consists of two distinctive Tribes, who have co-existed together for a long time. The Yavapai language, categorized by Linguistic of the Yuman dialect, the Apaches are members of the Athapaskan speaking people.

The two languages are as different as Japanese and Slavic; each group had their own ceremonies, traditional songs and dances, food and other activities.

## HISTORY

On February 27, 1875, the United States Army, acting on an Executive Order from the President, transferred an estimated 1,500 Yavapai and Dilzhe'e Apache from the Rio Verde Indian Reserve 180 miles away to the Indian Agency at San Carlos. The forced removal of the indigenous people for the Verde Valley resulted in several hundred lives lost and the loss of several thousand acres of treaty lands promised to the Yavapai-Apache by the United States government.



The Yavapai and Dilzhe'e Apache remained in internment at San Carlos for 25 years. When finally released, only about 200 actually made it back to their homeland in the Verde Valley. What they found when they returned was that their land was taken over by Anglo settlers and that there was no longer a place reserved for the Yavapai-Apache people in their own homeland.



## CULTURE

Many cultural events take place on the reservation during the year. The Exodus Return Day Event is a solemn event to commemorate the inhuman treatment of our Ancestors, with a holy pilgrimage we go to Boynton Canyon to offer Prayers.

The return is to celebrate the people returning to their aboriginal homeland. Present celebrations are held every year at the Veterans Park below the Cliff Castle Casino.

## GOVERNMENT

The Yavapai-Apache Tribal Administration Complex, Tribal Court, Council Chambers and Cliff Castle Casino are located on the Nation's lands in the Camp Verde area, about 90 miles north of Phoenix and 50 miles south of Flagstaff, along Interstate 17. The Nation today spans close to 1900 acres in the four communities of Camp Verde Middle Verde, Clarkdale and Rimrock.



## POINTS OF PRIDE

Cliff Castle Casino has been ranked best casino in the state seven years in a row. The Nation is the largest employer in the Verde Valley.

## **IV. VERDE VALLEY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION**

Accessibility determines use and value for property, public or private. In most instances -- shopping, employment, housing, tourism destinations -- transportation conveyance enhances a site's utility. But in others, such as enjoying forests, mountains and riparian areas, limited access may be preferred. Scenic enjoyment is recognized as a key purpose of roadway use in the Verde Valley. This Regional Plan Element provides an overview of transportation in the Verde Valley from both present conditions and future recommendations perspectives.

### **Existing Transportation System**

The Verde Valley is currently served by a multimodal transportation system consisting of roadways, trails, transit, and rail services. A summary inventory of each mode is provided.

#### **EXISTING ROADWAY SYSTEM**

The existing regional street and highway network is comprised of an Interstate highway, several state routes, arterials, and collector roadways. The state routes and Interstate 17 form a rectangular ring around a large portion of the region linking Sedona, Cottonwood, Clarkdale, and Camp Verde at three corners of the rectangle. Interstate 17 at Camp Verde is a southern gateway to the Valley and State Route 179 is a northern gateway to the Valley.

Interstate 17 diagonally bisects the southeast portion of the region in a general north-south direction serving long trips to and from the Valley. However, Interstate 17 is increasingly serving shorter trips between State Route 260 and State Route 179. State Route 89A generally parallels I-17 in the northern portion of the region, and links Jerome, Clarkdale, Cottonwood, and Sedona. State Route 89A is a commuter route from Cottonwood to Sedona. State Route 260 enters the region from the southeast, traverses through Camp Verde, and joins State Route 89A in Cottonwood. State Route 179 connects I-17 near McGuireville to the Village of Oak Creek to the north and on State Route 89A at Sedona.

Major county roads in the Verde Valley include the Mingus Extension, Page Springs Road, Cornville Road, Middle Verde Road, Beaverhead Flat Road, Beaver Creek Road, Montezuma Lake Road, and Old State Route 279.

#### **EXISTING MULTIMODAL SERVICES**

A variety of public transportation services currently operate in the Verde Valley. These services include local transit, special needs transportation, intercity shuttle services, and an excursion train.

##### **Local Transit Services**

Two regular programs provided by local governments are in place, with future links and phases in the planning stage.

**The Cottonwood Area Transit System (CATS)** provides both door-to-door paratransit (dial-a-ride and reserve-a-ride) service and deviated fixed route service. The dial-a-ride serves the municipalities of Cottonwood and Clarkdale as well as the adjacent unincorporated

VERDE VALLEY REGIONAL LAND USE PLAN

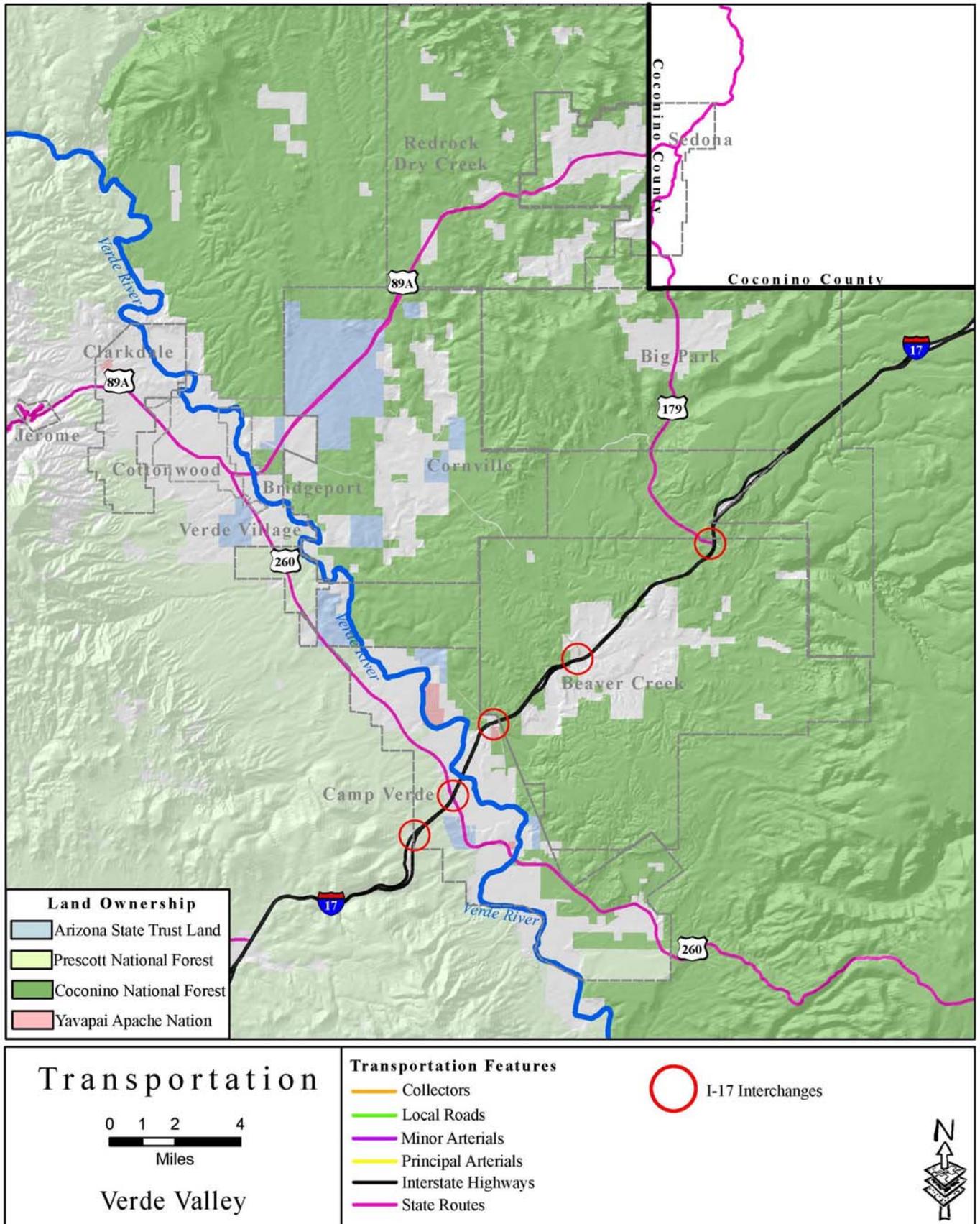


Figure 3

areas of Verde Village and Bridgeport. Before and after school, CATS provides supplemental service by transporting students to and from areas too remote to be practically included on a school bus route. This deviated fixed route service, called Catch-A-Ride, operates on a schedule with stops at school campuses, major apartment housing locations, senior centers, shopping plazas, and medical facilities.

**The First Phase of the Sedona Road Runner**, adopted by the City of Sedona, will focus on establishing a Commercial District Circulator. The high-frequency circulator will operate a free service between the Hillside Galleries on SR 179 and the north end of Uptown Sedona on 89A beginning in the fall of 2006. Phase Two will provide service between West Sedona and the Village of Oak Creek with 30-minute frequencies. The vehicles to be used to the high-frequency circulator will be based in Cottonwood, providing morning and evening commuter service for Cottonwood-based Sedona workers. No local transit service is available for the general public in other portions of the Verde Valley.

### **Special Needs Services**

This category refers to services (operated by a combination of private and public organizations) restricted to the elderly, persons with disabilities, or subsets of these groups. Several special needs providers serve Sedona, the Village of Oak Creek, the Cottonwood/Clarkdale area, Camp Verde, McGuireville, and the Camp Verde Yavapai Apache Community. Some providers restrict transportation services to their own clients, while others serve eligible members of the community at large.

The Verde Valley Caregivers Coalition (VoCap) provides rides throughout the Verde Valley for shopping or medical reasons. Trips to Phoenix and Flagstaff can be scheduled, but most trips are within the County. Thirty trips per week are typically provided. The Yavapai County Department of Medical Assistance-Long Term Care Division provides non-emergency medical transportation services under the Arizona Long Term Care System (ALTCS). It is estimated that 50 percent of the clients reside in nursing care and other institutional facilities with the remainder in home- and community-based residences. Sedona Community Center provides rides for medical and social needs -- 15,000 individual trips annually.

Area special needs transportation providers currently receiving FTA Section 5310 funding include the Verde Valley Senior Citizens Association in Cottonwood, and the Yavapai Apache Nation in Camp Verde.

### **Intercity Shuttle Services**

Several private companies offer shuttle services. Sedona Phoenix Shuttle operates eight round trips daily between the Village of Oak Creek, Sedona, Cottonwood, Camp Verde, and Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport. Coconino-Yavapai Shuttle makes two trips daily between Central Yavapai County, Verde Valley, and Flagstaff. Door-to-door service is provided. The specific routing for each day, including the communities in the Prescott and Verde Valley areas served, varies depending upon scheduled pick-ups and drop-offs. Open Road Tours makes five round trips daily between Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport and Camp Verde. Other area shuttle services include Ace Xpress, Anytime Airporter Express, and Extra Mile Express. These shuttles provide service to and from a number of Verde Valley communities including Camp Verde, Clarkdale, Cottonwood, Jerome, Lake Montezuma, Rimrock, Sedona, and the Village of Oak Creek.

**Rail Service**

The Verde Canyon Railroad is a privately operated excursion train -- rather than a “transportation service” -- that schedules round trip excursions between Clarkdale and Perkinsville six times per week. The rail line runs through the beautiful Verde River Canyon, most of which is only accessible by rail or by equestrian or hiking trails. In addition to the picturesque red rock formations, the canyon is home to a variety of animal and plant life including bald eagles. The canyon floor is a riparian area through which the Verde River flows year round. Trains are equipped with standard coach cars, first class cars, and open-air cars for better viewing of the dramatic scenery through which the trains pass. “Moonlight” and other special trips are periodically offered in addition to the regularly scheduled daily runs.

In addition, rail freight service is provided between the Phoenix Cement facility in Clarkdale and Drake, Arizona, where the line joins the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) route between Phoenix and Northern Arizona.

**EXISTING AVIATION SERVICES**

The Verde Valley is served by two general aviation airports at Cottonwood and at Sedona. No regularly scheduled commercial air service exists, but both airports are open to the public. The Cottonwood Airport is staffed between 8:00 am and 5:00 pm daily year round, and the Sedona Airport is staffed between 8:00 am and 5:00 pm from October through April and between 7:00 am 6:00 pm from May through September. Both airports have “tiedowns” where aircraft can be parked and secured overnight for a fee, and both have fuel available. Neither facility currently has a control tower. The following table lists additional comparisons between the two facilities.



**Figure 4**

**VERDE VALLEY AREA AIRPORT SERVICES AND STATISTICS**

	<b>Cottonwood</b>	<b>Sedona</b>
Runway dimensions (length x width)	4,250 x 75 ft.	5,129 x 100 ft.
Aircraft based on the field	51	101
Average daily aircraft operations:	51	114
Transient general aviation	50%	48%
Local general aviation	48%	29%
Air taxi	2%	18%
Military	>1%	5%

As the table indicates, Sedona has over twice as many daily flight operations -- take-offs and landings -- as Cottonwood. While general aviation activities, both transient and local, comprise nearly all of Cottonwood’s operations, Sedona has more air taxi and military activity. Sedona also has a heliport available.

## **EXISTING TRAILS SYSTEM**

The existing trail system in the Verde Valley consists of dedicated trails in the Coconino and Prescott National Forests and parks, off-road trails such as along Beaverhead Flat Road, trails in the local communities such as the Sedona trails system, and on-road bicycle facilities.

### **Coconino and Prescott National Forest**

There are many multi-use recreational trails (particularly in the Red Rock part of the Coconino National Forest) ranging from easy to difficult hiking. Trails are accessed via trailheads located along state routes, county roads, and Forest Service roads.

### **Yavapai County**

The 2003 Yavapai County General Plan and the 1998 Yavapai County Master Trails Plan, contain policies and programs impacting bicycling and walking in the Verde Valley. The Yavapai County Master Trails Plan is currently being updated. A large portion of the existing trails on the Plan are in the Coconino Forest.

### **Sedona**

Sedona has created a Trails and Urban Pathways Plan and Vision, a set of maps depicting recommended bicycle and pedestrian facilities for the City of Sedona. The Trails and Urban Pathway Plan map lays out a comprehensive set of pedestrian and bicycle facilities including: the Red Rocks path, urban bike and pedestrian pathways, hiking trails, mountain bike trails and equestrian trails. Sedona has also targeted parking and pedestrian circulation in their “Uptown” district to address the large number of visitors and improve the pedestrian experience for this highly visited part of Sedona.

### **Cottonwood**

The 2003 Cottonwood General Plan’s Circulation Element reviews local street networks and establishes goals, policies and objectives for circulation and transportation. The Circulation Element addresses walking and bicycling opportunities, targeted at improving traffic and providing recreation. Cottonwood plans on developing a separate bicycle and pedestrian plan to improve overall conditions for bicycling and walking and to coordinate efforts with other agencies.

### **Clarkdale**

The Town of Clarkdale's 2002 General Plan contains elements addressing bicycle and pedestrian mobility within Clarkdale. Specifically, the Circulation Element provides for an efficient, orderly street system including opportunities for pedestrians and bicyclists.

### **Camp Verde**

The Transportation and Circulation section of the Camp Verde 2003 General Plan provides for a variety of transportation and circulation systems. Camp Verde has a strong initiative towards improving and expanding their trail system. The Trails Map shows over 200 miles of trails in and around Camp Verde.

VERDE VALLEY REGIONAL LAND USE PLAN

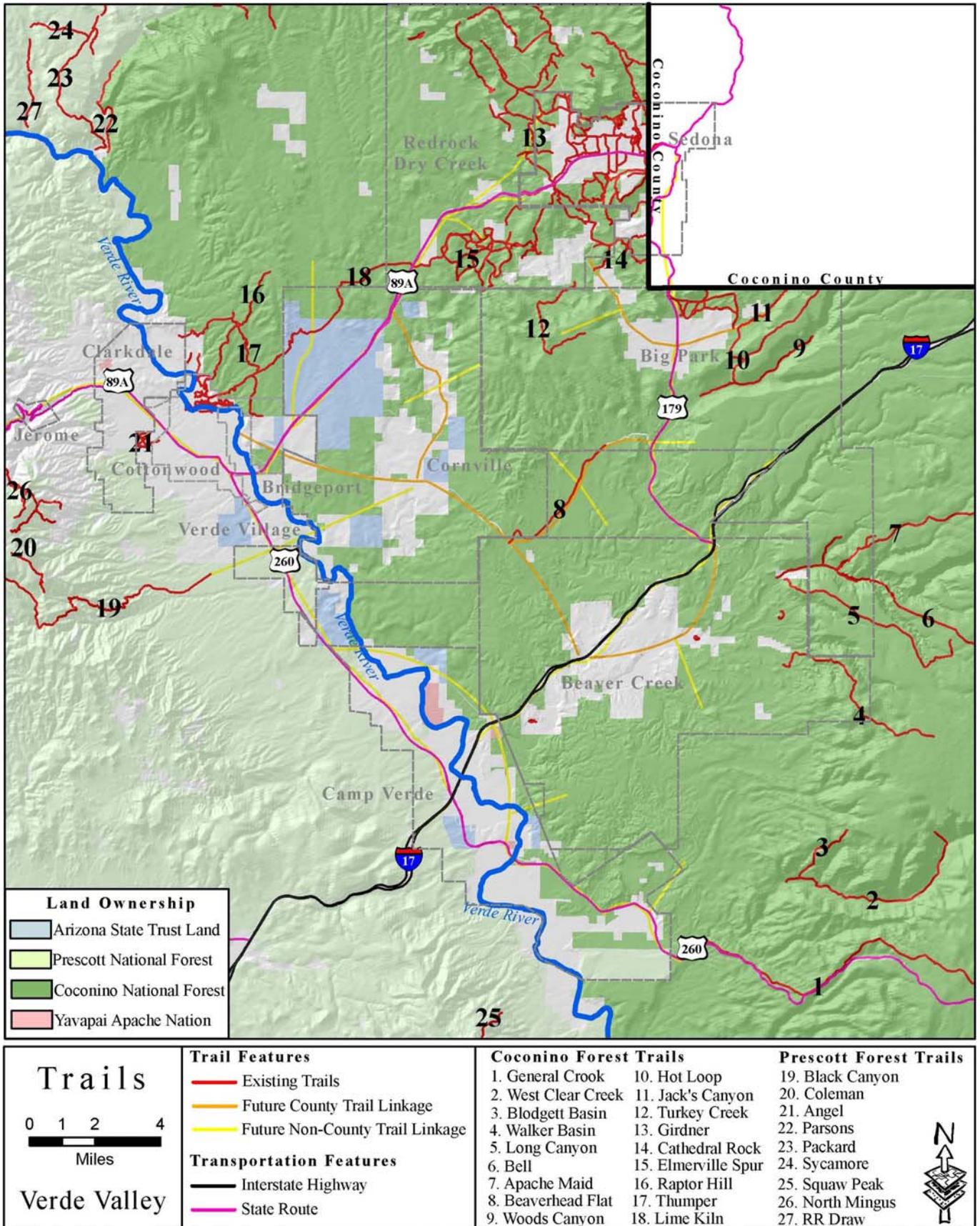


Figure 5

### **Cornville**

There are numerous informal trails and old roads in the planning area. Near the northern edge of the planning area is the Lime Kiln Trail, which retraces a historic route used by produce farmers to supply the mines at Jerome. To date, 1.5 miles of the trail are completed from Dead Horse Ranch State Park to the National Forest boundary. Ultimately, the trail will extend to Red Rock State Park, on to Fort Verde State Park, and back to Cottonwood. Also, near Page Springs Fish Hatchery at the Bubbling Ponds Important Bird Area, there is a 1.6 mile trail along Oak Creek through outstanding riparian habitat.

