



1. OVERVIEW



The **Overview**

Chapter orients the reader by providing a compendium of plan details about the *Chandler Downtown Region Area Plan* (DRAP) including the purpose of the plan and main objectives as well as summarizing the process, providing context for the region, and outlining the structure of the document.

OVERVIEW

PURPOSE

An area plan is a policy document designed to serve as a community-led roadmap for growth and development with a specifically defined area of a city. ARS 9-461.08 allows for the creation of specific (area) plans and details the breadth and purview of area plans which are generally considered to be policy documents with an allowance for limited regulation.

The DRAP provides a community derived vision for the city’s future development in this area. The DRAP consolidates two area plans, the *Chandler Redevelopment Element (1995)* and the *South Arizona Entry Corridor Study (2006)* as well as the *South Arizona Avenue Design Guidelines (2010)*, reflecting an amended planning area and significant changes over the last 30 years. The bulk of these plans have not seen any major updates since they were adopted whereas the downtown region has been through many changes in the overall development, population, and demographics. The DRAP ensures alignment with the current community vision and values, providing for both existing and future needs.

The DRAP encompasses five geographical districts or character areas with distinct boundaries: Northern, Eastern, Southern, San

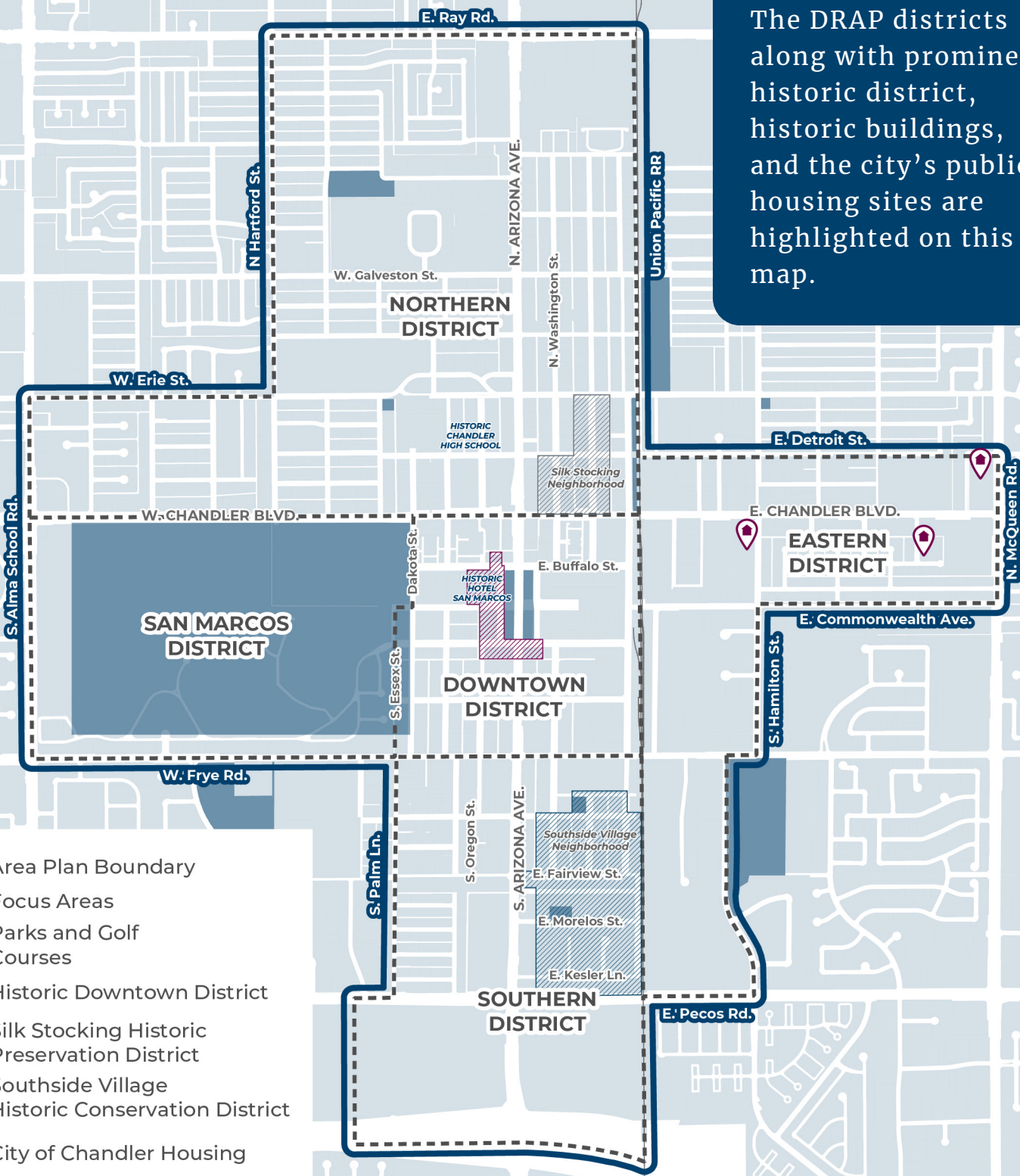
Marcos, and Downtown. Additionally, the DRAP also includes several prominent historic districts and buildings including:

