



# *Sahuaro*

**NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION PLAN**

SAHUARO  
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FINAL CITY COUNCIL ADOPTION  
February 19, 1986

CITY OF PHOENIX PLANNING DEPARTMENT

## Purpose

The purpose of a Special Conservation District (SCD) is to create a unique program tailored for preservation and enhancement of special neighborhood qualities through the development of a plan by the residents of the area.

This plan has been prepared after residents wishing to preserve their neighborhood in its present environment submitted petitions to the Phoenix Planning Commission requesting initiation of the SCD program. An SCD is established after the development and adoption of a Neighborhood Conservation Plan. The Sahuaro Neighborhood Conservation Plan is the result of many residents meeting and discussing their perceived image of their neighborhood, discussing the issues, deciding neighborhood goals and selecting methods to accomplish them.

The Neighborhood Conservation Plan serves as a guide for decision making by prospective developers, the public, public officials and new residents.

## Environmental Setting

The Sahuaro SCD area is nestled against the northern foothills of the Phoenix Mountain Preserve, a part of which extends into the SCD. The planning area has gently rolling terrain and is crisscrossed by natural washes that sometimes fill during heavy rains. The physical and visual presence of the desert habitat and the Mountain Preserve has had a major impact on the character of landscaping and development within the area. Proximity to the Preserve with its extensive trail system has been a major attraction for residents with walking, jogging and equestrian interests and to others who appreciate the serenity of the desert and its wildlife.

This desert and Preserve setting, combined with the acre sized lots, has created a rural atmosphere unique in an otherwise urban metropolis. It is, specifically this environment and unique character which the residents wish to preserve by adoption of this plan.

### Generalized Existing Land Use

The existing land uses within the Sahuaro SCD consists of one acre and larger single-family residential development, two churches on Shea Boulevard and over 20 acres of unsubdivided property within the area and adjacent to the Mountain Preserve.

Approximately 40 acres of the subdivided land throughout the area is also undeveloped. An odd shaped 42 acre parcel of the Mountain Preserve has been included within the boundaries of the SCD because it is an integral part of the neighborhood. The planning area is surrounded on three sides with residential properties of higher densities.

### General Existing Building Conditions

The residential and church structures within the SCD are in good or excellent condition. Many of the structures are of new construction.

### Circulation/Transportation

Shea Boulevard is the northern boundary of the Sahuaro SCD and provides major access for the residents including City transit service. 36th Street serves as collector or secondary access to the residents, but it is also used by nonlocal commuter drivers as a through street when avoiding congestion on 32nd Street and Shea Boulevard. Other north-south streets within the SCD are also plagued with this nonlocal traffic.

The interior streets of this neighborhood were paved as part of the Gold Dust Neighborhood Improvement District. At the request of some of the property owners the streets were of special design with narrow paving and flat (ribbon) curbs.

The nonstandard, narrow width of paving was designed in part to allow for an unpaved pedestrian and equestrian pathway in the public right-of-way and to blend with the rural and desert environment.

### Housing

The first homes in the SCD area were built approximately twenty-five years ago, and new homes are under construction today. The homes are nearly all owner occupied: The majority of the structures are single story, but two story and split level homes are scattered around the planning area. The architectural styles vary within the district, but ranch style, modern and styles of Spanish influence dominate designs, reflecting the character of the surrounding desert and its mountains.

### Utilities

The Sahuaro SCD is served with all public utilities, but only a small portion is connected to the City sewer system.

### Planning

In the process for the creation of the Sahuaro Neighborhood Conservation Plan, the residents reviewed and discussed positive characteristics and areas of concern about their neighborhood in a series of planning meetings.

The positive characteristics and areas of concern were summarized as follows:

#### Preservation of Low Density

Maintaining the RE-43 zoning throughout the SCD area is of highest priority to the Sahuaro residents. With approximately 25 percent of the SCD border on Shea Boulevard remaining undeveloped, concern about land uses incompatible with the neighborhood character has developed as commercial zoning has crept eastward on Shea Boulevard. Higher residential densities are sought by home builders and land speculators adding to the pressure for zoning changes. But the residents of Sahuaro believe that low density development and its related amenities are essential to the preservation of the character and lifestyle of the neighborhood by its residents.