### **State Highways**

Bicycling is permitted on the state highways of 89A, 260, 179 and I-17 within the Verde Valley. However, the degree of suitability on the shoulders of the state highways varies.

### **Transportation Issues**

Key issues being addressed in the Verde Valley Regional Transportation Plan which is currently being updated include the following:

#### **Roadways**

- Increasing roadway congestion
- Need to maintain and improve connectivity to major activity centers
- Need to develop county roads and state highways as multimodal corridors
- Need for stream and wash crossings at certain locations
- Need to pave county roads at certain locations

#### **Transit**

- Need to link communities and major activities with increased transit services and number of transit routes
- Need to provide increased special needs service
- Need to provide stops/shelters and transit centers

#### **Trails**

- Need to provide major trail linkages
- Need trail connectivity and continuity
- Need ongoing maintenance (washouts, overhanging vegetation, sight lines etc.)
- Need to provide safe trail crossings at intersections roadways
- Need to provide critical connections across barriers
- Need to define public access to trails on public and private lands; prevent barriers such as gated communities

### **Future Transportation System**

Recommendations for future transportation improvements in the Verde Valley are derived from citizens' vision, realistic appraisals of available resources and compatibility with Regional Land Use Plan implementation goals.

## **VISION**

The Verde Valley transportation system is a safe and efficient multimodal system comprised of roadways, non-motorized facilities, and transit service. Transportation facilities and land use are integrated through continued coordination among local, county, state, and federal governments. Alternative transportation modes including transit, pedestrian, bicycle, and trails are vital components of the multimodal transportation system.

## **FUTURE ROADWAY SYSTEM**

The future roadway system in the Verde Valley region shown in Figure 1 is comprised of Interstate 17, state highways, county roads, and local roads. Interstate 17, State Route 260, State Route 179, and State Route 89A will continue as state highways providing service to the communities. Interstate 17 will continue as the primary means of accessing Verde Valley from other regions. Interstate 17, a limited access freeway, carries a large volume of traffic, and functions mainly as a facilitator of through movements, bypassing the Verde Valley. However, as the region grows, Interstate 17 will likely serve increasing numbers of shorter trips with origins and destinations within the Valley.

Portions of State Route 89A in Sedona and Cottonwood and the northern portion of State Route 260 from Camp Verde to Cottonwood are currently functioning as major urban arterials. As population grows, State Route 89A will become even more heavily traveled as a commuter route between Cottonwood and Sedona, but will also serve tourist trips.

Roads that will function as minor urban arterials in the study area are: Old State Route 89A in Clarkdale; segments of State Route 89A in Clarkdale and Cottonwood; Mingus Avenue in Cottonwood; and part of State Route 260 south of I-17 in Camp Verde. In the study area, the following roads function as minor rural arterials: State Route 89A from the western portion of the region through Jerome to Clarkdale and east of Sedona; State Route 260 east of Camp Verde; and State Route 179 from the Village of Oak Creek to I-17.

County roads that will serve as minor arterials include Mingus Extension and Cornville Road. County collector roads include Page Springs Road, Beaverhead Flat Road, Beaver Creek Road, Montezuma Lake Road, and Old State Route 279.

As urbanization continues throughout the Valley, the character of portions of county roads will transition from rural to urban.

## **Roadway Principles**

It would be desirable for the future State highways and county roads in the Valley to have the following characteristics:

- Multimodal character providing for transit, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities
- Access managed to minimize access points and encourage development hubs
- Consistent design with aesthetic landscaping
- Safe crossings for motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians
- Traffic calming integrated into roadway design where feasible

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In addition to the above principles, regional access to other areas in the State should be preserved and improved as population grows.

**Proposed Roadway Improvements**

The following table summarizes recommendations that were made in the 1999 Verde Valley Transportation Study Update and the current status of the recommendations.

<b>Facility</b>	<b>Plan Recommendation</b>	<b>Status</b>
SR 89A–SR 260 to Sedona	Widen To 4 Lanes	Completed
SR 260 Ogden Ranch Road to I-17 Great Western	Widen To 4 Lanes	Revised Access Management Plan Near Completion
SR 260 Camp Verde Bypass	Construct 4-Lane Bypass	Completed
SR 179–SR 89A to I-17	Widen To 4 Lanes	2-Lane Concept with Roundabouts Adopted–SR 89A through the Village of Oak Creek
I-17–Middle Verde Road to SR 179	Widen To 6 Lanes	No Action
I-17–McGuireville TI	Reconstruct TI	Not Programmed
Montezuma Castle Highway	Widen To 4-Lanes	Improved 2 Lanes Completed
Mingus Avenue–Main Street to Cornville Road	2-Lane New Extension	Construction Completed
Cornville Road–SR 89A to Tissaw Road	Widen To Four Lanes	Safety Improvements Under Design
Jacks Canyon Road	Widen To Four Lanes	Improvements Under Design as 2- Lane
Beaver Creek Road–McGuireville to Montezuma Well	Reconstruct	Under Project Scoping
Montezuma Avenue	Not in Plan	Under Project Scoping
Low Water Crossing over Beaver Creek in Lake Montezuma Area	Construct Crossing	Design Concept Report Underway

State Route 260 improvements are anticipated. Future developments along this and other highway widening or construction projects will be expected to participate in roadway capacity implementation.

**FUTURE TRANSIT SERVICES**

The long-term vision for transit in the Valley is to provide convenient service among communities and major activity centers to meet future demand. Transit ridership throughout the Valley will increase proportionately with demand for services from residents and visitors. High capacity transit service may be warranted in the long term as highways become more congested.

The 2000 Verde Valley Transit Study recommended the implementation of fixed-route “regional commuter” bus service on a loop route serving Cottonwood, Sedona, the Village of Oak Creek, and Camp Verde. As previously mentioned, the fall 2006 implementation of the Sedona Roadrunner transit included a morning commuter trip from Cottonwood to Sedona and an evening return trip from Sedona to Cottonwood for use by Cottonwood-based Sedona workers. The widening and reconstruction of SR 260 between Camp Verde

and Cottonwood will enhance the feasibility of operating scheduled commuter bus service between those two communities.

In the near term, increasing traffic congestion on I-17 between the Verde Valley and the metropolitan Phoenix area will degrade the scheduled performance of intercity shuttle services just as it affects the schedules of individual motorists. Travelers will need to allow additional time for potential traffic-related delays. In the long term, travel volumes may warrant the construction of some sort of high capacity system in the I-17 corridor, but topographical constraints make construction of such a system costly, and funding sources have yet to be identified.

The Grand Canyon Railway, which operates excursion train service between Grand Canyon and Williams, Arizona, has discussed with BNSF the possibility of operating through excursion trains between Grand Canyon and the Phoenix area. If such an operation were implemented, it would facilitate the addition of excursions between Clarkdale and Grand Canyon. Verde Canyon Railroad has constructed an attractive depot facility in Clarkdale, but its only access is via the one-lane Bitter Creek Bridge -- a registered historic landmark. As railroad patronage and development of the surrounding industrial area increase traffic, an additional bridge may be needed for alternative access..

### **Transit Enhancements**

High priority should be placed on promoting transit service opportunities for the Verde Valley, especially to accommodate retirees and workforce commuters. There is a growing need for coordination, funding, equipment purchases and operational efficiency.

- Recent changes in federal and state transit-related programs create opportunities to expand transit developments in the area.
- A permanent Verde Valley Transit Advisory Committee would provide on-going oversight and policy guidance for a valley-wide ridesharing program.
- One possibility is for Cottonwood Area Transit Service to provide management oversight, including contract management/oversight, unified grant application, staffing for TAC meetings, monitoring and reporting, and marketing.
- The formation of a Northern Arizona Intergovernmental Public Transportation Authority (NAIPTA), constitutes an opportunity for seeking outside funding, improving coordination between stakeholder agencies, and consolidating resources has obtained intergovernmental support.

### **FUTURE AVIATION SERVICES**

Population gains are expected to justify aviation improvements, possibly including long-range planning for a regional airport.

### **Planned Airport Projects**

Both public airports receive state and local funding to support operations and maintenance, as well as capital investment in facility improvement or expansion. Much of the funding is

federal, administered in Arizona by the ADOT Aviation Division. Between 2006 and 2010, over \$7.4 million in improvement projects has been programmed for the Sedona airport, including the construction of a control tower and expansion of the terminal building and apron areas. More than \$4.8 million has been programmed for Cottonwood Airport projects including runway expansion and improvement as well as security fencing.

### **Factors Affecting Future Aviation Operations**

In addition to area population growth and planned airport improvements, several factors that may significantly impact future air traffic volumes at Sedona and Cottonwood are listed below:

- **Increased Fuel Prices** will affect the amount of discretionary general aviation travel somewhat.
- **Interstate 17 congestion-related delays**, together with the increased availability of transit, meeting rooms, offices, and other amenities may lead to increased use of private aircraft and air taxis for business trips.
- **The new “Sport License” recently implemented by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)**, may facilitate the involvement of more persons in general aviation. This license, in effect, allows most persons possessing a current and valid driver’s license (or a 3<sup>rd</sup> Class FAA medical certificate) who pass a flight training course to pilot certain types of lightweight aircraft such as: airplane (single-engine only); glider; lighter-than-air (airship or balloon); rotorcraft (gyroplane only); powered parachute; weight-shift control aircraft (e.g. trikes). The license is for daylight hours only and does not allow carrying passengers for compensation or hire.

### **FUTURE TRAIL SYSTEM**

The vision for the trails system is to provide for non-motorized modes of transportation that facilitate a variety of activities and experiences through the development of on- and off-road bicycle facilities, equestrian uses, pedestrian pathways, and multiuse trails. Trails will serve recreation, commuting, shopping and other purposes for bicyclists, walkers, and joggers.

#### **Trail Hierarchy**

The Verde Valley trail system will consist of a hierarchy of trails that responds to type of user trip purpose, and frequency of use. The following trail hierarchy will allow for wayfinding by creating an easily understood system:

- Primary trails linking destinations in Verde Valley
- Forest Service recreational trails
- Secondary trails connecting neighborhoods and activities to the primary trails and Forest Service Trails
- Local trails linking to secondary trails, and in many cases, “stand-alone” trails within neighborhoods
- Multiuse paths which may be incorporated into roadway corridors
- Including bicycle lanes in County road cross sections

### **Trail Linkages**

Primary County trails should link the communities together and tie to the Forest Service Trails and local secondary trails. Proposed Primary County Trails are shown in Figure 2 with proposed linkages either along State Highways or within the Coconino Forest Service lands.

The following primary trail linkages should be provided along:

- Mingus Extension and Cornville Road linking Cottonwood/Clarkdale to Cornville and Montezuma Lake Road
- Page Springs Road from Cornville Road to State Route 89A
- Existing trail along Beaverhead Flat Road extended to SR 179
- Montezuma Lake Road and Beaver Creek Road
- Jack Canyon Road and Verde Valley School Road
- Dead Horse Ranch State Park along Verde River through Camp Verde

A well-defined Trails Plan should be articulated in graphic and narrative form for acceptance by Yavapai County and the constituent Verde Valley communities. An approved Plan will aid in securing ADOT recognition of trails plans for purposes of highway multi-use design and improvements.

### **Trail Principles**

The county trails system should provide the following in accord with the County Master Trails Plan and/or criteria established by the National Forests:

- A clearly defined, connected trail system including multipurpose paths and on-road facilities
- Wayfinding with maps, markers, plaques, distance markers, icons
- Rest stops, interpretive information (natural, cultural, heritage, other connections/destinations along or near the trail, and the like)
- Safe crossings at streets and highways
- Amenities that complement the trail (i.e. mural design on bare walls)

### **On-Road Bicycle Facilities**

On-road bicycle facilities should be provided along the major trail linkages. Road design cross-sections for state highways, county roads, and city streets should include bicycle facilities on roadway shoulders or separate bicycle lanes. Bicycle facilities should be incorporated in the design of at-grade intersections and bridges. Underpasses or overpasses for bicycle and pedestrian facilities should be considered at critical locations. The County Trails Plan should include designated on-road bicycle facilities.

**County Trails Master Plan**

Yavapai County is in the process of updating the Trails Master Plan. For the Verde Valley, the Verde Valley Trails Action Team of the Coconino and Yavapai Resource Conservation and Development is conducting a trails inventory and preparing descriptions of proposed trails. The County should continue to coordinate with the Verde Valley Trails Action Team, Coconino Forest Service, communities, and developers in implementing and maintaining new and existing trails as well as on-road bicycle facilities.

**OTHER TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM CONSIDERATIONS**

The following concerns merit attention to improve the multimodal transportation system:

- Park-and-ride lots throughout the region (preferably provided free of charge by local businesses) to facilitate commuter transit, carpooling and vanpooling. These lots might also act as remote parking lots for visitors.
- Transit Centers provided at key locations in the region for facilitating collection of riders and transfers.
- A regional Traveler Information System including such elements as a website, kiosks, and electronic Variable Message Signs (VMS) to provide travelers with information for traversing the region.
- Continued coordination of transportation plans and project development among local, county, state, and federal agencies through the Verde Valley Transportation Organization (VVTPO).
- Encouragement of Transit Oriented Development (TOD), comprised of mixed-use, higher densities, in order to facilitate the integration of transportation and land use. This type of development supports transit, pedestrian and bicycling use.
- Implementation of Travel Demand Management (TDM) and Transportation System Management (TSM) actions implemented to reduce vehicle travel. Example TDM measures include employer initiatives to encourage carpooling, transit use, and telecommuting. An example of a TSM measure is the implementation of access management to coordinate the number of access points to roadways from adjacent property.

## V. OPEN SPACE

Open Space is possibly the most prized asset of the Verde Valley Region's residents. During the series of Community Workshops and Technical Advisory Committee public meetings, enthusiasm for protection of open spaces was expressed time and again. Concerns included the need for buffering between communities, protection of riparian habitat, access to public lands, trails connections, access to recreation areas, possible designation of a National Scenic Area (NSA), and above all, preventing the loss of "openness" which epitomizes the sense of place in the Verde Valley.

Yavapai County's land area is comprised of almost 74% Federal and State properties. With approximately 80% of the Verde Valley Region in United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service ownership, most of the Verde Valley Region meets the Open Space definition described in the 2003 Yavapai County General Plan:

*"Open Space is commonly defined as dedicated, reserved or conserved lands generally held in the public domain for specific purposes, such as for recreational uses, and for unique historic, environmental or scenic quality protection."*

A coordinated stance on prioritizing lands for preservation was articulated in the **"Open Space Issues and Challenges Report"** (July 2001) and **"Implementing a Verde Valley Open Space Plan"** (Walter Vannette, Northern Arizona University; February 2002). The Verde Valley Land Preservation Institute's "Open Space Existing Conditions Map" (See: Appendices) was prepared to illustrate the jurisdictional status of Valley Lands (e.g., incorporated/unincorporated communities, management agencies) as well as preservation measures in place or recommended.

Undeveloped, open areas are often confused with "Open Space." Some open areas are public and private lands that are potentially developable -- including properties owned by the Arizona State Lands Department (ASLD) and those Federal lands designated for possible trades.

The Arizona State Lands Department manages approximately 3% of the Verde Valley Region's area. The ASLD sells and leases Trust Lands in order to fulfill its mission of producing funds for education and other public benefit. These State lands are not held for the purposes defined in the definition of Open Space.

In addition to the US Forest Service, other federal agencies, as well as state, county and municipal public authorities manage Open Space areas. The Open Space component describes these agencies and their missions, and inventories facilities and uses. Also, the chapter discusses other non-public organizations which attempt to protect open space areas for special purposes.

