Sedona Community Plan

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Overview

WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY PLAN?

Sedona's Community Plan is the City's "general plan" required by the State of Arizona (**A.R.S. §9-461.05**). It is intended to convey the community's shared vision, values, and priorities to all residents, property owners, businesses, developers, and City staff. It is a decision-making guide for City Council and the Planning and Zoning Commission, and serves as a tool for the evaluation and design of future projects and programs, whether proposed by the City or private developers.

The Community Plan is not regulatory, and does not include the following:
- It is not a City capital improvements plan or maintenance and operations plan.
- It is not a City budget or commitment for expenditures of public funds.
- It is not a city code, land development code, zoning, or ordinance.

However, these are all expected to align with the Plan, and are key implementation tools for bringing the community's vision and goals to reality.

Sedona Community Plan
(city-wide vision, goals)

Community Focus Area (CFA) Plan
(area specific strategies)

Land Development Code
(regulations, standards)

development proposals, city projects

HOW WAS THE PLAN DEVELOPED?

General plans must be updated every ten years and the previous plan was completed in 2013. Although updated every ten years, there is no end date but a recognition of changing circumstances. This Plan is built on the **2013 Plan**, and is based on input from residents, stakeholders, partner agencies and organizations, and City staff. The input was gathered during a two-year community engagement process that had two primary goals: listening and learning. City staff listened to resident's concerns, answered questions, and relayed the Plan's purpose, authority, and scope. The outcome of this process is a plan that is intended to reflect the community's values, and address the priority issues and priorities over the next ten years.

COMPONENTS OF THE PLAN
Vision, Values, and Guiding Principles
The vision statement describes how the community sees itself in the future. The core values represent our shared ideals, and guiding principles represent our expectations. These are all intended to guide decisions, ultimately leading towards a future that is representative of the community's values and principles.

Goals
Goal statements are the desired outcomes that lead towards realizing the community vision. Goals are on the first page of each chapter.

Policies
Policies are intended to guide future decision making in order to accomplish the Plan's vision and goals. Following each policy, most chapters include a brief explanation or example.

▶ **Policy 1.1** Each policy is labeled "chapter number . Policy number"

Actions
Action items are specific tasks to be accomplished. They may address multiple policies, and can include projects, programs, or plans. Actions are listed at the end of each chapter.

Future Land Use Map
Located in the **Land Use chapter,** the Future Land Use Map designates preferred future land uses for properties. It is an important tool in implementing the Plan and guiding future development and redevelopment.

Tips for Using the Plan
Data and other information is from 2023 unless otherwise stated.

"City" vs "city"
In this document, "City" refers to the City of Sedona governmental agency. A lower-case "city" is referring to the geographical area or general community.

ⓘ   Link to information in the Plan

🌐   Link to an external website

Is the listing in priority order?
The order of items in a list does not necessarily indicate priority.

What is Planning?
"The goal of planning is to maximize the health, safety, and economic well-being of residents in ways that reflect the unique needs, desires, and culture of those who live and work within the community".

"Planners take a broad viewpoint and look at how the pieces of a community — buildings, roads, and parks — fit together like pieces of a puzzle... imagine what can and should happen to a community: how it should grow and change, and what it should offer residents 10, 15, or even 20 years into the future".
🌐   **American Planning Association**

Community Profile

The City of Sedona's 2022 year-round population was 9,844, whereas there is an estimated 3 million visitors annually*. Sedona's population has been declining since 2000. On the other hand, the surrounding Verde Valley region saw an 18.5% population growth during the same period.

* Population: City of Sedona estimate based on the 2020 U.S. Census
Visitation estimate: City of Sedona Tourism Program

SEDONA POPULATION GROWTH
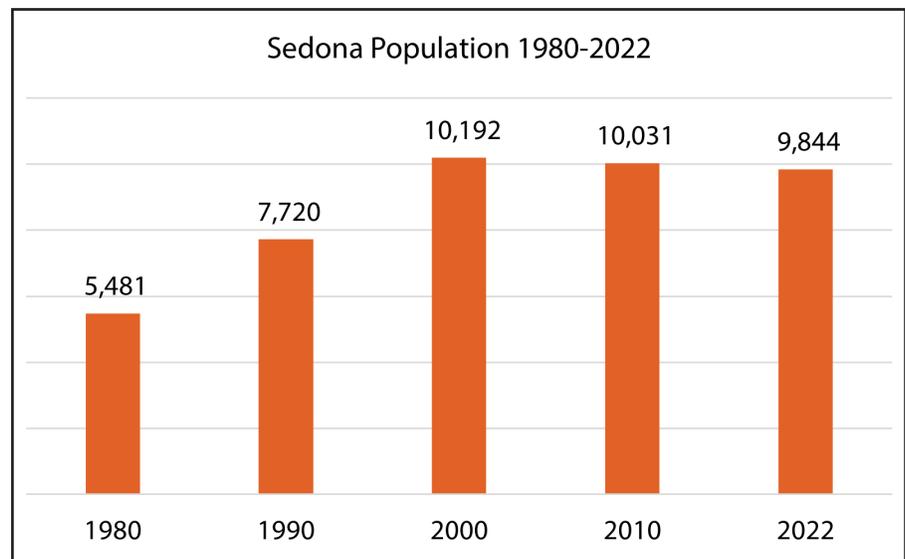
Figure 1.1
Sedona population growth from 1980-2022. Source: U.S. Census Bureau

POPULATION GROWTH IN THE VERDE VALLEY
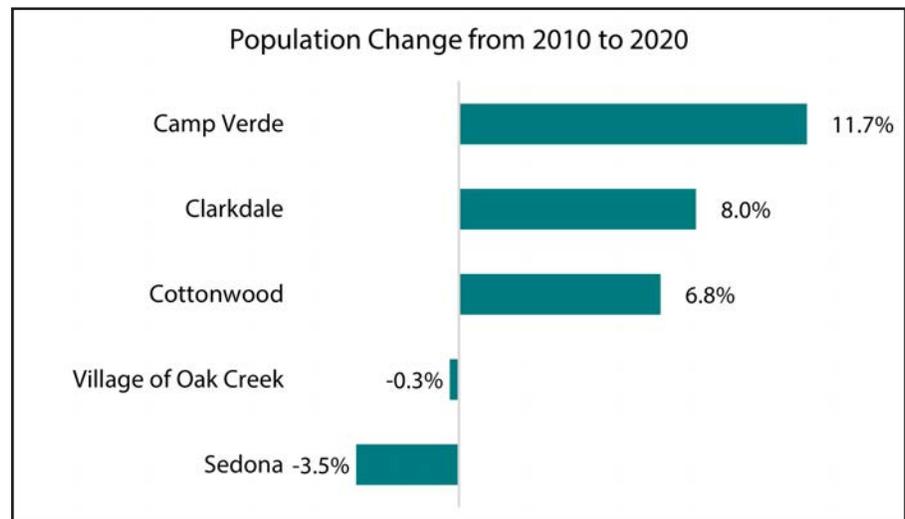
Figure 1.2
Verde Valley regional growth from 2010-2020. Source: U.S. Census Bureau

SEDONA'S YEAR-ROUND RESIDENTS

Sedona's year-round residential occupancy declined since 2000, from 86.7% to 74.9% in 2020. That is 4,997 out of 6,671 total housing units in 2020.

Year-Round Housing Occupancy

Year	Occupancy
1990	82.0%
2000	86.7%
2010	78.1%
2020	74.9%
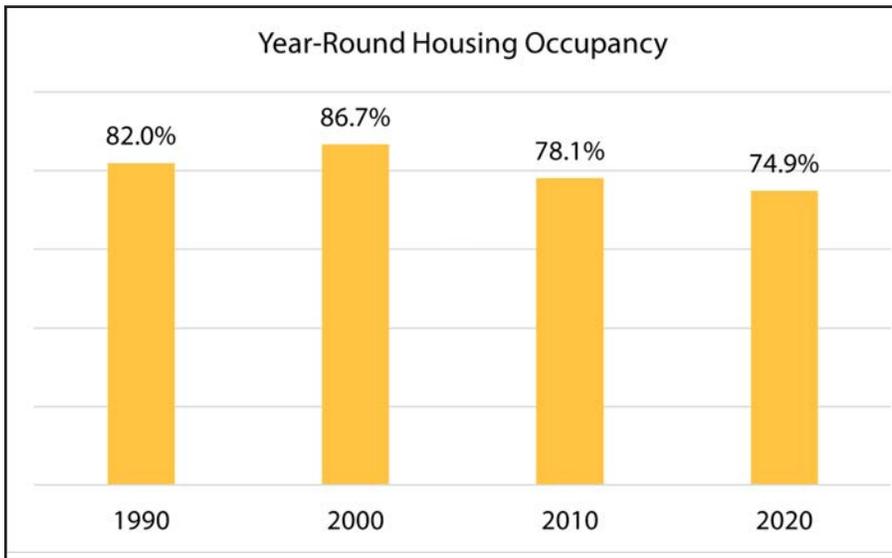
Figure 1.3
Year-round occupancy from 1990-2020.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

AGE OF SEDONA AND ARIZONA RESIDENTS

The median age of Sedona residents has been steadily increasing since 2000, reaching 58.5 in 2020, while Arizona's median age in 2020 was 38.6.

Median Age: Sedona and Arizona

	1990 Sedona	2000 Sedona	2010 Sedona	2020 Sedona	2020 Arizona
Median Age	52.6	50.5	56.1	58.5	38.60
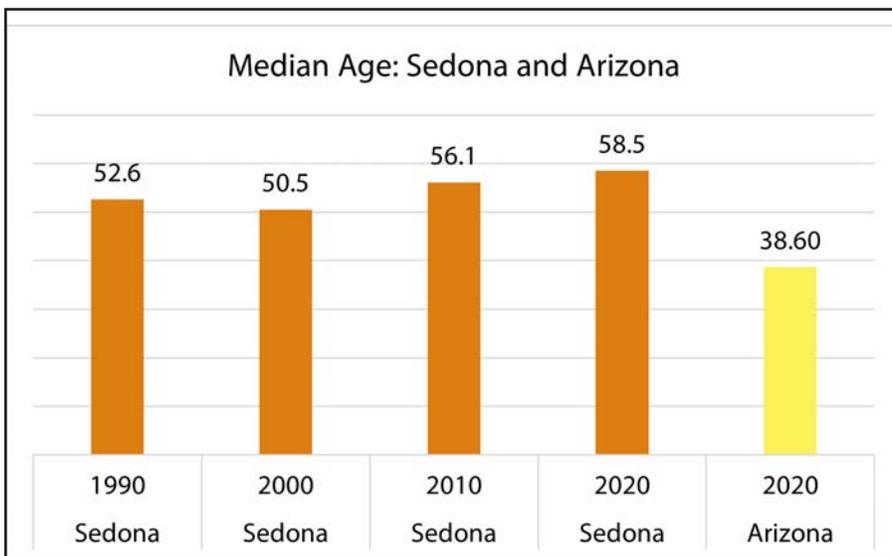
Figure 1.4
Median Age of Sedona Residents 1990-2020. Source: U.S. Census Bureau

LAND DEVELOPMENT

Despite the concerns voiced by many residents about growth, development has been relatively modest.
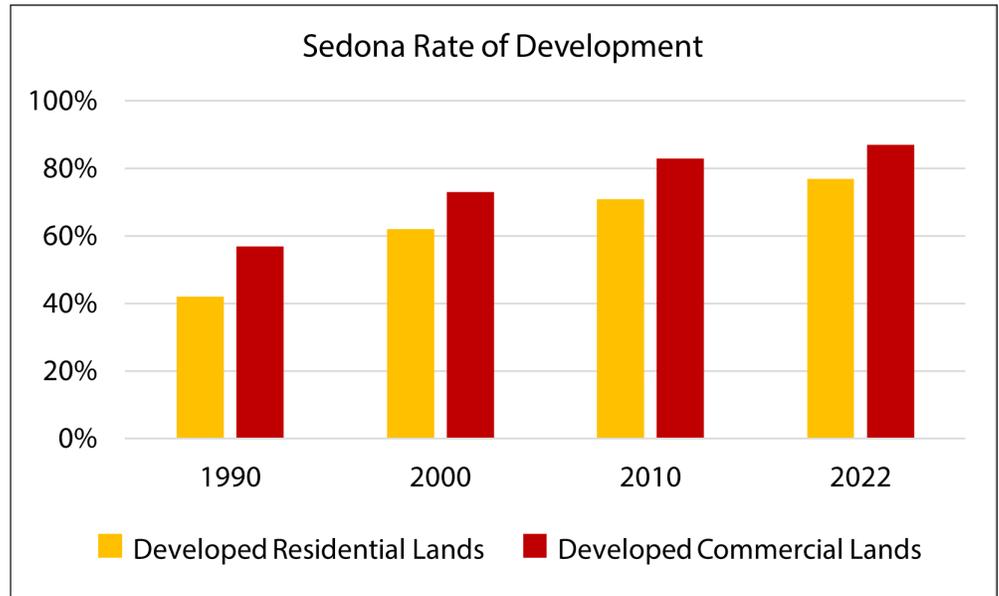
Figure 1.5. Rate of development acreage in Sedona from 1990-2022. Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Sedona Rate of Development

Developed Residential Lands ■ Developed Commercial Lands

VACANT AND DEVELOPED LAND IN SEDONA

There is a significant limit to Sedona's growth - the amount of land and public land boundaries. The city was 82% built-out in 2022. Many of the vacant lots on the map below are undeveloped for a reason, as many have challenges and high costs associated with building (steep cliffs, floodplains, difficult to access, etc.).
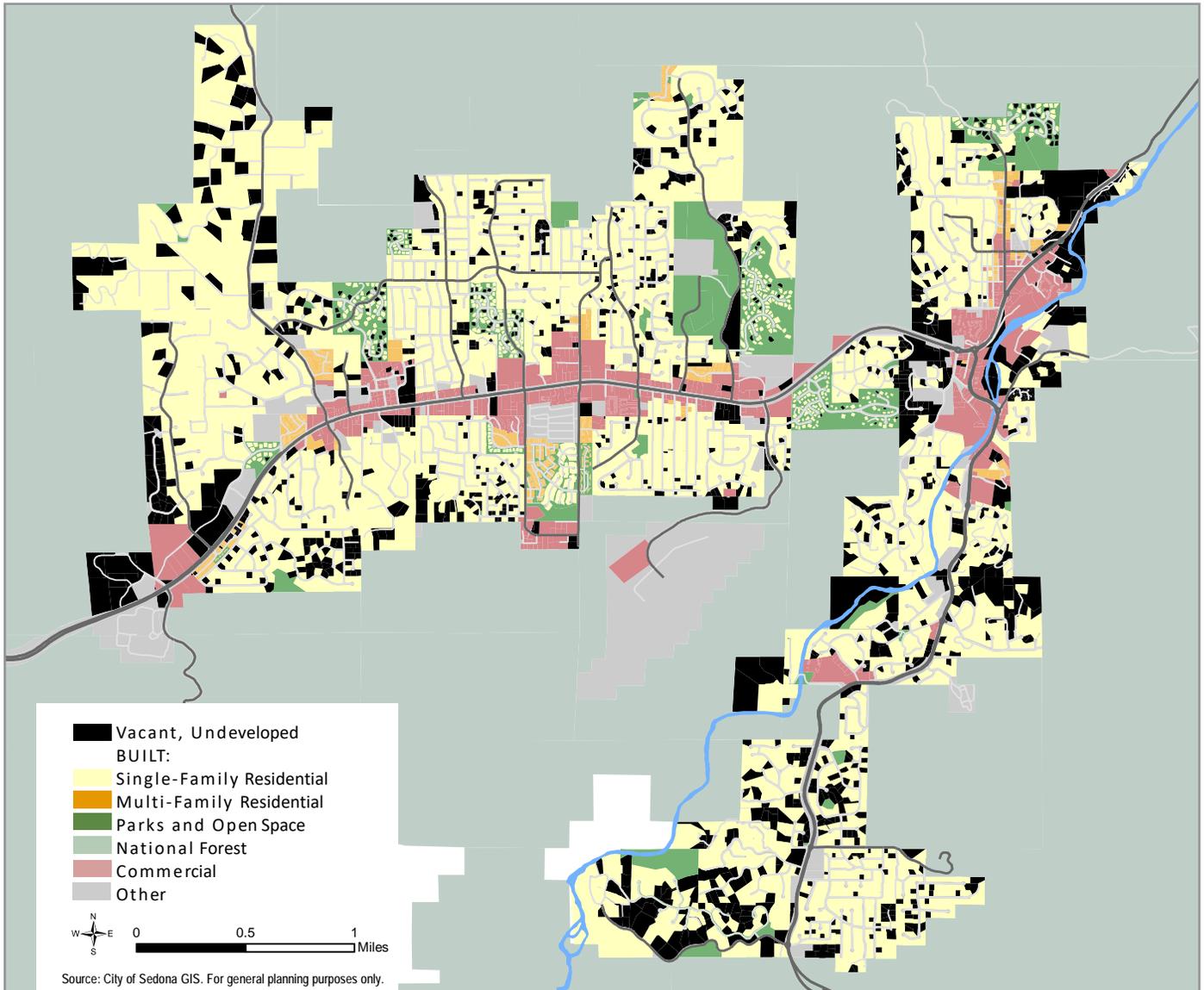
Figure 1.6. Vacant Land in the City of Sedona
Source: City of Sedona GIS

Key Issues

This is a summary of the key issues of concern raised by the community during the Plan's public outreach in 2022 and 2023. At the beginning of each element of the Plan is a list of key issues relevant to that chapter. The following is an overview of what the public considered key issues for the next 10 years. Most of these are cross-cutting topics that are intertwined, and influence many aspects of the community.

One major influence that must be recognized is the COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020. It influenced the economy, tourism industry, housing, and a sense of community. Sedona became a magnet for people seeking outdoor recreation during the pandemic. There was an increase in campers and RVs, short-term vacation rentals, crowded trailheads, and impacts on the environment. There was also an influx of people moving to Sedona, either permanently or temporary, enabled by opportunities for telecommuting and remote work.

KEY ISSUE - TRAFFIC

Traffic as a key issue of concern to Sedona residents has been a constant since incorporation. It was a high priority in the 2013 Community Plan which has resulted in numerous projects from several plans: **Transportation Master Plan**, **Transit Implementation Plan**, **GO! Sedona Pathways Plan**. The City's capital improvement plan for transportation projects is known as Sedona in Motion.

KEY ISSUE - HOUSING

Similar to traffic, housing has been an issue for years. It has become a more critical issue as the amount of buildable land in Sedona decreases, the cost of land increases, and the cost of building continues to go up. Other Verde Valley cities like Cottonwood, Clarkdale, and Camp Verde are experiencing many of the same issues, so commuting into Sedona is not necessarily the answer for people working in Sedona. Sedona has always been a community of single-family homes with very few apartments, condos, or townhomes. Starting out with such a deficit of these types of housing makes it far more challenging to provide the housing needed now and in the future.

KEY ISSUE - TOURISM

Traditionally, physical visitor centers have been the go-to place for tourists to get information about where to go and what to see. Today most people turn to social media, such as Instagram, to find out where to go, the "must-see" selfie spots, top ten sites and scenic hotspots. This is essentially unintentional and unmanaged marketing and advertising; it may not include helpful or educational information (parking availability, responsible recreation practices).

Unfortunately, these scenic hotspots cannot handle the influx of traffic, parking, waste, litter, and foot/bike traffic. Adding to the impacts, quite a few sites in Sedona are sensitive areas (including cultural resources like petroglyphs) that do not have designated trails, signs, and, in some cases, parking. As such, social media's influence may lead to environmental damage, graffiti, litter, and an increase in search and rescue for lost or injured hikers.

ℹ️ **Environment & Sustainability chapter**

🌐 **Sedona Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Report, 2019 by City of Sedona**

KEY ISSUE - RECREATION MANAGEMENT

Outdoor recreation is the number one activity for visitors to Sedona, and can include short walks for the scenic views, longer hikes, mountain biking, off-highway vehicles (OHVs) or horseback riding. It is also one reason many people live in Sedona, for the proximity to the stunning landscape and world-class trail system.

The experience for both residents and visitors has been affected by the increasing number of people on the trails and at scenic viewpoints. The volume of people and cars is also overwhelming trailheads and parking areas, especially during peak days and busy seasons. Unfortunately, the natural environment is being adversely affected by Sedona's popularity. It may be unintentional when there are too many visitors for the space, whether it is a trail, scenic spot, or trailhead. The impacts can also be attributed to a lack of awareness or knowledge of outdoor ethics. Then there are the impacts resulting from those that have a lack of respect for other people, plants, and animals. Efforts are underway to better address these issues, however far more can be done to mitigate further impacts to the natural environment, neighborhoods, and other trail users.

