THE PEOPLE AND THE PLACE ■ HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 1990 LAND USE SURVEY

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In March 1880, when the Southern Pacific Railroad finally connected Tucson with San Francisco, Tucsonans proudly sent telegrams across the nation announcing the historic event. To the chagrin of City notables, one response read, “Where in hell is Tucson?”

The Tucson of the 1990s no longer suffers from an identity problem. In the 110 years since the arrival of the railroad in 1880, Tucson has grown from a small town of two square miles with a population of 7,000 to a major metropolis with an area of 160 square miles and a population of 405,390 persons (1990 Census). Furthermore, the metropolitan area is likely to continue to grow at a rate significantly greater than the national average through the current decade and into the 21st century.

The 1990 Census showed Tucson to be the 33rd largest city in the United States, up from 45th in one decade. While Tucson’s population increased by 23 percent over the decade, the metropolitan area grew even faster with a 25 percent population increase. As growth continues, decisions regarding the use of Tucson’s land will become increasingly important.

This booklet contains highlights about the uses of land within the City of Tucson. While some historical information is included, the contents are focused upon recent data from the 1990 Land Use Survey and changes in the City’s land use since 1980. Along with a companion booklet, The People and the Place: Highlights from the 1990 Census, this publication provides basic information about population and land use for Tucson’s citizens as well as background material for updating the Land Use Element of the City’s Comprehensive General Plan.

The geographic scope of the 1990 Land Use Survey was the Tucson metropolitan area. The 1990 Land Use Map in the back of the booklet portrays land use for the surveyed area. Maps in this booklet are conceptual rather than specific to a site or parcel of land and offer a general image of Tucson’s development. In addition, a Land Use Summary for 1980 and 1990 can be found on the inside back cover. This summary tallies the acres of the various land uses and their percentages of the total and developed area within City of Tucson boundaries.

The Piman word for the area was “took-shan,” meaning place at the foot of the black rock. The Spanish interpreted the word as “Tucson” which has been used ever since.

Tucson is both an old community, rich in multicultural traditions, and a new 21st century center for research, commerce, and recreation.
ith the exception of a few exotic ventures such as sailing, skydiving, or orbiting the earth in a satellite, all human activities take place on the land—Mother Earth, terra firma, solid ground. Land is a natural resource and while the vast expanses of the great American Southwest may seem infinite, the amount and particular qualities of the land within a growing city such as Tucson are limited.

How land is perceived and valued has differed greatly between cultures and over time. Some cultures feel that land is not a possession but is temporarily entrusted to us. Others believe that land is personal property with ascribable monetary value and a utilitarian purpose. These ever-changing land values are impacted by supply and demand and reflected in the marketplace.

Land use decisions often begin with the nature of the land—steep slopes do not make good parking lots. The needs and values of the residents of the community help to direct land use decisions. We all need places to live, shop, work, and go to school. The private market—developers, realtors, and entrepreneurs—together with public agencies—governments, school districts, and others—respond to these community needs through land use decisions.

Much of what Tucson is today was developed many years ago, at tremendous cost to both private property owners and the government. The facilities in this City—all of its streets, sewers, parks, schools, and utility lines together with homes, shopping centers, office buildings, and workplaces—represent an immense Public and private investment.

This booklet describes how we, the present and past citizens of the City of Tucson, have chosen to use Our land. The 1990 Land Use Survey reflects decisions that were made earlier to determine which of many potential land uses occurred in what location. Those decisions were made in response to natural conditions, personal preferences and values, citizen needs, market responses, and governmental actions. These same factors will determine our future.

A question to be asked while perusing this booklet today is what changes can we expect in Tucson’s land use over the next decade? And what can we do to guide those changes in order to preserve or improve the lifestyle that is truly “Tucson” at its best?
any people imagine Southern Arizona as a flat, sandy desert filled with cacti and an occasional rugged mountain range. Not too long ago, Tucson was frequently described as a small, dusty “cow-town.” Actually, this Southwestern community has long been dominated by growth and development of an urban nature. Over the past 150 years, transportation routes and business opportunities have been especially influential in Tucson’s evolution.

EARLIEST SETTLEMENTS - BY FOOT OR BY HORSE

Evidence has been found indicating human habitation of this area as early as 12,000 years ago but it was not until approximately 100 AD that Tucson became the site of large, more permanent settlements along the banks of the Santa Cruz River by Native American peoples.