#### Traffic/Street Design and Safety

After an in-depth investigation of traffic principles, the residents agree that the Neighborhood Conservation Plan is not the appropriate tool for control of their traffic problems, but that addressing access design and safety is appropriate. The residents find that walking, jogging and horseback riding in their neighborhood are among the most pleasurable amenities of the area. Ensuring safe access within the planning area and into the Preserve is among the most important goals of this plan. The narrow paving, ribbon curbs and natural contours of the Gold Dust NID were selected to blend with the natural desert and rural setting of the neighborhood and to allow a safe area alongside the pavement for pedestrian and equestrian access.

Sahuaro residents believe that design standards and policies of the Gold Dust NID are satisfactory and appropriate for adoption as the SCD standards for existing and future development in order to allow safe access and still maintain the character of the neighborhood.

### Preservation of the Desert Character

A major amenity of the Sahuaro neighborhood is the serenity and simplicity of the desert environment. It is a natural extension of the mountain influence and a logical choice of landscaping in this climate and arid condition. Water conservation is an important issue for the future of our community and desert landscaping offers an attractive option in the Sahuaro SCD.

### Enjoyment of the Mountain Preserve and Ensuring Compatible Future Preserve Improvements

The Phoenix Mountain Preserve is the single most influencing factor and amenity of the Sahuaro neighborhood. Its proximity offers physical, visual and psychological relief to the residents and is the prime attraction for persons locating here. Preserving the views and the attractive aspects of the mountains are highly important to the residents. While understanding that the Preserve is a public amenity and open space facility for all citizens of Phoenix, the residents of the SCD are concerned about public access routes to, and activities within the Preserve. The citizens want to ensure that public accessways and future improvements within the Preserve are compatible with residential development adjacent to the Preserve.

## Statement of Goals and Policies

After in-depth discussion of the issues and probable goals, the residents have agreed that the plan should control by adoption of goals and policies rather than the institution of new regulations.. The following goals and policies represent the desired image and qualities the residents of the Sahuaro SCD wish to maintain in existing and future development:

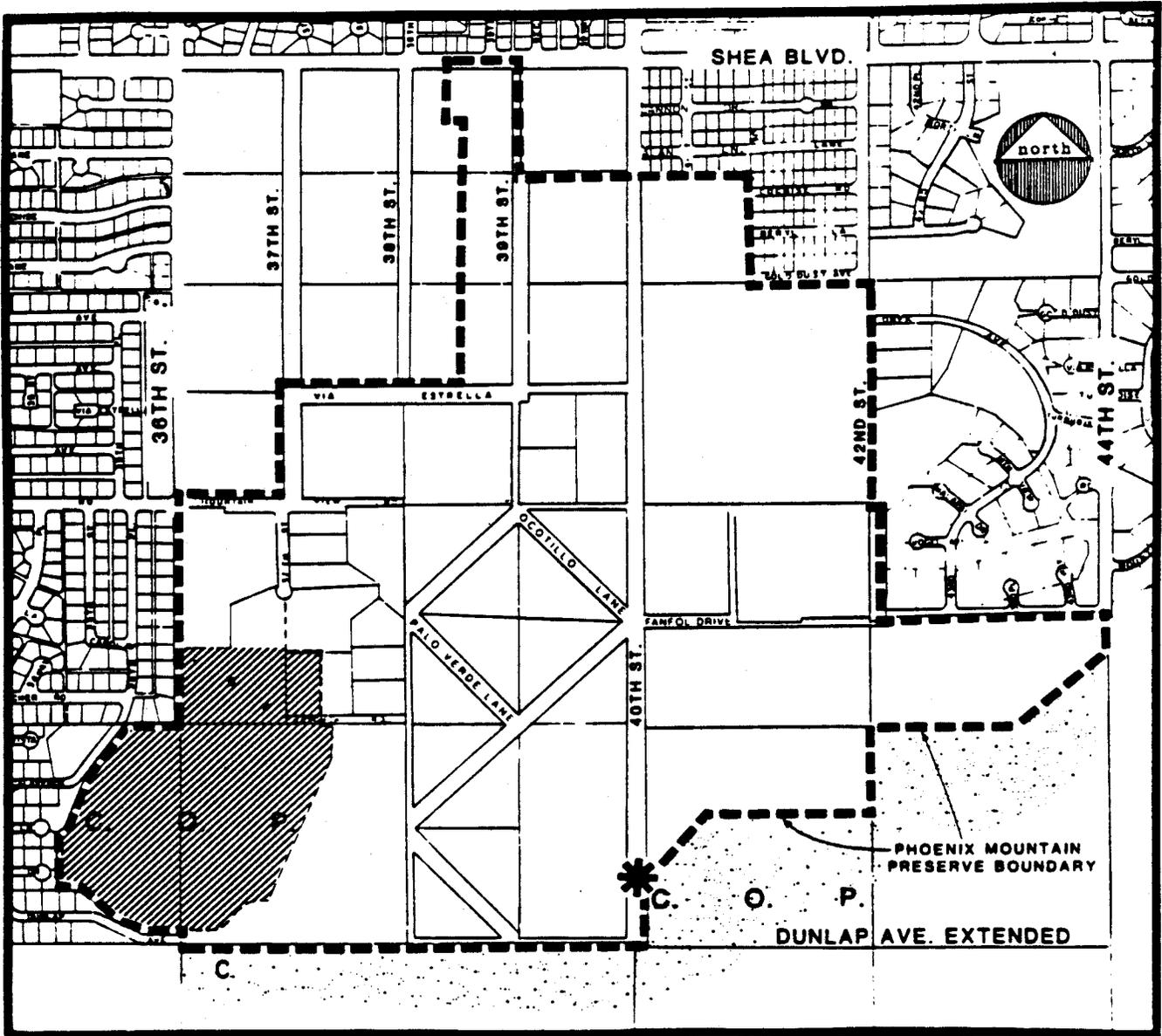
- Preserve the open character and low density of the Sahuaro SCD.
  - o Resist. zoning changes
  - o Maintain RE-43 zoning regulations
  