Off-Highway Vehicles (OHVs)

Off-highway vehicles (OHVs) is a key issue for many residents, as OHV rental businesses have grown and the popularity of individually owned OHVs has been rising. Resident concerns with OHVs includes the noise and traffic as they pass through neighborhoods to access the National Forest. Once on the Forest, driving off roads and over previously undisturbed areas, as well as dust, noise and traffic are of grave concern to everyone. The greatest challenge to managing OHVs is that in Arizona and on the National Forest, it is legal to drive them on streets and Forest roads. Establishing more restrictive regulations will need to happen at the state and federal level. Meanwhile, collaborative stakeholder working groups are working towards improved management to mitigate the impact of OHVs on City streets and the National Forest.

What are Outdoor Ethics?

"Outdoor ethics is based on the idea that we are all stewards of the environment and should provide careful and responsible management of our great outdoors so that this generation and those to come can enjoy it".
- **"Outdoor Safety & Ethics," USDA Forest Service**

Recreate Responsibly

"In May of 2020, just a few months into the COVID-19 pandemic and weeks after most of the United States and world were under "shelter-in-place" mandates, people were craving outdoor experiences. Many public lands and natural spaces' facilities were closed, but remained accessible and people were heading outside during an unprecedented and unpredictable time. Representatives...convened outdoor industry, conservation, and land management experts to address concerns and opportunities that accompanied increased visitation to natural spaces and the Recreate Responsibly Coalition and Campaign was born".
        - **Recreate Responsibly Coalition, #RecreateResponsibly**

KEY ISSUE - SHORT-TERM RENTALS (STR)

The short-term rental of single-family houses became legal in Sedona in 2017 after the State of Arizona passed a law prohibiting cities from banning STRs (**A.R.S. §9-500.39**, often referred to as Senate Bill 1350). Prior to this (1995-2016), the City of Sedona did not allow rentals of single-family homes for less than 30 days. By 2023 there were 1,140 identified STRs in the city, which makes up 16.8% of Sedona's housing.

Arizona state law preempts local control, so the City cannot simply prohibit STRs as it has done in the past. However, there are specific actions the City can legally take:

- Protect the public's health and safety
- Adopt and enforce nuisance ordinances
- Require the owner to provide an emergency contact
- Limit/prohibit STR use for sex offenders or adult-oriented businesses
- Prohibit STRs from having events that would require a permit at a typical single-family residential property including weddings, receptions, parties, retreats, workshops, and large religious gatherings

The fact that 16.8% of Sedona's housing stock is now STR (as of October 2023) has resulted in a variety of community issues, including the following:

Real Estate Impacts
- Less long-term rental properties for residents
- Residents moving outside of Sedona
- Removal of existing long-term rental residents to make way for STRs
- Increased cost of housing
- Investors out-competing "home" buyers
- Houses and guest houses being built with the intention of being short-term rentals (example: houses with 5 rooms/5 bathrooms)

Neighborhood Impacts
- Loss of a sense of community
- Loss of neighborhood feel

Advantages
- Homeowners have an opportunity to make money
- Increased property values
- Economic ripple effect - jobs for property managers, home cleaning services, home renovation and repair services

City Short-Term Rental Program

In 2022 cities were given the ability to require permits and regulate STR with limits. In 2023 there were 1,094 permitted STR with 95% compliance.

- New staff position "Short-term Rental Specialist"
- STR 24/7 Hotline
- STR Online Incident Report Form
- Rent Local Program: City pays STR owners within City limits to rent to a local worker for at least one year
- Deed Restriction Program: Homeowner may place a voluntary deed restriction on their property preventing its use as a STR
- Legislative Changes: Active in proposing bills to the legislature to return some local control to municipalities
- Publish and maintain a list of all permitted STRs with their emergency contact information on the City website
- Apply enforcement action to all STRs with code violations to ensure issues are addressed
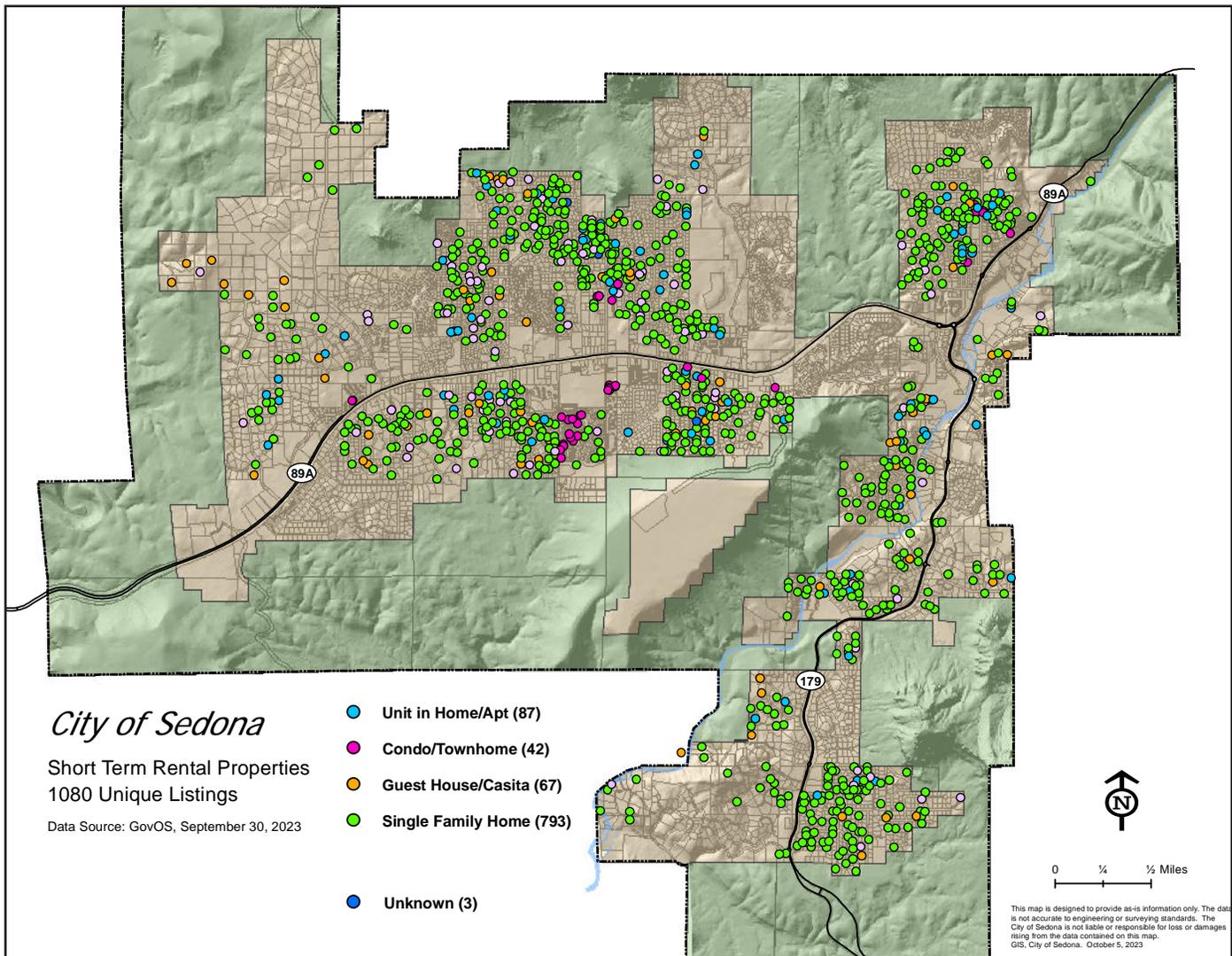
Figure 1.7. Map of Short Term Rental Properties, Source: City of Sedona and GOVOS 9/30/23

Requirements of the City's STR Permit Program

$200 annual permit

Emergency contact who can respond to complaints quickly

Written notice to neighbors and post notice on the property

Property/liability insurance

Background checks on all guests booking (done by STR operator)

What can be used as a STR?

- Single-family houses
- 1 to 4 unit houses (duplexes, etc.)
- Apartments with less than 5 units
- Condominiums, townhouses
- Individual rooms within any of above
- Guest houses, casitas, mother-in-law quarters

What cannot be used as a STR?

- Structures not approved as a dwelling unit (garage, shed, etc.)
- Unsafe structures that do not meet Building Codes
- Apartments with 5 or more units
- Recreational Vehicles (RV's)
- Temporary structures (tents, yurts)

KEY ISSUE - REGIONAL PLANNING

Although Sedona's year-round population has been in decline, the surrounding Verde Valley region has experienced significant growth. In the late 1990s and early 2000's, jurisdictions in the Verde Valley realized that the region's growth issues are shared by all and cannot be addressed if each community operates in a vacuum. There are a variety of shared regional issues such as housing, healthcare, and economic development that call for a long-term partnership approach.
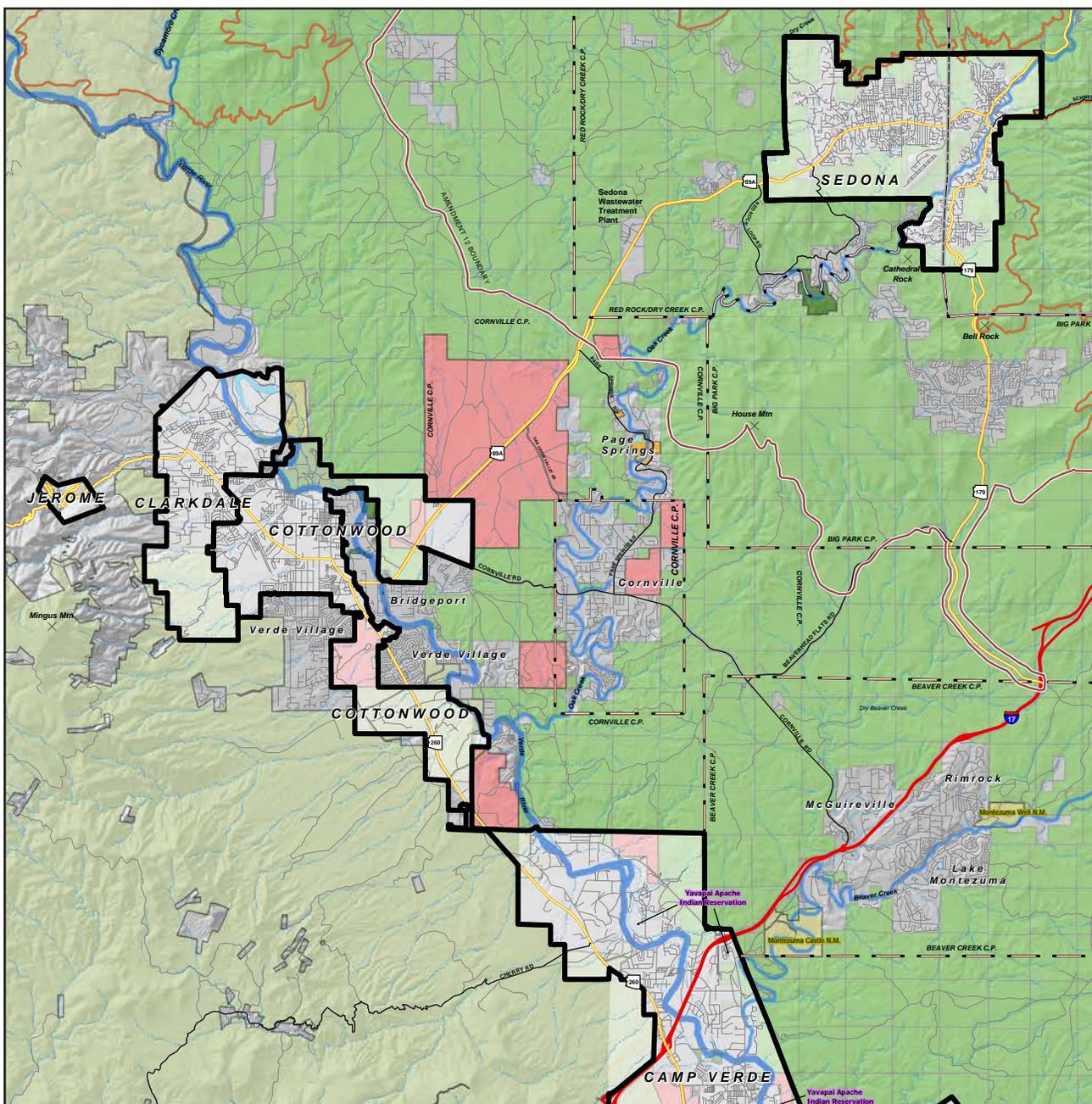
2. Vision

- Overview

- Core Values

- Guiding Principles:

    - Protect and honor our environment and heritage

    - Strengthen community livability and connections

    - Support regional economic diversity, local businesses, and responsible tourism

Vision Statement for 2033

Sedona is a diverse, livable, and vibrant community that nurtures connections between people and place, celebrates the arts, encourages healthy and active lifestyles, and places priority on the protection of the environment.

Overview

CORE VALUES

Core values are the community's shared ideals that inform our guiding principles, thus influencing all aspects of the Plan's recommendations. These core values are taken from all of the public input in 2022 and 2023, and align with previous Community Plan values.

Many things go into making a community, and together they all must be balanced. To help create that balance, our vision, core values, and guiding principles should be applied to all of our actions as we move forward into the future.

Sedona's Core Values:
- Environmental Protection
- Livable & Vibrant Community

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Our community's Guiding Principles are born from our Core Values; they are intended to set the standard for our community interactions with each other, our surroundings and with those who are guests of our community.

These guiding principles are intended to provide direction in all aspects of the Community Plan – goals, policies, and action items. They should also apply to the design of any city capital improvement projects as well as private development projects.

The Plan's recommendations will reflect and strengthen these core values, leading us toward our shared vision of Sedona. Each of the guiding principles are described on the following pages, featuring quotes received from the public during our community outreach efforts.

Sedona's Guiding Principles:
- Protect and honor our environment and heritage
- Strengthen community livability and connections
- Support regional economic diversity, local businesses, and responsible tourism

"As a lifelong resident of Sedona who is married to a lifelong resident and now raising two children (all of our parents still live here as well), I want to see Sedona retain the feel of community that has kept our family here for nearly 40 years. We want to see the families who move here stay because Sedona is so great instead of moving away after a few years because of limited economic and housing opportunities."

-Public Comment

Core Values

Our Core Value:
Livable & Vibrant Community

- A strong sense of community is our expectation of living in a small town. We value a sense of belonging and knowing that we matter to each other. Living in and caring for Sedona's peace, beauty, and nature is a bond that residents share.
- It is important to us that Sedona is a welcoming place for families, with sufficient housing, a thriving economy, and access to services necessary for a healthy and sustainable community.
- We utilize forward thinking land use policies and guidance to ensure the long term sustainability and protection of Sedona's resources.
- We appreciate the benefits brought by sustainable tourism and encourage visitors to respect Sedona's natural environment, heritage, and our community.
- Visual and performing arts are essential to our community's character and sense of community, as well as the local economy and tourist appeal.
- We encourage the responsible use and sustainable management of our City Parks and open space.

Our Core Value:
Environmental Protection

- We are privileged to live in a place of outstanding and unique beauty. We recognize the need to be constantly vigilant over the preservation of the natural landscape and wildlife. This includes caring for the land when it is threatened by overuse, development, or natural hazards.
- Now more than ever we also see the need to educate visitors about best recreation practices and continue to balance recreational tourism with resource protection and management.
- As a community, we have a great responsibility to demonstrate and support the responsible visitation and management of one of the most beautiful places on earth.
- All of our community actions and decisions must be weighed against the preservation of the beauty of Sedona.
- With that in mind we must, during the next decade, continue to maintain a community that is responsibly integrated into this beautiful environment.

Guiding Principles

Guiding Principle: Environment
Honor and protect our environment and heritage

- *We respect and protect the natural environment.*
- *We ensure that the built environment is in harmony with the natural environment.*
- *We incorporate sustainability and resiliency practices into all of our actions.*

What this means in 2033 …

Environment

- Protection of the environment is a high priority in all decision-making.
- Development is designed to limit impacts on the natural landscape, especially riparian habitat, drainages, steep slopes and viewsheds.
  - Development projects such as new houses, businesses, parks, and streets are landscaped with low water use, native plants that blend into the natural landscape.
  - Buildings are designed to maximize energy efficiency technologies and minimize their impact on the land.
- Water is a precious resource that is conserved to ensure future availability, and managed or reused to sustain habitat and replenish groundwater.
- Oak Creek is a green corridor with clean flowing water supporting an ecosystem of endemic plants, fish, birds, and other wildlife.
- Natural areas are protected from the impacts of vehicles, people, noise, and pollution.
- There are educational and directional signs and maps, and physical barriers to protect the land, as well as monitoring and restoration of public lands.

Sustainability and Resiliency

- The City of Sedona, partner agencies, and residents are prepared for natural disasters and climate change impacts.
- Communications are in English and Spanish, and readily available to residents, businesses, and visitors.
- There is access to clean energy and Sedona has reduced its dependence on fossil-fuels.
- There is increased awareness of the environmental impacts of consumption.
- Historic and prehistoric sites are recognized, preserved and celebrated.

"Sedona is about the rocks ... how to view them, enjoy them, walk, bike and run on them, preserve their adjoining forests and streams and do whatever we possibly can to protect them for future visitors and residents."
- Public Comment

Guiding Principle: Community
Strengthen community livability and connections

- *We come together to share experiences, help others, improve our community, enjoy the arts, and celebrate our heritage.*
- *We travel safely and efficiently throughout Sedona, with options to drive, walk, bike or ride the bus.*
- *Our community of residents, employees, and visitors enjoy these convenient alternatives to driving.*
- *Our community has a variety of housing options for all ages and income levels, and rental housing is stable and secure.*

What this means in 2033...

Sense of Community

- Sedona is a friendly, welcoming, and neighborly community that will collaborate with and support each other.
- Parks, plazas, cafes, festivals, and markets are dynamic places where people gather and socialize.
- There is a diversity of people interacting with each other - whether by age or background, resident, or visitor.
- Sedona is a community of active and productive volunteers.
- Sedona has a variety of educational opportunities for learning and interaction.
- Local culture is celebrated through the arts and events.
- Sedona has a unique and distinctive image and identity.

Housing Diversity

- There is an increase in housing options of all types, sizes, and cost.
- More diverse housing options attract more young people, families, and professionals to become a vital part of our community life.
- Diverse housing options exist for all types of residents (e.g., business owners, retirees, families, essential workers).
- New housing development complements existing structures and city character.
- Residents feel secure in the longevity of their living situation and feel confident advocating for themselves and their neighbors.

Mobility

- There are a variety of environmentally responsible transportation choices for employees, residents, and tourists.
- There are transit services with convenient and accessible parking areas throughout the City.
- There are more sidewalks, paths and trails that lead to activity centers, parks, trailheads, and popular destinations.
- Walking and biking is safe, convenient, appealing, and comfortable for residents and tourists to make the choice to drive less.
- There are protected bicycle paths and electric charging stations to facilitate safe, secure, and convenient travel by bicycle.
- There are fewer cars on the road; traffic moves well, with the exception of peak visitation.

> *"Support young families who want to live here, drive an economy that encourages jobs and affordable housing, enhance healthcare for younger families."*
> *- Public Comment*

Guiding Principle: Community
Support regional economic diversity, local businesses, and responsible tourism

- *Our community proactively manages tourism.*
- *We share with visitors how to respect and care for our red rock landscape and neighborhoods.*
- *We participate in a regional economy and we support our local businesses that practice respect for the environment, and enhance our community's quality of life.*

What this means in 2033…

Economy

- Collaborative partnerships support a diverse regional economy to ensure the availability of essential resources, including quality healthcare.
- Economic Policy supports emerging business and employment opportunities.
- Businesses are innovative, creative, and conscientious regarding goods and services, marketing, best practices, and teach everyone to respect our community and environment.
- Sedona has a thriving arts community.

Tourism

- Community members enjoy a high quality of life and the benefits brought by tourism.
- Visitors learn and practice respect for our community and our fragile and beautiful natural environment.
- Tourism fluctuates seasonally, however with the support of the local community as well as visitors, local businesses can prosper year-round.
- Sedona visitors are encouraged to stay for extended visits and support quality business practices.

3. COMMUNITY

- Overview

- Recommended Policies:

    - Community Partnerships

    - Parks and Public Places

    - Recreation and Events

    - Arts & Culture

    - Community Actions

COMMUNITY GOAL

Build a strong sense of community and culture.