1. Historic Downtown
2. Silk Stocking Historic Preservation District
3. Southside Village Historic Conservation District
4. Historic Chandler High School
5. Historic San Marcos Hotel

These items along with the city’s three public housing sites are shown on the following map.



The DRAP districts along with prominent historic district, historic buildings, and the city's public housing sites are highlighted on this map.



- Area Plan Boundary
- Focus Areas
- Parks and Golf Courses
- Historic Downtown District
- Silk Stocking Historic Preservation District
- Southside Village Historic Conservation District
- City of Chandler Housing

0 0.25 0.5 mi.

Main Objectives

The six main objectives for the DRAP that were refined through planning initiatives and community input are shown below. For each objective, the why and rationale are provided as well as the key benefits or outcomes. An overarching goal for the DRAP update, and addressed via the six main objectives collectively, is to bolster the strength of Chandler’s thriving downtown in a way that will support on-going economic success and growth, support existing businesses, and attract new businesses. These six objectives have been infused into the DRAP’s vision statement, goals, policies, design themes and principles, and actions.

1. Adaptive Reuse. Provide policies, design guidance, and actions to allow adaptive reuse for new and redevelopment projects.

- Why:
 - » Planning initiative: current and projected development patterns are different than what was expected 20 years ago
 - » Less land consolidation and big developments
 - » Current zoning is difficult for smaller projects
- Benefits:
 - » Preserve and enhance Chandler’s unique historic character
 - » Expand revitalization across all areas of the downtown region
 - » Create a more vibrant and culturally rich community environment

2. Industrial Commerce Routes. Establish industrial commerce routes to reroute commercial truck traffic in the downtown region.

- Why:
 - » Planning initiative: current and future development on Frye Road, such as the new protected bike lane and future Grayhawk Residences will challenge existing roadway capacity with the current semi-truck traffic.
 - » More people expected downtown - more traffic, pedestrian and bike safety concerns
 - » Better downtown environment and enhanced resident satisfaction
- Benefits:
 - » Improved user experience and comfort for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers by eliminating potential conflicts with large semi-truck traffic
 - » Protection of built infrastructure (curbs, gutters, and sidewalks)
 - » Improved efficiency and driving experience for semi-truck traffic



3. Integrated-Uses. Provide future land use designations and policies to allow new developments with integrated uses, comprised of any mix of residential, commercial or office uses, or any of these three as a single use development, at existing employment designated areas and throughout the downtown region.

- Why:
 - » Planning initiative: changing development trends
 - » More efficient land use planning long-term
 - » Provide policy to allow new uses now before a potential loss of existing industrial uses
 - » Achieve greater housing diversity within the downtown region
- Benefits:
 - » Live/work/play uses and development scale – a better fit for the downtown environment
 - » More available and diverse housing in a range of middle housing developments, stand-alone residential or mixed-use developments
 - » More vibrant, walkable, and sustainable community

4. Alley Activation. Establish policies, design guidance, and actions for alley activation as pedestrian areas in the downtown region.

- Why:
 - » Community input: create a more vibrant local identity with art & public gathering spaces
 - » Community input: provide additional landscaping & neighborhood beautification
 - » Staff initiative: assess condition of existing water and sewer infrastructure in alleys
- Benefits:
 - » More pedestrian space for community events
 - » Expand downtown character and landscape enhancements to underutilized alleys
 - » Ability to prioritize beneficial improvements before lower priority areas



5. Downtown Gateways. Create policies, design guidance, and actions to identify enhancement opportunities for gateways into the downtown region.