With the coming of the Spanish explorers and missionaries in the late 1690s, a mission was established at the base of what we call “A” Mountain near an existing Piman village. The official founding of Tucson dates from 1775 when the Presidio of San Agustín del Tucson was established, The Presidio was built as a fortified village located in today’s downtown area.

Tucson became an outpost of both Spanish and Anglo cultures—a frontera and frontier—located in the midst of a long-settled Native American community. New development mirrored European cultures, by way of Mexico, with houses facing inward toward the privacy of the interior patio. The town itself faced the church and public plaza.

In 1853, Tucson became part of the United States with the signing of the Treaty of Mesilla, better known as the Gadsden Purchase. This action transferred about 500 locals into the jurisdiction of the United States. Strongly urged by the Southern states before the Civil War, the acquisition of what became Southern Arizona provided a low elevation route for a southern rail connection from the West to the East Coast.

The village soon became a commercial and transportation center and continued to grow as frontiersmen and merchants settled here to benefit from the commerce associated with a regional center. Mexico was a major factor in Tucson’s early trade and commerce. Following the north-south routes of early explorers and expeditions along the Santa Cruz River, opportunities for trade with Mexico were facilitated through connections between the newly arriving Anglos and Tucson’s Mexican families.

Plaza de las Armas, known as Presidio Park today, c. 1885.
Tucson became a charter city on February 7, 1877. Important milestones in its growth were the arrival of the Southern Pacific Railroad line from California in 1880 and its extension eastward to El Paso by 1882. Tucson became a major link in transcontinental transportation and a hub for mining, agriculture, and mercantile activity with a fast-growing population of about 7,000 by 1900.

With the coming of the railroad, the importance of trade with Mexico decreased and Hispanic influence in development styles diminished. Major trade connections were now to the east and west rather than north and south. Anglo concepts of town planning and architecture began to predominate and the focus, especially for housing, was toward the exterior. Checkerboard patterns of wide, parallel and perpendicular streets formed at the edges of the older Hispanic presidio village. The Armory Park neighborhood, along with other Historic Districts, still preserves much of the flavor of this period.

Another important event in Tucson's development was the establishment of the University of Arizona northeast of downtown on 43 acres of land donated by two gamblers and a saloon keeper. The University opened for classes in 1891 and attracted development nearby. A mule-car street-railway line was put into operation in 1898 to connect downtown with the University. Today, a portion of the route is again in use by the Old Pueblo Trolley.

THE 1900S - MORE RAILROADS, AND THE FIRST MOTORCARS

Tucson's first annexation occurred in 1905, when a quarter-mile-wide strip around the original two-square mile City was added. Transportation again played a role in Tucson's expansion when the El Paso and Southwestern Railroad lines were routed through the City, from the east. In 1924, Southern Pacific Railroad acquired these lines and, until World War 11, the railroad was the city's largest employer.

Tucson's growth following World War I was led by the development of the health industry and tourism. By 1920, over 20,000 folks called Tucson home. With the increase in the number of automobiles and the luxury trains of the Southern Pacific and the Santa Fe Railroads, it was easy to visit Tucson's hotels and guest ranches in the wintertime for health or recreation. Between 1920 and 1940, Tucson became noted for the “Four C’s: Copper, Cotton, Cattle, and Climate.”

### Historic Growth of the Old Pueblo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1804</td>
<td>Lewis and Clark expedition</td>
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<tr>
<td>1812</td>
<td>War between the U.S. and Britain</td>
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<td>1844</td>
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<td>1849</td>
<td>8,000 prospectors rush to CA in search of gold</td>
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<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>Civil War begins</td>
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<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>Trans-continental railroad is connected in Utah</td>
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<td>1871</td>
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<td>Yellowstone is founded as first National Park</td>
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<td>S.P. Railroad reaches Tucson</td>
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<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>U of A opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>First Auto arrives in Tucson</td>
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### United States

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- 1861: Civil War begins
- 1869: Trans-continental railroad is connected in Utah
- 1872: Yellowstone is founded as first National Park
- 1880: S.P. Railroad reaches Tucson
- 1891: U of A opens
- 1899: First Auto arrives in Tucson

### Tucson

- 1804: Mexican independence from Spain brings Tucson under Mexico
- 1853: Gadsden Purchase adds Tucson to the U.S.
- 1862: Tucson declared part of the Confederate States
- 1863: Arizona Territory is established by President Lincoln
- 1871: Tucson is designated an incorporated village
- 1880: S.P. Railroad reaches Tucson
- 1885: Tucson becomes a charter city
- 1891: University of Arizona opens
- 1899: First Auto arrives in Tucson

Southern Pacific Railroad Station, Tucson. No date available.