OVERVIEW

COMMUNITY KEY ISSUES

- The loss in population, including families with children
- The increasing number of vacation rentals in neighborhoods
  - Less people/families living in homes
  - Impacts the city's sense of community
- Community concerns that there are:
  - Not enough opportunities for social interaction
  - Not enough activities for youth or support for families
  - Diverse but disconnected communities and neighborhoods
  - No central gathering place(s)
  - The impression of many residents that Sedona is being overwhelmed by tourists and the impacts of tourism

SYNOPSIS 2013 - 2023

- City Parks and Recreation
  - Ranger Station Park Master Plan and construction (to be complete in 2024)
  - Posse Grounds City Park
    - Barbara Antonsen Memorial Pavilion (photo below)
    - Bike Skills Park
    - Dog park renovations
    - Parking lot for the trailhead shuttle
    - Connector pathway from parking lot
    - Disc golf course and rebuilt bocce court
    - The Hub building becomes City Parks and Recreation facility
  - Sunset Park
    - Shared-use path connector
    - Shade structures and new playground equipment
- Development of the Citizen Engagement Program
- Established an Arts and Culture Program

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

🌐 **Sedona Small Grants Program**

▶ **Policy 3.1 - Facilitate connections between residents, local organizations, schools, and businesses to build a stronger sense of community.**

Residents have expressed concern about Sedona losing its sense of community, and have looked to the City to build community. The City's role has been to provide funding for select organizations, however it can also happen by simply providing an online directory connecting residents to local organizations (see below). As the list below shows, there are a lot of community organizations in Sedona and the Verde Valley, and some have struggled since the Pandemic to find volunteers. Collaboration with each other and with the City can help local groups to expand their membership, share resources, and be more effective in fulfilling their missions.

▶ **Policy 3.2 - Continue the small grants program, adding to the criteria the importance of building a sense of community and partnerships.**

The City of Sedona provides support to local non-profit organizations through a small grants program. To be eligible, the non-profit organization's programs, activities, or events should address the following criteria:

- Advance the Sedona Community Plan recommendations
- Advance the goals of equity and inclusion
- Promote public health, safety, and general welfare
- Directly benefit Sedona residents, their well-being and prosperity

Building a Sense of Community: Sedona Community Organizations

The following represents the types of groups in Sedona; this is not a comprehensive list of all organizations.

Community/Social
- Adult Community Center
- Community Food Bank
- Elks Lodge
- Humane Society of Sedona
- Rotary (2)
- Northern Arizona Interfaith Council
- Sedona 30
- Sedona Public Library
- Sedona Women
- Sedona XYZ

Environment/Recreation
- Gardens for Humanity
- The Hummingbird Society
- The Westerners
- Friends of the Verde River
- Keep Sedona Beautiful
- Oak Creek Watershed Council
- Red Rock Trail Fund
- Friends of the Forest
- Sedona Recycles
- Verde Valley Cyclists Coalition

Arts/Culture
- Chamber Music Sedona
- Fine Art Museum of Sedona
- Northern Arizona Watercolor Society
- Sedona Historical Society
- Sedona Area Guild of Artists
- Sedona Arts Center
- Sedona Visual Arts Coalition
- Sedona International Film Festival
- Sedona Symphony

PARKS AND PUBLIC PLACES

▶ **Policy 3.3 - Create places where people get together, interact, and share experiences.**

Incentivize development projects to include amenities that invite positive social interactions. This can be as simple as adding benches or something more substantial, such as creating a shady courtyard with tables, or an indoor meeting room open for use by local groups. Amenities can be added to an existing site or transform a site.

What Makes a Great Place?

- ⬤ key attributes
- ⬤ intangibles
- ◼ measurements

Sociability
number of women, children & elderly
social networks
volunteerism
evening use
street life
diverse
stewardship
cooperative
neighborly
pride
friendly
interactive
welcoming

Uses & Activities
local business ownership
land-use patterns
property values
rent levels
retail sales
fun
active
vital
special
real
useful
indigenous
celebratory
sustainable

Access & Linkages
continuity
proximity
connected
readable
walkable
convenient
accessible
traffic data
mode splits
transit usage
pedestrian activity
parking usage patterns

Comfort & Image
safe
clean
"green"
walkable
sittable
spiritual
charming
attractive
historic
crime statistics
sanitation rating
building conditions
environmental data

Place

PPS
PROJECT *for*
PUBLIC SPACES

Figure 3.1. How to Create Great Public Spaces
There have been many studies on what makes a place attract people, makes them stay, and return regularly. This can be seen as a menu of ingredients to improve upon or create a place for community.
Source: **Project for Public Spaces, www.pps.org**

Sedona's Community Places

A sampling of public places in Sedona:

City Parks & Public Spaces

Posse Grounds Park
- Dog Park
- Bike Skills Park
- Barbara Antonsen Memorial Pavilion
- The HUB

Sunset Park

Ranger Station Park

Community Places

The Sedona Library

The Sedona Arts Center

Sedona Heritage Museum

Yavapai College, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute

▶ **Policy 3.4 - Provide a variety of facilities and park amenities that serve Sedona resident's varied interests and abilities.**

To be a healthy and active community there should be a variety of accessible places that offer activities for all ages, skills, and abilities. Activities may include pickleball, basketball, mountain biking, and walking, as well as creative arts, music, and learning. Facilities such as parks, the library, and studios can be public places, private venues, non-profit or commercial places.

▶ **Policy 3.5 - Ensure that City projects contribute to a sense of community.**

Public parks and other projects can help build a sense of community and advance other community goals. It is important for residents that may or may not use the facility to have the opportunity to provide feedback at the earliest stages. This gives park users and other stakeholders a chance to weigh in on the advantages, drawbacks, and alternatives.

Ranger Station Park

The focal points of the park at 250 Brewer Rd. are the original Forest Service Ranger Station house and barn, adapted for use as community meeting spaces. Both buildings are City Historic Landmarks and are on the National Register of Historic Places. The Park Master Plan objectives reflect Community Plan goals:
- Honor the history
- Build a sense of community
- Create community interactions
- Engage people in healthy and active amenities
- Incorporate art in the park
- Design for a sense of place and sustainability

Recreation and Events

▶ **Policy 3.6 - Offer activities, events, and programs that bring people together throughout the year.**

These may be public or private events (see examples below) often led by volunteers that not only support, but create and lead events while sharing their talents, interests, and knowledge. For more people to participate, they need to know in advance, and know that they are welcome. This can be through the marketing of events as well as creating an all-inclusive listing on a website, email newsletter, and social media.

▶ **Policy 3.7 - Invite and involve everyone that makes this a diverse and interesting community.**

Celebrating community diversity is essential to building a sense of community. To make this happen, there needs to be outreach through a variety of media that is in both Spanish and English.

▶ **Policy 3.8 - Encourage residents to get involved in activities and events by participating or volunteering.**

This should include people of all ages - kids, adults and seniors. Many of the events in town are put on by local organizations that rely on volunteers to plan for and work at festivals and smaller events.

Community Activities & Events

City Parks and Recreation Activities
Posse Grounds Park Events:
- Red Dirt Concert Series
- Food Truck Festival
- Free to be Me Drumming Sessions
- Ecstatic Dance Thursdays
- Yappy Hour with Dogs
- Storytime in the Park
- Summer camps for kids

Athletic Programs:
- Youth and adult soccer
- Pickleball
- Ultimate Frisbee
- Swim and tennis lessons
- Basketball, volleyball, open gym

Holiday Events for Families:
- St Patrick's Day Parade
- Celebration of Spring
- Pumpkin Splash
- Breakfast with Santa

Community Festivals
- International Film Festival
- Oktoberfest
- Sedona Hummingbird Festival
- Sedona Mountain Bike Festival
- Sedona Wine Festival
- Sedona Yoga Festival

ARTS & CULTURE

City Arts & Culture Program

The following is a sampling of programs led by the City Arts & Culture Coordinator:

- Artist in the Classroom
- Roundabout Public Art
- Mayor's Arts Awards
- City Hall Art Rotation Exhibits
- City Council Moments of Art

🌐 **City Arts and Culture Program**

Artist in the Classroom Program

Art in the Roundabout Program

▶ **Policy 3.9 - Build community through community engagement in arts and culture.**

There are many organizations in the city that offer classes, workshops, and other educational resources. There are also groups that rely on volunteers, and all could be enhanced or expanded by raising awareness and participation among residents. The following community values highlighted in this Plan are also areas of focus for local organizations.

- Environment
- Arts
- Wellness and recreation
- History
- Sustainability
- Community support

▶ **Policy 3.10 - Expand the City's arts and culture programs and partnerships.**

The following are examples of potential City programs and partnerships:

- Partnership programs that embrace aging - with arts, cultural, and wellness activities.
- Involve the schools and youth in community events, activities, and programs.
- Sponsor art experiences, either pop-up, temporary, or interactive that highlight local artists - visual, literary, performing arts, and music.

▶ **Policy 3.11 - Preserve historic sites and celebrate Sedona's history.**

The City Historic Landmark program should continue to grow through the identification of significant sites and encouragement of owners to designate their property as a landmark. The City should also continue to partner with and support the Sedona Historical Society to provide cultural heritage programs, exhibits, and events for the community.

Community Actions

1. Ensure that communication of City information is bilingual, including websites, mailings, social media, emails, and printed materials in Spanish and English.

2. Improve City communications and messaging about opportunities for resident participation by providing online resources that connect residents to local organizations and activities, including the following:

   • Directory of local organizations.
   • Calendar of all community events and activities
   • Volunteer opportunities.

3. Update the criteria of the City's Small Grants Program to fund programs that build community.

4. Develop design guidelines to encourage community oriented features for both public and private development.

5. Improve City procedures to better incorporate Community Plan goals and priorities, public input, and development standards at the planning and design stage of City municipal projects.

6. Expand the capacity of the City's Arts and Culture Program.

7. Renovate The Hub building at Posse Grounds Park to better serve as a multi-purpose community space.

8. Explore the Sedona Performing Arts Center as a community place in partnership with the school district, City, residents, and local organizations to better utilize this venue for arts, culture, and entertainment programs.

9. Develop a master plan for Posse Grounds Park that addresses access to the park, circulation within the park (vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians), and parking. Consider passive and active recreation, and natural areas. The planning process must involve all park users (organized groups and individuals), the West Sedona School, and other stakeholders.

4. Land Use

- Overview

- Future Land Use Map

- Land Use Map Designations

- Community Focus Areas

- Land Use Policies

- Land Use Actions

Land Use Goal

Sedona's unique sense of place and stewardship of the natural environment is reflected in the design and development of the built environment.

OVERVIEW

LAND USE KEY ISSUES

- The city is nearly built-out as of 2023, with 18% of the available land remaining to build on (excluding National Forest and dedicated open space)
- Challenges to building new affordable housing due to decreasing supply of land, increasing cost, and zoning limitations
- STR impacts on land use as houses are purchased or built for STR, reducing the supply of land for residential housing
- Potential impacts of future development to environmentally sensitive areas, such as Oak Creek

SYNOPSIS 2013 - 2023

- 2016-2019: Adoption of Community Focus Area (CFA) Plans for the Western Gateway, Soldiers Pass, Schnebly, and Sunset CFAs
- 2017: State permits short-term vacation rentals of single-family residential housing (and up to 4 unit properties), removing the City's previous prohibition on rentals of less than 30 days
- 2018: Adoption of new Land Development Code
- 2022: City acquires the former Cultural Park property and other parcels

CURRENT LAND USE INCLUDING NATIONAL FOREST

Land Uses In Sedona
Total Acreage: 11,755

- National Forest
- Single Family Residential
- Highways/Streets
- Commercial/Lodging
- Public/Semi-Public
- Private Open Space
- Multi-family Residential
- City Parks/Open Space
- Other

2% 1% 1% ~1%
4%
4%
7%
49% National Forest
31% Single-Family Residential
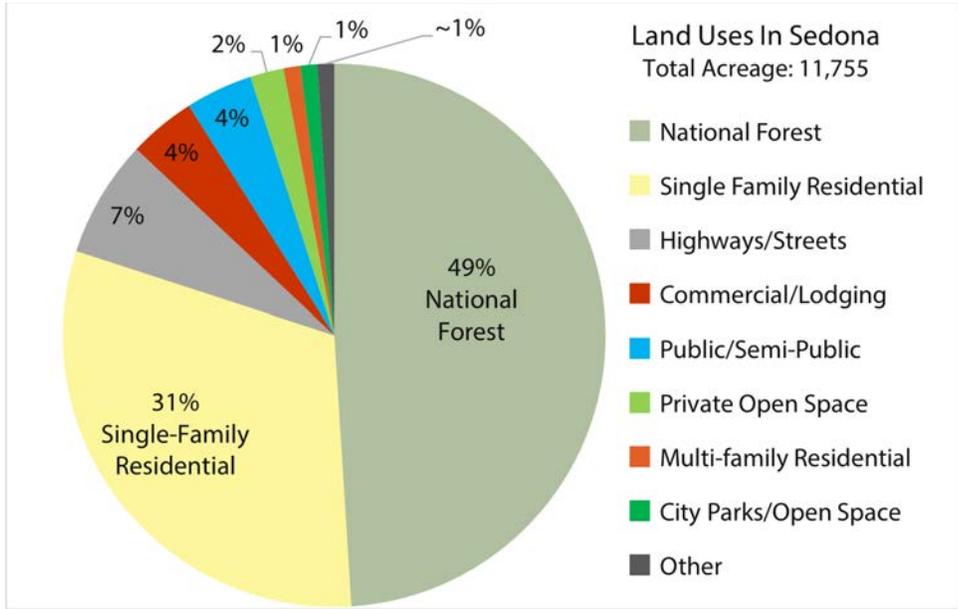
Figure 4.1.
This shows the land within Sedona city limits by type of land use (how the land is being used, as of 2023). What is noteworthy is the amount of National Forest land in the city.

"Other" Land Uses:

- Mobile Home Park (<1%)
- State Trust Land (<1%)
- Other City-Owned/ Undeveloped (<1%)
- Planned Development/ Undeveloped (<1%)

CURRENT LAND USE EXCLUDING NATIONAL FOREST

Land Uses in Sedona
Excluding National Forest

- Single Family Residential
- Highways/Streets
- Commercial/Lodging
- Public/Semi-Public
- Private Open Space
- Multi-family Residential
- City Parks/Open Space
- Other

2% 2% 2%
4%
8%
8%
61% Single Family Residential
13% Highways/Streets
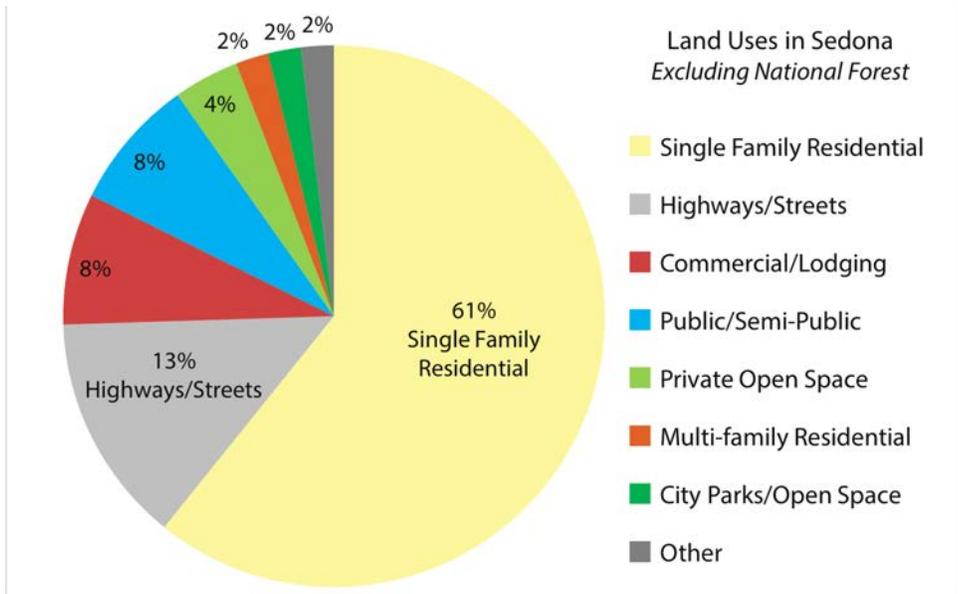
Figure 4.2.
This excludes the National Forest land, and shows the remaining land use by type (how the land is being used, as of 2023). What is most noteworthy about this is the significant percentage of land with single-family homes.

Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Map Is:
- Property designations recommended for future development
- Guide for decisions on rezoning and development proposals

It is *not*:
- A Zoning map
- Mandating development
- Changing property rights or zoning rights

ⓘ **Implementation chapter**

WHAT IS THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP?

The map on the following page depicts the land uses recommended for each property in the city. Whereas, the **Zoning Map** is part of the **Sedona Land Development Code**, the Future Land Use Map is most relevant when a property owner does not want to develop under the existing zoning.

If a property owner does not want to develop under existing zoning, the proposed land use must align with the Future Land Use Map and the goals and policies of the Community Plan, otherwise the owner must apply for an amendment to the Community Plan along with a rezoning application. Applications to change the Community Plan would be reviewed for adherence to the other goals and policies of the Community Plan.

**Figure 4.3.
Land Use Designations**
Descriptions of each land use designation shown in the legend to the left (and on the map) are described on the following pages.

Future Land Use Map Legend

- Community Focus Area Plan (CFA)
- Community Focus Area (CFA) Future Planning Area

Residential
- Single Family Very Low Density (0 to .5 DU/AC)
- Single Family Low Density (.5 to 2 DU/AC)
- Single Family Medium Density (2 to 4 DU/AC)
- Single Family High Density (4 to 8 DU/AC)
- Multi Family Low Density (4 to 8 DU/AC)
- Multi Family Medium Density (8 to12 DU/AC)
- Multi Family High Density (more than 12 DU/AC)
- Mobile Home Park

- Commercial
- Commercial / Lodging
- Mixed Use
- Public / Semi-Public
- Parks
- Open Space - National Forest
- Open Space

FUTURE LAND USE MAP


Draft Future Land Use Map, Sedona Community Plan

Figure 4.4. To view a more detailed map that can be zoomed in for easier viewing, please see the Exhibit of the Future Land Use Map (separate PDF file)

Western Gateway
CFA Plan
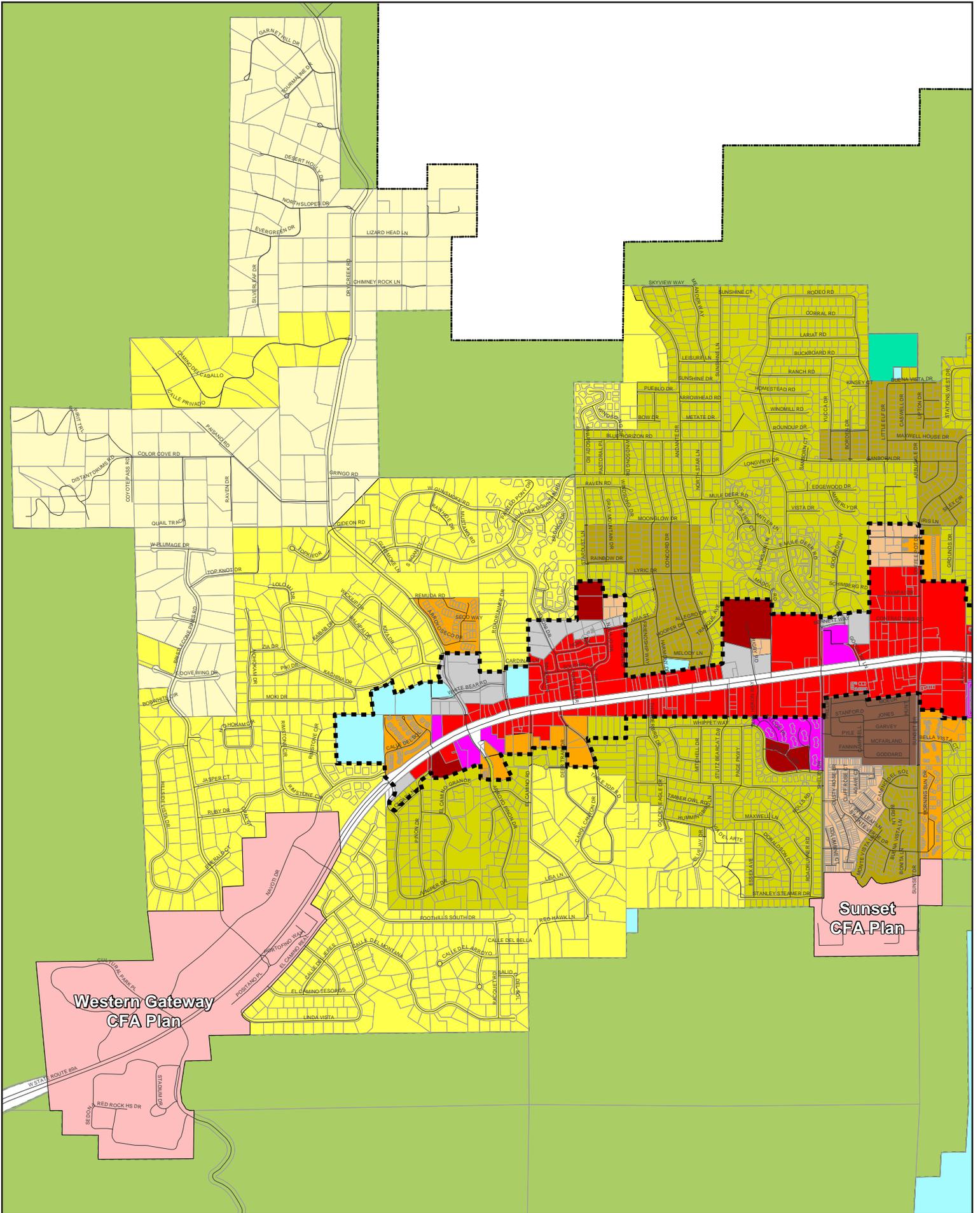
Sunset
CFA Plan

