

COCHISE COUNTY
**Comprehensive
Plan** CP 2045

Planning & Zoning Commission Work Session

The vision for Cochise County 2045 is to secure a vibrant, resilient, and inclusive future by preserving the county's unique rural character, encouraging appropriate economic growth, and ensuring the efficient use of natural resources.

November 12, 2025

Adopted XX/XX/XXXX



CH 1: Introduction & Overview

About the County

- Located in southeastern Arizona, spanning 6,219 sq. mi.
- Mix of mountains, valleys, ranchlands, and historic towns
- Key communities: Sierra Vista, Douglas, Bisbee, Benson, Tombstone, Willcox
- Home to Fort Huachuca
- Population: ~126,000 — aging and slightly declining
- Strong ties to agriculture, defense, and tourism
- Border location fosters cultural exchange and trade

Key Challenges & Opportunities

- Maintain rural character while supporting growth
- Address aging infrastructure and limited road funding
- Diversify the economy beyond government and defense
- Protect water and natural resources
- Expand housing, healthcare, and broadband access



HISTORICAL LAND USE DEVELOPMENT



**BEFORE ~1500 CE
PREHISTORIC AND INDIGENOUS:**
Land use centered on sustainable hunting, gathering, and limited agriculture near water sources.



**LATE 1800S-EARLY 1900S
MINING BOOM:**
Bisbee, Tombstone, and Douglas emerged as mining hubs for copper, silver, and gold. Mining defined early urbanization patterns and spurred supporting infrastructure.



**1900-1950
AGRICULTURAL EXPANSION:**
Irrigation and groundwater use supported farming and ranching, especially in the Sulphur Springs Valley.



**1950-1980
MILITARY & SUBURBAN GROWTH:**
Expansion of Fort Huachuca spurred population and commercial growth in Sierra Vista and surrounding areas. Post-WWII, suburbanization spread to Douglas and beyond.



**1980S- PRESENT
DIVERSIFICATION:**
Growth has been concentrated in cities like Sierra Vista and Douglas, with most rural areas remaining sparsely populated, with Hereford being an exception. Retirement, heritage tourism, viticulture, and small business development have become important economic drivers.

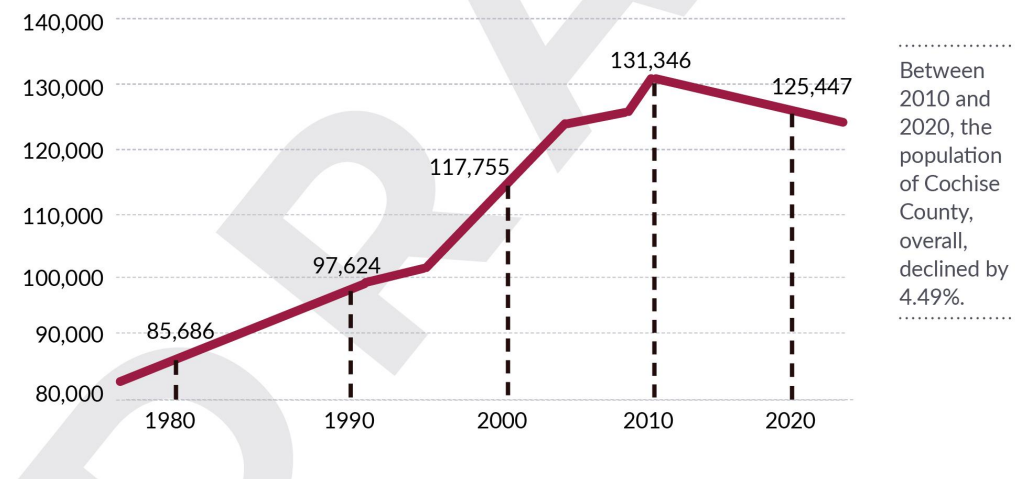
COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS

Unless otherwise noted, information regarding demographics is taken from the American Community Survey (ACS). A decennial census is required by the U.S. Constitution. Consequently, every 10 years since 1790, Congress has authorized the government to conduct a national census of the U.S. population. The primary function of the decennial census is to provide counts of people for the purpose of congressional apportionment.