Tucson auto dealer, c. 1908
uring World War II, the City expanded again as Davis-Monthan municipal airfield grew into a military airbase. Tucson experienced its largest expansion between 1950 and 1960. By 1960, the City had annexed over 60 square miles and supported a population of 212,892 residents. Development activity increased across the Rillito River and spread northeast to the “foothills.”

During the 1970s and 1,980s, a strong economic focus evolved from the “Four C’s” to the “Three T’s. Trade, Tourism and Technology.” During these two decades, Tucson annexed approximately 76 square miles of land, doubling the size of the City.

A significant amount of land was developed during the 1980s driven by increasing population, federal tax incentives for real estate, and continued lifestyle choices for low density, detached residences at the periphery of the City. Land was also redeveloped as demonstrated by the rehabilitation of landfills for commercial and industrial buildings and the transition of low-density residential areas into more intensive uses.

CENTER OF POPULATION

Although exact statistics are lacking, most of Tucson’s growth moved steadily eastward during its early years. From the City’s beginnings at the mission and presidio near the present downtown, waves of development took advantage of the easily developed valley land between the major rivers affording excellent views of the Catalina Mountains. To a lesser degree, early growth also extended north and south of the downtown following State Route 89/80, the only highway through Tucson until the 1950s.

Beginning in the 1970s, however, Tucson's booming growth began to press against constraints of the federally owned lands to the east. Development trends in the last decade have changed from an eastward flow, to areas northwest of the City. The region's center of population, located at Broadway and Alvernon in 1970, reversed it: historic pith and by 1990 was at the site of Sam Hughes Elementary School.

Today, the northwestern portion of the Tucson metropolitan area is continuing to grow most rapidly. In 1992, two thirds of all residential permits were issued north of Rillito Creek. The earlier north-south direction of growth has returned and may be strengthened by renewed opportunities for trade with Mexico, our friend and neighbor to the south.

| HISTORIC GROWTH OF THE OLD PUEBLO |

Rodeo Parade, Downtown Tucson, 1941

CENTER OF POPULATION — METROPOLITAN TUCSON

<table>
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<tr>
<th>UNITED STATES</th>
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<tr>
<td>1903 Wright brothers take first flight</td>
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<td>1917 U.S. enters World War I</td>
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<td>1929 Stock Market crash begins Great Depression</td>
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<tr>
<td>1941 U.S. enters World War II</td>
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<tr>
<td>1956 Inauguration of interstate highway system</td>
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<tr>
<td>1963 Civil Rights march in Washington</td>
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<tr>
<td>1969 Neil Armstrong walks on the moon</td>
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<td>1985 Arms reduction talks end the Cold War</td>
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<tr>
<th>TUCSON</th>
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<tr>
<td>1912 Arizona becomes a state</td>
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<tr>
<td>1925 Municipal Airport opens (named Davis Monthan in 1928)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1930 First City zoning ordinance is adopted</td>
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<tr>
<td>1934 Gangster John Dillinger is arrested in Tucson</td>
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<tr>
<td>1952 AZ Sonora Desert Museum opens</td>
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<tr>
<td>1965 Tucson International Airport opens</td>
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<tr>
<td>1972 Tucson Convention Center is built</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990 Tucson becomes 33rd largest U.S. city</td>
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Cities have many responsibilities such as providing police and Fire protection, roadways, and parks. In addition to these basic public services, each city has an obligation to plan for adequate land areas to meet future community needs and to assure a healthy economy and high quality of life.

The land use survey is one tool that planners and the development community use to determine existing land uses and assess future needs. Land uses within cities change over time through new development; annexation of county land, either vacant or developed; and, to a minor extent, through redevelopment of existing land uses. Land uses also respond to changing demographic, economic, and social factors.

Land use surveys provide critical information to address transportation, air and water quality, and storm water runoff issues. Partial funding for the City’s 1990 Land Use Survey was provided from the Urban Form Project, a grant for air quality planning. In addition to the most recent survey, the City conducted land use surveys in 1940, 1958, 1972, 1976, and 1980.