Soldiers Pass
CFA Plan

Schnebly
CFA Plan
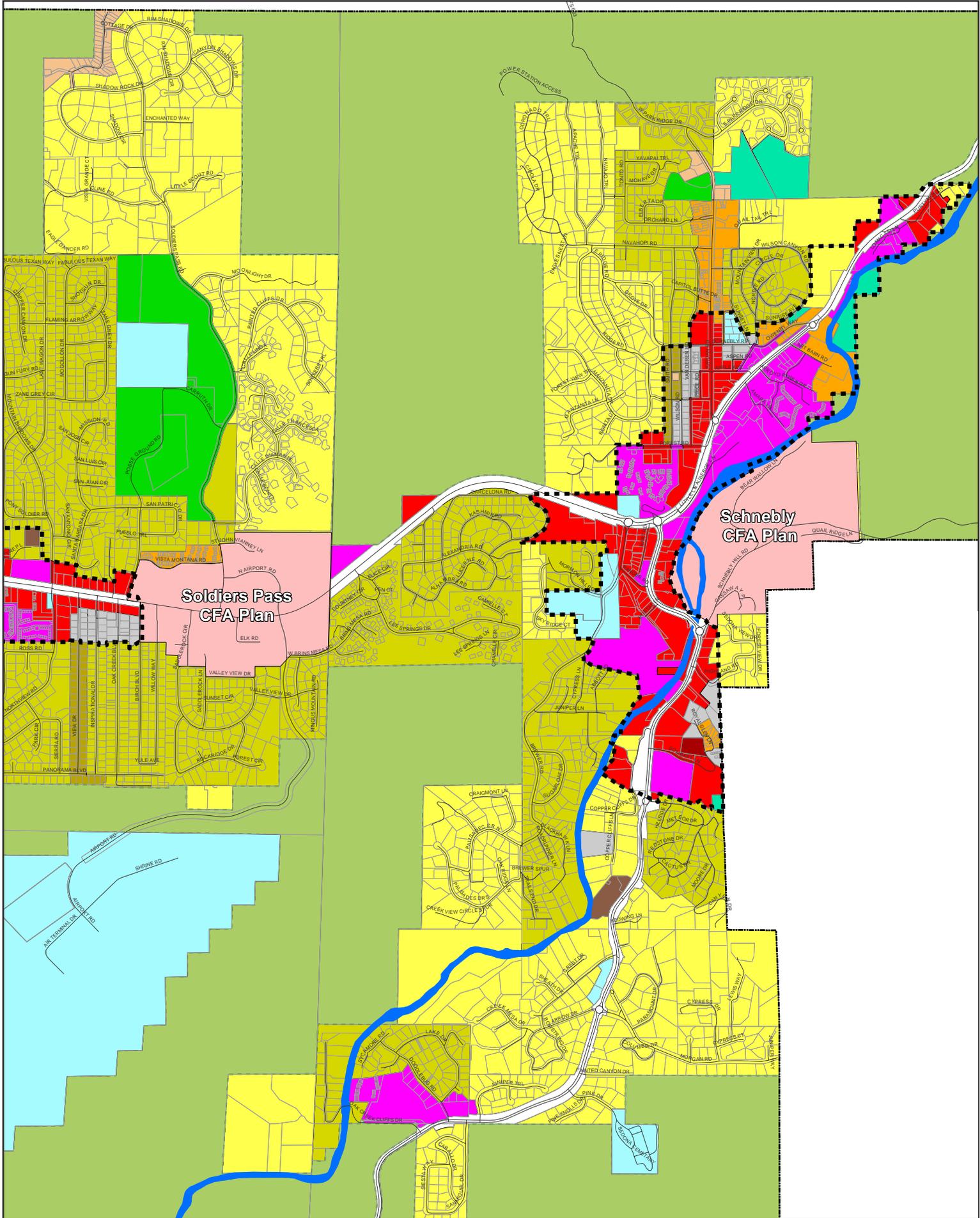
Soldiers Pass
CFA Plan

Schnebly
CFA Plan

Sunset
Plan
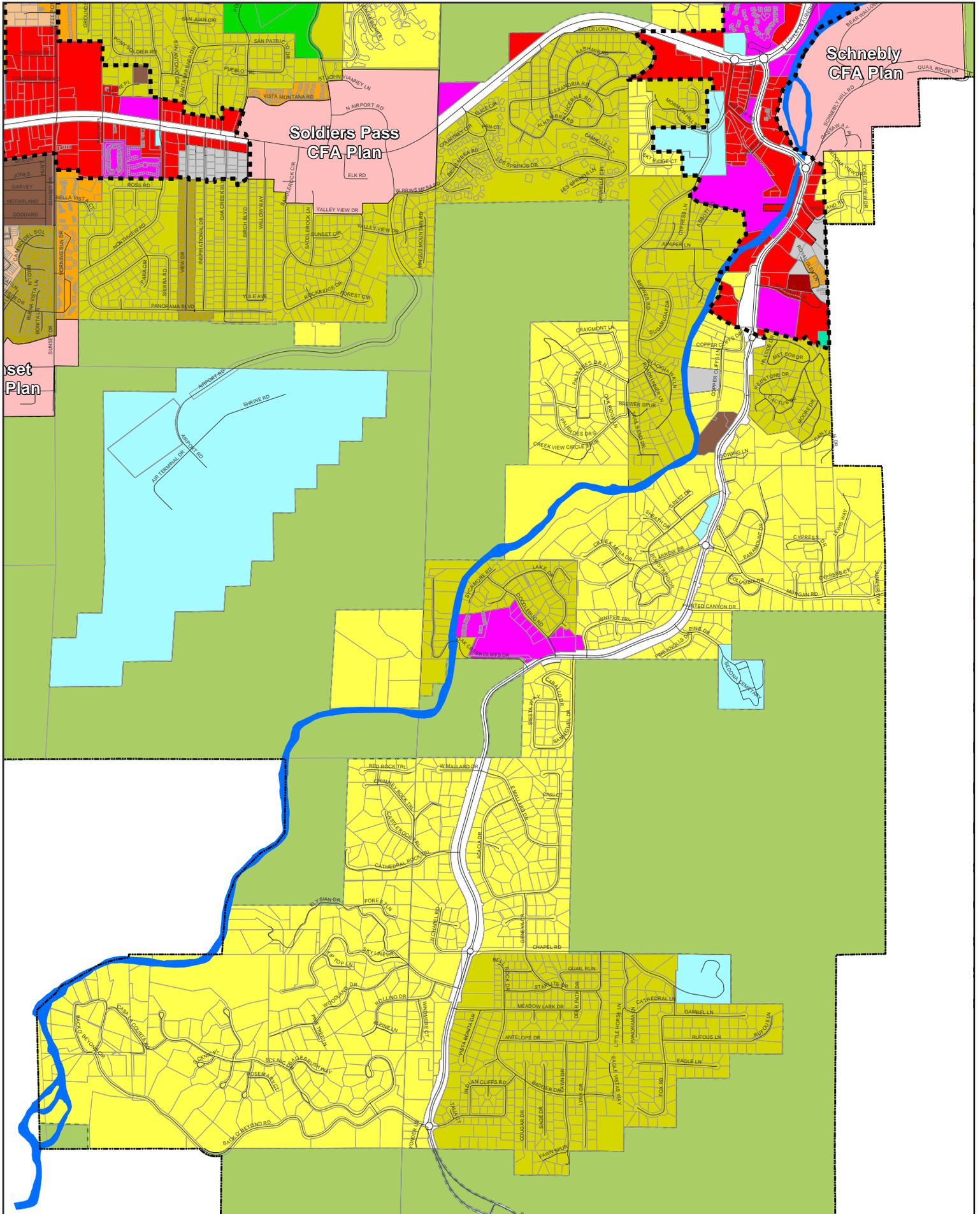
LAND USE MAP DESIGNATIONS

The following are descriptions of each Future Land Use Map designation and associated color on the map.

OPEN SPACE - NATIONAL FOREST

This designation is intended to support the long-term preservation of undisturbed areas in their natural condition.
National Forest includes:

- Coconino National Forest within City limits
  - Excluding the Chapel of the Holy Cross which is on the National Forest, operating under a lease agreement
- Use and development of these areas is subject to approval by the Forest Service

OPEN SPACE - OTHER NATURAL

Natural Open Space includes:

- Passive recreation areas with support infrastructure, such as trails and parking
  - Sugar Loaf Trailhead and Jordan Park open space (both city owned)
- Undeveloped floodplain along Oak Creek in Uptown
- Undeveloped lands adjacent to the Munds Mountain Wilderness

PARKS

This designation is intended to support the development of public parks for active and passive recreational uses, and community facilities.
Parks includes:

- Jordan Historical Park, Posse Grounds Park, Sunset Park, and Ranger Station Park

PUBLIC/SEMI-PUBLIC

This designation is intended to support uses owned and operated by public/semi-public entities for the benefit of the community.
Public/Semi-public includes:

- Schools, library, airport
- Hospitals, churches, cemeteries
- Municipal uses, public parking areas
- Public utilities

RESIDENTIAL MAP DESIGNATIONS

SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

This designation is intended to support the development of single-family homes. Cluster development, typically with subdivisions, is encouraged to direct development away from environmentally sensitive portions of a site (floodways and floodplains, steep slopes, ridgelines, etc.) with open space buffers recommended when adjacent to the National Forest to minimize wildland-urban interface impacts such as wildfire.

Single-family Residential includes:

- Includes one residential dwelling unit on one lot, and one accessory dwelling unit

MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

This designation is intended to support the development of multiple dwelling units on a single property. Multi-family designations can serve as a transition or buffer between non-residential development and single-family residential development. Locations may be considered that have current or planned access to transit, shared use paths, or other amenities.

Multi-family Residential includes:

- Multiple residential dwelling units on one lot
- Multi-family residential can occur within mixed-use and commercial areas

May include the following:

- Townhouses, condominiums, apartments, duplex/multiplex, patio homes, and other single-family attached styles

MOBILE HOME PARKS

This designation is intended to recognize existing mobile home parks as a unique land use. These are some of the most affordable housing options for low and moderate income households. If these areas are redeveloped, the existing densities (dwelling units per acre) should be retained or increased regardless of housing type.

- Includes existing mobile home parks that are not under a different land use designation

Note on Density:

Densities greater than 12 units per acre are supported on a case-by-case basis with consideration of strategies that address local housing needs, housing diversity, affordability, and availability.

See the Housing chapter

NON-RESIDENTIAL MAP DESIGNATIONS

MIXED-USE

Mixed-use as a Future Land Use Designation is new to this Plan. Many of the properties now showing as Mixed-use were designated as Planned Area in the 2013 Plan, which was not carried forward.

This designation is intended to support developments with a variety of uses, including residential, commercial, office, community, and educational. Mixed-use areas can serve as a transitional between more intense commercial uses and residential and should be considered in areas with access to transit, shared use paths, or other amenities.

May include any of the following:
- Commercial retail, office and services
- Public and semi-public uses
- Multi-family Residential* - Medium density (8-12 units per acre) or High Density (more than 12 units per acre)

BENEFITS OF MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

Areas of compact, mixed-use and walkable development can be people-friendly places, where people can live, work, shop, dine, and play, since a variety of needs are met in one appealing place. Compact development creates more walkable activity centers that contribute to quality of life by being more sustainable, less car-dependent and more people-friendly. Mixed-use and more compact development scenarios are especially encouraged within the West Sedona Corridor.

Compact, mixed-use and walkable development combine housing options with services and retail uses, and typically include venues for entertainment and the arts mixed with education and civic functions, a central community gathering space, all linked by walkways. Residents can enjoy living and working in the same area without having to drive everywhere. They can expect to have chance encounters with neighbors, co-workers and visitors, enhancing communication, collaboration and a sense of community. The following attributes indicate an area of mixed-use development.
- Inclusive people places
- Walkable and bike-able
- Transit-oriented
- Diverse housing choices
- Safe, active and lively
- Appropriate for infill
- Inclusive of local businesses
- Outdoor public spaces
- Compact, or concentrated

Note on Density:

Densities greater than 12 units per acre are supported on a case-by-case basis with consideration of strategies that address local housing needs, housing diversity, affordability, and availability.

See the Housing chapter

COMMERCIAL

This designation is intended to support general retail and other commercial and service uses. Land uses that are characterized by frequent visits of customers and clients should be located in areas with good vehicular circulation.

Except for property within an approved Community Focus Area, commercial uses should be limited to the W SR 89A and SR 179 corridors as designated on the Future Land Use Map.

Commercial may include any of the following, or a combination of:
- Retail, office, services
- Heavy commercial, light manufacturing
- Multi-family residential*

Heavier commercial uses that serve local needs may be considered within existing commercial areas if:
1. Uses are not located adjacent to the highway
2. Significant buffering to residential areas can be provided
3. Traffic generation is minimal

COMMERCIAL/LODGING

This designation is intended to support resort and lodging uses, including accessory commercial and service uses, in a manner that:
1. Is consistent with the Sedona Community Plan or specific plan for the area
2. Features community benefits.
3. Preserves the unique character of Sedona
4. Is compatible in size, scale, intensity, and character of other surrounding uses
5. Accommodates adequate vehicle parking and circulation
6. Promotes creative design and is sensitive to the natural environment

May include any of the following, or a combination of:
- Hotels, motels, and timeshares
- Commercial retail and services
- Multifamily uses (*See Note on Density and/or the Future Land Use Map)

Community Focus Areas

Community Focus Areas (CFAs) are locations where the City plays a proactive planning role to implement the Community Plan's vision and goals. CFAs are primarily commercial areas with properties likely to be developed or have redevelopment potential, but may include adjacent residential properties to ensure a good transition to lower density residential uses.

Implementation tools of CFA Plans:
- Incentives for specific types of development
- Flexibility in development standards for more creative, innovative designs
- Incentives to consolidate properties under unified, coordinated planning
- Transitional land uses buffering more intensive commercial from single-family residential

COMMUNITY FOCUS AREAS (CFAs)

ADOPTED CFA PLANS

🌐 **Adopted CFA Plans**

See the Future Land Use Map for locations.

Soldier Pass Road CFA Plan
Adopted April 12, 2016 (Resolution 2016-17)
Amended August 10, 2022 (**Resolution 2022-23**)

Western Gateway CFA Plan
Adopted May 24, 2016 (Resolution 2016-18)
Amended August 10, 2022 (**Resolution 2022-22**)

Schnebly CFA Plan
Adopted April 11, 2017 (**Resolution 2017-09**)
Amended November 10, 2020 (**Resolution 2020-23**)

Sunset CFA Plan
Adopted April 9, 2019 (**Resolution 2019-07**).

PROPOSED CFA PLANS: WEST SEDONA CORRIDOR AND UPTOWN

The West Sedona Corridor and Uptown can be transformed into vibrant and walkable destinations through the recommendations of CFA Plans.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Safety, comfort and convenience for pedestrians, bicyclists, and those with disabilities
- Beautification
- Incentives for redevelopment
- Distinctive character or design themes
- Make more efficient use of currently underutilized parking lots
- Create transitions and buffers to single-family residential neighborhoods

HOW ARE CFA PLANS DEVELOPED?

1. Input from residents, property owners, neighbors, businesses, and stakeholders
2. Planning and Zoning Commission public hearing and recommendation to City Council
3. City Council public hearing and adoption of the CFA Plan
4. Minor amendment is made to the Community Plan's Future Land Use Map to designate the area as having a CFA Plan

West Sedona Corridor Community Focus Area

This CFA plan has the following two areas with similar opportunities but distinct attributes:

1. Dry Creek/W SR 89A
2. Rodeo-Coffeepot/W SR 89A

OPPORTUNITIES

- Build on the existing attributes
- Identify transition areas appropriate for multi-family residential
- Work with property owners to upgrade non-conforming uses
- Redevelopment and redesign potential of large shopping complexes
- Reduce number of redundant or unnecessary curb cuts on W SR 89A
- Establish parallel alternatives to W SR 89A for vehicles and/or bicycle/pedestrians
- Improve walkability and bike-ability, including:
  - Safer crossings of W SR 89A; Alternative routes parallel to W SR 89A; Extend sidewalks on both sides of the cross-streets

ATTRIBUTES

Dry Creek/W SR 89A Area

- Civic: City Hall, fire station, pocket parks
- Education: library, charter school
- Residential: townhomes and apartments
- Lodging: hotels, motels, bed & breakfasts
- Social: outdoor cafes, pizza place, coffee shops, churches

Rodeo-Coffeepot/W SR 89A Area

- Entertainment: 2 theaters
- Lodging: timeshares, motel, hotel
- Retail and Restaurants: 3 grocery stores, pharmacies, coffee shops
- Residential: townhomes, mobile home parks

Figure 4.5. Proposed West Sedona CFA
Note: The map above shows a potential boundary of the CFA Plan. The exact boundaries will be determined during the CFA planning process.

Uptown Community Focus Area

There are two areas proposed for this CFA Plan, each having distinct attributes and opportunities.
1.   Uptown, north of The Y
2.   Ranger Road, south of The Y

1. Uptown Area

There is a draft Uptown CFA Plan that was completed in 2021, however it was put on hold in order to proceed with the Community Plan update. The draft CFA plan can be a starting point for a new planning process.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Large, undeveloped properties along Oak Creek
- Redevelopment potential
- Potential for public creek access and/or creekside park.
- Forest Road connection to W SR 89A
- Coordinated planning for land use, circulation, and parking
- Need for a multi-modal circulation plan for Uptown and the Ranger Road area that addresses:
  - Walking and biking safety
  - Transit circulation and stops
  - Parking
    - Resident parking
    - Employee parking
    - Tourist parking
  - Guided tours drop-off and pick-up
  - Main Street deliveries
  - Streetscapes

ATTRIBUTES

- Lodging: multiple hotels and resorts of all sizes
- Retail shops and restaurants
- Multi-family residential areas, especially along Jordan Rd
- The Sedona Subdivision - one of Sedona's oldest subdivisions
- Historic Sedona Arts Center
- Many historic buildings
- Challenging topography and access for northern area

2. Ranger Road Area

OPPORTUNITIES

- Ranger Station Park on Brewer Rd as community gathering place
- *4 buildings on the National Register of Historic Places (denoted below by asterisks)
- Potential for creekwalk
- Proposed Ranger Road roundabout connection to Forest Rd connector
- Redevelopment opportunities resulting from transportation projects
- Public parking and transit access improvements
- Improved walkability and bikeability
- Access to the National Forest, Soldiers Wash trail system

ATTRIBUTES

- Tlaquepaque and Gallery Row: mix of shops, galleries, and lodging
- Ranger Station Park on Brewer Rd
  - City-owned historic landmarks*: Ranger Station house and barn
- City of Sedona offices and municipal court on Brewer Rd
- City-owned land near Brewer/89A roundabout
- Hart Store Historic Landmark* at Ranger/Brewer
- Pumphouse Historic Landmark*
- Pedestrian underpass at Oak Creek/SR 179 (Under construction as of Spring 2024)
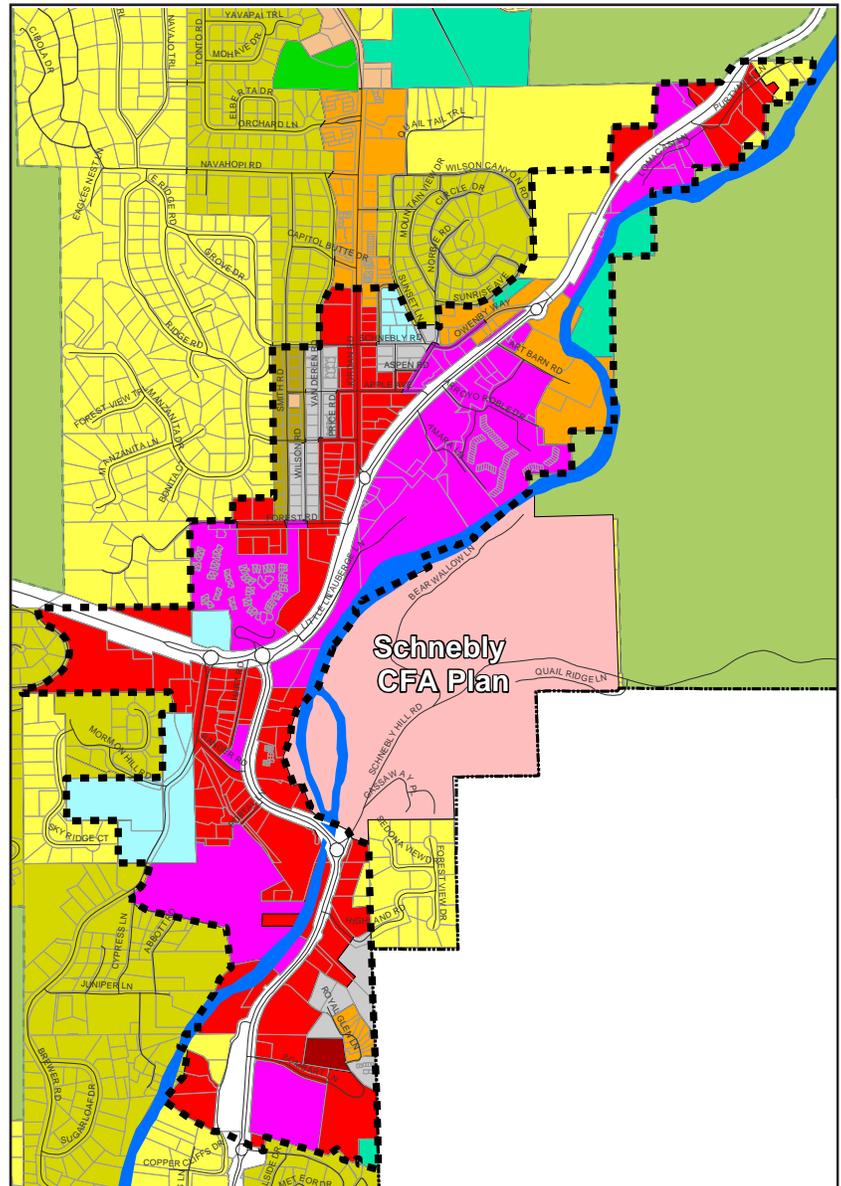
Figure 4.6. Proposed Uptown CFA
Note: The map above shows a potential boundary of the CFA Plan. The exact boundaries will be determined during the CFA planning process.