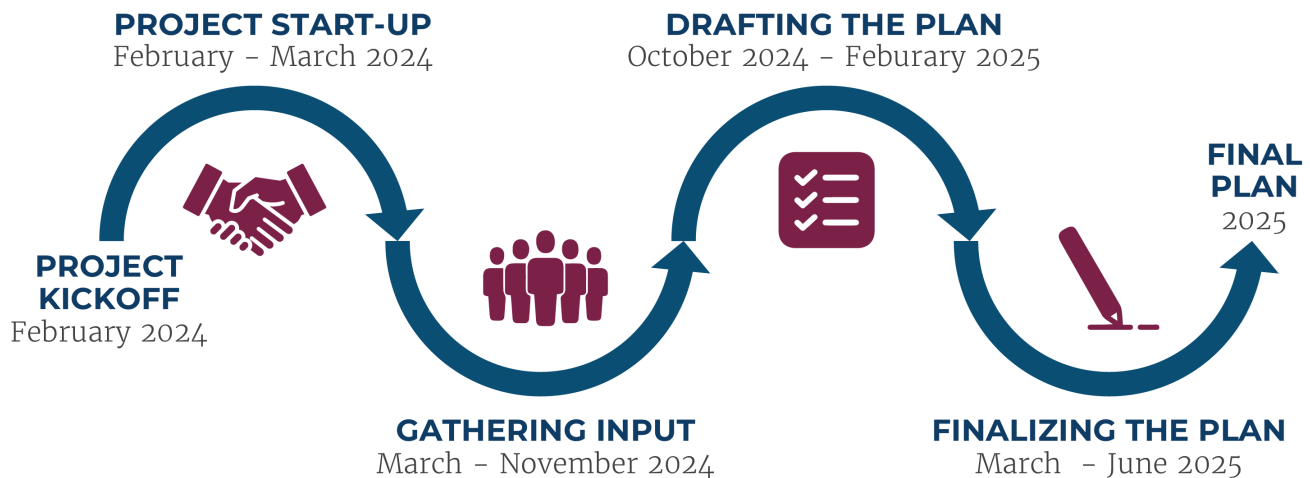
- Why:
 - » Community input: add more landscape, visual beautification and protected multi-modal paths
 - » Similar to Chandler Airpark gateway areas
 - » Consistent with “Downtown South” improvements
- Benefits:
 - » Roadway beautification with new landscaping in medians and rights-of-way (similar to Chandler Blvd)
 - » A downtown core that is connected to adjacent neighborhoods
 - » A sense of place and arrival to the downtown core

6. District Character Areas. Develop character area guidance for established neighborhood and future development areas.

- Why:
 - » Community input: provide unique landscaping, lighting and signage within neighborhoods
- Benefits:
 - » Enhance existing neighborhoods by creating a sense of place
 - » Create better pedestrian connections to the downtown core
 - » Honor the unique historic characteristic of established neighborhoods
 - » Develop enhancement opportunities across the region
 - » Create more diverse housing and supportive commercial areas

PROCESS

Over the course of 18-month schedule punctuated with multiple meaningful community touchpoints, the DRAP was developed with care and awareness of the unique aspects of each district within the downtown region itself. Between the Project Kickoff and the Final Plan, there were four phases.



1. Project Start Up

- Identified key stakeholders, a public participation plan, and the study area with five districts, and launched the project website with informational material and an online questionnaire.

2. Input Gathering

- Multi-pronged effort to reach the community and learn their priorities. The results of community interviews, questionnaires, in person and virtual community workshops and meetings with city boards and commissions all coalesced with a draft plan.

3. Drafting the Plan

- Combined community and stakeholder comments with the city's objectives ensuring a well-rounded draft plan for the downtown region.

4. Finalizing the Plan

- Provided a community driven draft plan to Chandler Planning & Zoning Commission to recommend adoption to the City Council.

CONTEXT

This section introduces the geographic, historic, demographic, market, and policy/regulatory context for the downtown region.