1990 LAND USE SURVEY
Tucson’s 1990 Land Use Survey utilized aerial photographs flown in March and April, 1990, the same time the Twenty-first Decennial Census of Population and Housing was conducted. The simultaneous timing of these two events allows for the coordination of demographic, housing, and land use information from both activities.

The 1990 survey area covered 448 square miles and included the cities of Tucson and South Tucson. Survey boundaries extended several miles beyond the Tucson City limits. The land use survey process measures the ground area utilized for a particular activity and does not account for multi-story buildings. Neither zoning classification nor ownership of the land, except for public ownership, are considerations in the survey.

As in previous land use surveys, the inventory process divided the study area by census blocks, which are generally equivalent to city blocks. Land use types on each block were identified through interpretation of aerial photographs supplemented by other informational resources and field visits. Due to the fiscal and time parameters for the project, the census block is the smallest unit of geography on which data can be mapped. These maps are general in nature and do not provide specific land use information for a lot or parcel.

Maps in this booklet offer a conceptual image of land use in the City, displaying the location of these uses by census block.

Land uses displayed on maps occupy about 30 percent or more of a census block.

Similar to earlier studies, 23 land use classifications were utilized in the 1990 survey. These classifications were combined into five land use groups for discussion in this booklet.
Population density is a term commonly used to describe an important characteristic of a city: the concentration of people within a defined area. Most importantly, density affects a city’s ability to provide needed facilities and services to its residents. Density of the total area is influenced by the amount of vacant land within a city’s borders.

Tucson is less dense today than at any time since the 1890s at fewer than 2,600 persons per square mile. From the end of the last century, the City’s population density gradually increased to about 4,500 persons per square mile in 1930 and remained fairly stable for over 50 years, reaching a City high of over 5,000 persons per square mile in 1953. The peak in density corresponds with the rapid population growth of the metropolitan area following World War II.

In 1960, the annexation of 50 square miles was instrumental in decreasing the density figures to around 3,500 persons per square mile — similar to Portland, Oregon. That population density remained constant until 1984 when figures gradually declined to today’s 2,600 persons per square mile due to annexation of largely vacant lands and Davis Monthan Air Force Base.

What causes low density? The advent of the automobile has been largely responsible for creating low density, sun-belt cities such as Tucson. Motorized vehicles have made distances to be traveled a minor consideration and have created the need for large areas of the land to be transformed into roadways, parking lots, and other auto-oriented uses. The earlier, compact city form prevalent in pre-automobile Eastern cities, and indeed in early Tucson, has been reconfigured into a spread of human activities across the landscape.

Tucson’s low density is also the result of citizen preference: the reason many choose to live here is the opportunity for homes on generous parcels of land. Low densities also result from a preference for low building heights reflecting desires for views of the surrounding mountains.

As we continue to grow larger, our low-density development pattern presents a challenge to meet the increased costs of services that must be provided such as roads, police and fire protection, and utilities.

Among U.S. cities in 1990, Tucson ranked 28th largest in area, 33rd in population, and 67th in population density.

Tucson’s low density is especially notable when contrasted with other cities: New York City is nine times as dense, and Los Angeles is three times as dense.

While the City has doubled the size of its incorporated area in the past 20 years, population density has decreased.
Land use ratios are often used to analyze land use trends and to determine what mix of land uses should be encouraged in future decades. The ratios given are calculated as a percentage of the developed land in a community.

Land use ratios in Tucson are fairly similar to other cities. While direct comparisons are difficult due to differences in the way various jurisdictions measure and define land use categories, a few recent studies provide some basis for comparison.

In 1992, the American Planning Association (APA) surveyed 32 large U.S. cities. To assess trends, the 1992 study was compared with earlier surveys from 1955, 1973, and 1983.

The APA study found that distinctive changes in land use ratios had taken place from 1955 to 1992. In particular, residential, commercial, and industrial land use ratios had expanded while the public land use ratio decreased. These changes are similar to historic trends noted in Tucson's land use ratios.

**RESIDENTIAL LAND USE**

Residential land uses typically occupy the largest proportion of the developed land in all cities. The average ratio of residential land reported in the APA survey grew from 40 percent in 1955 to 48 percent in both 1983 and 1992.