In every census between 1940 and 2000, two questionnaires were used to collect information: a “short form” with only basic

questions such as age, sex, race, and ethnicity and a “long form” with the basic short-form questions plus additional questions on social, economic, and housing characteristics. Following the 2000 Census, the long form was replaced by the ACS. The ACS is a nationwide, continuous survey designed to provide communities with reliable and timely social, economic, housing, and demographic data every year. While there is a margin of error of at least 10% of each total value, analyzing ACS information allows us to measure the changing social and economic characteristics of Cochise County².

Figure 1: Population Growth Trends³



² (U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.) 9. Differences between the ACS and the Decennial Census. Website: Census.Gov. https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2020/acs/acs_general_handbook_2020_ch09.pdf.)

³ U.S. Census Bureau (2023). American Community Survey 1-year estimates. Retrieved from Census Reporter Profile page for Cochise County, AZ <<http://censusreporter.org/profiles/05000US04003-cochise-county-az/>>

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

County staff initiated the drafting of this update in the fall of 2024, concurrently implementing a comprehensive public engagement process to ensure the plan reflected community values and priorities.

Key engagement activities included:

- Project Website: Served as a central hub for project information, schedules, maps, FAQs, and online surveys.
- Community Surveys: Multiple surveys collected input on housing, water, land use, transportation, and economic development. A detailed summary of survey responses, participation metrics,

and public comments is provided in Appendix 2.

- Public Meetings and Workshops: A series of in-person meetings allowed residents to discuss priorities, ask questions, and provide direct feedback to staff. These meetings complemented the online engagement, reaching participants who preferred face-to-face interaction.
- Public Review of Draft Plan: The draft plan was placed on public inspection via the project website and at designated County locations, allowing residents to provide feedback prior to adoption.

ENGAGEMENT TAKEAWAYS

The community survey highlights resident priorities and concerns that inform this Comprehensive Plan. Overall, respondents value quality of life but see challenges in housing, infrastructure, water, and economic opportunity.

Quality of Life: Most respondents were satisfied with the quality of life but feel it has either declined or remained stagnant compared

to ten years ago.

Land Use/Rural Character Preservation: There are concerns about urban sprawl and how to preserve the rural character.

Housing Preferences: There is high demand for affordable housing, single-family homes, and off-grid housing options. There are mixed opinions on incentivizing higher-density



CH 2: Land Use & Growth

Chapter Overview

- Guides growth to protect resources, support welfare, and maintain rural character.
- Covers all state-required land use categories
- Growth managed through 4 Growth Area Categories (A–D) and 7 Land Use Designations.
- Master Development Plans (MDPs) provide site-specific guidance for complex projects.
- Regional Community Profiles replace outdated Area Plans for equitable guidance.
- Planning considers coordination with federal, state, military, and incorporated lands, as well as floodplains, air quality, and exempt land uses.

Goals

1. Smart Growth, Right Places
2. Investing in People, Powering Industry
3. Showcase Cochise
4. Healthy Land, Healthy Life
5. Power from the Sun
6. Rocks, Resources, Resilience
7. High-Flying Safety, Grounded Planning
8. Every Community Counts: Equitable, Informed Planning
9. Working Landscapes, Balanced Futures



2: Land Use & Growth Element

GROWTH PROJECTIONS

Based on projected population growth, Cochise County anticipates modest increases in residential and commercial land demand, which will be accommodated primarily within existing communities and designated Growth

Areas. Detailed estimates of future housing and employment land needs are provided in the Housing and Economic Development Elements.