LAND USE POLICIES

▶ **Policy 4.1 -** Partner with the Forest Service to ensure National Forest lands within City limits remain public open space and not exchanged for private development.

▶ **Policy 4.2 -** Participate in regional planning with agencies and organizations in the Verde Valley.

▶ **Policy 4.3 -** Maintain design standards that reflect Sedona's "sense of place", historic and cultural heritage, viewsheds, and environment and natural resources.

▶ **Policy 4.4 -** Support cluster development to direct development away from more environmentally-sensitive portions of a site.

▶ **Policy 4.5 -** Allow densities greater than 12 dwelling units per acre through consideration of projects with strategies for achieving housing diversity, affordability, and availability to address housing needs in areas designated for Multi-family High Density, Commercial, and Mixed-use.

▶ **Policy 4.6 -** Transform the commercial corridors into a mix of residential, commercial, and public uses well-connected for walking, biking, or using transit.

▶ **Policy 4.7 -** Limit lodging uses to locations within the Commercial/Lodging designation on the Future Land Use Map or otherwise identified in an adopted CFA Plan.

▶ **Policy 4.8 -** Require parking standards that are consistent with multi-modal transportation, mixed and shared uses, promote efficient use of space, and minimize asphalt coverage.

▶ **Policy 4.9 -** Ensure that proposed land uses are compatible with adjacent aggregate (sand and gravel) resources, if these resources are identified by the State of Arizona. [State required Policy per **A.R.S. 9-461.05** C.1.g.]

▶ **Policy 4.10** - For the term of this Plan, prioritize housing growth within City limits (as of 2023), focusing our efforts on affordability and diversity.

Land Use Actions

Action L1. Determine appropriate locations for the following identified needs: affordable multi-family residential, mixed-use development, and public gathering places.

Action L2. Expand the designation of mixed-use where appropriate, as determined through the CFA planning process.

Action L3. Develop a Land Use Master Plan for the Cultural Park property.

Action L4. Conduct a feasibility study of future development at the Dells (City property south of the Wastewater Plant).

Action L5. Develop a CFA Plan for the West Sedona Corridor.

Action L6. Develop a CFA Plan for Uptown.

Action L7. Evaluate potential for increased building height where view corridors are least impacted and where multiple stories may be the best option for development of multi-family housing and mixed-uses.

Action L8. Evaluate the annexation of land, expanding city limits to encompass land owned by the City of Sedona.

5. Housing

- Overview

- Recommended Policies

  - Housing Diversity and Affordability

  - Housing Actions

Housing Goal

Sedona has diverse housing options that are safe, secure, and affordable.

OVERVIEW

HOUSING KEY ISSUES

- Lack of housing availability - for sale or rent
- High cost of housing - for sale or rent
- Lack of variation in housing types - 81% of Sedona's housing is single-family residential
- Impacts of short-term rentals (STRs), see following page
- Diminishing amount of buildable land in the City
  - Many of the remaining parcels are more difficult and expensive to build on (topography, drainage, etc.)
- Builders tell us that our development codes, costs, and overall experience working with the city make it very difficult to build housing in Sedona
- Housing is a key issue for economic development
  - Sedona has a large gap between wages and housing costs
  - Housing issues adversely impact employee recruitment and retention

SYNOPSIS 2013 - 2023

- 2017: Short-term vacation rentals are legalized by the State of Arizona
- 2020: COVID-19 Pandemic affected the supply and cost of building materials
- 2020: City of Sedona **Housing Study**, which states that Sedona will need an additional 1600 housing units to meet our needs
- The **Verde Valley Housing Study** states that the Verde Valley will need around 3600 units
- Housing Program established with 2 new staff positions: Housing Manager (2021) and Housing Coordinator (2023)
- Cultural Park property in West Sedona purchased by the City

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The City of Sedona Housing Programs

City Housing Fund: City Council allocated $12 million to incentivize and help finance the development of affordable housing in Sedona

Sedona Workforce Homeownership Assistance Program for eligible workers

Sedona Employer Assisted Housing Program for City of Sedona employees

Rent Local: City pays STR owners within City limits to rent to a local worker for at least one year

Deed Restriction Program: Homeowner may place a voluntary deed restriction on their property preventing its use as a STR

City Housing Program
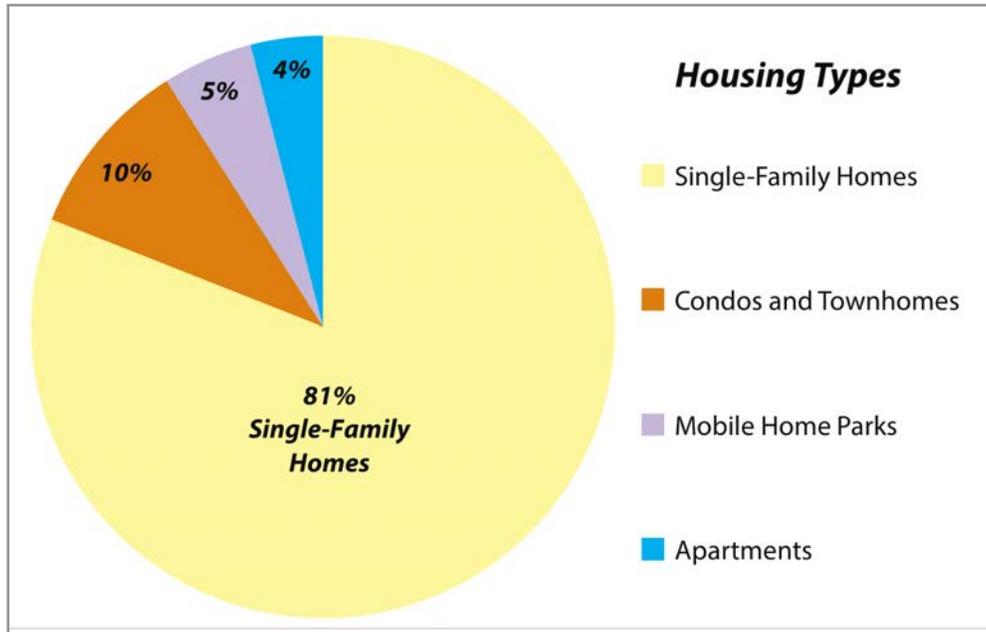
Figure 5.1.
Existing housing types in Sedona, as of 2023. Single-family homes are
the biggest slice of the pie. Source: City of Sedona, 2023

SPOTLIGHT

Western Gateway CFA: Cultural Park

In 2022 the City of Sedona bought the 40-acre property off W 89A and Red
Rock Loop Road/Cultural Park Place (site of former amphitheater) to ensure
that future development on what is Sedona's largest, undeveloped property
in the city limits, will accommodate a variety of housing types, sizes, and cost.
A land use master plan will be developed through a process that includes
community and stakeholder input, incorporating other community needs.
This property is included in the Western Gateway Community Focus Area Plan,
which will be the basis of future planning.

MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING IN SEDONA

Multi-family residential can accommodate more housing in a smaller area. It can also be many smaller housing units on a single lot, such as apartments. It can also include townhouses or condos which are typically smaller units on smaller lots. Building more multi-family housing in Sedona can happen a number of ways, such as building up by allowing for taller buildings, infill that may fill in vacant lots, or by splitting large lots, or spreading out (not an option with National Forest in city limits). What is Sedona willing to do to increase the amount of housing?

The advantages of more multi-family housing:

- Accommodates more people on less land
- Units can be smaller in size with a mix of sizes within one complex
- Can be located in mixed-use areas more convenient for walking and transit
- Smaller housing units can cost less to build, own, or rent

Why is Sedona lacking multi-family housing?

1. Only 14% of the city is zoned for multi-family housing
2. Sedona height restrictions (no more than 2-3 stories allowed)
3. Compared to other cities, Sedona has relatively low density limits
4. At 82% build-out, there is a limited amount of buildable property
5. High property values
6. Development, materials, and labor costs

Housing Diversity and Affordability

Sedona's lack of housing has begun to affect the entire community. Residents and visitors that rely on grocery stores, pharmacies, or medical offices are affected when businesses cannot attract or retain enough employees. This can result in businesses reducing the hours or days of operation when there are not enough employees. The worst case scenario is that businesses close and residents relocate due to the decline in providers, services, and amenities.

▶ **Policy 5.1 - Expand Sedona's mix of housing types to meet the needs of a diverse and vibrant community.**

A complete and thriving community is made up of people at different stages in life - singles, couples, families, and seniors - who want housing options that suit their lifestyle, circumstances, and budget. Examples of alternatives are cottages, duplexes, triplexes, age-in-place housing, and accessory dwelling units (ADU).

▶ **Policy 5.2 - Encourage redevelopment of the commercial corridors to include a mix of uses, including multi-family housing.**

There are locations for multi-family housing that can accommodate increased height and density, and take advantage of access to transit and walkability. Siting these projects must take into consideration scenic views and neighboring homes. This can be determined with public input during the process of developing Community Focus Area (CFA) plans.

▶ **Policy 5.3 - Encourage collaboration among employers to provide workforce housing.**

Businesses need to attract and retain employees which is a challenge if there is not enough (or affordable) housing. Rather than each company struggling to find a solution, it may be more effective for them to join forces. Already, several larger resorts are providing housing for employees to rent, and shuttles to and from Cottonwood.

▶ **Policy 5.4 - Increase housing diversity with strategies that promote the development of affordable and market-rate housing in Sedona.**

The City's Housing Program is pursuing multiple projects in partnership with developers to build more housing in Sedona. There may be additional ways to support the development of affordable housing, such as improving procedures and policies that could lower costs, decrease time frames, minimize obstacles, increase efficiencies, and streamline customer and employee workflow.

What is Affordable?
Housing is considered "affordable" if it costs no more than 30% of a household's income.

The Increasing Cost of Housing
The median housing price for a single-family home:

$1,050,000 in 2022
$650,000 in 2020
$330,000 in 2011
$600,000 in 2007

▶ **Policy 5.5 - Increase the Verde Valley's supply of affordable housing for the area's workforce, homeless, and others in need through regional partnerships.**

As a small town in an extraordinarily scenic setting, housing is more expensive in Sedona compared to the surrounding communities. In the past, people working in Sedona could find more affordable places to live in Cottonwood, Village of Oak Creek, and Camp Verde. However, housing costs in these communities have been rising over the last ten years, diminishing the cost savings of living in neighboring communities. It has become increasingly problematic for employers to recruit and retain employees.

▶ **Policy 5.6 - Address rental housing conditions when the health, welfare, and safety of Sedona residents are at risk.**

In some instances, when affordable housing can be found, building conditions can be unsafe, unhealthy, and don't meet city standards. During the public outreach in 2022, residents expressed their fears of losing their housing with little notice, which had happened to others in their community. Often the 'affordable' housing is tolerated since asking a landlord to make repairs can mean losing the housing, as landlords know there are others willing to take their place. This is an issue that can be addressed at the local, city level and through state policies.

The Role of Building Codes
To protect the public's health, safety, and welfare. The codes are not arbitrary, but are the foundation of safe construction.

Suggestions to modify to code to reduce housing costs cannot come at the expense of the public's health, safety and welfare.

Housing Actions

1. Improve City procedures, policies, and programs to better support the building of affordable housing.

2. Amend the Land Development Code and other applicable codes to advance city housing initiatives as outlined in this Plan.

3. Update the City's Development Incentives and Guidelines for Affordable Housing (DIGAH).

4. Participate in regional housing programs (new and existing) that benefit Sedona and the Verde Valley.

5. Identify incentives that support and encourage developers to build more affordable multi-family housing.

6. Develop programs and partnerships that provide support to both tenants and property managers.

6. Circulation

- Overview

- Recommended Policies:

  - Multimodal Network

  - Walking and Biking

  - Transit

  - Streets and Highways

  - Uptown

  - Parking

Circulation Goal

Build a complete and connected circulation network that is safe, convenient, and efficient for all users and all modes of travel.

OVERVIEW

CIRCULATION KEY ISSUES

- Traffic congestion, particularly at the Y and Uptown pedestrian crossings
- Lack of street connectivity
  - Lack of emergency evacuation routes
  - No "relief" or alternate routes (e.g., to W 89A, east-west route in West Sedona)
  - Result of subdivisions that developed prior to incorporation
- Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) jurisdiction of W 89A and SR 179 means Sedona is limited in what improvements can be made
- Walking and biking safety
  - Few or inadequate sidewalks, bike lanes, etc.
  - Roundabout safety, especially for bicyclists
  - W 89A is car dominant and at times high traffic congestion
  - Lack of safe crossings of W 89A that is seen as an obstacle to bikes and pedestrians going north-south
- Cost of improvements and need for sustainable funding sources
- Lack of communication and understanding that there is no single solution to solving traffic congestion
- Transit system slow to happen
  - Need for sustainable funding
  - Lack of transit connectivity (limited routes and times for the Verde Shuttle)
  - Resident perception that transit is for visitors not residents, especially with the trailhead shuttles being the first to launch
  - Uptown "seek and find" parking adds to congestion
- Lack of or inadequate signage to direct tourists (wayfinding) to parking and around town, especially in Uptown
- Not enough parking at certain locations at peak times, leading to overflow of vehicles onto neighborhood streets, and safety concerns

SYNOPSIS 2013-2023

- 2018: **Transportation Master Plan** (Sedona In Motion) completed
- 2018: 1/2 cent sales tax approved to fund projects
- 2020: **GO! Sedona Pathways Plan** (GO Plan) completed
- 2021: Tax permanently extended to fund transit system
- 2022: **Transit Implementation Plan** completed, Transit program established, and transit manager hired

Sedona In Motion (SIM)

The City's comprehensive Transportation Master Plan, completed in 2018 was followed by the passage of a ½ percent sales tax increase to fund transportation projects. Sedona in Motion was established as the Transportation Master Plan's implementation program, a top priority of City Council. In November 2021, Council voted to permanently increase the City Transaction Privilege Tax from 3% to 3.5% by removing the previous 10-year (2018-2028) sunset from the ½ percent tax increase. The ½ percent permanent increase will be dedicated to transportation purposes, including the implementation of a transit system in Sedona.

Completed SIM Projects

The following are a few of the completed projects as of 2023:
- Uptown Roadway Improvements, Phase 1
- Uptown wayfinding signs for public parking lots and pedestrian signs
- Los Abrigados/Brewer Road connection
- Launched the trailhead shuttle program with 3 park-and-ride lots
- New shared-use pathways (4.5 miles): , Soldier Pass Rd, Posse Grounds parking connector, Dry Creek Road phase 1
- Dynamic Message Sign installed adjacent to I-17 north of General Crook Trail

Completed Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects
- Thunder Mountain/Sanborn Drive
- Soldiers Pass Rd Path and Posse Ground Park connector path
- Sunset Road pathway and Sunset Park connector path
- Chapel Rd Path
- Green bicycle safety lanes on W 89A

SIM Strategies
- SIM-1 Uptown Roadway Improvements
- SIM-2 Uptown Pedestrian Improvements
- SIM-3 Parking & Wayfinding
- SIM-4 SR 179 Improvements, Schnebly Roundabout to the Y
- SIM-5/6 Neighborhood Connections
- SIM-7/8 Enhanced Transit Service
- SIM-9 Neighborhood Vehicles
- SIM-10 West Sedona Access Improvements
- SIM-11 Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements
- SIM-12 Traveler Information

🌐 **Sedona in Motion and Sedona Transportation Master Plan www.sedonaaz.gov/SIM**

What About Bypasses or Bridges?

Building new bypasses or new bridges over Oak Creek were considered in the Transportation Master Plan which stated that these strategies "provides a low benefit in relation to the potential cost of the project". The challenges of building bypasses and bridges include:
- Costs far outweigh benefits (cost of construction, land acquisition, etc)
- Jurisdiction is outside city limits, through the National Forest/Yavapai County
- Traffic modeling by engineers findings of no significant reduction to traffic congestion
- Contradictory to Sedona's core values: environmental stewardship, sense of place, community character, etc.
- Environmental impacts

Multimodal Network

The Transportation Master Plan and Sedona in Motion program recommends a multifaceted approach that goes beyond roads and cars as essential to addressing Sedona's traffic and parking issues. A connected network for all modes is needed, whether it is driving, walking, biking or taking the bus.

Figure 6.1. Examples of multimodal transportation. Image source: goraleigh.org

▶ **Policy 6.1 - Develop a multi-modal circulation network that provides for safe alternatives to get around town while improving traffic flow and reducing reliance on the automobile.**

Addressing traffic will take a multifaceted approach; there is no single solution, street connection, or mode that will reduce traffic congestion in Sedona. There are too many cars, thus reducing the number of cars on the road is one of the primary goals for a multimodal network. What it will take: 1) improving infrastructure for all modes, 2) providing transit and alternatives to cars, 3) prioritizing walking and biking improvements, and 4) encouraging visitors, residents, and employees to use other ways of getting around than by car.

▶ **Policy 6.2 - Take a comprehensive, holistic approach to transportation and land use planning to improve resident's quality of life and the visitor experience.**

Land use planning and transportation projects should be integrated to achieve the vision and goals as set forth in this Plan. This can include new commercial and residential development, redevelopment, and public infrastructure projects such as transit, pathways, and other amenities.

▶ **Policy 6.3 - Communicate the Sedona in Motion program goals, priorities, and progress.**

The public has expressed frustration with the SIM projects in part because they see individual projects under construction but not the larger picture of how they all contribute to the solution. It is important to convey how all the projects are components of a larger, connected network that takes time to develop. As SIM projects are completed and the program evolves, it will become even more important to communicate the big picture to the public.

▶ **Policy 6.4 - Pursue a collaborative regional circulation plan that addresses destination access, transit, and parking.**

The very nature of transportation is that people are on the move. Addressing traffic and transit in particular must take a regional approach to match how visitors and residents move through the Verde Valley.

▶ **Policy 6.5 - Design projects for people, ensuring the experience is safe, comfortable, interesting, and efficient.**

The success or popularity of public infrastructure projects like pathways, roads, or transit may depend on the design details that make it a good or bad experience for the user.

What makes a Walkable City?