### **Open Space: Federal and State Land Management Agencies**

The primary Open Space areas in the Verde Valley Region are in the properties owned by the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (USDAFS) and managed for multiple purposes. Other Open Space properties are maintained for specific purposes by

the United States National Parks, Department of Interior as National Monuments; by Arizona State Parks Department for recreation and historic preservation; by Arizona Game and Fish Department for fish hatcheries; and by Yavapai County, the Towns of Cottonwood, Clarkdale, Camp Verde, and Jerome, and the City of Sedona as community parks, trails and urban pathways.

**FOREST SERVICE, UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

**Purpose and Mission** - Originally created in 1905 to manage water and timber, the USDA Forest Service responsibilities have been expanded for “*multiple uses and benefits and for the sustained yield of renewable resources such as water, forage, wildlife, wood, and recreation.*” The USDA Forest Service stated mission is “*to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.*”

**Holdings and Facilities** - The Forest Service maintains over six hundred thousand acres of land surrounding the Verde Valley communities through two National Forests, discussed below. The National Forests offer many opportunities for camping, fishing, hunting, equestrian and hiking trails, scenic drives and wilderness experiences.

The public is urged, by the District Rangers for both National Forests, to do their part, sharing responsibility for sustaining these assets:

*Community actions and development adjacent to National Forest have an influence on maintaining National Forest wildland attributes. Communities need to share the responsibility in maintaining these attributes, such as, requiring buffers in new development, minimizing infrastructure needs on National Forest, monitoring and enforcing private land developments not encroaching onto National Forest lands, discouraging illegal trail/social trail development, dealing with solid waste disposal issues, addressing motorized access issues. By communities sharing in this role, lands may be less likely to lose their National Forest character and be considered for future land exchanges.*

**PRESCOTT NATIONAL FOREST (PNF)** -- headquartered in Prescott, the PNF maintains approximately 1.25 million acres, including over 200,000 acres in the Verde Valley Region’s west side, managed by the Verde Ranger District in Camp Verde. The PNF provides numerous camping opportunities, miles of trails and Wilderness Areas in accordance with the Prescott National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, 1986, Republished 2004. The Plan provides direction for the next 10 to 15 years for “*integrated multiple use and sustained yield of goods and services from the forest in a way that maximizes long-term public benefits in an environmentally sound manner.*”

Prescott National Forest Plan Amendment 13, Verde Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan, June 14, 2004, includes a 13 mile portion of the Verde River area between Beasley Flats and the Tonto National Forest boundary that is designated “Scenic River” under the Wild and Scenic River Act (Public Law 90-542). The area, approved in 1997, encompasses 2,166 acres approximately ¼ mile wide on each side

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of the Verde River. The management emphasis is to “*maintain the Scenic River’s outstandingly remarkable values for scenic, fish, wildlife, and historic and cultural values, while protecting the river’s free flowing character and water quality.*” The 65 miles of the Verde Wild & Scenic River are managed through a partnership of the Prescott, Coconino and Tonto National Forests with help from volunteers.

**Camping** facilities in the Verde Valley Region Study Area of the PNF are summarized in the following chart. Many other sites, limited to day-use, are prevalent throughout the Region, providing additional recreational opportunities.

<b>Campground</b>	<b>Elevation</b>	<b>Facilities</b>	<b>Season &amp; Stay Limit</b>	<b>Attractions</b>	<b>Trail Access</b>
Mingus Mountain Family Campground	7,500'	24 campsites; 3 picnic sites; vault toilets	5/1 to 12/12 weather permitting; 14 days	Views of Verde Valley	North Mingus #105, View Point #106, Coleman #108, Gaddes #110
Potato Patch Family Campground	7,000'	28 campsites; 12 RV sites; toilet; drinking water	4/29 to 10/31; 14 days	Close to Woodchute Wilderness & Jerome	Woodchute Trailhead #102

**Trails** in the PNF traverse more than 450 miles. Within the Verde Valley Regional Land Use Planning Area, non-motorized trails total approximately 19 miles: Black Canyon Trail #114, 6.4 mi; Coleman Trail #108, 2.3 mi; Little Yeager Trail #533, 2.0 mi; View Point Trail #106, 3.1 mi; and Yeager Canyon Trail #28, 2.4 miles. Additionally, two multi-use trails, Gaddes Canyon Trail #110 (2.6 miles) and Yeager Cabin Trail #111 (1.8 miles) permit limited motorized equipment.

**Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Trails** - The Hayfield Draw OHV Day-Use site, located on the westside of State Route 260, offers access for off-highway vehicles, in addition to picnicking facilities. The site contains 80 acres and provides more than 100 miles of trails for ATV and trail bikes.

**Wilderness Areas** in the USDA Forest Service were established by Congress in 1964, as areas “*where nature and its forces work undisturbed by human activities and have retained their primeval characteristics.*” Only hiking, horseback riding and dispersed backcountry camping are permitted in Wilderness Areas.

Although the Verde District of the Prescott National Forest contains several Wilderness Areas, only two are within the Verde Valley Regional Land Use Planning Area:

- **Woodchute Wilderness** – west of Jerome and north of Mingus Mountain, Woodchute is a small Wilderness Area containing 5,923 acres, with elevations ranging from 5,500 to 7,800 feet. It has one maintained Trail, #102, and is known for its views of Central Arizona and the San Francisco Peaks.
- **Cedar Bench Wilderness** – south of Camp Verde, contains 16,005 acres and six trails (#27, #162, #163, #164, #506, #540, #542). Cedar Bench is bounded on the

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east by the Verde Wild and Scenic River. Elevations range from 4,500 to 6,700 feet along the Verde Rim, separating the Agua Fria and Verde watersheds.

Note: the Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Area is described with others in the Coconino National Forest although a portion of it lies within the PNF.

**Inventoried Roadless Areas** – there are two Inventoried Roadless Areas identified in Verde District of PNF, the Black Canyon and the Grief Hill Inventoried Roadless Areas, located north of I-17 and west of Cottonwood and Camp Verde, respectively. Policy of the Forest Service in Chapter 1920, Land and Resource Management Planning, FSM 1900 – Planning, states: “*Inventoried roadless areas contain important environmental values that warrant protection. Accordingly, until a forest-scale roads analysis (FSM 7712.13b) is completed and incorporated into a forest plan, inventoried roadless areas shall, as a general rule, be managed to preserve their roadless characteristics.*” Exceptions for road management or timber harvest are provided for on a project-specific basis by the Chief or Regional Forester. The interim directive was extended from January 16, 2006 to July 16, 2007.

**COCONINO NATIONAL FOREST (CNF)** - maintaining over 1.82 million acres, the CNF is headquartered in Flagstaff and provides management for the approximate 400,000 acres in the Verde Valley Region through its Red Rock Ranger District in Sedona. The CNF also provides a South Gateway Visitors Center in the Village of Oak Creek on State Route 179.

The CNF follows guidelines in its 1987 Coconino National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. The Plan was modified by “Amendment 12” in 1998, to protect the Red Rock Country around Sedona, extending almost to the northeast corner of the Greater Cornville-Page Springs Community Planning Area. Amendment 12 is unique in that it focuses on acquisition rather than disposal of Forest lands. With the recent announcement of forest plan revisions by the U.S. Forest Service, Verde Valley citizens are concerned that Amendment 12 could be modified. Consequently, a grassroots petition, spearheaded by the Keep Sedona Beautiful organization, sought to designate the area as a National Scenic Area (NSA). Upon Congress' adoption of the 160,000 acres as an NSA, the Amendment 12 protection could become permanent.

**Camping** facilities are many in the Coconino National Forest. The following chart summarizes the camping availability in the Verde Valley Regional Land Use Planning Area of the CNF. There are numerous Day-Use sites and other campgrounds north of the Verde Valley Regional Land Use Planning Area in the Oak Creek Canyon area that are not included in the chart.

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<b>Campground</b>	<b>Elevation</b>	<b>Facilities</b>	<b>Season &amp; Stay Limit</b>	<b>Attractions</b>	<b>Trail Access</b>
Chavez Crossing Group Camp	4100'	3 group sites drinking water, vault toilets	All year 7 days	Water play, photography, Sedona	Munds Wagon #78, Jacks Canyon #55, Munds Mountain Wilderness
Clear Creek/ Clear Creek Group Camp	3200'	18 sites, plus 1 group site, drinking water, vault toilets	All year 7 days	Swimming, fishing, wildlife watching	Blodget Basin #31, West Clear Creek #17, Towel Crk #67 West Clear Creek Wilderness
Beaver Creek	3800'	13 sites, drinking water, pit toilets	All year 7 days	Swimming, fishing, wildlife watching	Apache Maid #15, Bell #13, Walker Basin #81, Wet Beaver Creek Wilderness

**Trails** in the Coconino National Forest traverse more than 159 miles. Those within the Verde Valley Region Study Area make up the vast majority of the trails network: West Clear Creek #17, 7.7 mi; Towel Creek #67, 6.4 mi; Bell, #13, 11.0 mi; Apache Maid #15, 9.5 mi; Woods Canyon #93, 4.25 mi; Hot Loop #94, 9.0 mi; Jacks Canyon #55, 6.5 mi; Munds Mountain #78, 4.0 mi; Turkey Creek #92, 3.0 mi; Soldier Pass #66, 2.4 mi; Brins Mesa # 119, 3.0 mi; Sterling Pass #46, 2.4 mi; Vultee Arch #22, 1.7 mi; Secret Canyon #121, 4.2 mi; Long Canyon #63, 9.5 mi; Long Canyon #122, 2.9 mi.; Boynton Canyon #47, 2.5 mi; Fay Canyon #53, 1.1 mi; Doe Mountain #60, 0.7 mi; Loy Canyon #5, 5.0 mi; Mooney #12, 4.2 mi; Casner Mountain #8, 7.0 mi; Dogie #116, 5.4 mi; Taylor Cabin #35, 2.3 mi; and the peaks on Winter Cabin Trail #70. Mail Trail from Camp Verde to Payson, 56 miles.

**Scenic Drives** in Coconino National Forest that are accessible by automobile include the Desert Canyon Loop and the Red Rock/Sycamore Canyon Loop.

***Desert Canyon Loop*** traverses a 22-mile round trip from I-17 east to State Route 260 to Forest Road 618 and back to I-17. The Loop runs past Clear Creek and Beaver Creek Campgrounds, offering scenic views of canyons and ranches, plus a side road to Montezuma’s Well National Monument.

***Red Rock/Sycamore Canyon Loop***, located west of Sedona, is an 18-mile round trip from State Route 89A to Dry Creek Road (Forest Road 152C) to Vultee Arch Road to Forest Road 525 and back to State Route 89A. The Loop provides spectacular vistas of Red Rock Country with many side roads and trails to additional scenic areas such as Devil’s Bridge and Vultee Arch. Two Heritage Sites, Palatki and Honanki, are also accessible from side roads. Red Rock Loop Road can be added to the scenic drive heading south from State Route 89A.

**Wilderness Areas** in the Coconino National Forest are well distributed in the Verde Valley Region.

- ***Sycamore Canyon*** - located at Yavapai County’s northern boundary, northwest of Sedona, Sycamore Canyon Wilderness is split between the PNF and CNF. The canyon and creek form the boundary of the two National Forests. With 55,937

acres, Sycamore Canyon is the largest Wilderness Area in the Verde Valley and provides scenic vistas and many trails amid unique rock formations.

- **Red Rock/Secret Mountain Wilderness** – adjacent to the east edge of Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Area northwest of Sedona, Red Rock/Secret Mountain Wilderness contains 49,950 acres of colorful buttes, cliffs and canyons. Trails traverse the varying terrain revealing evidence of ancient inhabitants and panoramic views.
- **Munds Mountain Wilderness** - on the northeastern edge of the Verde Valley, Munds Mountain Wilderness contains 18,150 acres and is closely located to Sedona and the Village of Oak Creek. The numerous trails provide vistas of Oak Creek and the San Francisco Peaks, as well as close up views of enormous red cliffs.
- **Wet Beaver Wilderness** – located east of I-17 at its junction with State Route 179, Wet Beaver Wilderness offers variety in outdoor experience including wading and/or swimming to its upper stretches. Trails from Beaver Creek Campground allow the adventurous hiker to enjoy the Wet Beaver Wilderness' 6,159 acres of red rock canyon and desert oasis environment.
- **West Clear Creek Wilderness** - the 15,238 acres of West Clear Creek Wilderness are situated in a long narrow canyon which meanders from just east of Camp Verde, parallel and north of General Crook Highway (State Route 260), to State Route 87 in Coconino County. The steep canyons and numerous wall-to-wall pools of the Wilderness make it accessible to the hardy adventurer or fisherman.

The Regional Land Use Plan acknowledges that the National Forests are managed for multiple resources in addition to open space and trails. Other activities, such as range, wildlife, watershed, fire and fuels management are a part of the U.S. Forest Service responsibility and may influence both open space and recreation access desires by communities.

## **NATIONAL MONUMENTS, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, UNITED STATES**

### **DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR**

**Purpose and Mission** - the National Park Service was created in 1916 by Congress to “*conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.*” In 2002, the Secretary of the Department of Interior announced the Department’s intention in managing national monuments with guiding principles known as the “Four C’s: Consultation, Cooperation, and Communication, all in the service of Conservation.”

**Holdings and Facilities** -- There are two National Monuments in the Verde Valley Region: Tuzigoot National Monument and Montezuma Castle/Montezuma Well National Monument.

- Tuzigoot National Monument, east of the Town of Clarkdale, is believed to be an ancient village or pueblo of the Sinagua culture, built about 1000 A.D. and abandoned around 1400 A.D. It contained 110 rooms in a three-story structure. The prehistoric site consists of 112 acres, with the recent addition of the 70-acre Tavasci Marsh area. The Monument is enhanced by a visitor center with exhibits. It can be accessed via State Route 89A through the downtowns of Clarkdale or Cottonwood.
- Montezuma's Castle/Montezuma's Well National Monument is located east of I-17, northeast of Camp Verde in the Beaver Creek Community area. The Monument was established in 1906 for preservation of the five-story, 20-room prehistoric cliff dwelling. The site consists of approximately 840 acres and is believed to have been inhabited by the Sinagua culture over 600 years ago. The naming of the Monument is attributed to Spanish explorers entering the Verde Valley in search of mines in the early 1580s. The site contains a visitor center and museum.

## **ARIZONA STATE GOVERNMENT**

### **ARIZONA STATE PARKS DEPARTMENT**

**Purpose and Mission** of the Arizona State Parks Department is *"to manage and conserve Arizona's natural, cultural and recreational resources for the benefit of the people, both in our parks and through our partners."* The 2004 Arizona State Parks Annual Report notes that the agency's Resources Management Section's primary methods toward achieving the Department's mission are through property acquisition and management. Two acquisitions in the Verde Valley Region helped State Parks accomplish specific goals: to protect the unique riparian habitat of the Verde River Greenway, the acquisition of 19.94 acres from Phelps Dodge; and to protect a cultural resource, the acquisition of 2.97 acres from the State Land Department for a 2-mile trail connection of the historic Lime Kiln Trail from Dead Horse State Park into Coconino National Forest. The Arizona State Parks Board voted in May, 2005, to expand the area of interest of the Verde River Greenway State Natural Area to include approximately 35 miles of the river from the Tuzigoot Bridge to Beazely Flats. Acquisition efforts are continuing.

**Holdings and Facilities** – there are more than 1,000 acres contained in four Arizona State Parks located in close proximity to the Verde Valley communities.

- **Dead Horse Ranch State Park/Verde River Greenway State Natural Area**, near the Town of Cottonwood, contains 423 acres, with hiking and equestrian trails, ramadas, picnicking areas, fishing, canoeing, 109 full-service campsites with electricity, restrooms, showers and other amenities and a total of 147 campsites.

The Park's trail system includes access to the Verde River Greenway State Natural Area, running six river miles from the Tuzigoot Bridge on the north to the 89A Bridge on the south, in Bridgeport -- totaling 573 acres. In conjunction with Coconino National Forest, other multi-use trails are accessed: Forest Loop, 0.5mi; Lime Kiln, 2.1mi (connecting an additional 12 miles across State Trust Land and USFS to Red Rock State Park); Tavasci Marsh, 1.0mi; Hicky Ditch, 0.5 mi; and

Creosote, 0.5mi. Other trails include the Mesa, an interpretive 1.2 mi. loop; Quail Wash, 0.25 mi, one-way; and Lagoon, 0.25 mi. loop.

- **Red Rock State Park**, located 5 miles west of Sedona, is known for its beautiful red rock outcroppings and education center, as well as for hiking and picnicking on its 286 acres. The meandering Oak Creek provides diverse habitat for plants and wildlife and for environmental education. Facilities for picnicking and weddings are provided at the Twin Cypress Picnic Ramada, Wedding Tree and the Visitor Center roof top.

The family-oriented trail system provides 5-miles of inter-connecting loops including Eagle's Nest Loop, Apache Fire Loop, Coyote Ridge, Kisva, Yavapai Ridge, Javelina and Rattlesnake Trails.

- **Jerome State Historic Park** in the Town of Jerome, consists of the historic Douglas Mansion, exhibits, mining equipment and picnic facilities on approximately 3 acres. The Douglas Mansion Museum, built in 1916, displays the histories of the family and the Jerome area through artifacts, minerals, photographs and models. The picnic areas provide spectacular Verde Valley views.
- **Fort Verde State Historic Park**, three miles east of I-17 in the Town of Camp Verde, contains historic buildings on its eleven acres, relating to Arizona's Territorial days. Fort Verde is considered "the best preserved example of an Indian Wars period fort in Arizona" with its three historic house museums which formerly accommodated military men, officers and doctors in the late 1800s. Fort Verde was connected by a wagon road (which became known as General Crook Road), west to Fort Whipple in the Prescott area and east to Fort Apache. The eleven-acre site provides picnic areas and restrooms, and offers living history programs.