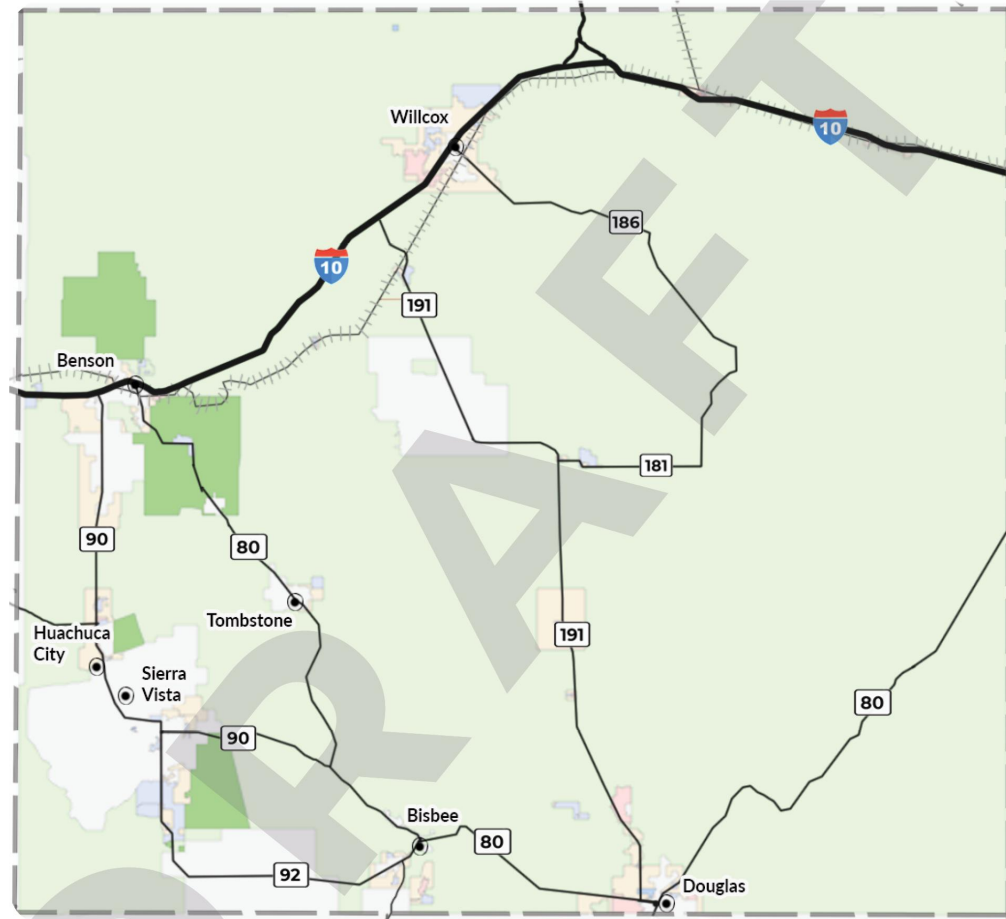
LAND USE FRAMEWORK

In Cochise County, land use and growth are guided by Growth Area Categories and Land Use Designations. All unincorporated areas are classified into four Growth Area Categories—A, B, C, and D—based on development patterns, infrastructure, land use density, economic role, and growth potential. These categories indicate current and anticipated development intensity, helping to prioritize resources and guide planning. They are illustrated on the Growth Areas Categories Map, a key policy tool for steering development consistent with county goals and community values.

Developing, Enterprise, Enterprise Redevelopment, Neighborhood Conservation, Neighborhood Rehabilitation, Rural Residential, and Rural—which describe the intended character of land areas, including residential, commercial, industrial, and open space uses. These designations are mapped countywide and aligned with zoning regulations to ensure consistency and enforceability. Proposed changes to land use



MAP 3: LAND USE



- Developing
- Enterprise
- Enterprise Redevelopment
- Neighborhood Conservation
- Neighborhood Rehabilitation
- Rural
- Rural Residential

Please see <https://cochise.maps.arcgis.com/> for the most detailed and up-to-date information.