There are four conditions that influence the walkability of a place: 1) do you feel safe? 2) is it an interesting experience? 3) do you feel comfortable, and 4) is it useful?

- Jeff Speck, "Walkable City: How Downtown Can Save America, One Step at a Time," 2012

Choice in Modes

"people living in the county often don't realize that their "choice" to travel by car is actually compelled by the lack of better multimodal facilities".

- Larry Schoer, Howard County MD Multimodal Transportation Board in "Best Complete Streets Policies 2023" **smartgrowthamerica.org**

WALKING AND BIKING

Walking and biking in Sedona's favorable climate and picturesque surroundings significantly enhances the experience. Prioritizing safety, connectivity, and amenities is crucial to reduce car dependency and create a vibrant, mixed-use community where more people walk, bike, and use transit.

Walking and biking are healthy activities, and Sedona has an excellent climate and scenery to enhance the experience. Improving the safety, linkages, and amenities of a walking and biking network is important to encourage more people to leave their cars, which is critical for a walkable, mixed-use environment.

Sedona Trails and Pathways System (ST&PS)
- 🌐 **Transportation Master Plan**
- 🌐 **GO! Sedona Pathways Plan**

▶ **Policy 6.6 - Prioritize pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements to major roadways.**

A 2020 survey of residents found that 68% of respondents were in support of allocating additional funding for walking and biking improvements from the circulation budget. The GO! Sedona Pathways Plan has identified and prioritized projects that will improve safety which will also encourage more people to walk or bike.

▶ **Policy 6.7 - Create a network of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements and connections linking neighborhoods, activity centers, and popular destinations, and promote walkable, bike-able connections to transit stops.**

Since 2007, pedestrian enhancements have been implemented across Sedona. In 2020, the city introduced the GO! Sedona Pathways Plan. This plan incorporates recommendations from the Transportation Master Plan from 2018. The pathways network seeks to connect the 300 miles of trails inside and out of Sedona to our pathways inside the city. Sedona can be a more connected community by linking residents and visitors to neighborhoods, and destinations like schools, parks, shopping, and the National Forest.

Figure 6.2. Complete Green Street with landscaping, protected bike lane and sidewalk. Source: Avondale Community Sustainability Plan

▶ **Policy 6.8 - Plan future transportation improvements and land use development that supports walkable, mixed-use areas.**

Development in Sedona did not happen with walking and biking in mind. It developed as a rural community with incremental, unplanned growth before incorporation in 1988. Most neighborhoods have no sidewalks and for those that do, sidewalk are on only one side of the street. The main thoroughfares are 89A and 179, which are hard to avoid due to the lack of alternate routes or the need to cross them. Overcoming these challenges will take a strategic approach and close coordination with land use development. Efforts should focus on adding sidewalks and bike paths where they are needed most. They should connect people to where they want to go, in as direct and continuous a route as possible.

▶ **Policy 6.9 - Partner with the Forest Service to implement a trail access improvement plan.**

Recommendations to improve existing trailheads, develop new trailheads, and improve trail access can be found on page 22 of the **GO! Sedona Pathways Plan**. The goals are to: reduce parking conflicts in neighborhoods, expand trailhead parking capacity and better distribute use where appropriate. The other goal is to provide trails access without the use of a car via transit or walking/biking from home or lodging. One project in the works is a new improved Girdner trailhead at the Cultural Park that will be coordinated with future development to integrate public parking, visitor information, and transit.

TRANSIT

The first phase of the City's transit program was launched in 2022. The Sedona Trailhead Shuttle serves five trailheads from three park-and-ride locations and saw a 23% increase in use from 2022 to 2023. The trailhead shuttles have markedly reduced traffic and parking congestion at these trailheads and nearby neighborhoods. In addition, the established Verde Shuttle provides service between Cottonwood and Sedona. Sedona's next endeavor is an on-demand transit service ("micro-transit" or Sedona Shuttle Connect) set to begin in 2024.

▶ **Policy 6.10 - Develop a robust transit system that supports residents, employees, and visitors.**

The Sedona Transit Implementation Plan projected a ten-year price tag of over $109 million in transit capital and operating costs. However, as these costs were anticipated during the pre-COVID economy - this cost will be much higher. With conservative cost increases of over 30% for this program, funding will be a significant challenge as the city moves forward with developing its public transit system. However, there are additional grant funding opportunities available through the current federal Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act and future Federal authorizations.
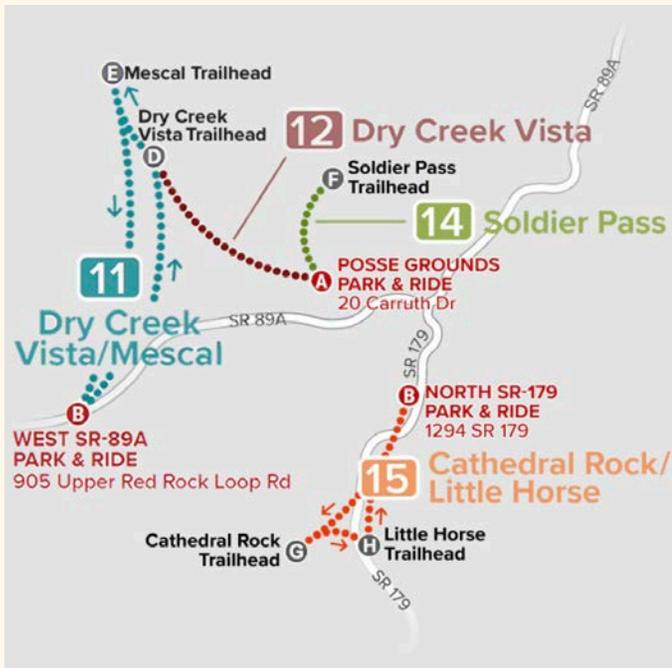

Figure 6.3. Sedona Trailhead Shuttle 2023 route map. Riders can connect to the Verde Shuttle at the North SR-179 Park & Ride.

🌐 **Sedona Shuttle**

▶ **Policy 6.11 - Incorporate transit service to and from major destinations to alleviate impacts on neighborhoods and improve the visitor experience.**

Trailhead shuttles were the first phase of the transit program, however, there are other popular destinations that should be high priorities for future transit service, such as attractions within residential neighborhoods, and places with high traffic congestion and insufficient parking.

Summary of Transit Implementation Strategies
Short-Range Transit Projects
Sedona Shuttle Connect:
- App-enabled demand response shared ride public transportation service
- Real time passenger scheduling and vehicle tracking

Long Range Transit Projects
- Transit Maintenance & Operations Facility: Support the city's zero emission transit fleet with a micro-grid providing renewable solar energy
- Ride Exchange: Supports multimodal transportation options
- Fixed Route Bus Routes:
    - Uptown
    - West Sedona
    - Village of Oak Creek
- Fixed Route Bus Routes, Phase 2:
    - Oak Creek Canyon / Slide Rock
    - West Fork Oak Creek Trailhead
- Possible Future Transit Connections:
    - Cottonwood Area Transit: Connecting Cottonwood to Sedona via the Village of Oak Creek
    - Yavapai-Apache Transit: Connecting Camp Verde to Sedona via the Village of Oak Creek
    - Mountain Line: Connecting Flagstaff and Sedona via SR 89 A

STREETS AND HIGHWAYS

Street Connectivity

Advantages of a well-connected street network:

Emergency evacuation alternatives

Distributes traffic across the network

Improves walking/biking

Allows more direct access between destinations

Can reduce travel distances

Provides more route options

▶ **Policy 6.12 - Upgrade Sedona's major roads to "Complete Streets" that are designed for safe use by all modes of travel.**

To increase the number of people choosing not to drive, streets need to be designed to meet the needs of all types of travel, as illustrated in the diagram below. This does not mean changing every street in the city, as it is not necessary on most neighborhood streets. An assessment should be done to prioritize which streets are most in need of upgrades.

▶ **Policy 6.13 - Explore potential street connections that connect neighborhoods while maintaining the safety and integrity of the neighborhoods.**

Sedona's street network evolved as subdivisions were developed incrementally, funneling nearly all neighborhood traffic to SR 89A or 179. This is now a significant safety concern in the event of an emergency, as there may be only one outlet for a neighborhood. Street connections can be strategically designed to control speeds and minimize traffic through a neighborhood.

Pedestrian Separation **Separated Bike Lane** **Roadway Separation**

Shared-Use Path
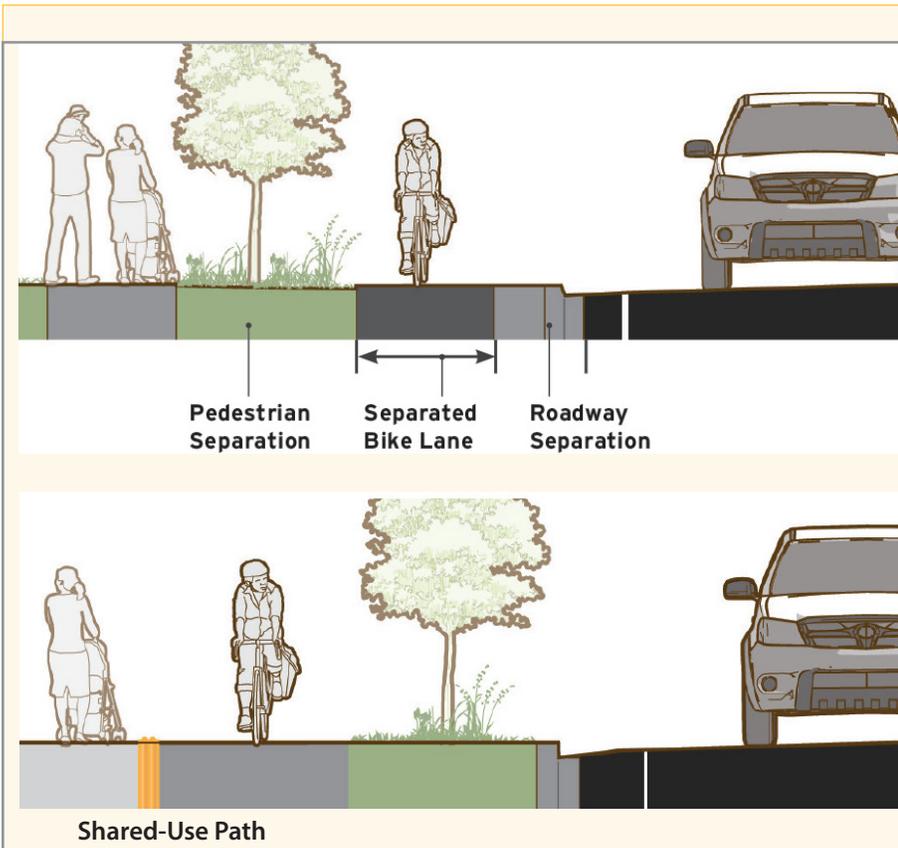
Figure 6.4.
Two variations of a Complete Street.
Source: Small Town and Rural Design Guide

🌐 **Rural Design Guide.com**

West SR 89A

▶ **Policy 6.14 - Improve the safety and streetscape of W 89A by reducing curb-cuts and driveways, adding landscaping, and widening the sidewalk and bike-lane.**

Driving, walking, or biking on W 89A can be an unpleasant or hazardous experience. This is the result of a variety of factors, many of which can be improved through design and development improvements. Besides street design, the streetscape, or area on each side of the road, can influence the experience and safety of everyone. The streetscape encompasses sidewalks, driveways, and intersections, and features such as trees and landscaping, lighting, benches, and bus stops. The benefits of good streetscape design: improved safety for all modes, beautification, and whether or not it is safe, comfortable, and interesting for walking and biking.

▶ **Policy 6.15 - Work with developers and property owners to improve connectivity between commercial properties on W 89A.**

There are many shopping centers, shops, and restaurants that are not connected, where you can't go from one parking lot to the next.

▶ **Policy 6.16 - Explore transfer of W SR 89A and SR 179 (between the Y and Schnebly Hill roundabout) from State to City jurisdiction.**

West 89A is a State highway, which limits what the City can do to make improvements. This means that changes within the road right-of-way, such as signs or sidewalks, must be vetted and approved by the State. If the City did control the highway, it would be responsible for the roadway - funding for maintenance improvements projects, and additional resources to manage it. A change to City jurisdiction would require a referendum (see below).

The benefits of city control include improving the safety and experience for walking and biking; landscaping and streetscapes; and working directly with property owners and developers to make improvements. As an alternative or interim measure, the **GO! Plan** and **Transportation Master Plan** recommend installing mid-block, signalized crossings designed for safe crossing by pedestrians and cyclists, rather than adding a median and roundabouts.

Did You Know?
- 7 traffic signals (stoplights) added to W 89A since 1991
- Arizona Department of Transportation's spacing guidelines of one signal per 1/4 mile does not allow for additional signals in West Sedona
- 89A was upgraded to a four-lane highway between Sedona and Cottonwood in 2002
- As part of that project a median and wider sidewalks added from Juniper Drive to west of Upper Red Rock Loop Road

Transferring a Highway to Sedona from the State

Sedona City Code 2.15.100: Transfer of state routes to the city.

The council shall refer any offer by the state of Arizona for the conversion, exchange, turn-back, conveyance, gift or any other form of transfer of a state route located in the city limits to the city for use or designation as a city street to the qualified electors of the city at a special or general election for approval and acceptance of such offer. Approval and acceptance of any such offer by the city shall require approval by a majority of the qualified electors voting on such referendum. [Approved by voters at November 8, 2011 election. Code 2006 § 2-1-10].

Street Safety for Everyone

Driving, walking, or biking on W 89A can be hazardous, with the potential for a variety of conflicts, and possibly crashes. There are a variety of design improvements that can be done to minimize risks, such as:

1. Reducing curb cuts/driveways
2. Connecting parking lots
3. Locating driveways on side streets instead of W 89A
4. Replacing center lanes with medians
5. Converting intersections into roundabouts
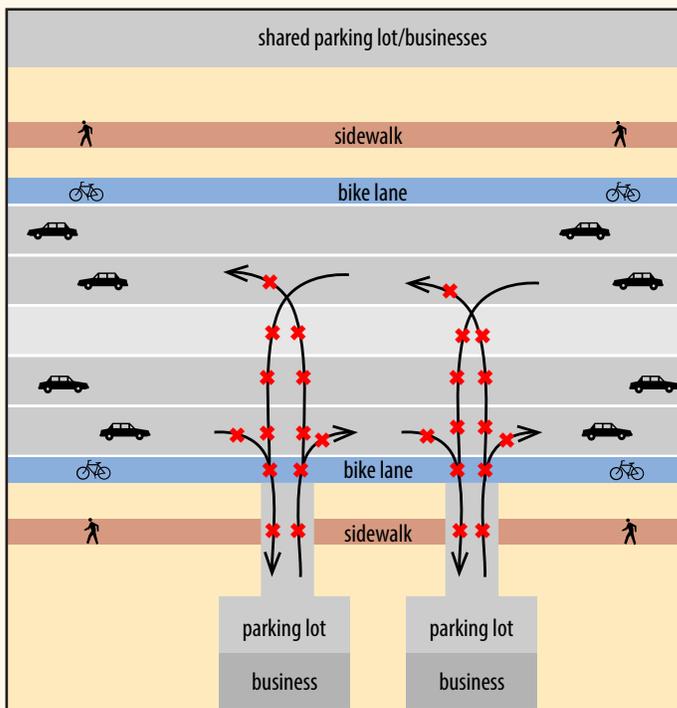
Figure 6.5.
Improving Safety for All Modes
This graphic shows all of the potential conflict points (each represented by a red "x") that may be encountered if you are driving, walking, or biking on W 89A.

State Route 179

SR 179 has seen significant changes over the years, starting out as a simple dirt road, then a two-lane, paved highway. In 1996, Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) proposed rebuilding the highway as 4-lanes. The community strongly objected to the design due to concerns that it did not reflect Sedona's values around environmental stewardship, sense of place aesthetics, and viewshed protection. The community organized, and in 2003 ADOT began an extensive new public planning process for the design of this Scenic Byway, which resulted in the current design that was completed in 2010.

▶ **Policy 6.17 - Alleviate congestion around The Y, Schnebly Hill/179 roundabout, and the Brewer/89A roundabout.**

Originally proposed in 1996, several studies have recommended an extension of Ranger Road to W 89A, replacing the Brewer roundabout, as another measure to alleviate traffic backups at The Y. This project was in the design phase in 2023. The roundabout would also connect to the Forest Rd extension, under construction in 2023.

History of the Brewer Roundabout
- 1996 proposal for extending Ranger Rd to a roundabout on 89A
- 2008 ADOT builds a roundabout at Brewer/89A instead of extending Ranger to a new roundabout
- 2018 Transportation Master Plan recommends the Ranger roundabout
- 2023 Ranger roundabout in the design phase

Figure 6.6. Conceptual rendering of a new Ranger Rd roundabout at West 89A.

Uptown

Over the last ten years, the City's capital improvements program has been focused on improving traffic flow in Uptown. Some of the projects underway or completed:

2020 Main Street Improvements

80% reduction in traffic congestion on 89A after building a median divider/barrier, 2 southbound lanes, 2 roundabouts, and the new Owenby Rd.

2022 Northbound Improvements

18% efficiency improvement in traffic and pedestrian movement from the Amara Lane Intersection Project.

2023-24 Northbound Improvements

50% improvement is expected after adding a left-turn lane, two northbound lanes, and pathway between The Y and Forest Road.

1. Uptown Roadway Improvements
2. SR 89A Northbound Improvements
3. Uptown Parking Garage
4. Forest Road Extension
5. Future Forest Road Intersection and Brewer Roundabout Modifications
6. Proposed Mobility Hub Location
7. Ranger/Brewer and Ranger Extension Project
8. Portal Lane Connection
9. Los Abrigados/Brewer Connection
10. Pedestrian Crossing of Oak Creek
11. Ranger Auxiliary Lane

Figure 6.7. Map of Uptown projects that are complete, being designed, or in the study phase.

► **Policy 6.18 - Develop an integrated area plan that addresses circulation, parking, neighborhoods, and land use for the greater Uptown area.**

In 2020, a draft plan was completed for the Uptown Community Focus Area, however City Council chose to put the plan on hold until this Community Plan update was complete. In addition to land use, the draft plan included circulation recommendations on streets, parking, and bicycle/pedestrian improvements. The draft Uptown CFA Plan can be the basis of a more comprehensive effort that goes into more depth on circulation issues.

Reimagining Jordan Road

Figure 6.8
Illustration of a Jordan Rd Gateway Plaza - the potential transformation of a portion of Jordan Rd into a public plaza and landscaped sidewalk. In comparison, below is a photograph of Jordan Rd.
Source: "Draft Uptown Community Focus Area Plan, 2021"

Parking

More and more cities and towns in the U.S. are moving away from minimum parking requirements to promote walkability, free up space, reduce affordable housing costs, and other redevelopment opportunities. Although this type of parking reform may not work everywhere, the City should investigate removing or reducing minimum off-street parking requirements for properties in commercial, mixed-use areas, and multi-family areas with the potential for significant pedestrian and transit access.

▶   **Policy 6.19 - Evaluate potential alternatives, incentives, and changes to the Land Development Code off-street parking requirements.**

An example of the need to address this issue is that the City parking standards are applicable to all commercial projects and do not differentiate between an Uptown versus a West Sedona project need.

▶   **Policy 6.20 - Improve Uptown parking by increasing capacity, consolidating, sharing, and improving access to parking and transit.**

Beginning in 2005, the City began studying the parking needs in Uptown and the SR 179 commercial area, most recently completing a parking assessment in 2019. In 2020 the City acquired property and began the design of a parking garage on Forest Road in Uptown. A second siting analysis was completed in 2023. The analysis concluded that:

- Parking consolidation, preferably adjacent to a collector road, would alleviate traffic congestion on local and other Uptown roadways.
- The location of the parking consolidation should be placed on the southwest end of Uptown due to 85% of the trips originating from the west and south.
- Consolidated lots should be located within 0.4 miles of the end destination to improve walkability and bikeability in the Uptown area.
- A complete signage program is needed to better inform and direct tourists.

► **Policy 6.21 - Encourage the use of shared parking agreements.**

This could be between private property owners and businesses, or between public and private use. This often works well when the times of use don't overlap, such as an office open during the day and a restaurant open in the evenings. One example is an agreement for public parking at a church, except during church services. Shared parking could be one tool to address the need for trailhead parking.