Tucson reflects this trend with just over 48 percent of the developed area devoted to residential use in 1990, about the same as in 1980. Not surprisingly, our ratio of residential land use has increased in every surveyed year since 1940. The large winter visitor population supplemented by significant numbers of year-round retirees and other newcomers has steadily expanded residential land use.

**COMMERCIAL LAND USE**

Since the 1950s, commercial land uses have occupied an increasing amount of land according to the APA survey. In 1955, about 3 percent of the land in surveyed cities was developed for commercial uses. This figure increased to 10 percent by 1973 and remained at that level in 1992.

Tucson has followed this trend with a 1990 commercial kind use ratio of about 10 percent, up from 8 percent in 1980. In addition to new development, the increase in commercial land use was due to the popularity of one- and two-story commercial buildings (rather than high-rise) and features such as parking lots and landscaping.

- Residential land currently occupies about half of the developed area in Tucson and many other large U.S. cities.
- The form of Tucson’s urbanized area has encouraged the use of an increasing amount of commercial land to serve a dispersed population.
- Tucson and other cities are using more land for residential, commercial, and industrial uses and less for public purposes such as streets and government buildings.
Similar to commercial land use, U.S. cities in the APA survey experienced an increase in the ratio of industrial land use through the 1980s. In 1955, the average industrial land use ratio was just over 6 percent for large cities. By 1983, that figure had increased to 12 percent, declining to 10 percent in 1992.

In Tucson, the ratio of industrial land was about 7 percent in 1990, up from about 6 percent in 1980. Southwest cities, such as Tucson, grew later than “rust belt” cities and required less land for industrial use because the entire country was shifting from manufacturing to more service-oriented economies.

PUBLIC AND INSTITUTIONAL LAND USE

In the APA survey, land used for public purposes includes streets, parks, and other institutional uses. The average land use ratio of these activities steadily declined in the surveyed cities from 51 percent in 1955 to 45 percent in 1973 and further to 32 percent in 1992.

Tucson’s proportion of public land uses is higher than the APA survey average with 35 percent of its developed land in public uses in 1990, down from 37 percent in 1980. The decline was largely due to the annexation of vacant land without many public facilities.

VACANT LAND

Because of difficulties in comparing the amounts of vacant land in cities, the 1992 APA survey did not include this category.

According to Tucson’s 1990 Land Use Survey, vacant land increased from 27 percent of the total area in 1980 to 35 percent in 1990. Of the 27 percent vacant within the 1980 boundaries of the City, about 20 percent (just over 5 square miles) was developed during the decade. This infill was more than offset by the 57 square miles of mostly vacant land annexed into the City between 1980 and 1990.

- Compared with averages for 106 other large U.S. cities, Tucson has consistently used more land per person for every land use category.
- As in many sunbelt cities, the ratio of industrial land use is significantly less in Tucson than in many other large U.S. cities.
- Over one third of Tucson’s total area is vacant land, providing future opportunities for small infill projects and larger planned developments.
The decade’s big news in Tucson’s residential land use was the rapid growth of attached housing. The surge of this housing type far exceeded the growth of single-family, detached homes in Tucson. Residential land uses increased by 24 percent in the decade, closely echoing the 23 percent increase in the City’s population.

**DETACHED HOMES**

The “American Dream,” a single-family, detached home, remains Tucson’s predominant housing type. However, construction of detached housing tagged during the decade, reflecting 1990 Census trends: decreasing income, increasing housing costs, and changing personal lifestyles. Detached homes accounted for about 76 percent of all developed residential land in 1990, down from 81 percent in 1980.

Detached family housing patterns have changed little since 1980. As the map illustrates, most of this housing type is located in the interior of one-mile grids formed by the major streets. The average density of Tucson’s detached housing in 1990 was 3.95 residences per acre (RAC), down from 4.2 in 1980.

**ATTACHED HOUSING UNITS**

Attached housing development was the fastest growing housing type during the past decade, with a 74 percent increase in land used for this housing type. Many factors contributed to this increase including favorable tax taws; declining household incomes; and increasing demands of students, single-parent and one-person households, and winter visitors. Land used for attached housing was dominated by apartments and jumped from about 13 percent of Tucson’s residential land in 1980 to 18 percent in 1990.

In 1980, most of Tucson’s attached housing was located within the central part of Tucson. By 1990, attached housing locations had greatly expanded with new apartment developments along most of the major streets throughout the City. Average density of the City’s attached housing in 1990 was 16.7 RAC, down from 17.6 in 1980.