Geographic

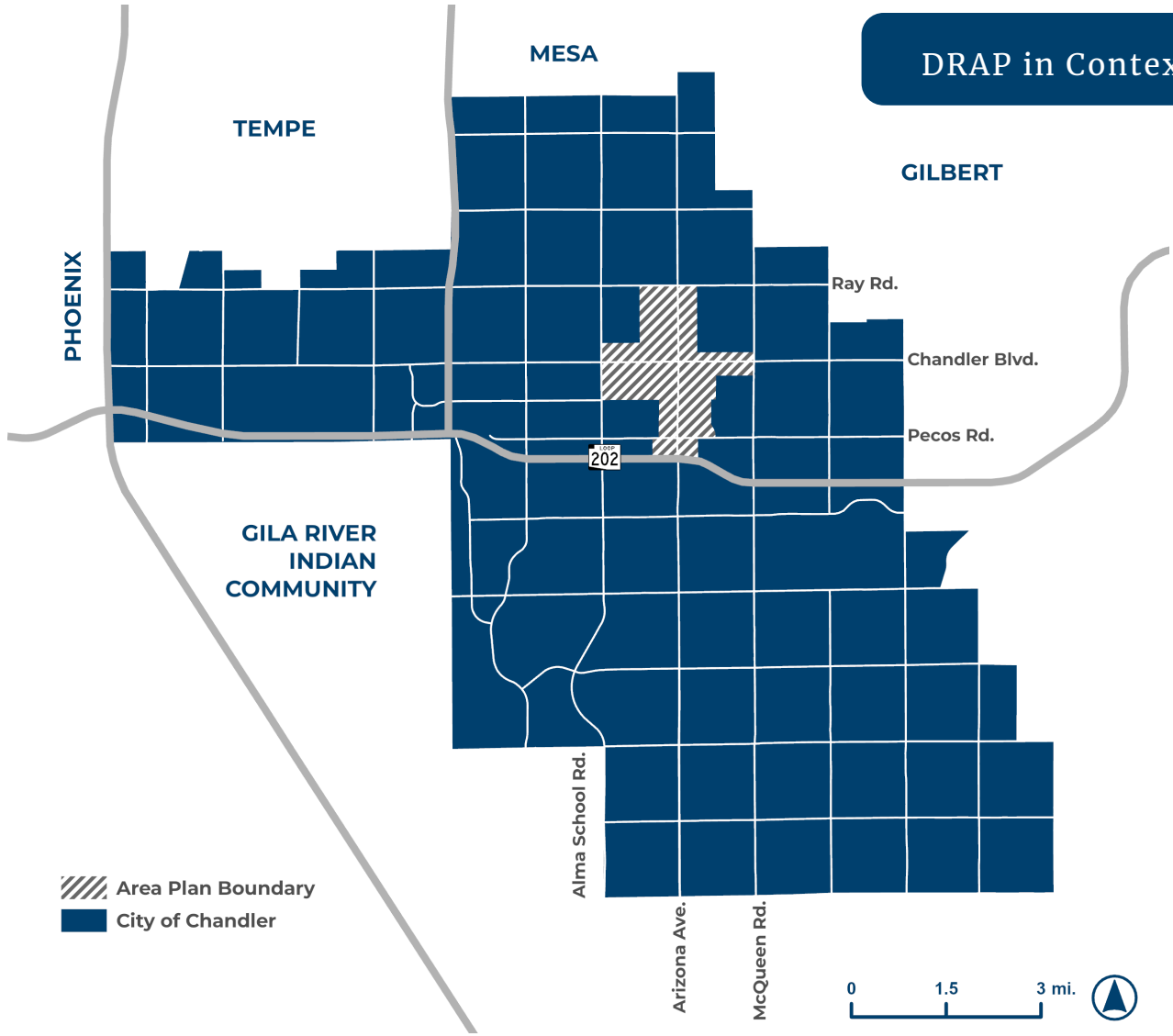
Chandler’s incorporated area is 66 square miles in size and nestled in the southeast valley on the Maricopa and Pinal County line. Chandler is a bustling, mid-sized community with a significant employment base that draws many families with the lure of quiet neighborhoods, a lively historic downtown, an acclaimed school system and numerous parks, museums, and recreation opportunities. The Municipal Planning Area (MPA) is 71.5 square miles which includes 6.5

square miles or 4,156.5 acres unincorporated county islands. No annexation opportunities exist beyond the current MPA, and the city is approximately 94% built out; placing future focus on redevelopment, infill, and adaptive reuse. The current population of Chandler as of August 1, 2025 is estimated to be 291,572.