- Preserve the Desert Character of the Sahuaro SCD.
  - o The use of native landscaping plants and materials is encouraged within the Sahuaro SCD for preservation of the desert setting and conservation of water.
  - o Pedestrian and equestrian paths shall be retained as natural and nonpaved accessways within the Sahuaro SCD.
  
- Minimize Traffic Impact on the Sahuaro SCD.
  - o New streets or improvements of public rights-of-way shall preserve current and safe neighborhood accessibility to the Mountain Preserve.
  - o Plan the future development of the Mountain Preserve so that due consideration be given to the traffic impact on the neighborhood.

- Adopt the Gold Dust Neighborhood Improvement District Design Standards for Existing and Future Public Street Right-of-Way Improvements.
  - o Preserve the unpaved public right-of-way alongside the existing neighborhood streets or any new streets from new encroachments other than those present at the time of roadway construction, for use as a pedestrian, jogging and equestrian pathway.
  
- Maintain the Existing Lifestyle of the Sahuaro SCD.
  - o Residents shall maintain responsible and sanitary conditions in the care of animals on their property within the Sahuaro SCD.
  
- Phoenix Mountain Preserve Activities be planned so as to be sensitive to the residential development in the SCD, yet provide adequate enjoyment to all citizens of Phoenix.
  - o An adequate distance and appropriate buffering shall be maintained between homes and Preserve activity in order to retain residential privacy and to avoid creating a public nuisance.
  - o The designs of signs, fences, gateways and facilities shall be aesthetically compatible with the rural character of the neighborhood.

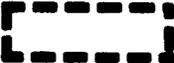
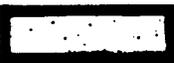
## Procedures for Amending or Supplementing This Neighborhood Conservation Plan

From time to time the Neighborhood Conservation Plan may be amended by the citizens of the SCD and the City Council, providing that adequate notice has been given and public hearings have been conducted as required by law. Council consideration will include review and recommendations from residents, such public hearings and City staff.

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## LEGEND

	RE-43 RESIDENTIAL
	PHOENIX MOUNTAIN PRESERVE WITHIN THE SPECIAL CONSERVATION DISTRICT
	MAJOR PUBLIC ENTRANCE TO PHOENIX MOUNTAIN PRESERVE -SPECIAL TREATMENT AREA
	BUFFER ZONE OF COMPATIBLE ACTIVITY MOUNTAIN PRESERVE