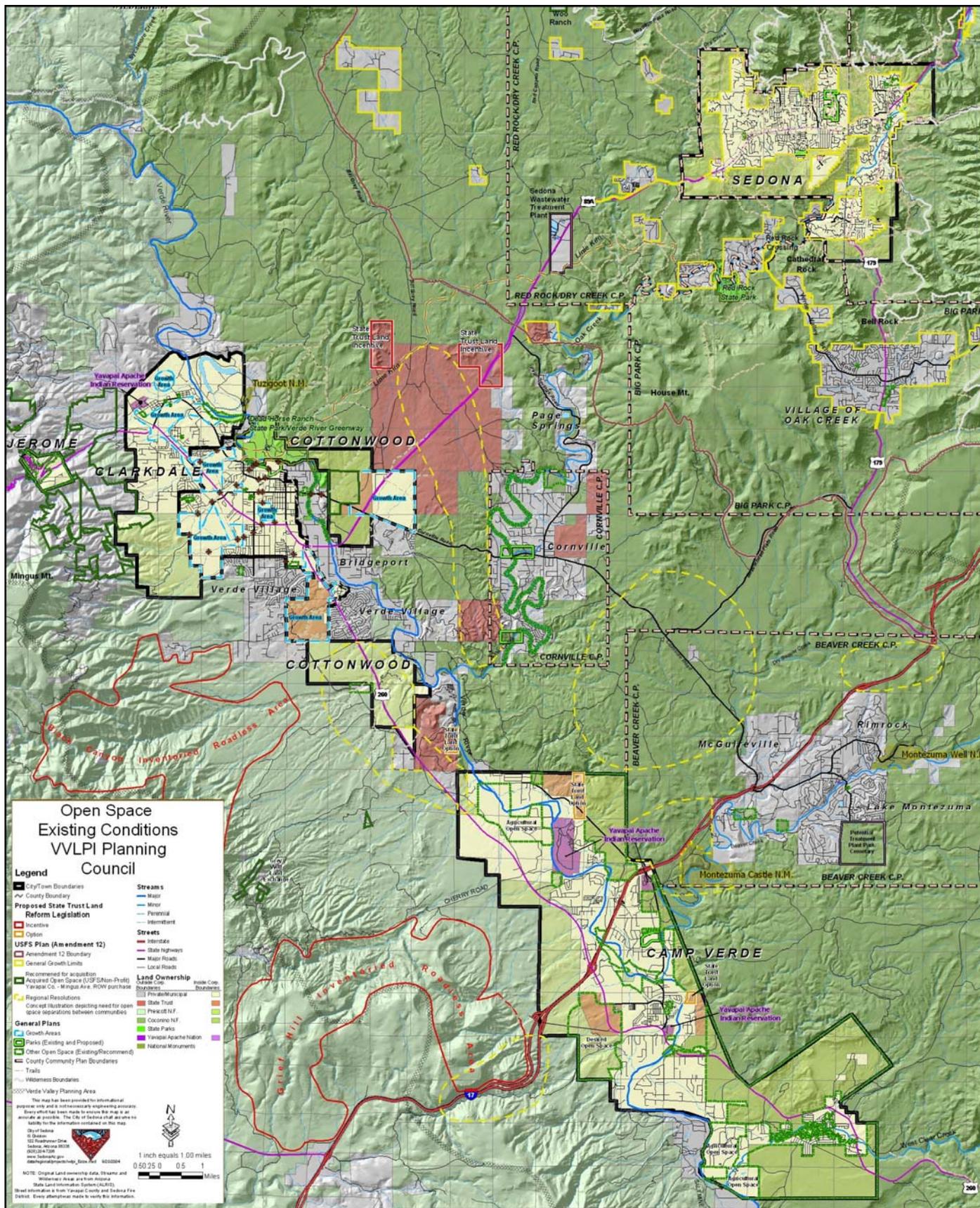
#### **ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT**

**Purpose and Mission** of the Arizona Game and Fish (AG&F) is *"to conserve, enhance, and restore Arizona's diverse wildlife resources and habitats through aggressive protection and management programs, and to provide wildlife resources and safe watercraft and off-highway vehicle recreation for the enjoyment, appreciation, and use by present and future generations."*

**Holdings and Facilities** - one of the five fish hatcheries of the AG&F is operated in the Verde Valley Region:

- **Page Springs Hatchery** - located in the unincorporated Greater Cornville-Page Springs Community, the hatchery raises more than 650,000 rainbow and brown trout for distribution throughout Arizona. The hatchery site contains trails leading to wildlife viewing areas in remote parts of the property. Picnic facilities, a visitors' center and restrooms are provided.

# VERDE VALLEY REGIONAL LAND USE PLAN



**Figure 6**

**Current/Future Open Space Planning:**  
**County, Municipalities, Communities, and Regional Organizations**

The rapid growth throughout Arizona, Yavapai County and the Verde Valley Region in the last decade of the Twentieth Century, created a need for updating land use planning in most communities and counties. The growth experience, changing historically rural areas to more urbanized patterns, was coupled with the enactment of State statutes known as the "Growing Smarter Acts." A component of the Growing Smarter legislation was the addition of Open Space Elements for General Plans of municipalities and of counties with populations over 200,000 in the US Census 2000.

**YAVAPAI COUNTY**

The population of Yavapai County was far below the 200,000 population threshold when the County proposed to update its General Plan. The Board of Supervisors recognized, however, that a need for an Open Space Element existed due to the rapid growth and potential loss of openness. As a result, the Yavapai County Board of Supervisors adopted Open Space Goals and Objectives in December, 2001, as part of the Yavapai County General Plan in order to "*maintain the desired spaciousness within and around communities*" for "*identification, better community planning (e.g., clustered development), preservation and sound management of undeveloped land with respect for private property rights and public purposes.*"

**GOAL: Enhance Parks, Recreational Opportunities**

- a. Objective:* develop an Open Space Master Plan identifying geographic features and natural resources to be protected; recreational facilities, preserved open space; wildlife habitat/corridors; and future regional needs
- b. Objective:* strive to reserve desirable public lands for recreation, open space protection of wildlife habitats and buffering of residential areas
- c. Objective:* encourage parks at regional and local levels favoring natural recreational venues

**GOAL: Plan for Interconnected Greenways and Trails**

- a. Objective:* use greenbelts to separate communities and preserve their identities
- b. Objective:* preserve existing trails for differentiated uses (i.e. non-motorized, and off-highway vehicles)
- c. Objective:* connect open spaces with wildlife corridors and pronghorn grassland habitats; set aside prime wildlife viewing areas
- d. Objective:* protect riparian areas, watercourses and associated floodplains

**GOAL: Preserve County Open Space Character**

- a. Objective:* protect scenic views, mountain vistas; require development to adapt sensitively to natural areas, protect wildlife habitats
- b. Objective:* retain agricultural uses encouraging continued agribusiness (e.g., ranches, farms)
- c. Objective:* maintain clean air by mitigating sources of pollution (e.g., traffic congestion, open burning, heavily traveled unpaved roads)

**County Parks** - since the adoption of the Yavapai County General Plan, 2003, two County Parks have been developed in the Verde Valley Region: Windmill Park and Sycamore Community Park.

- **Windmill Park** consists of 4.59 acres near Oak Creek in the unincorporated community of Cornville. It is developed with playground equipment, multi-purpose

**VERDE VALLEY REGIONAL LAND USE PLAN**

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playfield, horseshoe and volleyball pits, ramadas with picnic tables, a pond and portable toilets. The park was partially funded through grants received from the Arizona State Parks Department.

- **Sycamore Community Park**, in Lake Montezuma, is located close to Beaver Creek. It consists of 3 acres with picnic tables, benches, walking trails and portable toilets.

**County Trails** - the Yavapai County Master Trails Plan for Non-Motorized Multi-Use was adopted in 1998, with a primary goal to develop a County-wide, non-motorized trail system. Trails were to be acquired using utility and railroad rights-of way, floodplains, historic trails, and other trail linkages that may be negotiated with private property owners and developers. Another major goal is ensuring access to trails on public lands and providing alternative modes of transportation. This goal is especially important to the residents of the Verde Valley communities who express concerns for adequate access to public lands.

The Yavapai County Trails Committee (YCTC) was appointed by the Board of Supervisors to advise County officials on implementation of the Trails Plan. Working in conjunction with the Yavapai Trails Association and other volunteer groups, the YCTC recommends trails to the Yavapai County Board of Supervisors for adoption. There are currently eight adopted Yavapai County trails, spanning over 42 miles in the Verde Valley Region, as summarized in the following chart.

**YAVAPAI COUNTY NON-MOTORIZED HIKING/EQUESTRIAN/BICYCLING TRAILS**

<b>TRAIL NAME</b>	<b>OWNERSHIP</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>MILES</b>	<b>FACILITIES</b>
General George Crook National Recreation Trail/ Copper Canyon	Prescott National Forest	Dewey/Camp Verde Area	22	None
Beaverhead Flat Trail	Yavapai County	Cornville-Village of Oak Creek	5	None
Bones, USFS Trail #180	Coconino National Forest	Cottonwood/Clarkdale	2.5	Trailhead parking
Lime Kiln Trail, USFS Trail #82	Coconino National Forest and Arizona State Parks	Cottonwood, Sedona, Dead Horse Ranch State Park, Red Rock State Park	14 (park to park)	Trailhead (CNF) and horsetrailer parking; restrooms
Raptor Hill, USFS Trail #82	Coconino National Forest	Cottonwood/Clarkdale	1.9	Trailhead parking
Thumper, USFS Trail #131	Coconino National Forest	Cottonwood	1.4	Trailhead parking
Bill Ensign Trail, USFS Trail #182	Coconino National Forest	Cottonwood	1.3	Trailhead parking
Chasm Creek Trail Head F.R. 164	Prescott National Forest	Camp Verde Area	6.1	Trailhead and horse trailer parking; water for horses

**CITIES/TOWNS**

During the late-1990s representatives of Verde Valley cities and towns, Yavapai and Coconino Counties met on a regular basis and formed the Regional Planners' Working Group. The Group discussed major areas of concern, with special emphasis on protection of open space. "Regional Cooperating Resolutions," resulting from the Planners' Working Group were adopted by each entity, including Yavapai County in 1998. The Resolutions (See: Appendices) focused on cooperation to maintain significant open space and the separations between communities. In addition to passage of an individual Regional Cooperating Resolution, each entity included an Open Space Element in its General Plan in compliance with the Arizona Growing Smarter Acts.

**City of Sedona** – surrounded by Coconino National Forest, the City of Sedona adopted the Sedona Community Plan, 2002, with emphasis on a growth policy which is *"to not expand the existing private land base, thus promoting infill and preventing sprawl."* Existing Open Space makes up 52% of the City: 5,759 acres of CNF; 139 acres of City-owned parks (104 acres parks/pocket parks; 35 acres natural open space), natural open areas; 264 acres private natural open areas, Community Plan designated open space and planned development preserved open space.

The Sedona Community Plan's Open Space Vision states *"that a significant amount of open space will be a strong determining factor in the character of Sedona and the Verde Valley Region"* with key points for maintaining scenic and natural resources, a comprehensive system of trails and parks, and provisions for access to open space areas. A series of goals and objectives is recommended in the Plan, as well as support for regional open space planning.

**Cottonwood** -- the 2003 Cottonwood General Plan discusses Open Space on both regional and internal levels, as much of the recreational demand comes from non-City residents living in the local vicinity. Maintaining 104 acres of park lands (75% in the Riverfront Park) and 2.5 miles of trails, Cottonwood benefits from the recreational amenities of Dead Horse State Park and the Verde River Greenway, managed by State and Federal entities. Cottonwood has little authority over open space policies in the abutting Prescott and Coconino National Forests, except for the areas near the Verde River, encompassing the primary parks and greenway, which the City recently annexed. State Parks and the City of Cottonwood are acquiring more lands along the Verde River for public access including a new access point provided by the City's acquisition of the Old Town Jail connection to the trail system at Riverfront Park. A high open space priority is land or easement acquisition for continuous trails between Tuzigoot and the Bridgeport bridge. The Open Space & Recreation Element of the Cottonwood General Plan identifies a primary goal as: *"Working with other entities, identify and protect key open space resources inside and outside the City, especially the Verde River."* Objectives and action steps accompany the goals.

**Clarkdale** – the 2002 Clarkdale General Plan recognizes both the enjoyment and the economic value of preserving open space resources for parks, recreation, wildlife habitat and riparian areas while protecting drainageways and floodplains. The Town maintains

four neighborhood parks, totaling 6.47 acres in addition to the community pool and Town civic complex. Recreational amenities are augmented by facilities at Clarkdale-Jerome School and Yavapai College. Within the Town Limits two major Open Space components are managed by Arizona State Parks: the Verde River Greenway (68.5 acres) in the northeast, and the Prescott National Forest (1,717 acres) in the south. A goal statement, *“Provide an integrated system of open space and natural resource areas to serve the residents of Clarkdale,”* includes regional considerations in its objective to *“encourage policies to identify and preserve regional open space resources.”* The objectives are followed by policy statements and implementation strategies.

**Camp Verde** – the 2004 Camp Verde General Plan, ratified by its citizens in March, 2005, envisions *“Open space within Camp Verde will protect sensitive natural areas and scenic vistas and provide a variety of recreational opportunities.”* The Town contains a variety of small parks, recreation and open space areas, managed by the Town, Camp Verde School District, Arizona State Parks and the US Forest Service. The General Plan specifies that open space and development are to be balanced in order *“to preserve the community’s rural character by providing buffers between different types of land uses”* and *“designating portions of new development as natural areas.”* One of the Town’s goals states the need to *“work cooperatively with other Verde Valley communities, US Fish and Wildlife, Game and Fish Department and other organizations to prepare and implement a comprehensive regional open space plan that protects critical open space in Camp Verde.”* The Plan lists implementation strategies for each goal.

**Jerome** - the Town of Jerome is currently engaged in the preparation of a General Plan. The Mayor and Council have expressed a strong interest in protecting open or undeveloped properties along adjacent slopes, particularly the eastern front of Mingus Mountain, in order to preserve the unique historic character of the community, to maintain separation from Clarkdale and to protect viewsheds.

## **COMMUNITIES**

The 2003 Yavapai County General Plan encourages community planning for unincorporated communities which are experiencing rapid growth. A new Cornville Community Plan was approved in 2005. Beaver Creek is presently updating their community plan.

**Cornville Community** - in 1999, the Cornville Community Association, a non-profit volunteer membership organization, began reviewing the 1986 Cornville Comprehensive Land Use Plan and its 1997 revision. Following guidance in the 2003 Yavapai County General Plan, the Association included an Open Space Element as part of their award winning, 2005 Cornville Community Plan. The expanded planning area of 55 square miles includes significant open spaces on 20,000 acres of Coconino National Forest, five acres of Yavapai County’s Windmill Park and 195 acres of Arizona Game and Fish Department’s Page Springs Fish Hatchery. Public open space uses focus on recreation with hiking, biking, horseback riding, fishing and other creek activities. There are three public access points to the meandering 23 miles of Lower Oak Creek and one for Spring Creek. Lower Oak Creek converges with the Verde River at the southwest corner of the planning area.

The 2005 Cornville Community Plan endorses the three Open Space goals and objectives of the 2003 Yavapai County General Plan. Other goals state: *“Proactively seek opportunities to preserve open space,”* and *“Work with Yavapai County to acquire 80 acres of National Forest next to Windmill Park for park expansion and other public purposes.”*

**Big Park Community (BPC)** – with an annual population growth rate of almost 6%, the Big Park Regional Coordinating Council (BPRCC), formed in 1997, undertook the review of the 1988 Big Park Community Plan, retaining its concepts of *“the original small rural town atmosphere”* and many of its goals. The BPC Planning Area’s approximate 54 square miles has vast amounts of open space with 88% of its area held by the Coconino National Forest. Additionally, the Arizona State Parks Department manages Red Rock State Park’s 286 acres, located at the northern border of BPC, providing public access to Oak Creek. Of the approximately 3800 acres of private land in BPC, 20% was exchanged from the National Forest during the last quarter of the twentieth century. The adopted 1998 Big Park Community Plan’s chapter on Parks, Recreation and Schools emphasizes support of cooperative efforts (such as the installation of 28 miles of non-motorized mixed-use trails connecting to Sedona) among *“community, state and national agencies to seek to protect areas of cultural and historic value or interest;”* *“preservation of major wash corridors;”* *“construction of a USFS visitors’ center;”* and promotion of *“separate easements into the USFS trailheads.”*

**Beaver Creek Community (BCC)** – Coconino National Forest is the major Open Space, surrounding the Beaver Creek Community, as it does the Big Park Community. The Beaver Creek Community is composed of three sub-communities, McGuireville, Rimrock and Lake Montezuma, all containing portions of Wet Beaver Creek, a unique riparian area which provides an interior open space corridor. The National Park Service maintains Montezuma’s Well National Monument at the eastern edge and Montezuma’s Castle National Monument at the southwestern corner of BCC. Sycamore Park, a three-acre park in Lake Montezuma, is managed by Yavapai County. Starting in 1988, local advisory committees appointed by Yavapai County Board of Supervisors, worked with residents to produce the 1992 Beaver Creek Community Plan. The Plan designates two parcels of CNF (approximately 80 acres and 40 acres in size) in the McGuireville area for exchange to be used for community parks. Both parcels provide public access to Wet Beaver Creek, and one is located at the confluence of Dry Beaver and Wet Beaver Creeks. BCC is currently initiating an update of the Community Plan.