UPTOWN PARKING ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS, 2023

At one of the stakeholder workshops for the Uptown Parking Alternatives Analysis, the following summarized recommendations were made to the City:

- Prioritize safety for all modes and preserve resident and emergency vehicle access & egress
- Improve Uptown district walkability, bikeability, and ADA access and promote transit and micro-mobility opportunities
- Make public parking easy to find and navigate
- Right-size public parking in the context of other infrastructure and access investments
- Expand public paid parking and formalize an employee parking permit

CIRCULATION ACTIONS

1. Develop Sedona's multimodal system by making progress on all the Sedona in Motion projects, including those identified in other plans such as the **GO Sedona Pathways Plan** and the Sedona **Transit Implementation Plan**. Projects include the following:
   - Using advances in technology to improve the functionality of the circulation, parking, and transit system.
   - Improve communication about the purpose and progress of the SIM program, and how to be part of the "SIM Solution", including an online dashboard about the status and progress of each SIM project.
   - Pursue sustainable funding sources for the continued development and operation of Sedona's public transit system.
   - Complete implementation of the Wayfinding Sign Plan.
   - Conduct a street connection feasibility study that evaluates and prioritizes potential connections for vehicles and/or bike/pedestrian use.
   - Extend Ranger Road to a new roundabout at 89A, replacing the Brewer roundabout.
   - Alleviate congestion at the Tlaquepaque crosswalk and Schnebly/179 roundabout.
   - Complete Uptown northbound improvements on N 89A between The Y and Forest Rd.

2. Establish project review standards to ensure City infrastructure projects align with City plans, best practices, and the Land Development Code.

3. Expand the scope of the Uptown Community Focus Area Plan to include more detailed multimodal circulation and parking recommendations.

4. Develop an action plan to improve safety for walking, biking, and using transit. This may include the following: a "Complete Street" safety assessment to prioritize improvements; and in conjunction with ADOT, evaluate options for improving W 89A through West Sedona.

5. Evaluate off-street parking requirements during the Land Development Code update process that will include public and stakeholder input.

6. Develop a city-wide parking plan that incorporates land use, transit, and circulation, guided by Community Plan goals.

7. Explore the feasibility of a bypass or bridge to alleviate traffic congestion.

7. Environment & Sustainability

- Overview

- Recommended Policies:

- Open Space

- Oak Creek

- Recreation Management

- Resiliency

- Conservation

- Water

- Wastewater

- Energy

- Innovative Building

- Environment & Sustainability Actions

Environment & Sustainability Goal

As responsible stewards of the natural environment, Sedona maintains a lasting water supply, healthy ecosystems, and the ability to adapt to changing conditions.

OVERVIEW

ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY KEY ISSUES

- Threat of wildfire: Sedona is designated an At Risk Community for wildfire by the Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management
- Concerns about limited emergency evacuation routes
- Environmental impacts from recreation such as off-trail use, parking overflow, and OHVs
- OHV noise and traffic through neighborhoods
- Permanent alteration of the landscape due to construction that prioritizes cost over environmental protection
- Aging water and wastewater infrastructure
- The spread of invasive plants, such as the Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*)
- Changing climate patterns, such as higher temperatures, more intense storms, and drought (**International Panel on Climate Change 2023 Report**)

SYNOPSIS 2013 - 2023

- 2017: Wastewater Master Plan updated
- 2019: Created City Sustainability Program, with 3 full-time employees as of 2023
- 2020: **Municipal Sustainability Plan** completed. (2013 Community Plan Action Item E.7)
- 2021: **Climate Action Plan** completed (2013 Community Plan Action Item E.7)
- Adopted the **International Energy Conservation Code** (IECC). (2013 Community Plan Action Item E.5)
- 2023: **Evacuation and Re-entry Plan** added to the **Emergency Operations Plan**

OPEN SPACE &
NATURAL RESOURCES

The City's open space inventory comprises an impressive 52% open space within City limits. This was a point of pride and defining feature of the newly incorporated city. However, as the city approaches build-out, more innovative strategies will be needed to maintain public open space.

▶ **Policy 7.1 - Partner with the Forest Service to ensure National Forest lands within and adjacent to City limits remain public open space and not exchanged for private development.**

49% of land within the city limits is National Forest. This is the realization of one of the city's original goals outlined in the first Sedona Community Plan in 1991. In 1998, the Forest Service amended the 1987 Forest Land Management Plan to protect National Forest lands within and around Sedona (known as Amendment 12). This was an important accomplishment considering there was a Forest Service proposal to exchange several tracts of National Forest to allow for future development. In subsequent plans, the Forest Service continues to restrict land exchanges in the Sedona area.

▶ **Policy 7.2 - Encourage development projects to preserve natural areas.**

Properties with significant natural resource values such as the riparian habitat of Oak Creek should be preserved and maintained in a natural state. Development should also take into consideration designing a project to preserve scenic views of the site visible from highways, scenic vistas, and gateways into the community. One method of accomplishing this is with cluster development that concentrates buildings in a smaller area in order to retain the remainder of the site as protected open space.

▶ **Policy 7.3 - Support the retention of open space between communities, especially along W 89A between Cottonwood and Sedona.**

This is a recommendation from previous regional planning efforts that saw the value of retaining open space between Verde Valley communities. The majority of this corridor is National Forest, however there is land that could be developed, such as State Trust Land, private property, and City of Sedona owned property associated with the Wastewater Treatment property. Future development of this property in particular should be carefully evaluated, with consideration given to Community Plan recommendations.

▶ **Policy 7.4. Provide education and resources about living in the wildland-urban interface.**

The wildland-urban interface (WUI) is an "area where human settlement mixes with and meets natural landscapes" (USDA Forest Service, https://www.fs.usda.gov/research/nrs/fire/wui). Sedona residents can put into action the guiding principle "protect and honor the environment" (Vision chapter) with the knowledge and understanding about urban wildlife, landscaping with native plants, invasive species management, and water conservation.

SEDONA OPEN SPACE

Open Space Inventory
Total Acres: 6,069
- National Forest 5,736 acres
- Private Open Space 243 acres (such as Homeowners Associations dedicated open space tracts)
- City Parks & Open Space 126 acres
  - Posse Grounds Park 79 acres
  - Jordan Park Ridge/Glen 25 acres
  - Sugar Loaf Trailhead 9 acres
  - Sunset Park 7 acres
  - Jordan Historic Park 5 acres
  - Ranger Station Park 3.5 acres
  - Jamesen Park 0.4 acres
  - Arroyo Pinon Botanical Garden 0.2 acres
  - Greyback Park 0.1 acres

Figure 7.1. Dedicated open space and public land in the City of Sedona

Oak Creek

Oak Creek is one of the reasons people settled in what later became known as Sedona. The waters of Oak Creek supplied drinking water, and irrigation for crops and orchards. There are still remnants of those days, such as pumphouses and irrigation ditches. Today, the only way to visit Oak Creek within city limits is to stay at one of several resorts on the creek, and the remainder of the creek is private property - mostly houses.

▶ **Policy 7.5 - Preserve and restore the Oak Creek corridor floodplains and riparian areas from the impacts of development.**

The majority of Oak Creek flows past resorts and houses along the banks of the creek. In some cases, buildings or improvements like decks and patios are just feet away from the water. There are several areas of abandoned hotels and RV parks on the creek (privately owned), which are being marketed for development. There is time to ensure the riparian areas are preserved and buildings are built outside the floodplain. If these properties must be developed (private property owners have the right to build), it can be done in an environmentally sensitive way.

"[It's important to preserve] our bountiful natural assets for now and future generations, including but not limited to water conservation, and the protection of Sedona's surrounding land and its forests over which we have some control."
- Public comment

▶ **Policy 7.6 - Protect the water quality of the Oak Creek watershed.**

The causes of contamination include waste from wildlife, humans, dogs, livestock, septic systems, recreation, and agriculture. Stormwater can carry pollutants such as pesticides and oil, as well as trash and other debris. Efforts are underway, led by the Oak Creek Watershed Council, to counteract these impacts through education and outreach, and through projects such as installing more public toilets, trash receptacles, and dog waste stations.

Figure 7.2
Volunteers and city staff at a clean-up event sponsored by the Oak Creek Watershed Council, oakcreekwatershed.org

RECREATION MANAGEMENT

Natural areas and neighborhoods need to be protected from the impacts of recreation, including noise, invasive plants/animals, dust, and pollution.

ⓘ **Economy & Tourism chapter**

▶ **Policy 7.7 - Foster responsible recreation through educational messaging and wayfinding.**

Social media has led visitors to places not on designated trails nor endorsed by the Forest Service. Educational messaging, signage, and marketing is improving, however more can be done to inform people how to recreate responsibly, where to go, how to get there, and directional signs on the trails. See Economy & Tourism chapter for more information.

▶ **Policy 7.8 - Engage in partnerships that work to protect and restore the environment from the impacts of outdoor recreation.**

Outdoor recreation is cross-jurisdictional (National Forest/City of Sedona) thus management must occur as a partnership process to continually improve management. To be most effective, it should also include businesses, non-profits, and the Chamber, including the many organizations that organize volunteers to help with fundraising and on-the-ground projects.

"The large amounts of people treading through (or camping in, riding through, or driving through) the National Forest lands can degrade the ecosystem if not doing so respectfully."
- Public comment

Figure 7.2
Excerpt of "Be an Oak Creek Caretaker" poster. Source: Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, azdeq.gov/Oak Creek

Resiliency

It is increasingly important for leaders and the community to understand how to adapt and be prepared to handle disruptive events such as wildfire, flooding, severe drought, etc.

▶ **Policy 7.9 - Increase community capacity and awareness of climate change risks and impacts.**

Sedona is facing what is likely to be a hotter and drier future with more wildfires and subsequent increase in severe flooding, as seen in the **International Panel for Climate Change 2023 Report** and recent events. Awareness in the community is essential to make changes to protect the City and its natural environments into the future.

▶ **Policy 7.10 - Identify and target support for at-risk populations, including those who don't speak or read in English.**

According to the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**, at-risk populations are "people with access and functional needs (temporary or permanent) that may interfere with their ability to access or receive medical care before, during, or after a disaster or public health emergency". The City of Sedona has several plans that address the agency and partner's roles in preventing, preparing for, and recovering from emergency situations or hazard events however the communications have not always been accessible to everyone.

What is a Resilient Community?
"Community resilience is the ability of a community to prepare for anticipated natural hazards, adapt to changing conditions, and withstand and recover rapidly from disruptions."
 - **Federal Emergency Management Agency**

⊕ **Sedona Emergency Management**

🌐 **Firewise Communities**

ℹ️ See **Innovative Building section** for more on wildfire risk reduction.

▶ **Policy 7.11 - Implement Firewise USA® practices and programs in partnership with the Sedona Fire District , Coconino National Forest, residents and other property owners.**

The Firewise USA® recognition program provides guidance to homeowners, neighborhoods, and communities on what can be done to reduce wildfire risk. As a homeowner, examples are to establish clear zones around your house, and use fire resistant landscaping and building materials. To be a Firewise Site, a set of voluntary criteria must be met annually including convening a volunteer committee, conducting an assessment of wildfire risk, and completing recommended actions such as removing yard debris. As of 2023, there was only one Firewise USA® site in Sedona, the Cottages at Coffeepot Homeowners Association
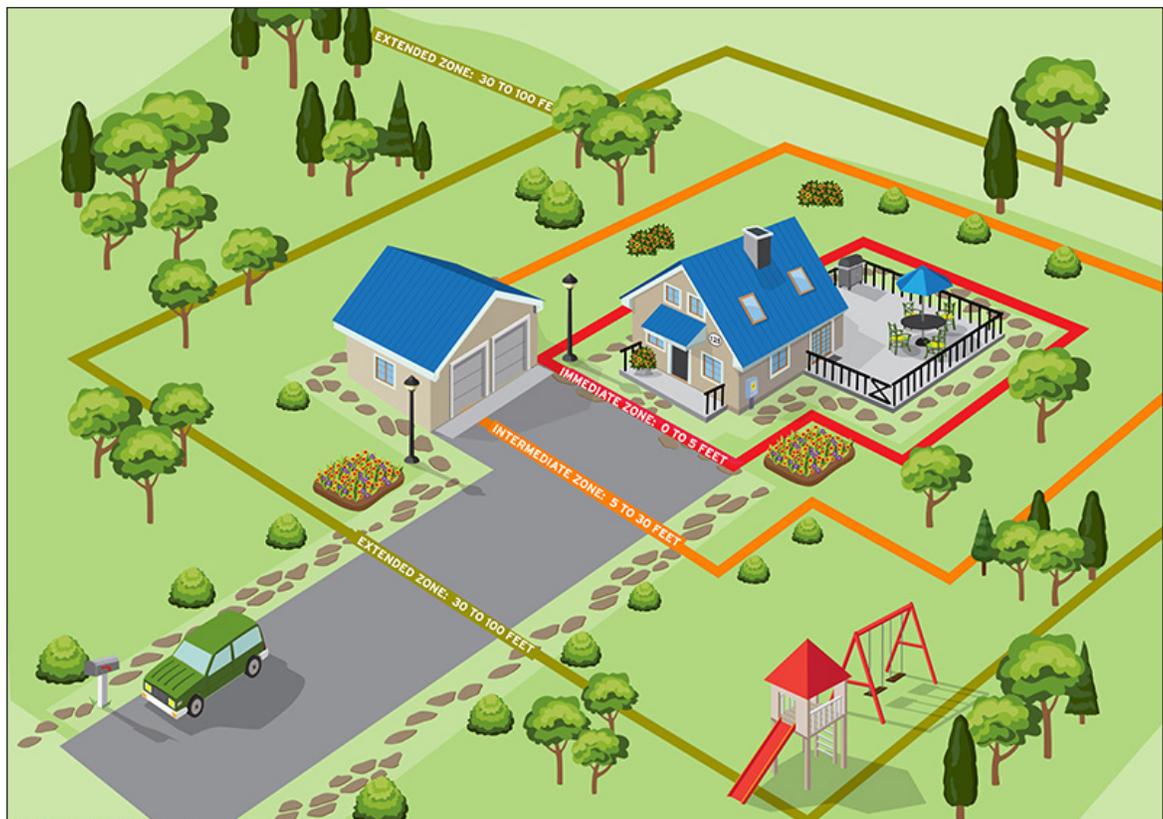

Figure 7.2. Clearance zones around homes and structures.
Source: **National Fire Protection Association**.

WATER CONSERVATION

The majority of the potable water supply for Sedona is from groundwater wells owned and managed by the Arizona Water Company, and to a lesser extent the Oak Creek Water Company.

▶ **Policy 7.12 - Reduce residential and commercial water use.**

The Arizona Water Company has partnered with the City and others to develop a Joint Water Resource Program and Integrated Demand Management Program. This will guide water conservation efforts, education, and assistance, especially for residents, businesses, and large resorts. Finding and resolving water leaks is one method of reducing water use, which can happen with landscaping irrigation leaks or malfunctions, or dripping faucets in houses. It can also happen as a result of aging water system, the needs to be addressed by the water providers, Arizona Water Company and Oak Creek Water.

▶ **Policy 7.13 - Participate in regional and statewide water planning efforts.**

To ensure an ample supply of clean water for future generations, a multi-pronged regional approach is essential. Verde Valley communities, including Sedona, have formed partnerships to address various water resource issues.

Water conservation education program
and partnership. rippleeffectsedona.com

Wastewater

The transport, treatment, and use of wastewater is an important component to ensuring a sustainable water supply and healthy ecosystem.

▶ **Policy 7.14 - Address aging wastewater infrastructure.**

The City established its sewer system in 1993, and while many areas have been converted from septic systems, the sewer infrastructure is now aging and components will need to be replaced and/or upgraded to ensure proper containment and transport of effluent.

▶ **Policy 7.15 - Reuse treated wastewater (effluent) for beneficial use and to recharge groundwater.**

The City currently disposes of treated effluent in several ways: wastewater ponds, spray irrigation, injection wells, reuse for fighting wildfire, and in construction projects. The challenge in reusing effluent from the City's Wastewater Treatment Plant at a larger scale is distributing and pumping the water back to the city, 4 miles uphill at a significant cost.

City of Sedona's wastewater treatment plant on West 89A, left. Sewer main construction in Uptown, above.

Energy Conservation

Reducing energy use and increasing energy efficiency is a goal for all commercial, residential, and public facilities.

▶ **Policy 7.16 - Greenhouse gas emissions and energy use are reduced in all city operations, procedures, and procurement.**

Conserving energy will reduce costs while decreasing the use of fossil fuels and resulting pollution. Improving the efficiency of buildings can reduce the need for heating and cooling and result in lower utility bills.

▶ **Policy 7.17 - Maximize renewable energy generation and storage capacity, such as electric vehicle (EV) chargers, solar panels, etc.**

Solar power is already in use by many homes and businesses. The City's Sustainability Program is providing resource assistance to locals interested in solar photovoltaic (PV) systems for their homes or businesses.

▶ **Policy 7.18 - Educate, support, and assist property owners with converting exterior light fixtures.**

The City of Sedona was designated the world's eighth International Dark Sky Community in 2014 by the International Dark-Sky Association through a partnership with Keep Sedona Beautiful.

Sedona amended the Land Development Code § 5.8 in 2023 to address older, non-compliant, exterior lights.

> *"All lighting that does not conform to all provisions of this Code shall be brought into compliance by January 1, 2028. Until this time, no modification or replacement shall be made to a nonconforming fixture unless the fixture thereafter conforms to the provisions of this Code, except that identical lamp replacement is allowed".*

What is Dark Sky Lighting?
Responsible outdoor lighting is:
- Useful - All light should have a clear purpose
- Targeted - Light should be directed only to where it's needed
- Low level - Illumination should be no higher than necessary
- Controlled - Light should be used only when it is useful
- Warm-colored lighting
  - **Dark Sky International**

Figure 7.3
Example of a dark sky compliant light fixture.

> *"[Our focus is on an] equitable transition to clean, reliable, and affordable energy. Shifting our building energy sources from fossil fuels to clean electricity sources like wind and solar will be critical in meeting our long-term goals [to reduce emissions by 50% by 2030]. Making this shift will require that we continue to reduce building energy demand, introduce incentives for building electrification, and expand renewable energy and battery storage infrastructure."*
> *- Sedona* **Climate Action Plan**

Innovative Building

Environmental stewardship is one of the core values of our community, thus it should be evident in the built environment, whether construction, infrastructure, or maintenance.

▶ **Policy 7.19 - Design and build all projects utilizing innovative, green building methods and materials**

Innovative building, or green/sustainable building, uses design practices and construction methods and materials responsibly and efficiently. This can result in lower operating costs, potentially less maintenance, and reduced local and global impacts. Examples:

- Efficient use of energy and water that may include passive methods or technology
- Healthy indoor systems with minimal pollutants
- Renewable or sustainable materials with minimal waste

▶ **Policy 7.20 - Encourage, and in some cases require, new and redevelopment projects to include wildfire risk reduction measures in design and construction.**

The Sedona Fire District has a **Wildland Urban Interface code** that includes standards for design and construction of new developments. In 2018, the City's Land Development Code was modified (for example reducing the amount of required landscaping).

▶ **Policy 7.21 - Locate and design buildings* to maintain, restore, or enhance natural areas with minimal disturbance.**

A healthy environment is reliant on maintaining the natural functions of the ecosystem that native plants and wildlife depend on. While preserving the landscape in its natural state is preferred, landscaping with native plants can reduce water consumption while providing wildlife habitat.

*Projects may be City of Sedona or development on private land

▶ **Policy 7.22 - City properties should set the example for designing for a sense of place with environmentally responsible and innovative building and landscaping projects.**

City parks, City Hall, street landscaping, and capital improvement projects are ideal for demonstrating environmental stewardship. These are opportunities to educate the public and developers on the value of planting with native plants as well as appropriate low-water use, adaptive plants.