The downtown region covers 2.4 square miles that is primarily built out. This represents a unique opportunity for the city to connect and transform this area through creative approaches to adaptive reuse, redevelopment and a regional application of community driven design guidelines.



DRAP in Context



 Area Plan Boundary
 City of Chandler

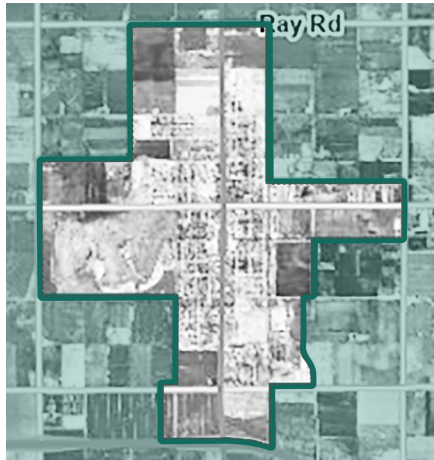


71.5 sq. miles
(City of Chandler area)

2.4 sq. miles
(Downtown Region)

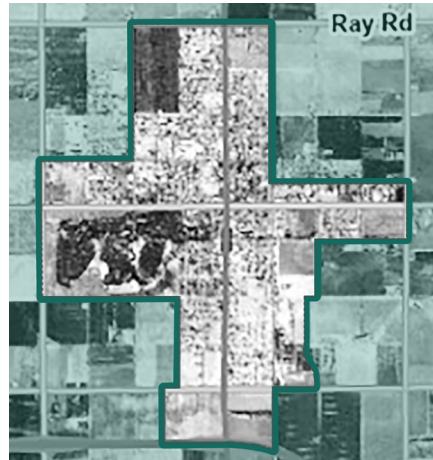
Historic

History often informs the future of a region, making historic context an important aspect of planning. Understanding historical context helps explain present conditions and informs better decision-making for the future.



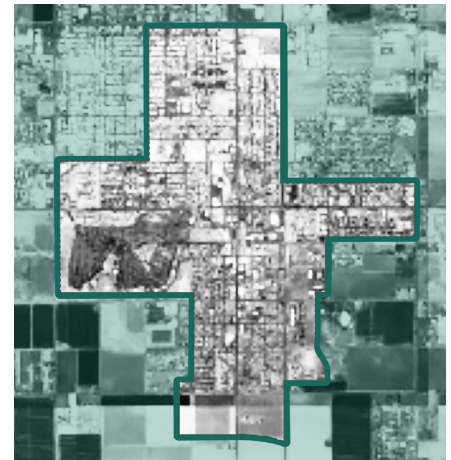
1949

Chandler has been incorporated for 28 years. It is the height of post war expansion punctuated by the increase in residential building permits and the improvements made to streets and public facilities. Chandler boasts a municipal airport as well as proximity to Williams Air Force Base as a major employer. Chandler and its surrounding lands are intensively irrigated and highly productive making agriculture the principal economy of the area. The population is approximately 3,800.



1959

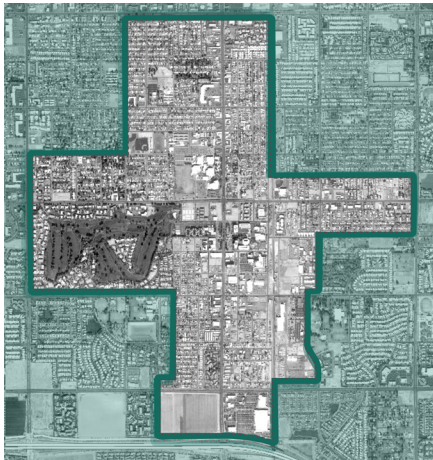
Chandler is well on its way toward becoming a metropolis. The Interstate 10 freeway is in the works, Chandler High School was established in 1951 and the GI Bill fueled housing boom is still going strong with record residential building permits. A new drive in opened in '55 and some agricultural land is being developed with the shift from agrarian to urban character beginning to take shape. The population is hovering around 9,000.