TABLE 3: LAND USE AND PERMITTED ZONING

ZONING	DEVELOP. (DEV)	ENTER. (ENT)	ENTER. REDEV. (ER)	NEIGH. CONSERV. OR REHAB (NB OR NR)	RURAL (R)	RURAL RES. (RR)
RU-2	✓				✓	✓
RU-4, RU-10, RU-36					✓	✓
R-9, R-18, R-36	✓			✓		
SM-9, SM-18, SM-36	✓			✓		
SM- OR SR-87	✓				✓	✓
SM- OR SR-174					✓	✓
SM- OR SR-10 ACRES					✓	✓
SM- OR SR-18 ACRES					✓	✓
SM- OR SR-36 ACRES					✓	✓
SR-8, SR-12, SR-22, SR-43	✓			✓		
MR-1 OR MR-2	✓			✓		
NB	✓	✓	✓	✓		
GB, LI	✓	✓	✓			
HI	✓	✓	✓		✓	

CH 3: Circulation

Chapter Overview

- Guides transportation planning
- Covers roads, rail, transit, airports, and bicycle/pedestrian networks.
- County maintains paved, dirt, and primitive roads; partnerships and RIDs support local improvements.
- Railroads: Mostly inactive freight corridors with potential for reuse.
- Transit: Urban fixed-route and rural demand-response
- Airports: Nine facilities for general aviation, training, and military operations.
- Bicycle & pedestrian: Urban networks, U.S. Bicycle Route 90, and Sun Corridor Trail

