Town of Sahuarita
Open Space Plan Element

University of Arizona
Planning Program
Projects Team
Introduction

- Planning students in the Planning Program Project Class

**Overall Goal**
- Potential uses of $1.5 Million Bond
- Prepare for the General Plan Update in 2012

Create an opportunity for the Town of Sahuarita to become the hub for outdoor recreation in Southern Arizona.
What Is Open Space?

Open space is private or publicly owned property in the form of agricultural land, undisturbed desert, riparian areas, parks and even in the landscaped or native vegetation yards of individual homeowners.

Madera Canyon

Sahuarita open space
Phase 1: Existing Conditions

- Reviewed open space elements within six plans from Sahuarita
  - Sahuarita General Plan (2003)
  - Sahuarita Town Center and Santa Cruz River Sub Area Plan (2008)
  - Sahuarita Parks, Recreation, Trails and Open Space Master Plan (2008)

- Public Open House held on September 22, 2010
  - Existing open space in and around Sahuarita
  - Open space interests and needs of residents

- Existing Conditions Section
Plan Review

- Sahuarita General Plan (2003)
  - Provide an appropriate variety of recreational facilities and expand bicycling, pedestrian and equestrian uses
  - Build on the presence of the Santa Cruz River
  - Promote the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail
  - Establish linkages between open space, parks, and other recreational facilities

- Sahuarita Parks, Recreation, Trails and Open Space Master Plan (2008)
  - Protect water resources, vegetation and habitat, and wildlife
  - Acquire land in the planning area
  - Greenways and trails to link parks, commercial, and residential areas
  - Provide a balanced recreation system for all ages with personal, social, economic and environmental benefits
Regional Interests: The Town of Sahuarita and its Neighbors
Summary of Community Vision

Sahuarita envisions **open space** as:

- A **central component to its identity** and **regional attraction**

Sahuarita is committed to:

- Social and environmental sustainability
- Conservation and preservation of the Santa Cruz River
- Keeping natural resources and natural open spaces as a top priority
- Promoting the region’s system of trails
- Connectivity in the form of linkages to the Santa Cruz River and Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail
Phase 2: Goals and Recommendations

- Interviews with key stakeholders

- Joint Commission and Public Meeting held on November 1, 2010
  - Feedback on proposed goals and recommendation

- Recommendations Section
Goals

**Goal 1:** Highlight the Santa Cruz River as Sahuarita's centerpiece for open space

**Goal 2:** Provide community residents with the opportunity to enjoy open space along linkages within the Town of Sahuarita

**Goal 3:** Increase Regional Connectivity for Open Space

**Goal 4:** Identify and Preserve Sensitive Areas through Planning and Policy

**Goal 5:** Protect and Increase Open Space within the Town of Sahuarita

View from Quail Creek golf course
Goal 1: Highlight the Santa Cruz River as Sahuarita's centerpiece for open space

Objective 1.1: Purchase open space parcels with bond funds.

5 Parcels were chosen based on the following criteria:

- Santa Cruz River Floodplain
- View shed
- Riparian habitat
- North-south balance of outdoor amenities
- How complicated assembling a large parcel of land would be
Landmark Parcels

- Connect trails along the Santa Cruz and the east-west trail
- Provide expansive open space for Santo Tomas, Los Arroyos, La Joya Verde and Quail Creek communities
- Secure the required easement for the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail
- Balance open space and parklands concentrated in the north end of Sahuarita

Quail Creek Veterans Municipal Park
Goal 1: Highlight the Santa Cruz River as Sahuarita's centerpiece for open space

**Objective 1.2:** Distinguish the Santa Cruz River as an outdoor feature.

**Objective 1.3:** Provide an educational, environmental and economical multi use region.

**Objective 1.4:** Establish the Santa Cruz River as the major gateway for extended connectivity and improved circulation.
Goal 2: Provide community residents with the opportunity to enjoy open space along linkages within the Town of Sahuarita

Objective 2.1: Increase pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian linkages between neighborhoods and the Santa Cruz River.

Objective 2.2: Increase enjoyment of open space through education, outreach, and enhancement of pedestrian environments.
Goal 3: Increase Regional Connectivity for Open Space

Objective 3.1: Coordinate non motorized connections between the Town of Sahuarita and regional trail systems integrated with the Santa Cruz River.

Arizona State Land near Sahuarita
Goal 4: Identify and Preserve Sensitive Areas through Planning and Policy

Objective 4.1: Identify important wildlife habitat and migration lands.

Objective 4.2: Create open space annexation policies for sensitive areas.

Objective 4.3: Seek open space preserves between mining lands and urban development.
Goal 5: Protect and Increase Open Space within the Town of Sahuarita

Objective 5.1: Create an appropriate institutional framework for open space protection.

Objective 5.2: Consolidate open space within neighborhoods to provide greater opportunity for outdoor enjoyment and reflection.
Benefits

- Amplify Santa Cruz River's potential in becoming the region's premier eco-tourism destination

- Enhance pedestrian/bike trails, multi-use and greenway paths, and overall circulation in and around Sahuarita

- Stronger regional sense of identity
Action Plan

1. Establish an Open Space Coalition advocacy group

2. Purchase identified Landmark property with Pima County bond money

3. Update the regulatory framework to increase open space in future development

4. Develop trail linkages along the Santa Cruz River corridor in accordance with Sahuarita Master Trails Plan
The class would like to make special thanks to the Town of Sahuarita Staff for their input and assistance in the creation of the Town of Sahuarita Open Space Plan Element.
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Vulnerable Species:
  Vegetation
  Birds
  Reptiles
  Mammals


  “Madera Canyon.” Photograph. Taken September 2010
  “Grass Area.” Taken September 2010
  “Neighborhood Pedestrian Trail.” Photograph. Taken Spetember 2010

Image Sources

   “Cactus at Proposed West Desert Preserve.” Photograph. Taken October 2010

   “Group Photo.” Photograph. Taken December 2010.


Smith, Desiree and Simms, Milini. “Pecan Trees.” Photograph. Taken September 2010
   “Quail Creek Golf Course.” Taken September 2010
   “Rancho Sahuarita Pedestrian Walkway.” Taken September 2010
   “Open space in Madera Highlands.” Taken September 2010