1986

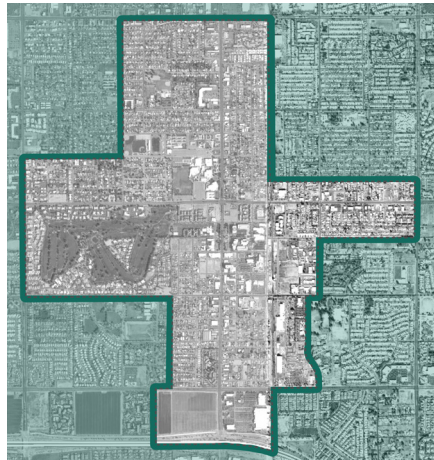
Over the last 27 years, Chandler has experienced exponential growth increasing by nearly 10,000 residents in just six years! Today's population is about 48,000 people. Downtown continues to be the hub of the community although expansion and annexations are creating numerous other enclaves and population centers. The completion of the Chandler Compadre Stadium in '85 marked Chandler's entry into the Spring Training landscape. In '86 Chandler opens the nation's first privatized wastewater treatment facility. The high-tech boom also begin with the arrival of Intel in 1980 joining Motorola and the Rogers Corp.

Sources: City of Chandler; A History of Chandler: 1912-1953
<http://prepohandle/10150/551240>



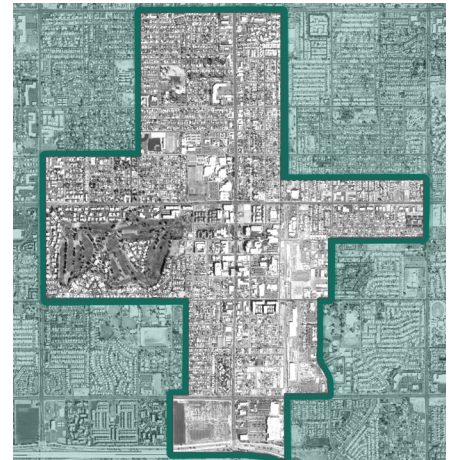
2009

The 21st century brings continued growth and prosperity to Chandler. The Downtown is experiencing a major revitalization after waning in the late '80s. Walkability, landscaping and charm abound. The population is nearly 250,000, now one of the fastest growing cities in the valley! Most agricultural land is gone in favor of residential developments. Chandler Center for the Arts has been added to downtown and the completion of Loop 202 Santan Freeway in '06 increased access and prosperity. Chandler is now home to tech and semiconductor manufacturing companies like Intel, NXP Semiconductors, Microchip Technology, and Northrop Grumman.



2016

Growth is leveling off now with our population declining slightly at 248,000. We have a new General Plan and a booming downtown that attracts festivals, parties and markets. The tech industry continues to drive the local economy employing around 22,000 people. Waymo locates in Chandler in '16 leading to innovative technology and groundbreaking local ordinances. Chandler Mall is starting to feel the pressures of online retail.















2022

Chandler's growth is trending upward with a population at over 280,000. As Covid has let up somewhat, the work-from-home culture has afforded more options for people to relocate. Tech continues to boom with over 28,000 jobs in the city and over 300 companies relating specifically to tech and tech manufacturing. Housing availability and cost of housing present challenges especially in the downtown core of Chandler.

Community Demographics

Demographics are critical to planning efforts. The numbers serve to inventory current population conditions. Understanding current conditions helps Chandler forecast potential future needs for the community. Predictive planning also helps communities attract commercial uses, meet housing needs, and provide city services. A snapshot of demographics for the downtown region derived from ESRI Business Analyst via U.S. Census Bureau ACS 5-Year Estimates (2018-2022) for the DRAP are illustrated below.

 <p>15,140 Total population</p>	 <p>6,308 People per square mile</p>	 <p>33.3 Years Median age</p>
 <p>\$ 56,196 Median household income</p>	 <p>\$ 28,674 Per capita income</p>	 <p>2x Renter to owner-occupied tenure</p>
 <p>30.3 % Post Secondary Education</p>	 <p>2.71 Declining average household size</p>	 <p>Rising incomes Shifts to higher income households</p>
 <p>57% Hispanic Origin</p>	 <p>Apparel & Services Top spending category</p>	 <p>56.6% White Collar and Service-oriented jobs</p>



Market

Chandler's downtown region benefits from a well-rounded economy with a variety of cultural, entertainment, and employment uses that will continue to support future growth. Historic buildings and a historic golf course, together with other unique distinguishing features define the downtown region and help Chandler to stand out amongst other cities in the region.