**MOBILE HOMES**

The popularity of mobile homes has been consistent. The 24 percent increase in land used for mobile homes over the decade parallels the 24 percent increase in land used for all residential types. Mobile homes occupied about 6 percent of total residential land in 1990, unchanged from 1980.

Mobile home developments are found throughout the City but are concentrated in the northwest and southwest areas, particularly along the Santa Cruz and Rillito Rivers. Mobile home density averaged 9.4 RAC in 1990, up from 7.6 in 1980.

The past decade saw a decreasing proportion of Tucson’s land developed into single-family, detached homes and a substantial increase of land in apartments and other attached dwellings.

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Overall, the City’s residential land use increased about 24 percent in the decade, keeping pace with the population increase of 23 percent.

The decrease in the ratio of land used for detached housing reflects issues of affordability and changing lifestyles for many Tucsonans.

Land used for attached housing posted a significant increase of 74 percent from 1980 to 1990.

Mobile homes remained about 6 percent of residential land use, indicating their continued popularity.
The City of Tucson provides most of the workplaces for the entire metropolitan population. As the 1990 Census reported, about 85 percent of employed city residents and 65 percent of County residents were working inside City boundaries.

With continued population growth in the region it is not surprising that land used for commercial and industrial purposes in the City also increased. The most dramatic increases were reported in land used for major office buildings (more than tripled since 1980) and shopping centers (more than doubled).

**COMMERCIAL LAND USE**

The City experienced a 39 percent increase in land used for all commercial purposes over the past decade. The largest proportion of the group was the general and strip commercial category, which accounted for 72 percent of all commercial uses, Large office buildings represented 10 percent of the commercial group in 1990 while shopping centers accounted for 18 percent.

As the map displays, commercial uses are a dominant feature along most major streets throughout Tucson with concentrations at many intersections. New commercial land uses were particularly notable in the northwest and eastern sections of the City.

However, Tucson's commercial land use patterns are changing: the proportion of commercial land located in shopping centers or malls has increased dramatically. Today, over one half of Tucson's retail space is located in shopping centers as opposed to arterial street locations. Thirty years ago, 90 percent of the retail space was found along major street frontages. And 50 years ago, almost all of Tucson's commercial activity was in the Central Business District - the downtown.

**INDUSTRIAL LAND USE**

Industrial uses accounted for about 7 percent of the City's developed land in 1990, up from 6 percent in 1980. Although a relatively small portion of Tucson's land, industrial land use experienced a 37 percent increase in the decade. Tucson is typical of sunbelt towns which developed after World War II when the proportion of industrial labor in the United States was declining.

As expected, most industrial uses in Tucson are clustered near major transportation routes such as railroad routes, major highways, and airports in order to minimize shipping costs. Much of the current industrial land is utilized as distribution space rather than manufacturing.

As the Baby Boom generation approaches the years of maximum consumption, commercial land uses are likely to increase. Malls and large shopping centers will be Tucson's leading commercial locations in the future.

Steinfeld's Department Store, c. 1931
and used for public purposes had the smallest increase of any group of land uses over the decade. In sharp contrast to population and City area growth (23 and 58 percent respectively), land used for public facilities grew by about 7 percent.

Streets, including medians and alleys, represent the largest portion of public land uses in Tucson, about 7/1 percent of this group in 1990. The increase in land used for streets was less than 3 percent over the decade.

Streets comprised 17 percent of Tucson’s developed area in 1990, down from 21 percent in 1980. This drop was largely attributable to the annexation of vacant land with no streets and to technical differences in the 1980 and 1990 surveys.

Government facilities represented about 4 percent of the public land uses in 1990, a decrease of about 2 percent over the decade. This decrease reflects the diminishing proportion of government employment in Tucson as reported by the 1990 Census.

Institutional land uses increased by 26 percent between 1980 and 1990 and accounted for 25 percent of the public group. As shown on the map, many public facilities, especially schools, libraries, and other services, are widely disbursed throughout the City for the convenience of residents. Concentrations of public uses are located in the downtown area with its large number of city, county, state, and federal buildings and at the University of Arizona, which is the largest aggregation of public land uses in Tucson.

Davis-Monthan Air Force Base was not included in the land use ratios for the City. Annexed into the City in 1986, the base is comprised of several distinct land uses and covers nearly 17 square miles, about 11 percent of the total City area.