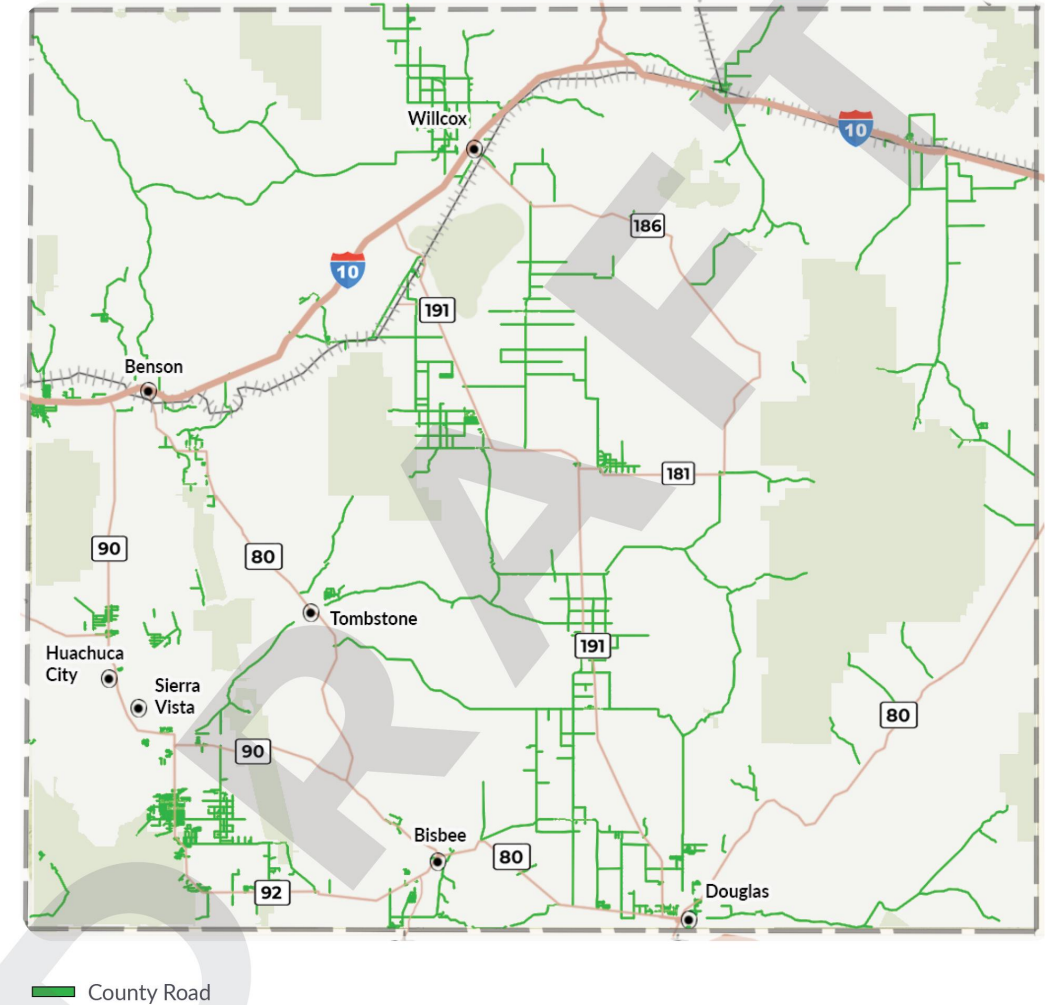
Goals

1. Preserving Rails, Promoting Mobility
2. Aviation for Growth and Access
3. Move by Foot and Wheel
4. Connect Through Transit
5. Paving the Way Forward
6. Driving Improvements Through Partnerships



3: Circulation Element

MAP 13: COUNTY MAINTAINED ROADS



Please see <https://cochise.maps.arcgis.com/> for the most detailed and up-to-date information.

RAILROADS

Railroads have played a central role in Cochise County's settlement, commerce, and regional connectivity. The Gadsden Purchase of 1853 provided a southern route for a transcontinental railroad, supporting the growth of communities such as Benson, Bisbee, Douglas, and Tombstone. While most corridors are inactive, preserving them through rail-banking or adaptive reuse offers long-term mobility and economic options.



SAN PEDRO & SOUTHWESTERN RAILROAD (SPSR)

The SPSR operated a line from Benson to Paul Spur (~67 miles) and the Bisbee Branch (~5.6 miles).

- » In 2006, the Surface Transportation Board authorized abandonment of approximately 76.2 miles of the SPSR line due to limited freight demand.
- » Following abandonment, tracks and infrastructure were removed, and the right-of-way largely returned to private ownership, though some portions remain under public or conservation ownership.

MEXICO-SONORA RAILROAD

Cochise County historically connected to cross-border rail operations, notably the Mexico-Sonora Railroad, linking U.S. rail networks with Sonora, Mexico. While most of

these connections are inactive, they remain part of the county's heritage and present tourism potential.

PASSENGER RAIL AND FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Currently, Cochise County has no active passenger rail service. Historical lines, such as the San Pedro Valley Railroad and other regional connectors, primarily supported freight operations. Regional studies, including the Phoenix-Tucson Passenger Rail Corridor, highlight growing interest in passenger rail in southern Arizona, though no immediate expansions into Cochise County are planned. The County will continue to monitor state and regional studies to remain prepared should future opportunities for passenger service emerge.

AIRPORTS



There are nine airports in Cochise County that serve various aviation needs, from general aviation to military operations. Below is a brief overview of these facilities:

1. Benson Municipal Airport – City-owned, general aviation facility with a full-service Fixed Base Operator (FBO).
2. Cochise County Airport – County-owned, general aviation; included in the FAA's National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems.
3. Tombstone Municipal Airport – City-owned, general aviation serving visitors and private pilots.
4. Bisbee Municipal Airport – City-owned, general aviation managed by an Airport Advisory Committee.
5. Cochise College Airport – Operated by Cochise College, primarily for pilot training and aviation programs.
6. Bisbee-Douglas International Airport – County-owned, general aviation; built during WWII as a bomber training base, transferred to the County in 1949.
7. Tribal Air Airport – Privately owned near McNeal, used by New Tribes Mission for aviation operations.
8. Douglas Municipal Airport – City-owned, general aviation; first international airport in the U.S.
9. Libby Airfield / Sierra Vista Municipal Airport – Joint-use facility for general aviation and U.S. Army operations at Fort Huachuca.