Chandler's downtown region offerings and attractions are uniquely different than other southeast valley downtowns.

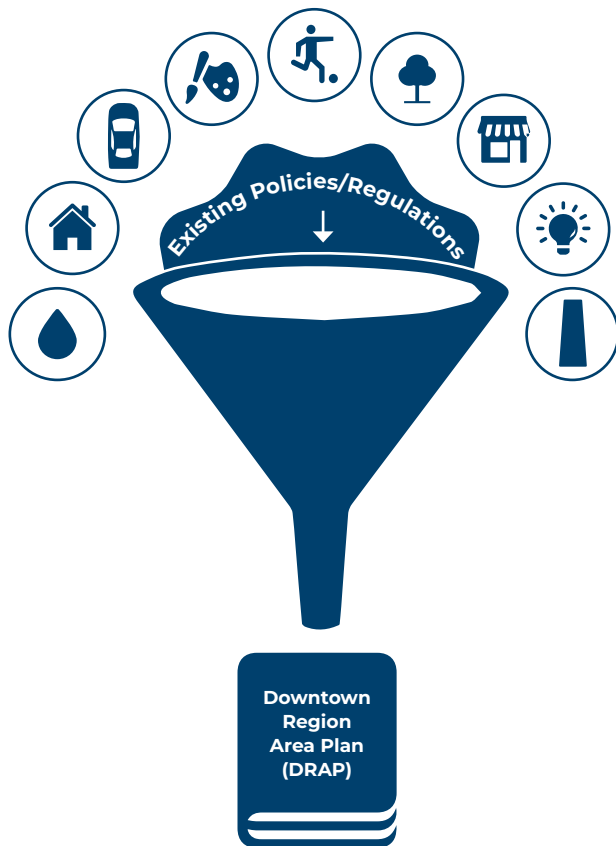
- Hospitality uses include the Crowne Plaza Resort with its convention facilities and Hilton Garden Inn
- The Chandler Center for the Arts
- Historically significant buildings and covered walkways

- More than 300,000 square feet of office space
- A variety of housing types that include planned and existing multifamily complexes within walking distance of historic downtown.
- A diverse economy that is not solely based on restaurant and bar sales.

Despite these assets, the city must continue to proactively promote the downtown region and its assets. A flexible, adaptable downtown region will be able to adjust to changing market conditions. Continued growth and success will require harnessing the resources of the city and capitalizing on private interests. Whereas this summary is intended to orient the reader to Chandler's current market conditions; the full market analysis is referenced on the next page.

Policy/Regulatory

Nineteen (19) documents exist to form the policy and regulatory basis within the boundaries of the DRAP. Each of these foundational municipal documents have been summarized and linked below. It is anticipated that these documents will continue to evolve and be updated, and the DRAP will continue including them by reference.



19 documents form the policy and regulatory basis within the DRAP boundaries.

Adaptive Reuse Overlay District (2016)

An overlay district modifies the standards of an underlying zoning district to accomplish a broader goal. In this case, the Adaptive Reuse Overlay District intends to simplify or reduce the processes required to modify existing structures and sites within the district thus encouraging the reuse of existing sites or structures by streamlining costs and timelines.

Adaptive Reuse Program

This program is companion to the city’s Adaptive Reuse Overlay District detailing the benefits and criteria of eligibility for prospective businesses.

City Center District (2000)

The CCD provides land use and development standards promoting character and visual identity but accounting for unique lot sizes, parking constrictions and other unusual circumstances for the City Center immediately surrounding Chandler Park.

Downtown Chandler Market Analysis

This document was drafted in February 2025 as part of the DRAP process. This market analysis evaluated the state of the downtown region and how it competes in the regional economy given its current retail, cultural, and entertainment assets and housing and office markets which can help stabilize and expand visitation in the region. The document concluded that in order to

remain competitive, the city needs to continue being proactive in promoting the downtown region and its assets as well as making efforts to incentivize new development.

Economic Development Strategic Plan

This plan guides the efforts of the city’s Economic Development Division related to business attraction, business retention and expansion, small business assistance, adaptive reuse and redevelopment, and other strategic focus areas.

Historic Preservation Design Guidelines (2023)

As a companion document to the Historic Preservation Ordinance, these guidelines further guide property owners on restoration, rehabilitation, and preservation of historic sites with specifications on materials, drainage, fencing, signage, and modification standards.