As the City grows outward in a continuing pattern of low density development, more land and more money will be needed to provide streets and infrastructure.
Arks and open space are important land uses in every great city, providing places to play, relax, and enjoy the outdoors. Including washes and drainageways, Tucson’s parks and open space land increased by 54 percent over the decade.

The parks category included parks, golf courses, and large recreational areas at school sites. Cemeteries, which occupy about one square mile, were also a part of this group. These uses increased by 53 percent in the decade. Parks, golf courses, and cemeteries comprised 43 percent of Tucson’s total parks and open space land in 1990, unchanged from 1980.

The designated natural areas within the City limits are Sentinel Peak Park (“A” Mountain) and the nearby Tumamoc Hill, comprising 11 percent of the City’s total parks and open space areas in 1990. The apparent decrease of 22 percent in natural areas is due to the conversion of properties to more active park uses during the decade.

Tucson’s drainageways constitute 46 percent of the inventory of open space in Tucson, with many washes providing visual amenities, habitat for wildlife, and occasional trails for recreation. Drainageways increased by 54 percent in the decade primarily through the annexation of land at the less developed edges of the City.

Close to 100 parks are located throughout the City providing opportunities to play and enjoy the outdoors.

Washes and drainageways account for almost one half of Tucson’s parks and open space land use groups.
Tucson has an abundance of vacant land, nearly twice as much as in 1980. This category consists of everything from small vacant lots found throughout the City to large undeveloped parcels primarily located on its periphery. Vacant land accounted for approximately 35 percent of the total City area in 1990 versus 27 percent in 1980, an 87 percent increase.

About 20 percent of the land classified as vacant in 1980 was developed during the decade. However, this infill was more than offset by the annexation of mostly vacant land. The largest vacant areas are near the southeast edge of Davis-Monthan Air Force Base. Other vacant areas of significant size are on the western edge of the City, close to Tucson Mountain Park and along the Santa Cruz River.

AGRICULTURAL LAND

This category represents less than 1 percent of the total area, unchanged from 1980. Over time, agricultural land has been developed into residential and commercial land uses. The 45 percent increase in Tucson’s agricultural land use during the decade was due to annexations. Agricultural uses are generally found where soil conditions are most suitable. As shown on the map, Tucson’s agricultural land occurs close to major drainageways.

The 50 square miles of vacant land in the City is an area larger than the corporate limits of Boston, San Francisco, or Miami.

More than one third of the land within the City of Tucson was vacant in 1990.

If presently vacant land were developed at current land use ratios, the result would be an addition of 15,257 acres of residential, 4,964 acres of commercial and industrial, and 11,419 acres of public land use.
Certainly, land use in Tucson has changed during the past decade. Among the many facts that were highlighted in this booklet are:

- The size of the City of Tucson increased over 50 percent.
- The direction of growth changed from an east-west to a north-south orientation.
- Land developed as apartments and other forms of attached housing increased substantially while the proportion of public land use decreased.
- The proportion of vacant land grew due to annexation of mostly undeveloped land.

As featured in the companion publication on 1990 Census highlights, many demographic changes have also taken place:

- Our population grew at twice the national rate.
- Tucson’s residents are growing older.
- Working mothers have become commonplace, and single parent and one-person households are growing rapidly.
- The housing stock is aging, and a smaller proportion of residents own their homes.

Tucson’s demographic changes will have implications for future land use:

- The aging population will require new housing forms convenient to transportation routes, shopping, and support services.
- As residential areas grow older, rehabilitation of entire neighborhoods may have to be considered. Older street fronts will need updating and redevelopment.
- More care centers for children with working parents will be needed along with adequate facilities and services for special population groups such as the elderly or persons with disabilities.
- Commercial development trends toward "superstores" will increase land requirements for larger buildings and parking lots.
- Industrial land uses in Tucson may see a dramatic increase if free trade agreements are finalized between Canada, the U.S., and Mexico.
- The City’s investment in roads, parks, and other public infrastructure will need to be maintained and improved.
- Currently vacant land will present opportunities for innovative development and urban infill.

The greatest challenge is to create a city that Tucson’s citizens will be proud to call home in the year 2000, as described in the City’s vision statement*. Decisions made by community leaders, business and property owners, and citizens will lead to land use changes and new forms of development. By planning ahead to accommodate these inevitable changes, the City will conserve its resources and enhance its opportunities for continued economic growth in an attractive, safe, livable city.