## **REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

The Verde Valley Region’s natural environment is a magnet attracting many visitors who become permanent residents. As a result, the increasing growth has produced a groundswell of residents who are involved in the protection and conservation of the environment and open space which attracted them to the Region. Many participate in the following and other regional organizations:

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**Verde Valley Land Preservation Institute (VVLPI)** – a non-profit corporation, the VVLPI has a stated mission: “*to develop and implement immediate and long-range strategies to preserve and enhance the natural open space of the Verde Valley.*” The VVLPI plans to “*ensure a public collaborative process involving scientific research, education, planning, and land acquisition, management, development and preservation techniques.*” The Institute envisions “*a high quality of life in a region where open space and the beautiful vistas are its defining characteristics*” through the implementation of “*a regional open space plan that maintains a balance between natural and human communities and encourages responsible growth and economic prosperity.*”

**Verde Valley Forum (VVF)** – based on the foundations of the Sedona Academy of Public Affairs, the VVF was formed in 2004 “*to build informed consensus for action on issues of critical importance to the Verde Valley and its communities.*” The VVF envisions “*a well-integrated region whose residents share a sense of community and place and enjoy a sustainable quality environment*” that will be “*maintained by informed citizens, community and business organizations, local governments and educational institutions.*” The Sedona Academy has conducted 19 forums, inspiring the formation of the Verde Valley Land Preservation Academy with its “*Implementing a Verde Valley Open Space Plan,*” held in 2002.

**Keep Sedona Beautiful (KSB)** -- a non-profit organization (formed in 1972 -- prior to the City of Sedona’s incorporation in 1988) that is a vehicle for positive change in the Greater Sedona Area. KSB helps promote dialogue within the community about environmental and aesthetic concerns and facilitates practical solutions. Activities range from education and advocacy to hands-on tasks such as litter lifting and facilitating open space land acquisitions. KSB concerns range from preserving the quality of Oak Creek to maintaining Sedona's dark, star-studded night skies. They work for the good of the community because they believe keeping Sedona beautiful is good business.

**Cornville Trails Committee** - a volunteer committee with a mission “*to provide and/or create both multi-use and non-vehicular use trails in the Cornville Area*” with a goal of creating a recreational loop trail by connecting new trails with those existing in Cornville, Clarkdale, Cottonwood, Village of Oak Creek and Sedona. The loop trail is planned in three phases through partnerships with the Coconino National Forest, Yavapai County, developers of Verde Santa Fe and other private property owners.

**Stewards of Public Lands** - the volunteer organization is committed to the long term respect for and the cleanup of the Verde Valley Watershed. It is supported by cooperative efforts of the Coconino and Prescott National Forests, the Verde Valley communities, Yavapai County and many private businesses.

**Dead Horse Ranch Trails Coalition** -- Formed in 1996, its volunteer members consist of hikers, bikers and equestrian users as well representatives from Cottonwood, Clarkdale, Cornville and Camp Verde, USFS Land Managers, Yavapai County and Arizona State Parks. Its Mission Statement is: “*to Provide Recreational Trail Opportunities for Residents and Visitors of the Verde Valley, Arizona.*” The Coalition has been instrumental in getting

trails around Dead Horse Ranch State Park accepted in to the USFS Trail System. The Dead Horse Ranch Trails Coalition worked with USFS, Arizona State Land Department, Yavapai County and ARIZONA State Parks to acquire two mile right-of-way across State Trust Lands for the Historic Lime Kiln Trail connecting Cottonwood and Sedona by way of Dead Horse Ranch State Park and Red Rock State Park. The Coalition assisted with the easement for the proposed trail that will connect the Zalesky Road area of Bridgeport to Cornville through the Verde Santa Fe subdivision; and started a three-mile paddle trail along the Verde River Greenway from Dead Horse Ranch to 89A Bridge in Bridgeport. The Dead Horse Ranch Trails Coalition is striving eventually to have trails connecting all of the Valley communities

***Nature Conservancy*** - is a non-profit organization with a mission “*to preserve the plants, animals, and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters needed for their survival.*” The Nature Conservancy, along with other conservation, education and business organizations, supports the Arizona State Land Conservation Initiative which earmarks almost 700,000 acres across Arizona for protection and conservation. Included in the Initiative is approximately 890 acres of the 6,400 acres of State Trust Land between Cottonwood and Sedona, targeted by the Nature Conservancy for protection of a winter range for elk, and part of Spring Creek containing five species of native fish.

***Important Bird Areas Program (IBA)/Audubon Arizona*** - the IBA Program, a part of Audubon Arizona, involves citizens, landowners, land managers and biologists in an effort to protect sites “that provide essential habitat for one or more species of bird.” The Program is voluntary and scientifically based, with sites identified by the Arizona IBA Scientific Review Committee, composed of biologists and bird experts. Information provided by Audubon Arizona describes two IBA’s in the Verde Valley Region:

***Tuzigoot IBA*** – located in the Clarkdale area, the “Species of Conservation Status” designated site consists of three water-based systems including 2-miles of the Verde River riparian corridor, Peck’s Lake and associated upland habitats, and Tavasci Marsh, a 70-acre, spring-fed marsh, now in the Tuzigoot National Monument. The IBA provides “high quality wetland, lake and riparian habitat for migrating, breeding and over-wintering birds. The marsh habitat stands out for its uniqueness in Arizona and its populations of Least Bittern and Virginia’s Rail, Belted Kingfisher, Great Blue Herron with rare Yuma Clapper Rail detections. The riparian area including the mesquite bosque stand out for the conservation status birds using the habitat during breeding and migration periods. The over-wintering waterfowl numbers exceed 1000 birds.”

***Lower Oak Creek IBA*** –stretching from the Red Rock State Park to Page Springs Fish Hatchery, the creek corridor IBA contains species of “Continental and State Conservation Concern.” The year round flow of Lower Oak Creek “supports the broad species that accompany the convergence of the northern plateau with the rising arid desert lands from the south. The riparian corridor IBA is exceptional in two respects: it is a migration corridor ‘hot spot’ supporting exceptional land bird diversity and abundance in spring and fall migration; it is premier riparian habitat

corridor supporting numerous riparian obligate species, many of which are species of conservation concern in Arizona.”

***Regional Driving Tours/Trails Organizations***

***Heritage Driving Tours*** - the Yavapai County Heritage Alliance (YCHA), a Verde Valley Region volunteer organization, is compiling a list of cultural and heritage sites to be included in a heritage driving tour. The group’s purpose is “*to protect, preserve and expose the cultural and historic sites of the Verde Valley to locals and visitors for the purpose of creating resources to protect and preserve.*” Considerations include mining/geology, agriculture, heritage museums, historic homes/structures, churches/cemeteries as well as national and state monuments, parks and archeological sites. The driving tour will utilize the scenic by-ways of existing roads and highways with future historic road markers.

***Great Western Trail (GWT)*** – the designation of a Mexico to Canada “backcountry trail” through Arizona, Utah, Idaho, Wyoming and Montana has, since 1992, been the goal of the Great Western Trail Association and the Arizona State Association of 4-Wheel Drive Clubs, in partnership with land management agencies. In 2000, approximately 80 miles through the Verde District of the Prescott National Forest were designated. Utilizing existing Yavapai County and Forest Service primitive roads, the GWT begins east of Black Canyon City/I-17, and meanders through the Prescott National Forest northerly, crossing Interstate-17, then meandering northwesterly around Mingus Mountain, and through Perkinsville to the Kaibab National Forest at the Coconino County boundary. A goal of the volunteer organizations is to have all segments of the trail “adopted” by clubs, organizations and individuals for stewardship.

**Open Space/Development Patterns and Compatibility Techniques**

A bird's-eye view of the Verde Valley Region reveals a development pattern looking very much like a triangle placed upon a large field of Open Space. The “development triangle’s” western apex at Jerome/Clarkdale, connects through Cottonwood/Verde Villages to a southern apex in Camp Verde, and reaches the north apex, Sedona, through the Beaver Creek and Big Park communities. The interior of the triangle is mostly Open Space with the exception of the Cornville community and scattered rural development.

The human-eye view at earth-level of the Verde Valley Region is currently characterized by openness with short interruptions of developed areas. A common concern expressed by the Region’s residents is that the existing development pattern will continue to expand and eventually expunge the openness, resulting in a fully developed and expanded “triangle.” Some techniques including greenbelt separations, buffering and cultural/environmental preservation/conservation can prevent the absorption of significant Open Spaces.

There are many goals for protection and enhancement of Open Space in the “regional cooperating resolutions,” General Plans and Community Plans of the Verde Valley Region’s cities, towns and communities, as well as in that of Yavapai County. These goals are particularly well-stated in the original Regional Planning Resolution and are echoed in the mission statements of numerous regional organizations, federal and state agencies. In

addition to Open Space objectives, municipalities have other, equally important responsibilities such as housing, economics, transportation and infrastructure. Federal and state authorities each have their own individual mandates. Establishing compatibility among these entities, their goals and mandates is essential to the sustainability of Open Space in the Verde Valley Region. Some compatibility techniques and programs are summarized in the following sections.

***Greenbelt Separations***

A common thread in the goals of Verde Valley municipal, community and county plans is to “*maintain significant Open Spaces between communities and along highway corridors,*” as noted, for example, in the Cottonwood and Sedona General Plans. The governing authorities can take the first step toward implementing open space goals, by establishing urban growth boundaries within their jurisdictions, designating other areas for rural and low intensity land use. An example of this is Sedona's policy of limiting development to properties that are currently privately held, thereby protecting open space areas from growth. This is most meaningful when neighboring jurisdictions enter into intergovernmental agreements, jointly creating the greenbelt separations.

Development incentives and density trades may be added to zoning and development codes to limit development areas and help achieve “greenbelt separations” on private properties. Where state or federal lands exist in the “greenbelt separator” areas, local jurisdictions should engage in dialogue to preserve, exchange or purchase the necessary open spaces. This may be best accomplished in partnerships between neighboring municipalities, and/or with county, state or federal agencies.

***Buffering***

The common trend in development is the spreading of structures along major transportation corridors. In the Verde Valley Region the major corridors are, in most cases, the only connectors among the cities, towns and communities. The greenbelt separators, if implemented, can relieve the highway development sprawl in large part. In some areas, however, existing development may prevent greenbelt separations. In these areas, or in other cases where greenbelt separators are not feasible, buffering techniques can be used to protect the feeling of openness. The buffers may be areas where substantial development setbacks from streets and neighborhoods are maintained. Buffers may also incorporate natural protected features such as washes, floodplains or ridges. In some cases buffering can be achieved by dense plantings and vegetated berms.

***Preservation/Conservation Mechanisms***

Much research of existing cultural/historic sites and environmentally sensitive areas in the Verde Valley Region has been accomplished. The protection of these areas can add to maintaining the feeling of openness, so treasured in the Region. The Verde River, Oak Creek, Beaver Creek and other tributaries are the long cherished community focal points and the vital riparian areas for wildlife including some endangered species. Portions of the Verde River are designated as a “Wild and Scenic River,” preserving it “*in free-flowing condition,*” and declaring that its “*immediate environments shall be protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.*”

In another approach to conservation, the Arizona Game and Fish Department recently filed the “Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy: 2005-2015” to identify and manage the “*wildlife and biotic communities of greatest conservation need.*” The Department administers grants programs from federal funds of the Conservation Trust for State Wildlife Grants and from Arizona Lottery for the Heritage Fund Program. Funding programs provide for a wide variety of wildlife conservation, natural areas, historic preservation, parks and trails.

A program of Conservation-based Management Alternatives was authorized by the Arizona Growing Smarter Act with grant awards for the encouragement of conservation practices in livestock and crop production, or “*to provide wildlife habitat or other public benefits that preserve open space.*” The funding for this program is limited, but contains the incentive of no requirement for matching funds, and provides awards to individual landowners as well as to agricultural lessees of state and federal lands.

Additionally, prehistoric archaeological and historic cultural sites can be designated for protection, after identification and evaluation by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), at Arizona State Parks. SHPO manages many levels of historic/cultural programs and grants for public and private properties.

## **VI. HOUSING**

The foundation for living quality in the Verde Valley is represented by the places where people reside. Neighborhoods blend into the eastern Yavapai County country character. The "old town" areas of Camp Verde, Cottonwood, Clarkdale, and Jerome are reminders of historic ranching and mining centers. And Sedona's earlier residential areas about the commercial crossroads of State Routes 89A and 179 and extend along Oak Creek in the City's easterly, Coconino County neighborhoods. Cornville and Bridgeport represent populations that are sustaining the Valley's agricultural heritage.

Residential location takes three different forms: 1) urban -- in built-up portions of the incorporated municipalities; 2) suburban/community -- clustered unincorporated areas, such as Big Park, Verde Village or Beaver Creek; and 3) rural -- ranging from large lot communities (i.e., Cornville, Bridgeport) to outlying country homes and ranches.

Open space, as noted, is particularly prized. Even residents in older or more dense housing in the Verde Valley enjoy scenic surroundings and proximity to outdoor recreational areas. Preventing sprawl, including residential developments, constitutes a basic principle of the Regional Land Use Plan. Spacious buffers around original settlements (e.g., Jerome, Clarkdale, Centerville) are to be maintained. New, planned housing should observe "brown belts" consisting of peripheral open space, preserved natural washes, public land and agricultural uses.

If preserving open space is the Verde Valley's highest planning priority, addressing regional housing issues may be the thorniest regional problem. Concerns about traffic congestion, water availability, job creation all relate directly to residential development trends. There is consensus that no single area can provide an effective solution to meet common needs for variety, choice and reasonable price points to accommodate the majority of current and future citizens.



New residential construction is called for in adopted General Plans. Local Growth Areas Elements anticipate infill development in such designated areas in proximity to existing infrastructure and community facilities. The preferred planned communities approach encourages new housing developments to tie into existing roads, sewers, and water infrastructure; or be of sufficient scale to provide free-standing utilities systems, traffic access and internal circulation roadways.

### **Residential Stock**

Homes in the Verde Valley include all types, sizes and land areas with one factor in common -- they are becoming more expensive. Shelter units range from aging mobile homes and more rental manufactured housing to sprawling high-end homes and contemporary condominiums.

Maintaining housing value for all socio-economic levels depends on preserving the Verde Valley's inherent attractiveness, improving transportation and other infrastructure and,

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generally, managing growth effectively as a shared County/municipal responsibility. The community, its scenery and commercial development, will always serve as the first impression for visitors and tourists, however, the quality of the housing stock is vital to the overall character of living quality necessary to attract potential employers and economic investment.

According to the 2000 census, there were an estimated 20,428 dwelling units in the Verde Valley. By 2006, that number is estimated to have grown to more than 24,000 units. Single-family, detached housing predominates 59.5%. Manufactured housing represents 27.9%. Valley-wide, there are an estimated 2,200 multi-family dwelling units.

### Incorporated Municipalities

<b>Town/City</b>	<b>Single Family - Detached</b>	<b>Single Family - Attached</b>	<b>Attached: 2+ Units</b>	<b>Mobile Homes</b>
<b>Sedona</b>	3,882	399	530	857
<b>Cottonwood</b>	2,081	94	1,268	902
<b>Clarkdale</b>	1,045	17	160	369
<b>Camp Verde</b>	1,937	100	140	1,735
<b>Jerome</b>	112	7	73	4

Some areas support a disproportionate share of rental housing. In Cottonwood, nearly half of single-family dwelling units (48%) are not owner-occupied. Although there is job growth in the City, many new residents commute to employment elsewhere. Although there is a strong preference among citizens and their local governments, alike, for home ownership, there are clearly needs for both a balance of rental opportunities and creative assistance for purchasing shelter.

Age of housing stock in the Verde Valley is influenced by significant population growth, accommodated mostly in newly-constructed housing. About one-third of total dwelling units have been added over the past two decades. Nonetheless, many homes date back to the late Nineteenth Century when Camp Verde was a frontier military outpost and copper mines were in high production with workers housed in Clarkdale, Jerome and Cottonwood. Although older dwellings have been modernized, many are in need of significant upgrading. Older housing (more than 40 or 50 years old) and dwellings built or placed prior to the adoption of contemporary local building codes or inspection processes are more likely than newer housing to have one or more defects that represent a threat to the health or safety of the occupants. Cottonwood's 2001 inventory of housing conditions, for example, indicated that the majority of units in need of significant repair or modernization were located in the Old Town and Main & Mingus neighborhoods.

A State grant to Clarkdale for the Centerville neighborhood, for example, included assistance for home rehabilitation. Together with a grant program, a revolving fund was established for weatherization, roofing and plumbing upgrades.



**VERDE VALLEY REGIONAL LAND USE PLAN**

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Older single-family units are as likely to be occupied by renters as by owners. Therefore, neighborhood revitalization efforts throughout the Valley must include resources targeted to landlords so as to address single-family home rental conditions.

**Demand**

Population growth projections indicate that the influx of new residents into the region will continue for the foreseeable future. Special "small town atmosphere" attraction draws families seeking wholesome environments in which to raise their children, active retirees escaping metropolitan areas' congestion, employers seeing a positive business climate, and persons residing elsewhere who invest in "weekend getaway" or seasonal vacation homes.

**Verde Valley Population and Projections: 1990 - 2020**

Place	U.S. Census		% Change (1990-2000)	DES	D.E.S. Projections**		
	1990	2000*		Estimate 7/1/2005	2010	2015	2020
Camp Verde	6,243	9,451	51%	10,730	11,407	12,759	14,068
Clarkdale	2,144	3,422	59%	3,680	3,932	4,363	4,786
Cottonwood	5,918	9,179	55%	10,860	10,749	13,033	15,246
Jerome	403	329	-18%	330	686	729	772
Sedona	7,720	10,192	32%	10,935	12,380	13,521	14,644
Big Park	3,024	5,245	73%	x	6,317	7,175	8,007
Cornville	2,089	3,335	59%	x	4,417	4,683	5,203
Lake Montezuma	1,841	3,344	81%	x	3,076	3,398	3,710
Verde Village	7,037	10,610	50%	x	10,905	10,905	10,905

The Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) provides population projections for the State, County, and places counted by the U.S. Census Bureau.