Historic Preservation Ordinance (2020)

This ordinance empowers property owners to protect, preserve and maintain the character and integrity of sites, districts etc. that are part of Chandler’s history.

Infill Incentive District and Infill Incentive Plan (2023)

This plan supports the Infill Incentive District and details incentives available (expedited plan review, fee waivers, etc.) to encourage the redevelopment of underutilized commercial properties.

General Plan (2016)

As the most recent general plan for the city, this

plan serves as a long-term guide for growth and development outlining goals and policies that support the community vision. The core values/guiding principles include Strategic Community Building, Focused Stewardship, and Strong Community Foundation.

Residential Conversion Policy (1989)

This policy sets criteria for converting single family homes into professional offices or business uses. This includes property eligibility, parking and access, landscape, buffering, land uses and neighborhood compatibility among other elements.

Silk Stocking Historic Preservation District

Part of Chandler’s Silk Stocking neighborhood is designated a historic preservation district. The historic preservation overlay includes 23 designated properties along Washington and Coronado streets whose property owners signed a waiver to adhere to this historic preservation ordinance and its accompanying design guidelines for property maintenance, repair, and rehabilitation.

Southside Village Historic Conservation District

The Southside Village neighborhood is designed as a Historic Conservation District to recognize and preserve its historical and cultural significance. This designation was adopted by Resolution 5598 in 2022. The designation aims to honor the heritage of Southside Village and encourage the protection of its historic character.

Strategic Framework (2023 – 2025)

The city’s framework details six focus areas identified by the City Council as priorities for innovation and investment through 2025.

The focus areas include: Community Safety, Connectivity, Economic Vitality, Neighborhoods, Quality of Life, and Sustainability and Technology.

Transportation Master Plan (2019)

The Chandler TMP was designed to plan for future transportation needs of the projected workforce within the Chandler MPA. Topics of plan include roadway, transit, and bicycle/ pedestrian. The vision, goals and policies developed in the master plan are aligned with the 2016 General Plan.

ULI Technical Assistance Panel Summary Report for Downtown South (2022)

This study provides a set of recommendations to improve Chandler’s Downtown. It analyzes development opportunities in downtown in relation to evolving growth paradigms for historic preservation, adaptive reuse, and mixed-income housing.

ULI Technical Assistance Panel Summary Report for Washington Street Alignment (2023-2024)

This study provides a set of recommendations to improve Chandler’s Southside Village streetscape. The study includes repaving options for sections of streets including a proposed realignment of Washington Street as well as various parking and visibility solutions, traffic calming options and truck congestion relief.

Buffering and landscape improvements are also included in the study.

Valley Metro Arizona Avenue Alternatives Analysis

This study evaluated potential routes for high-capacity transit that would connect downtown Chandler to high-capacity transit in the Southeast Valley.

Water, Wastewater & Reclaimed Water Master Plan Update (2020)

This master plan updates the original 2008 document with innovative strategies to develop, manage, and use Chandler’s surface water, groundwater, and reclaimed water resources.

Zoning Code

The Chandler Zoning Code is a set of regulations that dictate land uses within specific zoning districts. The code shapes the development and organization of Chandler by designating uses, density, setbacks, buffers, parking, and sign regulations as well as design standards in certain cases.



ORGANIZATION

The DRAP structure consists of six chapters and appendices.

CHAPTER:	CHAPTER DESCRIPTION:
01. Overview	Overview provides a general context for the project’s purpose, process, context, and organization.
02. Discovery	Discovery summarizes strategies and results of community engagement reflecting the importance and depth of community input over the course of the project.
03. Region	Region contextualizes the overarching vision as well as the desired future land uses and circulation network for the region.
04. Districts	<p>Districts outline the identified and guided districts within the region and details the community identified District Design Concepts, goals, and policies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Northern District ● Eastern District ● Downtown District ● Southern District ● San Marcos District
05. Design Themes & Principles	Design Themes and Principles articulate the design aesthetics desired for the region thru general design guidance and illustrate applications within each District.
06. Implementation	Implementation illustrates region-wide, housing-related, and district-specific action items designed to systematically implement the community’s vision.
A-C Appendices	Appendices provide supporting documentation including the community engagement materials, glossary, and a high resolution printable 11x17 Future Land Use Map (FLUM).