*Copies of “Tucson: The People and the Place - Highlights from the 1990 Census” and “Vision: A Guide for the Future of the City of Tucson” are available from the Planning Department, Third Floor, City Hall, 255 West Alameda Street. Phone: 791-4505.

More extensive information regarding the 1990 Land Use Survey is available from the Planning Department Library, First Floor, City Hall, 255 W. Alameda Street. Phone: 791-4234.
## City of Tucson 1980 & 1990 - Land Use Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Land Uses (Acres)</td>
<td>Percent of Total Area</td>
<td>Percent of Developed Area</td>
<td>Land Uses (Acres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban Ranch Homes</td>
<td>27,410.05</td>
<td>30.66%</td>
<td>48.22%</td>
<td>22,136.85</td>
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<tr>
<td>Detached Housing</td>
<td>20,445.94</td>
<td>22.67%</td>
<td>35.97%</td>
<td>17,999.63</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attached Housing</td>
<td>5,021.59</td>
<td>5.62%</td>
<td>8.83%</td>
<td>2,883.52</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mobile Homes</td>
<td>1,542.51</td>
<td>1.73%</td>
<td>2.71%</td>
<td>1,253.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commercial:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>General/Strip Commercial</td>
<td>5,200.02</td>
<td>5.62%</td>
<td>9.15%</td>
<td>3,720.08</td>
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<tr>
<td>Major Office Buildings</td>
<td>3,727.37</td>
<td>4.17%</td>
<td>6.58%</td>
<td>3,207.61</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shopping Centers</td>
<td>529.29</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
<td>0.93%</td>
<td>124.12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Industrial:</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Structure</td>
<td>3,715.22</td>
<td>4.16%</td>
<td>5.54%</td>
<td>3,526.20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Industrial Nonstructure</td>
<td>1,081.69</td>
<td>1.21%</td>
<td>1.90%</td>
<td>824.79</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trans., Communication, &amp; Utilities</td>
<td>812.53</td>
<td>0.91%</td>
<td>1.43%</td>
<td>530.47</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resource Extraction</td>
<td>855.53</td>
<td>0.96%</td>
<td>1.51%</td>
<td>954.59</td>
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<tr>
<td>Airports</td>
<td>938.66</td>
<td>1.05%</td>
<td>1.65%</td>
<td>241.65</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Misc. Institutions and Public Uses</td>
<td>27.61</td>
<td>0.03%</td>
<td>0.05%</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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<td>Government Structure</td>
<td>4,001.19</td>
<td>4.48%</td>
<td>7.04%</td>
<td>3,321.59</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government Nonstructure</td>
<td>3,489.76</td>
<td>3.90%</td>
<td>5.14%</td>
<td>2,771.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Military and Reservation*</td>
<td>384.19</td>
<td>0.43%</td>
<td>0.63%</td>
<td>162.46</td>
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<tr>
<td>Streets, Medians, and Alleys:</td>
<td>127.24</td>
<td>0.14%</td>
<td>0.22%</td>
<td>368.03</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open Space:</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Areas and Preserves</td>
<td>9,664.10</td>
<td>11.65%</td>
<td>17.39%</td>
<td>5,613.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks, Golf, and Cemeteries</td>
<td>676.66</td>
<td>0.65%</td>
<td>1.34%</td>
<td>976.24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drainageways, Washes, Riverbeds</td>
<td>2,629.70</td>
<td>3.16%</td>
<td>4.99%</td>
<td>1,647.40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Developed Land</td>
<td>56,843.38</td>
<td>63.58%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>45,666.16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>928.35</td>
<td>1.04%</td>
<td></td>
<td>638.76</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>765.71</td>
<td>0.86%</td>
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<td>565.67</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feedlots, Pens, and Corrals</td>
<td>143.39</td>
<td>0.16%</td>
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<td>132.89</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vacant Land</td>
<td>31,639.53</td>
<td>35.92%</td>
<td></td>
<td>16,903.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Undeveloped Land</td>
<td>32,567.88</td>
<td>36.42%</td>
<td></td>
<td>17,542.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Area*</td>
<td>89,411.26</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td>63,228.22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adding Davis-Monthan AFB</td>
<td>10,765.30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>100,176.56</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*The effect of Davis-Monthan Air Force Base has been removed for the sake of comparison.