\* Corrected Census 2000 Figures

The 1997 DES long range projections indicated an average annual growth rate of 2.87% per year over the twenty years between 2000 and 2020.

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Actual percent of population change in the incorporated communities from years 2000 to 2005 ranged between .3% and 18.3%.

Cottonwood has projections of average annual growth rates in the 4% to 6% where many other places are within a 2% to 4% range of average annual rate of growth. Individual community plans use different population projection rates (e.g., Cornville used a 6% rate).

The State of Arizona does not require cities of less than 50,000 residents to incorporate a housing element as part of the General Plan. However, due to the local demand for housing and services, most cities and towns in the Verde Valley have developed a residential strategy that provides an analysis of existing and projected housing needs.

As population grows throughout the Verde Valley, demand for additional housing units will continue. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the entire Verde Valley saw a 51% increase in population from 1990 to 2000. This led to a 36.7% increase in total dwelling units among the incorporated communities of Verde Valley -- suggesting that a considerable proportion of the increment reflects a vigorous "second home" market as well as replacement housing, leaving many substandard units unoccupied.

A quality mix of shelter options that is affordable to various population groups must be developed to correct the current housing market imbalances. The availability and variety of

quality housing in different cost ranges are critical to the economic vitality and diversity of any community. With so little (about 17%) of the Verde Valley's land area privately owned (121 square miles, including much of the land along the Verde River), absorption of land by the housing market is creating shortages in developable land.

An aging population may demand different housing types, as well as associated services. Depending upon income, health and financial status, aging households may require housing alternatives such as assisted or congregate living. Verde Valley's aging population of 65 years and older makes up 19% of the total population.

Also, income trends and projections and economic data contribute to the quantification of demand for various housing types at various price points. In the Town of Camp Verde, until recently, it has been unusual to see any two residences that look exactly alike. Housing that is both attractive and affordable to a variety of people at diverse income levels is necessary to retain and attract appropriate and quality employment opportunities.

The proportion of occupied units is one indicator of demand in the local housing market. Occupied units (owner and renter) make up 88% of the total dwelling units in the Verde Valley; showing only 12% of dwelling units for renting or buying are available in the Verde Valley region. The tenure (owner or renter) of occupied units is another indicator of demand and further defines the local housing market. In 2000, Cottonwood had the lowest homeownership rate of any Verde Valley community at 53.7%; declining from 55.6% in 1990. Homeownership rates were lowest among single-person households, young households and households headed by a person over the age of 75 years. If multi-family housing continues to be primarily renter-occupied, the proportion of homeownership will substantially decline as residential land build-out continues.

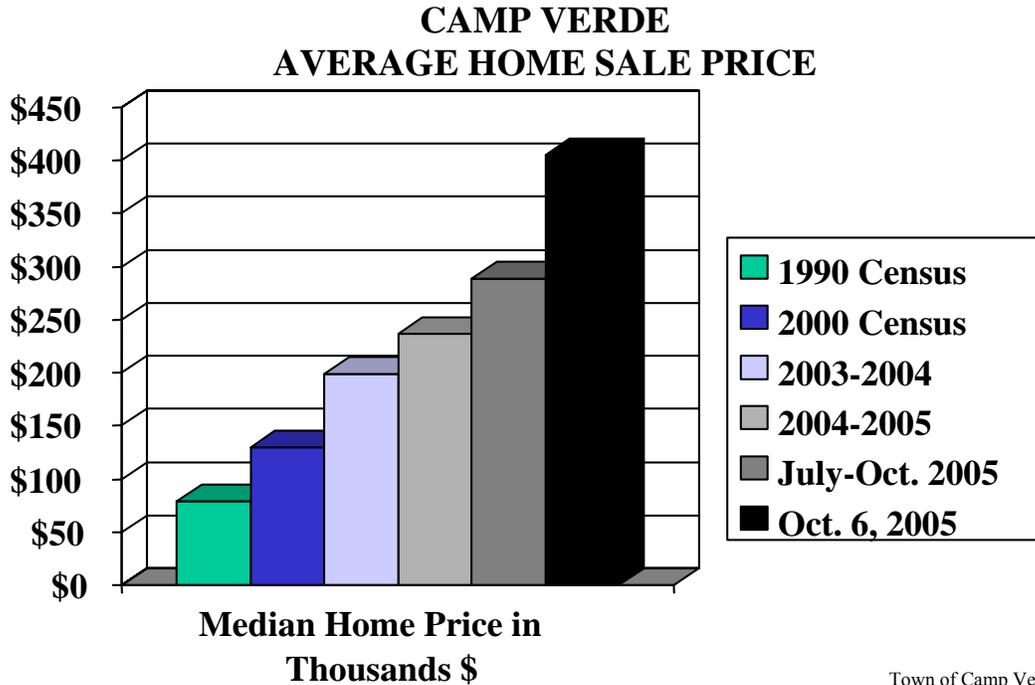
Over the past ten to fifteen years, only Sedona was considered "pricey" by older persons looking to the Verde Valley for relocation. Now, though no longer perceived as economy rates, local home prices are less daunting to buyers bringing accrued residential equity and investment/retirement income with them than to locally-employed first time homebuyers or would-be "move-up market" purchasers.

A majority of new homes in Camp Verde's "Cliffs" development are being purchased as retirement or pre-retirement second homes.

### **Rising Costs**

All over the Valley, real estate inflation is affecting homebuyers and renters. Demand has driven the price of land to double, triple and, in some places more, since 2000. Shrinking inventories of available, buildable sites are responsible, in part. Lack of infrastructure capacity, particularly in water and wastewater systems, contributes heavily to the problem. And, where sites are found that could allow for clustering for more reasonable costs in utilities and roadway access, larger, "cookie cutter" lots miss opportunities for savings. Each of these factors contributes to diseconomies in home and rental unit production -- higher expenditures per dwelling that are passed along to the buyers.

Solutions are needed to help bridge the increasing gap between local wages and housing costs. Camp Verde's median house prices have increased from \$79,000 in 1990, to \$130,000 in 2000, to nearly \$400,000 at present. (See chart below) Median household incomes in the Town are \$32,000 annually, compared with the Yavapai County median annual household income of \$46,000.



Escalating prices in Sedona have driven homeownership out of reach for virtually all working families and individuals. Those who own their home feel pressure to sell. The Sedona Housing Commission, established in 2003 to address the affordability gap, reported the median price for a home in the City at nearly a half million dollars. Today, staff reports the average cost has risen above \$600,000.

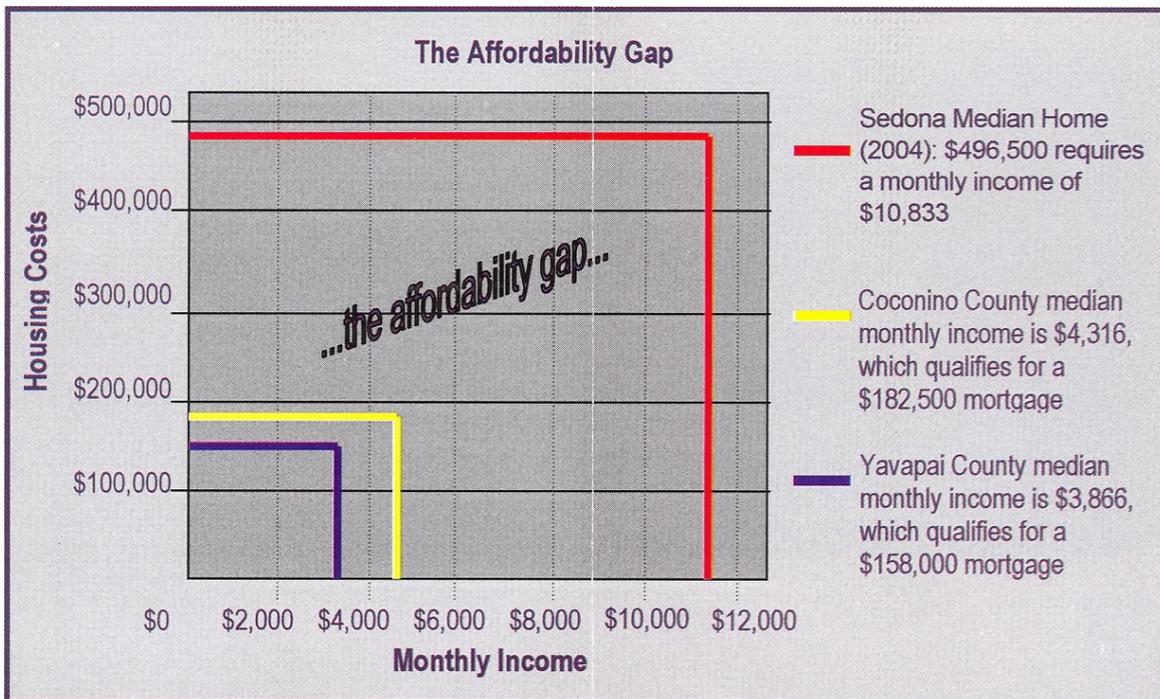
Cottonwood, Verde Village and the Lake Montezuma/Rimrock area generally serve middle-income and blue collar workers; however, the doubling of house prices over the last five years has widened the affordability gap. As Verde Village approaches buildout of its approximately 4,400 lots, 1,500-square foot dwellings that not long ago were selling in the mid-\$100K range are now in the \$300,000 and up; new units in manufactured home subdivisions are at \$200,000.

Even existing homeowners are impacted by rising costs. For example, increased assessed valuations are causing higher property taxes -- which especially affect persons on fixed incomes. And the increases are by no means "moderate;" between 2001 and now, in Sedona, vacant residential lots are estimated to be up by more than half; single-family homes nearly double; condos, townhomes and mobile homes by about two-thirds.

**Creating Housing Opportunity**

A key focus for residential planning in the Verde Valley is workforce housing. Creating more well-paying jobs is a regional economic development objective. Employment growth assists any areas experiencing a housing boom to achieve better balance between the costs of providing public services and revenues with which to pay for them. High shelter costs coupled with relatively low household incomes accentuates the division between "haves" and "have nots" that is especially undesirable to Yavapai County's long-standing friendly, laid back character.

To attract appropriate employment-driven economic development adequate housing must be available at prices commensurate with wage levels. The Affordability Gap, prevalent in the entire Valley is illustrated in this graphic published by Sedona's Housing Commission.



Numerous area residents live in low density rural fringe locations in urban neighborhoods so distant from their workplace or other destinations that they must rely on costly car transportation. Although the Verde Valley average travel time to work (workers 16 and older) of 21.48 minutes is slightly under the U.S. average, 25.5 minutes, commuting distances -- and transportation costs -- are greater. Maintaining a vehicle, fuel and insurance adds a hidden surcharge to workers' housing costs when they are unable to find living accommodations convenient to their employment. Improved housing opportunities consider placing affordable residential development nearer to job centers and/or providing alternative transportation options.

Purchasing a typical new home in Verde Village would require a monthly household income of about \$6,000; in Camp Verde, nearly \$8,000; in Sedona, more than \$10,000 per month. With two wage earners, these prices are still beyond the means of most Valley wage-earner families.

Local initiatives are addressing housing issues, with emphasis on educating the public about the increasing housing cost/household income gap. Camp Verde, like Cottonwood, highlights the problem and articulates specific housing goals through a Housing Element in the Town's adopted General Plan. Residential cost relief measures are being addressed by Sedona's Housing Commission; on-going assessments by Cottonwood Council, Planning Commission and staff; and Camp Verde's new Housing Commission. Citizens, business owners and homebuilders receive information, assistance and opportunities to suggest ideas and participate in housing affordability action programs.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds administered by the State help to finance a number of aid programs for first-time homebuyers, renters and owners of substandard residences. Communities share these resources to assist homeowners with rehabilitation and mobile home replacement. Rural Community Housing Rehabilitation grants are also being used in Camp Verde.

Land trusts, making publicly-owned real estate available for home construction at written down costs, are being considered. The Camp Verde Housing Commission, through home grant partnership with private developers (mortgage revenue bonds, down payment/closing cost assistance through various lenders) plans to produce housing on Town-owned land. Lacking available, affordable land within its corporate limits, Sedona supports a Regional Land Trust concept.

Municipalities' residential land use policies could be revisited to allow greater dwelling unit densities in appropriate locations so as to reduce the land cost component. Smaller lots are not popular in Camp Verde; but three homebuilding ventures are currently active in the Town Center area. Wet utilities limitations in the Town, which stems from not owning the water and wastewater systems, complicate prospects for lots less than one acre in other parts of the community.

Cottonwood expects to be the Valley's major contributor to housing starts in the near term, with enough residential land inventory to double the Town's population in five years. An estimated 4,500 to 5,000 dwelling units have been planned, with an anticipated absorption period of four to five years. The City annexed the undeveloped lots in Verde Santa Fe. Planned high-density (15 or more units per acre), multi-family development is foreseen along Cornville Road.

Employment growth continues in Cottonwood, including more "big box" retail, health care facility expansion, hospitality industry and potential job creation (driven by utility extension along the Willard Street Corridor) at the Airpark development adjacent to the Cottonwood Municipal Airport. To help meet worker housing demand, in addition to large-scale developments, Cottonwood officials seek alternatives to single-family

residential. Home ownership will be encouraged with incentives for constructing smaller homes on smaller lots and, possibly, attached townhomes, allowing for 10-12 units per acre.

Rental opportunities in built-out single family neighborhoods are being discussed by the Town. This approach might invite small apartment infill redevelopment as well as garage apartments, granny flats and a newly-proposed "urban living village" concept for Old Town that would add second story living space above street level commercial uses.

Housing-related recommendations detailed in the Regional Plan Implementation Program are intended to site new residential development in appropriate locations, provide incentives for reduced shelter expense and balance housing with job growth as well as transportation system improvements to alleviate traffic congestions.

Sample housing policies for which actions steps are proposed address:

- Target Sites in unincorporated areas
- Residential Development Density checklists
- Development Code revisions, standardization
- Conservation Expectations (e.g., open space, water use)
- Mixed-Use Jobs : Housing Balance

Most important, there should be a Valley-wide response to the pervasive housing cost problem. Although individual community participation may vary according to local resources and preferences, a comprehensive, multi-faceted commitment to affordable residential value is required.

It is recommended that a regional housing task force should be formed of citizens representing communities, incorporated and unincorporated, as well as rural areas to formulate housing policy that are adaptable to varying conditions in the Verde Valley.

## **VII. LAND MANAGEMENT AGENCIES**

The two major governmental land management agencies with Verde Valley holdings that could be made available for development are the National Forest Service and the Arizona State Land Department. Releases of the lands under their control are determined by distinctively different purposes, policies and procedures. In both instances, the lands were allocated by the United States government.

Although the Forest Service and Land Department each take local land use factors into consideration as part of their stewardship responsibilities, their administrative missions entail broader perspectives. The NFS is empowered to trade land to increase the natural resource value of its holdings as national assets. Monetary value, to assist in funding the public schools and other public institutional purposes State-wide, serves as the Land Department's focus as an agent of Arizona government.

There are fourteen State Trust Land beneficiaries in all:

- Common Schools
- Legislative, Executive, Judicial Buildings
- State Hospital
- Miners' Hospital (2 grants)
- Penitentiaries
- Normal Schools
- Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges
- Military Institutes
- School of Mines
- University Land Code
- University of Arizona
- School for the Deaf and Blind
- State Charitable, Penal and Reformatory

Land disbursements in the Verde Valley by these entities may have significant impact on future development patterns. Depending on the location and extent of the acreage, physical constraints such as steep terrain or flood potential, as well as approved zoning entitlements, making more land available is likely to affect inventories for various use types and intensities. Anticipated demand for residential, commercial, employment, public or institutional construction may be, in part, absorbed by newly-available sites, thereby slowing development timing for some land that is currently in private ownership.

In the case of very large tract disbursements, the Valley's overall growth rate could increase. A large, masterplanned community, for example, might establish market demand of its own.

Verde Valley citizens, and their governmental representatives, would like to participate in the planning process when Forest Service or Trust Land is being evaluated for possible trade, lease or sale transaction. The Regional Plan establishes some basic principles for assessing development potential. Additional criteria are suggested as guides to appropriate land use designation.

### **Arizona State Land Department**

The Arizona State Trust Land includes more than nine million acres spread over most of Arizona except for the State's northeast quadrant where Navajo and Hopi reservations represent the predominant land ownership. The Verde River Watershed contains approximately 326,000 acres of State Trust land. Of this total, about 11,020 acres (17.22

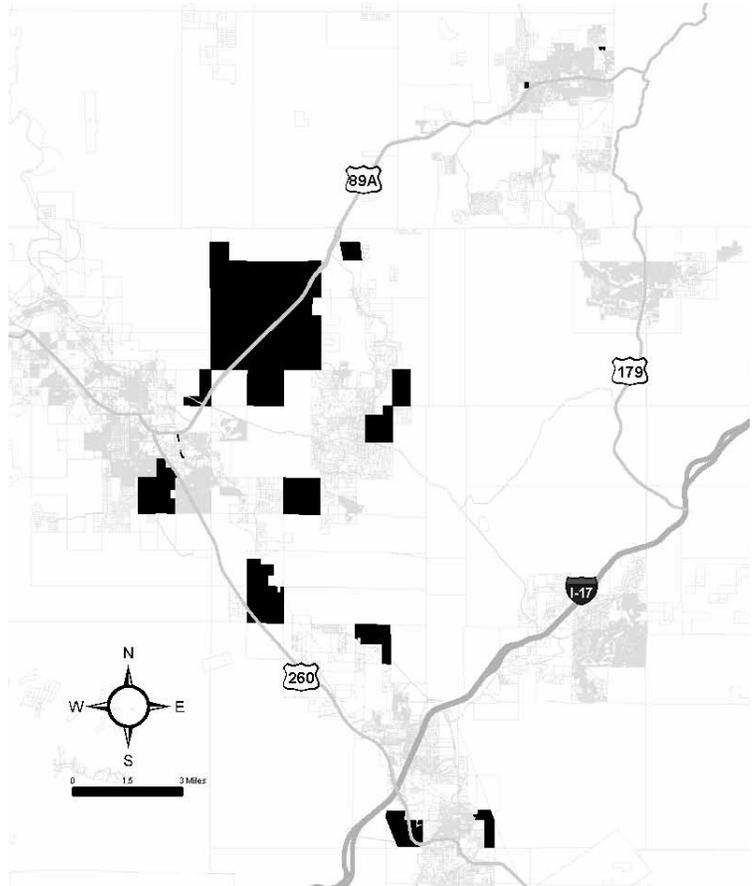
## VERDE VALLEY REGIONAL LAND USE PLAN

square miles) are within the Verde Valley Regional Plan study area. The inset graphic, below, shows their location -- with the notable large tract between Cottonwood and Sedona.