▶ **Policy 7.23 - Manage stormwater to reduce the impacts of flooding while retaining the environmental benefits of stormwater by using green infrastructure design.**

Also known as low impact development, the intent is to capture the water on-site to allow infiltration rather than funneling it elsewhere. Just as in nature, plants and rocks can slow the movement of stormwater, recharge groundwater, and discourage erosion. Simultaneously, that slowed stormwater can irrigate landscaping and provide wildlife habitat that blends with the natural environment. This may be as simple as adding a curb cut that allows water to collect in a median or strip of landscaping between a street and sidewalk.
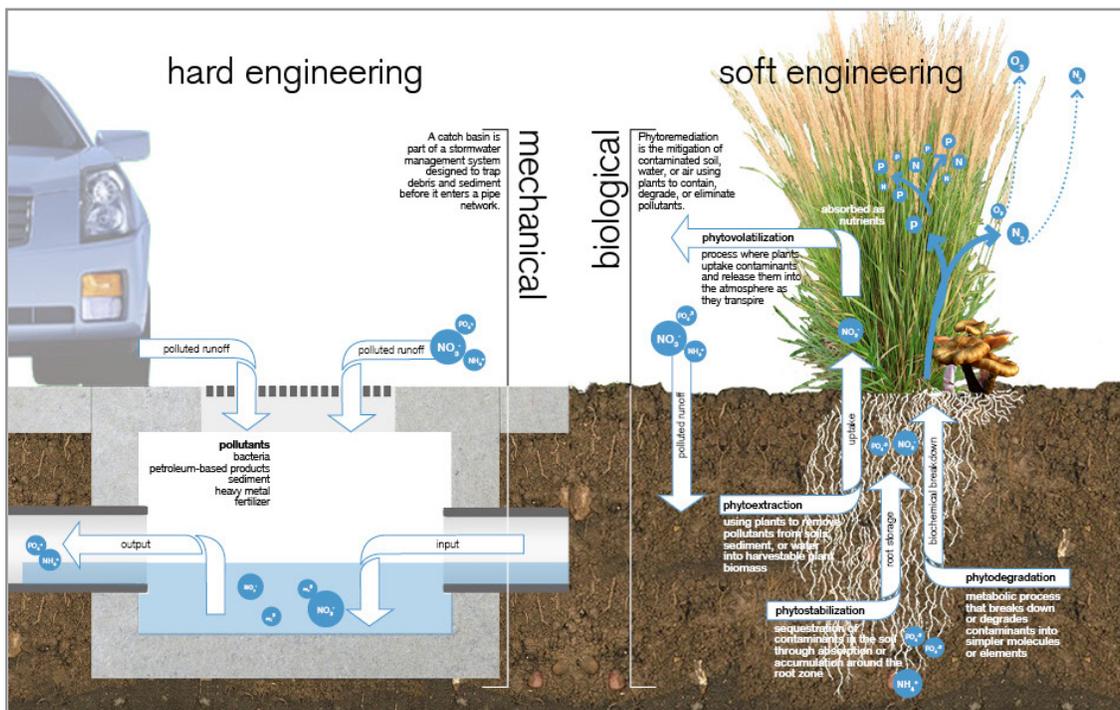

Figure 7.3. Low Impact Development - comparison of traditional vs natural solutions to stormwater management. Source: **University of Arkansas Community Design Center**

Environment & Sustainability Actions

1. Establish procedures to ensure emergency communications and materials meet accessibility standards and are in both English and Spanish.

2. Amend the Land Development Code to reduce wildfire risk of new development and redevelopment.

3. Establish a citizen/stakeholder work group to strategize implementation of the Firewise Program in neighborhoods throughout the City.

4. Implement a recreational wayfinding plan that includes trailheads and trails, in partnership with the National Forest for a seamless cross-jurisdiction signage system.

5. Continue to support and participate in inter-agency, non-profit, and stakeholder collaboration efforts that address environmental and recreational issues.

6. Support and expand the Oak Creek stewardship initiatives of the Oak Creek Watershed Council, Friends of the Verde River, other organized groups, and property owners and developers.

7. Pursue working with property owners and developers to ensure future development preserves the Oak Creek corridor; including the potential for city acquisition for permanent protection as land becomes available.

8. Work with partners to develop an Oak Creek watershed plan that identifies ways to work with property owners to restore and protect the creek ecosystem.

9. Investigate strategies for either incentivizing or regulating water conservation measures.

10. Identify appropriate standards for water conservation that can be applied during the development review process.

11. Encourage water use audits to help identify water leaks and high use fixtures.

12. Implement a green building program that includes education, standards, and incentives coordinated with the Sedona building code.

13. Invest in community resilience hubs, which are places that support residents with coordinated communication, distribution of resources, and serves before, during, and after a natural hazard event. See **USDN Resilience Hubs** for examples.

14. Create landscaping guidelines for developers and residents that address preserving natural areas, native plants, and xeriscape practices.

15. Improve the City's capacity to incorporate natural resource management best practices in design, construction, maintenance, and operations.

16. Develop a resource guide and development standards for low impact development/green infrastructure methods of managing stormwater.

17. Initiate partnerships to develop a city-wide weed management plan that includes business and resident education and volunteers.

18. Partner with Verde Watershed Restoration Coalition and other partners to expand invasive species education in Sedona.

19. Explore and implement incentives, rebates, and other ways that support energy and water conservation improvements.

20. Investigate additional public/private partnerships for water conservation.

21. Evaluate linking wastewater rates to water use to encourage water conservation.

22. Investigate waste management (trash hauling) alternatives that are more efficient and sustainable.

23. Explore water conservation measures such as limiting ornamental grass lawns and decorative water features.

24. Evaluate City noise regulations.

25. Establish a forum, such as a work group, for sharing and creating information about living in the wildland-urban interface that includes representatives from the Forest Service, Arizona Game and Fish Department, non-profit organizations, homeowners, and other stakeholders.

8. Economy & Tourism

- Overview

- Recommended Policies:

  - Economic Initiatives

  - Tourism & Visitor Management

  - Economy & Tourism Actions

Economy & Tourism Goal

Sedona's economy is resilient and sustainable, and tourism is managed to ensure a healthy balance between environmental stewardship, community quality of life and visitor experience.

OVERVIEW

ECONOMY & TOURISM KEY ISSUES

- Lagging transportation and infrastructure
- Inadequate healthcare facilities with lack of available physicians
- Inadequate assisted living facilities motivating aging residents to leave
- Lack of available employees
- The increasing number of visitors to Sedona leading to damage to the National Forest, reduction in community quality of life and sense of community, and increased traffic and parking challenges
- The Instagram effect of unmanaged advertising to scenic hot spots, often leading visitors to locations unable to handle the traffic, parking, waste, and foot/bike traffic
- Conversion of residential housing into short-term vacation rentals (STR) has increased the number of relatively unregulated "hotel rooms" and decreased the amount of workforce housing
- Safety issues as a result of the State's limitation on a city's ability to regulate, as well as a proliferation of "work without a permit"

SYNOPSIS 2013 - 2023

- 2010: Instagram social media platform launched and grew to become one of the most significant influences on the travel industry
- 2013: Residents alerted City Council to their concerns about the proliferation of OHV rentals on city streets
- 2017: The use of residential housing for short-term vacation rentals became legal as the State of Arizona overturned the City's prohibition on rentals of less than 30-days
- 2023: The City of Sedona and the Chamber of Commerce end their long-standing agreement
- 2023: The City of Sedona launched a new Tourism Program and became the designated Destination Management and Marketing Organization (DMMO) and as such, an official partner of the Arizona State Office of Tourism

What is "overtourism"?
The United Nations World Tourism Organization has defined overtourism as "the impact of tourism on a destination, or parts thereof, that excessively influences perceived quality of life of citizens and/or quality of visitors experiences in a negative way." Headlines from: Outside magazine, azcentral.com, and Travel & Leisure

Overtourism Has Reached a Dangerous Tipping Point—Am I Part of the Problem?
The stunning destination of Sedona, Arizona is feeling the squeeze, along with many other iconic destinations worldwide. A new film called 'The Last Tourist' offers up ways we can fix the travel glut.

Sedona Is Arizona's 'It' Destination — but Where Does It Go From Here?
With attention growing from Instagrammers, New Agers, and all sorts of city slickers, some residents of this Arizona town are taking a step back — and envisioning a more sustainable future.
By Maya Kachroo-Levine | Published on April 29, 2022

TRAVEL
Sedona tourism triples over the last decade
Associated Press
Published 10:29 a.m. MT Feb. 5, 2016

Economic Initiatives

Sedona's future lies not only in building a sustainable regional economy, but also in building a more diversified, and thus resilient economy.

▶ **Policy 8.1 - Engage with Verde Valley communities to build a resilient and sustainable regional economy.**
Building a sustainable regional economy will require that Sedona participate with partners in the Verde Valley region such as public agencies, non-profits, coalitions, and groups like the Verde Valley Regional Economic Organization (VVREO). These partnerships can collectively develop and provide programs and support services for all sectors of our region's economy.

▶ **Policy 8.2 - Grow a more diversified economy in Sedona.**
In order to diversify the economy over the next 10 years, two things need to be accomplished: the workforce will need affordable housing, and businesses need broadband. Housing should be addressed at both the local Sedona level and the regional Verde Valley to meet projected housing needs. As of 2023, the City has been actively working on bringing broadband to Sedona.

▶ **Policy 8.3 - Prioritize affordable housing to attract and retain employees in Sedona.**
Sedona has always found it challenging to attract and retain employees due to the higher than average cost of living. Since the COVID Pandemic, those issues have been exacerbated by a shortage of employees nationwide. The increase in short term rentals has also decreased the availability of long-term rental properties.

ⓘ **Housing chapter**

"The Verde Valley embraces a shared economic agenda. Government, business, land owners, developers, educators and civic leaders are united and mobilized to achieve measurable results. There is a team spirit to achieve the vision of economic prosperity. Collaboration between communities and regional organizations is second nature to ensure the integration of actions and investments to accomplish specific objectives."
            -Verde Valley Regional Economic Organization **Strategic Plan**

"[Find] ways to keep both the tourists and the residents happy. Those who live here need to understand the importance of our visitors, and also need to have quality of life as a resident."
            - Public Comment

▶ **Policy 8.4 - Collaborate with regional partners and the healthcare industry to ensure the availability of medical providers in the Verde Valley.**

The number of healthcare providers, doctors, and dentists offices in Sedona has been decreasing over the years. This means that residents must go to Cottonwood, Flagstaff, Prescott, or Phoenix. Access to healthcare is a growing issue in smaller, more rural towns across the country. This is also a regional problem that is best resolved by a coalition of neighboring communities working together.

▶ **Policy 8.5 - Work with public and private partners to build broadband, fiber optic infrastructure throughout the City.**

According to the National Digital Inclusion Alliance, in 2017 (most recent data available) residential access to broadband such as cable and fiber optic in Sedona was between 70-80 percent. Three broadband providers have speeds of at least 25 Mbps downstream / 3 Mbps upstream, which is considered reasonable standard for streaming. However, with the continuing growth of remote workers, Sedona will need to expand broadband coverage and encourage providers to increase their speeds in order to stay ahead of the technological curve and build a thriving economy.

▶ **Policy 8.6 - Support programs that assist local businesses, entrepreneurs, telecommuters, and home based workers.**

There is a need to work with the Chamber of Commerce, the Verde Valley Regional Economic Organization, and others to support the business community.

▶ **Policy 8.7 - Support business prosperity by connecting the community to local tourism businesses.**

Since tourism can fluctuate, a more resilient economy has strong community connections between local businesses and residents, who can help bridge that gap while also fostering a stronger sense of unity.

Tourism & Visitor Management

There are two aspects to tourism and visitor management, one is focused on the marketing and messaging before people get here (they may see an ad or are planning a trip), and the other is visitor management during the time they are in Sedona. It is essential that both are addressed in coordination.

Visitor management must be incorporated into nearly all City programs: circulation (finding their way around town, traffic, parking, using transit), environment and sustainability (responsible recreation), community (neighborhood impacts), and housing (impacts of short-term rentals).

▶ **Policy 8.8 - Ensure resident's quality of life by taking a comprehensive, coordinated approach to visitor management to control the adverse impacts of tourism on our community.**

The way to boost community and quality of life is to carefully and strategically manage tourism. To succeed at serving the community, residents need to see that the City is supporting residents by managing tourists.

▶ **Policy 8.9 - Proactively manage and market Sedona as a community that values the protection of the environment and a positive visitor experience.**

In 2023, the long-standing contract with the Sedona Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Bureau was not renewed. This prompted the City to establish a new tourism marketing and management program. With the help of the new Tourism Advisory Board, the new program will focus on: Tourism Strategic Plan, brand/identity development, summer marketing campaign(s), and updating the Sustainable Tourism Plan.

City of Sedona Tourism Program Launched in 2023

- Designated "Destination Management and Marketing Organization" (DMMO), an authorized partner of the Arizona Office of Tourism
- Hired Tourism and Economics Initiatives Coordinator
- Tourism Advisory Board established
- Created websites:
- ScenicSedona.com
- SunnySedona.com
- Enhanced messaging to Recreate Responsibly, Leave No Trace, etc.
- Began data collection and analysis of past and current visitation
- New business database with over 500 tourism-related businesses signed up in 2023. Businesses are featured on the new website and are eligible to receive leads and opportunities from the professional travel industry.

ⓘ **Environment and Sustainability chapter**, Recreation section

▶ **Policy 8.10 - Strive to find a balance between community quality of life and a healthy tourism economy, engaging both concerned residents and business owners in future decision making.**

The impacts of tourism on the community that pose a challenge to Sedona include traffic and parking issues, lack of housing, seasonal lulls in patronage, and environmental degradation. Tourism must be managed to mitigate these challenges through proactive communications, educational campaigns for tourists, and strengthening connections between the community and local businesses.

▶ **Policy 8.11 - Ensure that destination marketing promotes responsible tourism through strategic and innovative messaging to better manage the impacts of tourism.**

The City intends to be strategic about attracting specific visitors during slower times, with targeted messaging that emphasizes low-impact tourism and recreation. Collaborating with front-line stakeholders, land managers, and other partners can provide consistent and effective messaging that must balance the need for environmental stewardship, resident quality of life, and a healthy tourism economy.

> *"There are too many visitors who have little awareness and concern about protecting the natural wonder that is Sedona. There are many places around the globe that make their visitor focus on ecotourism. I would like Sedona to take that approach with our future - we can provide education and shift our focus from wild and rowdy to a peaceful appreciation of the quiet, dark sky, arts, culture, and natural world."*
> *- Public Comment*

Economy & Tourism Actions

1. Continue to participate in partnership programs such as the Verde Valley Regional Economic Organization (VVREO).

2. Continue efforts to build affordable housing, in the city and regionally.

3. Follow through on efforts to bring broadband to Sedona.

4. Support initiatives and partnerships serving local businesses and community.

5. Develop a Tourism Strategic Plan that will outline the initial direction for the Tourism Program.

6. Develop Tourism Marketing Plan that will outline marketing goals on how and when to market such a fragile environment both from a landscape and community sentiment standpoint.

7. Develop a tourism branding plan that outlines what Sedona is as a destination and how to communicate this with the world.

8. Proactively enter the social media influencer culture to counteract the unintended consequences of social media, including partnering with established influencers.

9. Collaborate with other organizations, agencies and businesses to track tourist numbers and trends.

10. Strategically schedule events, activities, and marketing more broadly across the year to relieve congestion.

9. Implementation

- How the Plan is Implemented

- Plan Administration

- Plan Amendments

- 2013 Community Plan Implementation

- Implementation Policies

- Implementation Actions

How the Plan is Implemented

This portion of the Plan details how both the public and private sector contribute to turning the Plan into action. Over the next 10 years the Plan will influence other more specific plans, the Land Development Code, and Capital Improvements Programming.

COMMUNITY PLAN ACTION PROGRAM AND DETAILED PLANS

Many of the actions proposed in this Plan call for more specific planning to further define how the goals, policies, and actions will be achieved. These more detailed plans may relate to particular geographic areas or topics, such as the proposed West Sedona Corridor CFA Plan.

LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE

The City of Sedona **Land Development Code** contains zoning district regulations, subdivision regulations, procedural requirements, and development standards applicable to nearly all projects proposed by developers and builders. The provisions of the Land Development Code are to be consistent with and conform to the Community Plan and related specific planning. Upon completion of this Plan, there may need to be updates to the Land Development Code to reflect the Plan's recommendations, thus it is a key tool to implement the Plan.

PRIVATE SECTOR

Many of the Plan recommendations are implemented with new development or redevelopment proposals that must conform to the City's Land Development Code. There also may be incentives identified in CFA Plans that can influence a project. Incentives may include flexibility on certain development standards provided in conjunction with benefits to the community.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM

The Plan also guides the preparation of the City's Capital Improvements Program (CIP), a ten-year plan that identities the capital projects and equipment and infrastructure investments that will be made by the City along with the priority, projected costs and funding sources for each project. The CIP is updated annually by the City Council with public participation. As provided in Arizona State statutes, the Planning and Zoning Commission then reviews the CIP to determine the conformity of the proposed capital projects with the adopted Community Plan. The City Council then approves the CIP.

Plan Administration

COMMUNITY PLAN ADOPTION/RE-ADOPTION

As required under Arizona Revised Statutes (A.R.S.) **9-461.06**, the adoption or re-adoption of a general plan (Sedona's "Community Plan") is subject to:

- Public participation procedures adopted by the City Council
- Approval by an affirmative vote of at least two thirds of the members of the Sedona City Council
- Updating at least once every ten years

SPECIFIC PLANS

Community Focus Area (CFA) Plans are Specific Plans (addressed in A.R.S. Section **9-461.08** and **.09**) involving public participation in more detailed planning to implement the Community Plan through detailed Policy direction for smaller areas of the City. In addition to recommending appropriate locations for different land use types, Specific/CFA Plans may guide building locations, placement of public facilities, and other issues appropriate to the area.

A Specific/CFA Plan is incorporated into the Sedona Community Plan by reference and is considered an implementation tool of the Sedona Community Plan. Specific/CFA Plans may be considered by the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council at any time and are adopted by a majority of the City Council.

Plan Amendments

MAJOR AMENDMENTS

As defined by **A.R.S. 9-461.06**, a major amendment is defined as a substantial alteration of the City's land use mixture or balance as established in the Community Plan's Land Use Element, and may be specific to Future Land Use Map changes. It is up to the City to develop criteria that meet this definition. The State requires that all proposed Major Amendments to the Community Plan:

- Are subject to public participation procedures adopted by the City Council
- Shall be presented at a public hearing within 12 months of when the proposal is made
- Be approved by an affirmative vote of at least two thirds of the members of the City Council
- May be initiated by the City or requested by the private sector

MAJOR AMENDMENT CRITERIA

The following criteria will be used to determine the need for a Major Amendment. These criteria do not apply to amendments proposed in conjunction with a Specific Plan (Community Focus Area Plan). Amendments in conjunction with these Specific Plans are all considered Minor Amendments.

1. A change to the Future Land Use Map where:
   - The land area is greater than 5 acres for changes to a non-residential land use designation, or
   - There is a change in the land use designation from: Any land use to Commercial/Lodging
2. A modification to the text of the Community Plan that proposes:
   - A change in the density ranges within the residential land use designations or a change in the intensity of use in any land use designation
   - Substantial changes to goals and policies in the Land Use or Housing chapters
   - Addition of a new land use designation

MINOR AMENDMENTS

Minor Amendments are changes other than a new or re-adopted Plan or Major Amendment. Minor Amendments may be considered and approved at any time by the City Council. Minor amendments are subject to public participation procedures adopted by the City Council.

ONGOING REVIEW

The City should conduct periodic reviews of the Community Plan to evaluate the following:

- Specific Action Items
- Potential Amendments
- Actions called out in **A.R.S. Section 9-461.07**, such as the preparation of an annual report on the progress of applying the Plan
- Planning and Zoning Commission reports Community Plan progress to City Council.

2013 Plan Implementation

The following are highlights of the completed action items from the 2013 Community Plan.

Circulation
- Completed Transportation Master Plan
- Completed Uptown Improvements
- Completed Transit Study
- Hired Transit Manager
- Launched trailhead shuttle system
- Completed GO Sedona Pathways Plan
- Constructed Thunder Mt/Sanborn and other shared use paths
- Established in-lieu fee for Uptown
- Acquired land and began design of a parking garage on Forest Rd
- Began construction of the Forest Road extension

Community
- Acquired Historic Ranger Station property in 2014
- Park Master Plan completed in 2016
- Park construction and historic building renovations to be complete in 2024

Environment
- Established Sustainability Program
- Expanded Sustainability Program staff to 3 employees
- Completed Climate Action Plan
- Completed Municipal Sustainability Plan
- Adopted the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC)

Economic Development
- Hired Economic Development Director
- Completed Economic Diversification Plan

Land Use & Housing
- Land Development Code updated
- Completed housing study
- Hired Housing Manager
- Completed CFA Plans: Soldiers Pass, Schnebly Hill, Cultural Park (Western Gateway), Sunset Live/Work, Uptown (draft)

Implementation Policies

▶ **Policy 9.1 -** Identify and use a variety of sources to finance necessary City services, facilities, equipment, and infrastructure that meet community needs.

▶ **Policy 9.2 -** Support funding mechanisms that are beneficial to development and bear a reasonable relationship to the burden imposed on the City to provide additional necessary public services.

▶ **Policy 9.3 -** Ensure the annual capital budget and City project priorities align with the Community Plan.

▶ **Policy 9.4 -** Require development to pay its fair, proportionate share of service and infrastructure costs through development agreements, development impact fees, and other appropriate methods.

Implementation Actions

1. Periodically review and adjust the City's development impact fees ordinance to ensure that the City collects sufficient funding to construct additional infrastructure needed to serve new residents and businesses developing in Sedona.

2. Establish procedures for the review of Capital Improvements and other City projects and programs to ensure alignment with the Community Plan and Land Development Code.

3. Establish procedure for the periodic review of the Community Plan status with City Council.