The State Land Department manages this property to produce revenue for Trust beneficiaries. Unlike many other western states that received similar grants by Congressional action, Arizona has retained Trust ownership over a most of its allocated acreage. In the past, most of the annual revenues from State Trust Lands resulted from leases for mining and cattle grazing.

In recent years, the State Land Department began to explore more assertively its opportunities for advantageous Trust Land leases or sales. The Department undertook a conceptual planning program to determine the development potential on selected sites that it administers. Terrain, the potential for flooding, presence of sensitive resources (such as rare plant communities, archaeological sites, threatened or endangered species), mineral potential, powerlines and other criteria are standard suitability criteria.

To date, most of these planning studies considered properties in metropolitan areas, such as in Maricopa and Pima Counties, where development pressures are greatest. Two concept plans, however, focused on State Land in Yavapai County. One considered ASLD holdings in the Tri-Cities area; the other, as portion of the Wickenburg study area.



Before Trust Lands are considered for disbursement, a lengthy and careful process is followed, after which a public auction is generally held. First a specific tract of Trust land is evaluated for concept planning or proposed for acquisition by a prospective user. Then an assessment of development potential and appraisal takes place to consider whether the parcel(s) should be included in the State Land Commissioner's Five-Year Plan for possible disbursement. Finally, if approved, the site is scheduled for auction.

In 2005, the Land Department sold 1,777 acres of urban land at an average price of \$143,048 per acre; 39 acres of rural land averaging \$7,228; for a total sales price exceeding

a quarter of a billion dollars. As of that time, no Verde Valley lands were listed on the Five Year Plan for disbursement; however, concept planning studies may be considered in the future.

There is legislation pending that, if approved, would allow some Trust lands to be devoted to open space or other public purposes; however, the Trust would have to be compensated. By statute, State Trust Lands, as any private lands, are entitled to a dwelling density of not less than one unit per acre, if designated on local plans as open space or growth area. Therefore, even though Yavapai County zoning classifications include larger lot sizes, ASLD-managed property would be exempt.

As elsewhere in the Verde River Watershed, development on State Trust land would be expected to be constrained by the available water supply. Cooperative ASLD planning with local jurisdictions includes recognition of adopted land use plans and the water resources that could be allocated to support ASLD concept plans' suggested development types and intensities.

### **National Forest Service**

The Verde Valley contains portions of two National Forests, the Coconino National Forest and the Prescott National Forest. As illustrated on the Land Use Map (See Appendix), these publicly-held lands represent the majority of the Valley's land area.

Under the General Exchange Act of March 1922, the Federal Land Management Act of 1976 and the Federal Land Exchange Facilitation Act (FLEFA), 43 U.S.C.A. 1701 (1988), there is a uniform process for the Secretary of Agriculture to exchange National Forest land upon determining that the public interest would be served by such a trade. Criteria include: lands that have lost their National Forest characteristics, isolated tracts of land that are difficult to manage, and exchanges that meet the needs of the State and area people with land that aids the local economy, recreation, community expansion and/or which provides food, fiber, minerals, fish and wildlife preservation.

The checkerboard pattern of alternating public and private land sections that is characteristic in Arizona and other western states stands as a principal reason for National Forest Service land exchanges. Generally, the purpose is to consolidate lands for improved public or private management.

Before National Forest land exchanges are completed, environmental analysis and appraisals are expected but not always conducted. Time-consuming, costly environmental reports are sometimes streamlined by "categorical exclusions" for smaller parcels trades. However, this limits public input opportunity. The appraisal is necessary to assure that the exchanges lands are of equal value. Inasmuch as the appraisals are not publicly available until the trade is approved, this, too, restricts citizen comment.

Clearly, the existence of this Verde Valley Regional Land Use Plan would be pertinent to future exchanges in the vicinity. It should be helpful to the National Forest Service, their

researchers and appraisers. Most important, the Plan may serve as a baseline for encouraging public participation.

The East Mingus Land Adjustment Task Force, supported by the Verde Valley Land Preservation Institute, has exemplified effective citizen consultation. The local objective, to emphasize transfers internal to the Valley rather than the region serving as a "land bank," is recognized in "Amendment 12" to the Coconino National Forest Management Plan (See: Open Space Existing Conditions Map, page V-9).

***Yavapai Ranch/Land Exchange***

The Northern Arizona Land Exchange and Verde River Partnership Act, referred to as Yavapai Ranch, was approved by the US. Congress in late 2005. The trade was decades in the making, culminating in Forest Service acquisition of 20,000 acres from the Ruskin Family's Yavapai Ranch, 30 miles north of Prescott. The result is a consolidated 70,000 acre Prescott National Forest block that contains the largest privately-held pine forest in Arizona and pronghorn habitat (grassland) to public use.

Yavapai Ranch owners receive NFS lands near Flagstaff and Williams which will be sold to those municipalities, lands on which five private camps are established (that can now own their sites) and, most significantly from the Regional Plan perspective, 2,200 acres of land in and adjacent to the Town of Camp Verde.

The exchange carries with it a cap on water use resulting from proposed private development. Commercial and industrial uses are anticipated, with some low density housing as well as significant open space area. It is estimated that as many as 15,000 homes might have been built on the lands that are to become part of the Prescott National Forest.

## VIII. REGIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Directions for sustaining the region's quality of living values constitute a summary -- and a strategy -- for augmenting goals in adopted County, municipal and community plans as well as honoring past and present Native American Indian heritage. Statements of principle lead into recommendations (underlined) pertaining to each of the Plan's sections. An Implementation Program arranges suggested action steps into chronological sequence.

Three fundamental, Overview Recommendations represent consensus among citizen participants in the planning process. Their key words summarize the shared commitment to this special place: Character, Respect, Cooperation.

### ***Preserve the Verde Valley's Open Space and Individual Community Character.***

This highest priority quality of living value affects all aspects of the Regional Plan. Chief concerns are that future development will intrude upon and destroy spaciousness. The number one regional objective is preventing sprawl that would cause communities to lose their distinctiveness.

- Recommendations: 1. Seek resources for reserving sensitive lands through purchase or easement;  
2. Create foundation for accepting grants, gifts, bequests to fund land acquisition, historic preservation, housing initiatives and other regional programs.

### ***Respect Adopted General Plans.***

Municipal and community plans have been accepted as "givens." However, future updates should consider, to the extent applicable, regional development guidelines. When considering General Plan Amendments, local officials need data regarding the broader implications of a proposed change. The objective is to maintain consistency with Valley-wide objectives.

- Recommendations: 1. Establish an advisory forum for inter-community resolution of land use conflicts;  
2. Develop and share information on Valley demographics and development plans in process with evaluations of possible regional impacts.

### ***Continue Valley Planning Cooperation.***

Regional planning in the Verde Valley, conceived several years earlier with Resolutions adopted by communities, is gaining momentum. Maintaining communication among staff, citizen organizations, local officials and residents requires regular reporting and scheduling of status reviews. Key subjects, such as economic development and water resources, are addressed in the Plan; however, additional follow-up expansion is warranted.

- Recommendations: 1. Augment regular, monthly community planners' meeting with an Annual Regional Plan Symposium;  
2. Prepare regional response to forthcoming water studies;  
3. Support land use policies for a balanced Valley economy.

## **Land Use**

Development decision-making guidelines assume maintaining an overall low density, using masterplanned clusters of mixed-use to achieve economic feasibility for self-sufficient communities. By addressing identified needs, especially employment and workforce housing, future development responds to the desire for regional land use balance.

### ***Maintain Open Space Separations between Communities.***

The Open Space Existing Conditions Map (Appendix) demonstrates extensive buffering sectors suggested by intercommunity Resolutions. In some instances, these separations may be maintained more readily, as in the case of Forest Service lands. Elsewhere, particularly State Trust Lands and other private holdings, creative solutions for acquisition or masterplanning must be sought.

Sight lines from highways could be observed at access points into development areas that are effectively screened from view by the rolling terrain. Well-designed, highway-related commercial nodes may be acceptable in strategic locations. These clusters would not be intended to detract from existing "downtowns." Rather, they could encourage a mix of convenience shopping and employment to enhance masterplanning new neighborhoods that concentrate development unobtrusively, surrounded by very low density housing, agriculture and open space.

Where existing municipal boundaries are abutting (e.g., Cottonwood/Clarkdale), view corridors with streetscape enhancements can mark transition from one community to the next. Large lot zoning, under County or municipal codes, helps to protect peripheral sectors around communities from becoming a sea of rooftops. Islands of development could occur amid longer stretches of highway corridor, but they should respond, if allowed at all, to Regional Plan principles: Transportation Oriented Development, (as advocated in the Transportation component, p. IV-11) workforce housing, job creation.

Natural washes act as separators along highway frontages. Landowners, encouraged to reserve these corridors as open space, require trade-offs in the form of density transfers to less-obtrusive portions of their holdings. Ample setbacks, affording access to clustered development interior to largely masterplanned tracts, may be accepted to observe buffering expectations.

Recommendation: Designate compatibility bands, two miles or more in width (where possible), to discourage urban scale development between communities.

### ***Encourage Mixed-Use Development.***

As population continues to rise, more sustainable communities require growth management that provides a broader array of jobs, shopping opportunities, housing choice and resident/visitor activities than is currently being produced in the Verde Valley. Land use diversification contributes to character of place that is rarely achieved with tract subdivisions. Actively soliciting combinations of uses within even relatively small planned sites brings efficiencies in transportation and infrastructure access.

Bringing places to live, work and play closer together is not only a positive marketing aspect, mixed-use layouts also lend themselves to higher, more compact land utilization. Built-in density bonuses, for instance, can yield the same amount of construction -- dwelling units, office or shopping space -- and permit more common open space.

Verde Valley jurisdictions, in consultation with landowners and developers, can provide flexible, regulatory tools as incentives for more efficient, marketable land utilization. Providing a variety of interrelated, compatible uses should be the expectation, not the exception.

- Recommendations: 1. Revise County and municipal zoning ordinances to establish innovative development options, including: average lot subdivisions (i.e., varied lot sizes resulting in the allowed dwelling unit yield), transfer of development rights (clustering homes, reserving common open space), home occupation commerce and the like;  
2. Develop a public information program to help citizens become aware of mixed-use development effectiveness.

***Steward Infrastructure Service Capacity.***

Well-managed, balanced development depends not only on land use policy, but, also, on feasibility to extend infrastructure service where projects are planned. In some instances, lacking capacity (e.g., Camp Verde wet utilities) may thwart attempts to encourage mixed-use or variable density construction. New, large-scale development proposals should be evaluated in terms both of ability to provide adequate infrastructure and their impact on existing systems resources.

By preparing a composite view of individual communities' strategic planning for growth accommodation, the Regional Planners' group (comprised of staff and interested citizens) could develop a shared big picture. This information would be highly important from the standpoint of maintaining projected requirements and response information pertaining to water allocation, but, also, for determining traffic generation, need for wastewater facilities expansion, school construction and other demand factors.

Cooperative planning enables better development timing decisions, opportunity to share technology, as well as possibly achieving economies of scale in project construction.

- Recommendation: Prepare an integrated, multi-jurisdictional Verde Valley Five-Year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) indicating commitments, timing and projected funding derived from individual communities' plans.

***Monitor Development Valley-wide.***

The Regional Planners' group acts as a clearinghouse for comparative information on recently-proposed and -completed development by municipality. Unincorporated area activity would be reported by Yavapai County staff. Subject matter includes:

- *Maintain Housing Balance* -- housing activity in terms of residential type, sales/rental price and related information, including available job creation data, by municipality or unincorporated sub-area.
- *Target Well-Paying, Sustainable Employment* -- prospects, as well as approved projects for various job categories or types, with estimated numbers of employees and wage levels, if available.
- *Place Commercial Development Strategically* -- Floor area projections for proposed or in-progress commercial space, noting whether free-standing, planned center and/or mixed-use development.

Recommendations: 1. Share data on dwelling unit starts, job growth projections and commercial Gross Leasable Area permits on a quarterly basis with annual reporting to the Regional Planning Symposium;  
2. Develop a planning presence in regional Economic Forums.

### **Transportation**

Verde Valley interests emphasize alternative transportation. Transit options and improved trail systems received considerable support from citizens.

Roadway upgrades are preferred primarily for safety and reduced congestion rather than increased speeds. Aviation and rail service were also discussed.

#### ***Transit Service.***

Land use planning for Transportation Oriented Development (TOD) constitutes a high priority for the Verde Valley Transportation Planning Organization. Regional Plan principles call for clustered, higher density, mixed land use with emphasis on employment/shopping destinations and park-and-ride facilities.

Yavapai and Coconino Counties, through the Northern Arizona Intergovernmental Public Transportation Authority (NAIPTA), exhibit strong commitment to transit service. Expanding scheduled bus and shuttle services is seen as a necessary counterpoint to roadway investment in the Verde Valley.

Recommendation: Implement Verde Valley connections for the Northern Arizona Intergovernmental Public Transportation Authority and other existing/planned services.

#### ***Roadway Improvements.***

Relief from traffic congestion requires some transition, in terms of highway design, from rural to urban facilities. Improvements to 89A and 260 should allow these to function as urban arterials. With other routes functioning as minor urban arterials: Mingus Avenue, portions of 89A and Old 89A, and 260 south of I-17 in Camp Verde. Some County roads require paving to provide better collector road performance. Although circulation facilities may be constructed to handle greater traffic volumes, sensitivity should be observed for multimodal use, view corridors and, generally, the rural character of Verde Valley surroundings.

Updating the Verde Valley Regional Transportation Plan entails revisiting ADOT and County plans for improving vehicular access. Particular emphasis should be given to safety issues, such as I-17 ramps in the Beaver Creek area; and to reasonable accommodation of projected growth areas without losing the scenic by-way character of Verde Valley roads, such as protecting viewsheds in the foothills of Mingus Mountain and the Black Hills.

- Recommendations: 1. Support Verde Valley Regional Transportation Plan Update conclusions that coincide with Regional Land Use Plan aims for connectivity between communities and protects open space resources;  
2. Include sufficient safety shoulder (five foot minimum) in roadway design to encourage bicycle facility planning.

***Trails Connections.***

Area residents and organizations stress the promotion of a comprehensive trail/pathway system throughout the Verde Valley. A comprehensive, detailed Trails Plan should address transportation options as well as recreational opportunities. Specific destinations ought to be targeted: workplaces, transit hubs, shopping, community institutions/activities; and, on the recreation side: trailheads, campgrounds, scenic venues, nature interpretive areas.

Publicizing commitment to a pathway/trails vision helps to underscore the preference for enhancing outdoor enjoyment that is expressed time and again by Valley residents. Identified corridors support Land Use Plan buffers. Likewise, providing points of accessibility to the Prescott and Coconino National Forest lands as well as other, community-based recreation/leisure time facilities such as greenways along the Verde River and Oak Creek, invites visitors and regional citizens to utilize the Valley's extensive open space assets.

- Recommendations: 1. Complete a Verde Valley Trails and Pathways Plan, emphasizing bicycle linkages as an alternate transportation mode and obtaining recognition for the Valley as a cycling-friendly environment for attracting bicycle enthusiasts as well as serving regional residents;  
2. Designate potential amenity locations (e.g., rest stops, markers) for developer sponsorship. That is, pathway installation and maintenance for public access should become an expectation in evaluating development proposals -- with developers receiving additional consideration (e.g., density bonuses, parking or open space requirement trade-offs) for extending path/trail improvements as off-site system connections.

**Open Space**

The quality of Valley open areas, notwithstanding the high proportion of undeveloped land, is of great concern to Regional Plan participants. They recognize that insensitive use of land in certain locations can have detrimental impact on large expanses of natural terrain. Accordingly, efforts are directed to placing new development so as to benefit from, rather than detract from, surrounding open lands.

An overriding planning objective is to blend the man-made environment with the Verde Valley's existing natural conditions as unobtrusively as possible. Implementation suggestions call for inventorying and maintaining prime open space assets, while respecting private property rights. The VVLPI suggests that efforts focus on two major components: 1) planning/evaluation; and 2) acquisition/management.

***Preserve Special Open Space Assets.***

Riparian areas, wildlife habitat, nature walks, birding venues and scenic vistas of exceptional note ought to be identified for their protection to benefit future generation in the Verde Valley. There is a desire to protect National Parks and Monuments from encroachment. The Regional Plan recognizes the value these assets bring to nearby properties as well as the region as a whole; and, therefore, seeks to prevent negative impacts resulting from population growth.

Viewshed protection in areas as disparate as Mingus Mountain in Jerome and Clarkdale and Interstate 17 access ramps near Camp Verde (e.g., Ruskin property) should be established through design guidelines and, as appropriate, land use regulation.

Recommendation: Establish criteria, ranging from property owner incentives (such as property tax credits in return for scenic easements) to development limitations on sensitive lands (e.g., viewshed ordinance restrictions on building location, bulk and height), for municipal and County adoption.

***Maintain Coordination with State and Federal Agencies.***

National Forest Service and National Parks open space assets should be promoted by Yavapai County and Verde Valley communities. Open dialogue, including discussions of agreements similar to "Amendment 12" of the Coconino National Forest Land and Resources Management Plan for portions of the Prescott National Forest, could be initiated by municipal and County officials with the assistance of the Verde Valley Land Preservation Institute.

Arizona State Parks' initiatives, especially the Verde River Greenway that will make public use possible along 35 miles of River, represent major contributions to Verde Valley open space priorities. State Parks staff provided valuable input to the Regional Plan process and should continue to be included in regular Verde Valley planning meetings.

Recommendation: Develop an Open Space Access Plan with National Forest Service, National Monument and Arizona State Parks personnel for the purpose of designating appropriate locations for trailheads, access connections and user amenities on Verde Valley lands adjacent to public open space facilities.

***Implement Open Space Contributions for Land Use, Transportation.***

Buffering, in the Land Use component, and Comprehensive Trail Planning, in Transportation, represent key Open Space-related recommendations. Land acquisition

and improvements for these purposes will require financial resources in addition to investments made by developers, local governments, and Yavapai County. Frequently, Federal and State programs as well as private foundations, such as the Nature Conservancy or National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, have grants and matching funds available.

Recommendation: Research, document, and apply for financial assistance to obtain land (i.e., ownership, easement) and provide improvements regarding open space reservation in the region.

### **Housing**

Combatting the acceleration in Verde Valley housing prices is a shared problem throughout the region. Home ownership attainability is promoted by creating incentives or assisting housing providers to produce wholesome shelter at purchase or rental prices that are affordable to working families. Persons working in many parts of the Valley, including couples with well-paying jobs, often cannot qualify to buy a home near their employment.

Individual communities are becoming aware of the increasing problem and are acting to assist with solutions. Regional planning encourages more widespread, coordinated responses.

#### ***Recognize Implications of Rising Land Costs on Housing.***

Large lot residential zoning, preferred in many Verde Valley communities and neighborhoods, has the effect of inflating the proportion of housing prices attributable to the cost of land. Increasing residential demand in the Valley drives up land prices. Without ways to distribute expenditures for land over an increased number of dwelling units, these increasing costs are passed along to the home buyer.

In some communities (e.g., Camp Verde), expanded water/wastewater service capacity would allow for “compact housing” developments. Redevelopment programs could allow for second dwelling unit conversions in previously single-family or commercial districts.

Recommendation: Encourage municipalities to consider residential zoning density increases, designation of “workforce housing” overlay districts, guest house or “granny flat,” to increase yield on housing acreage.

#### ***Strive for Infrastructure Economies.***

As with land, infrastructure serving more dwelling units achieves economies of scale that can reduce purchase or rental costs. Larger, clustered residential development typically include infrastructure savings.

Jurisdictions in the region should be open to creative suggestions by homebuilders for reducing infrastructure costs. Innovative examples might include: alternate wastewater treatment solutions (e.g., constructed wetlands), water recycling, reduced paving widths, pathways replacing sidewalks and the like.

Recommendation: Approve demonstration project proposals that purport to reduce residential development costs and shelter prices. Monitor State legislation pertaining to reduced housing costs.

***Target Opportunities for Workforce Housing.***

Sites convenient to work centers, possibly including portions of State Trust Land holdings, can be identified for masterplanning moderately-priced housing with Transportation Oriented Development, clustered employment-shopping mix and other desirable features. Prospective employers coming into the region may be involved in development planning and marketing.

A regional approach has been advocated, as evidenced by considerations of Intergovernmental agreements among Valley municipalities.

Recommendation: Obtain multiple-government sponsorship for land write-down and/or bonding programs that are intended to reduce residential land and dwelling sale/rental prices, assured by development agreements with homebuilders.

**Land Management Agencies**

Two distinctively different, but similarly cooperative, approaches are advocated for working with the National Forest Service and the Arizona State Land Department. Water availability and effect on the existing inventory of developable land are major factors in accommodating land exchange and development proposals, respectively, from these entities.

***Arizona State Land Department***

It must be recognized that Trust Land is identical in status with private land, possessing the same development rights and, by statute, authorized to yield dwelling units on a “one to the acre” basis. Therefore, Verde Valley Regional Land Use Plan principles -- mixed-use, clustering, incentives -- should be coordinated with Arizona State Land Department planners on the same masterplanning basis as with other private development interests.

Trust Land can play a positive role in meeting regional needs for housing, employment and shopping demand. Also, strategically-placed tracts may be acquired for public use.

Recommendation: Include Arizona State Land Department representatives as regular participants in the Regional Planners’ working group and invite the Department to present its vision for Verde Valley Trust Lands at the Annual Regional Plan Symposium.

***National Forest Service***

The Yavapai Ranch Land Exchange, with its water utilization conditions, is now a matter of regional land use coordination, the Town of Camp Verde serving as principal. If future exchanges are considered, they should entail open, public processes referring to the Verde Valley Regional Land Use Plan.

Working cooperatively with the Forest Service, regional planners should create design guidelines for the best possible urban forest interface, both for newly developed private land and existing developments adjoining forest land, with the goal of protecting forest wildland characteristics. The guidelines can help deter and prevent such problems as encroachments, dumping, illegal ATV use, social trailing, soil compacting, erosion, and runoff from private land onto forest land. These guidelines can help developers incorporate appropriate design features into projects, and jurisdiction help staff properly assure projects will protect the interface.

Productive past relationships with the National Forest Service offer a model for continued land resource protection.

- Recommendations: 1. Support common policies and strategic land exchanges, such as proposed parkland acquisition for Windmill Park in Cornville and preserving the Mingus Mountain viewshed, within the general framework of: a) “no net loss” in publicly-held open space land; b) respecting water use limitations, using the USGS water recharge modeling as a guide; and c) providing criteria for urban forest interface.
2. Request Prescott National Forest consideration of a similar “cordon line” protection to that adopted by Coconino National Forest through “Amendment 12.”

## **IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM**

Continued information sharing and joint discussions are necessary to maintain momentum in following through on the directions that have been established for regional cooperation. Educational campaigns may be advisable, also, to explain the rationale for certain Regional Plan principles to the public. Mixed-use and clustered development techniques, for instance, may raise concerns about density -- until Valley residents are made aware of the positive land planning tradeoffs of more cost-effective infrastructure and additional open space reservations.

The following charts present Verde Valley Regional Land Use Plan Recommendations in tabular format to suggest a phasing of implementation actions. The proposed program outlines a progression that may be followed, in step-by-step fashion.

Early actions intend to establish initiation and planning to commence Regional Plan accomplishments. In most instances, progress may be achieved through consideration by existing, organized groups, such as County or municipal bodies or the Regional Planners' Working Group. Some new mechanisms are proposed. These include an Annual Regional Plan Symposium, an advisory forum for conflict resolution (which might be appointed by County Supervisors and municipalities' Mayor/Council), as well as a regional Housing Task Force representing participating communities' perspectives.

There should be ample opportunity for citizen participation in all Regional Plan implementation aspects. Continuing the "open invitation" practice of public attendance at Regional Planners' sessions would seem to be appropriate (given the excellent input obtained for the Regional Plan process) for communities to continue to compare notes.

The Implementation charts cover Short-Term (2006-08), Mid-Term (2009-13) and Long-Term (2014+) activities. It is likely that these general scheduling guidelines would be updated on a yearly basis -- accelerating activities that are moving along rapidly; deferring others as a result of changed conditions or resources. During the Long-Term phase, it is likely that a comprehensive Regional Plan update would be in order -- perhaps adding components to those addressed in this initial interaction.

The actions listings ought to be viewed as a "menu" that provides possible options for regional cooperation. Not every initiative would be undertaken at once, but the choices are laid out for setting priorities, dealing with issues of shared concern.

Deciding which projects come first will be determined by need, community interest and resources. With the Regional Planners' Group as a clearinghouse, jurisdictional leadership should weigh-in with their preferences, together with those of citizen organizations.

It has been suggested that Regional Plan oversight would, ideally, be the County's responsibility, possibly through a hired Regional Coordinator staff person. In the alternative, Plan administration would be managed by a legislative consortium with municipalities providing rotating staff members. Another approach, assisting the County

but representing an independent, joint community-supported coalition is advocated as an alternative.

Assessments pertaining to projected staff or volunteer time commitments, as well as any funding requirements would aid in determining whether -- and to what extent -- a given program can be undertaken. The Verde Valley Regional Land Use Plan's scope of activities for any given year would be approved by general consensus -- with the understanding that additional resources provided by a "sponsoring" agency, jurisdiction or group might allow for expediting or enriching a particular program component.

Actions are grouped according to, first, Regional Plan basic principles ("Commitment") and, then, for all major Plan sections (Land Use, Transportation, Open Space, Housing and Land Management Agencies). Each activity is derived from Plan Recommendations. Following the noted Recommendation, further explanatory notes are listed: a brief Description, proposed Action and suggested Responsibility (the groups or entities that might take charge of the proposed activity).

Reporting continuation, evaluation and updating activities characterize the Mid-Term and Long-Term program segments. It is anticipated that, as a general rule, the Regional Planners' group would keep track of the overall program progress. Every effort should be made to assure on-going involvement by representatives (citizens or staff) from all communities on the full range of implementing responses to Regional Plan recommendations. County web page reminders, e-mail announcements and, especially, recognition at the Annual Regional Plan Symposium would serve to alert communities, interested individuals and groups to current issues requiring local input.

### Short Term Implementation Actions (2006-08)

	<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>
<b>COMMITMENT</b>	VALLEY PLANNING COOPERATION	Conflict Resolution Forum	establish intercommunity advisory forum	County, Regional Planners
	PRESERVE OPEN SPACE & CHARACTER	Seek Funding Sources	apply for grants, solicit developer contributions; create foundation for accepting gifts, bequests	County, Regional Planners, municipalities
	RESPECT ADOPTED PLANS	Annual Regional Plan Symposium	progress, growth reporting, water study response; economic forums	Regional Planners, County
<b>LAND USE</b>	OPEN SPACE SEPARATIONS	Buffer Zone Mapping	General Plan Amendments, exceptions	County, municipalities, land owners
	MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT	Planned Development Flexibility	adopt incentives for including employment, varied housing, commerce, open space	County, municipalities
	INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICE CAPACITY	Verde Valley CIP: evaluate developments' impacts on systems	prepare composite investment schedule	Regional Planners
	MONITOR VALLEY DEVELOPMENT	Data Base Maintenance	inventory construction, jobs, retail	Regional Planners
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	TRANSIT SERVICE	NAIPTA Planning	participate in Authority, expand existing services	County, VVTPO, municipalities
	ROAD IMPROVEMENTS	VV Regional Transportation Plan with Bicycle Access	promote multi-purpose corridors	VVTPO, consultants, County, citizens
	TRAIL CONNECTIONS	VV Trails and Pathways Plan	adopt major connections, plan enhancements	VVTPO, VVLPI, County, municipalities, developers, citizens
<b>OPEN SPACE</b>	ORGANIZE OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION	Preparatory actions, initiating	identify groups, affiliations, funding sources	VVLPI, County, municipalities
	AGENCY COORDINATION	Open Space Access Plan	consult NFS, State Parks for connections, facilities	Agencies, Regional Planners
	OPEN LAND ACQUISITION	Tract Reservation Targets	delineate, assign priorities to possible acquisition	Agencies, VVLPI, Regional Planners
<b>HOUSING</b>	REDUCE RESIDENTIAL LAND COSTS	Residential Yield Incentives	form Regional Housing Task Force, develop incentives	Task Force, County
	INFRASTRUCTURE ECONOMIES	Demonstration Project Proposals	propose standards for County, municipal approval	Task Force, Regional Planners
	WORKFORCE HOUSING	Regional Housing Task Force	bonding, land banking, target sites	County, municipalities
<b>LAND MANAGEMENT AGENCIES</b>	STATE TRUST	Concept Plan Cooperation	ASLD as Regional Planners participant, Symposium presenter	ASLD, Regional Planners
	FOREST SERVICE	Land Exchange Criteria	define "no net loss," water caps; Amendment 12	NFS, Regional Planners

**VERDE VALLEY REGIONAL LAND USE PLAN**

**Mid-Term Implementation Actions (2009-13)**

	<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>
<b>REGIONAL COMMITMENTS</b>	VALLEY PLANNING COOPERATION	Evaluate Coordination Effectiveness	prepare Regional Plan Progress Report	Regional Planners, citizens
<b>LAND USE</b>	MONITOR VALLEY DEVELOPMENT	Continue: Symposium; Conflict Resolution; Data Base	evaluate proceedings/ records for Progress Report	Regional Planners
	RESOURCE ALLOCATION	Funding for Infrastructure, Land Acquisition	prioritize investment resources	County, municipalities
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	NAIPTA EXPANSION	Continue Support	implement Verde Valley facilities	County, municipalities
	TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS	Trails Plan Improvements	add facilities, amenities	County, municipalities, developers, citizens
<b>OPEN SPACE</b>	PRESERVE OPEN SPACE ASSETS	Sensitive Lands/ Viewshed Designation	inventory habitat, cultural/ natural resources, major drainage courses; prioritize view corridors: establish program	Regional Planners, VVLPI, municipalities
	AGENCY COORDINATION	“Amendment 12” Expansion	consult with Prescott, Coconino NF officials	VVLPI, Federal, State, County, municipalities
	OPEN LAND ACQUISITION	Acquire Reserved Tracts	negotiate targeted acquisitions based on resources	County, municipalities, VVLPI, or Foundation
<b>HOUSING</b>	SUCCESS MONITORING	Assess Incentive Program	report cost control effectiveness	Task Force, Regional Planners
	WORKFORCE HOUSING	Initiate Demonstration(s), Assistance Programs	dwelling unit production programs	Task Force, County, municipalities
<b>LAND MANAGEMENT AGENCIES</b>	ASLD CONCEPTS	Support Compatible Development	propose strategic sales, leases	ASLD, County
	NFS EXCHANGE	Criteria for Pending Exchanges	apply water, acreage, preservation guidelines	NFS, County, municipalities

**Long-Term Implementation Actions (2014+)**

	<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>
<b>REGIONAL COMMITMENTS</b>	GROWTH PROFILE	Verde Valley Growth Report	record population increases, land use absorption and related data by subsector and Valley-wide	County, municipalities, Regional Planners
<b>LAND USE</b>	HOUSING/JOBS BALANCE	Jobs to Housing Ratio	calculate effects of population/ employment change based on Growth Report	Regional Planners, developers
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	ALTERNATE TRANSPORTATION	Transit/Trails Recommendations	suggest systems improvements	NAIPTA, County, municipalities
<b>OPEN SPACE</b>	PRESERVATION EFFECTIVENESS	Open Space Reservation/ Management	measure increments: acquisition, easement, masterplan open space (e.g., parks, drainage areas)	VVLPI, Regional Planners
<b>HOUSING</b>	PROGRAM EXPANSION	Purchase/Rental Assistance	utilize land bank, renew bond/finance programs	Task Force, homebuilders, financial institutions
<b>LAND MANAGEMENT AGENCIES</b>	LONG-RANGE PLANNING	Agency Management Plans	review NFS, ASLD land utilization	Regional Planners, citizens

# **Appendices**

## **APPENDICES**

Two generalized Verde Valley graphics illustrate spatial relationships pertaining to: 1) adopted County, municipal and unincorporated community land use plans; and 2) jurisdictional and land management agency areas of responsibility.

### **1. COMPOSITE LAND USE**

The Verde Valley Regional Land Use Plan incorporates by reference each community's self-determined plan as well as the Yavapai County General Plan, adopted in 2003. The Composite Land Use graphic (see: p. II-13) adapts local plan designations into broad, standardized land use categories.

These generalized land use patterns are not intended to constitute a zoning map. Preferred locations for commercial, industrial, public and residential development are shown in the context of the surrounding State Parks, National Forests and National Monuments. Arizona State Trust Lands, which may be sold or leased for development, are indicated. For comparative purposes, the following table lists jurisdictional categories that have been combined to depict residential densities for Rural, Low/Medium Residential and Medium/High Residential.

<b>JURISDICTION</b>	Rural Residential (0-1)	Low/Medium Residential (1-5)	Medium/High Residential (5+)
Yavapai County	R1-2A to R1-36A		R1L-7.5 (5.8 du max)
Camp Verde	RCU, R1-70	R1-35 to R1-10	R1L-7.5 to R1-5 (8.7 du max)
Clarkdale	RS3 to R1L	R1	R1A-R-4 (14.5 du max)
Cottonwood	----	--	R1 (5.8 du to R4 (14.5 du max)
Sedona	RS5A-RS70	RS-35 to RS-10B	RS-6 to RMH (12 max)
Jerome	Agricultural	R1-10 and AR	R1-5 (8.7 du max)

**(Ranges, in units/acre subject to change following review by jurisdictions. Zoning districts noted for information only.)**

The individual jurisdiction's more detailed land use and zoning maps must be consulted to determine the type and intensity of development permitted on specific properties.

### **2. JURISDICTIONS/MANAGEMENT**

The Verde Valley Land Preservation Institute, with City of Sedona assistance, provided a graphic reference, reproduced in this Regional Land Use Plan (see p. V-9), that denotes areas of land management responsibility. Also indicated are suggested open space separations, incentive and option tracts, the Amendment 12 (Coconino National Forest) boundary and related VVLPI notations.