COUNTY OWNED AIRPORTS

- » **Cochise County Airport** – supports general aviation and flight training. Importance: Drives local economy and builds aviation workforce.
- » **Bisbee-Douglas International Airport** – WWII-era bomber training base. Importance: Supports general aviation, emergency response, and business connectivity.

Both airports provide essential access for commerce, safety, and regional connectivity.

CH 4: Water Resource

Chapter Overview

- Ensures sustainable water supply for residential, agricultural, industrial, and ecological uses.
- Relies on groundwater, surface water (rivers, lakes, wetlands), and reclaimed/effluent water.
- Manages water through conservation, recharge projects, irrigation districts, and community water systems.
- Supports long-term resilience against drought, flooding, and population growth.

Goals

1. Keep the Water Flowing – Reliable Water for All
2. Pure and Protected – Safeguarding Water Quality
3. Use it Wisely – Water Conservation
4. Recharge and Restore – Protecting Aquifers and Watersheds
5. Plan Ahead for Water



4: Water Resource Element

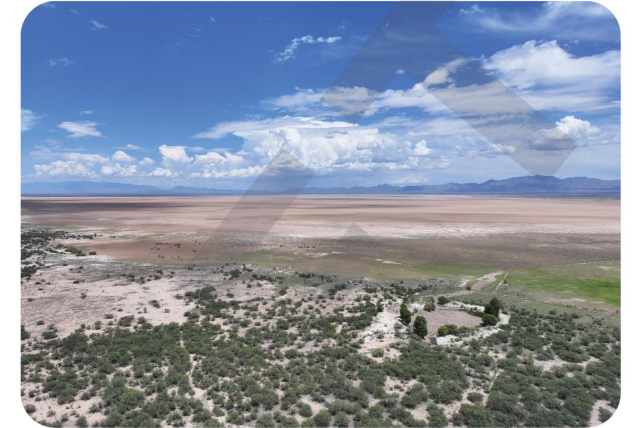
WATER RESOURCE INVENTORY

health. Recharge and conservation projects help sustain river flow and aquifer levels.

Parker Canyon Lake
Located in the Huachuca Mountains and managed by the U.S. Forest Service, Parker Canyon Lake is a man-made reservoir supporting recreation, fishing, wildlife habitat, and local aquifer recharge.

Willcox Playa
This large, seasonal dry lake bed in the Sulphur Springs Valley contributes to groundwater recharge and provides critical habitat for migratory birds, though it does not supply water directly.

Whitewater Draw
Managed for habitat conservation and public recreation, the seasonal wetlands of Whitewater Draw contribute to aquifer recharge and provide important ecological

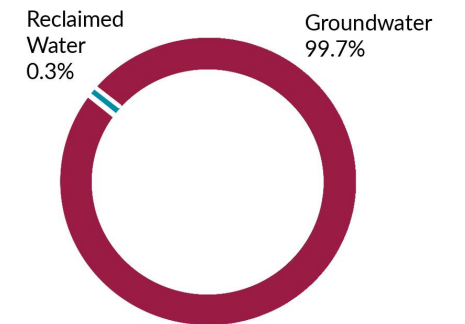


benefits.

Other Surface Waters
Smaller reservoirs, stock ponds, and ephemeral streams support ranching, limited irrigation, and local wildlife, while contributing incrementally to groundwater recharge.

GROUNDWATER
Groundwater is the primary water source for most communities, agriculture, and industry in Cochise County. According to the University of Arizona Water Resources Research Center (WRRRC), approximately 99.7% of total water use in Cochise County comes from groundwater, while reclaimed water accounts for only about 0.3%. The agricultural sector uses roughly 91.6% of total withdrawals, highlighting the central

Figure X: Source of Water In Cochise County*



WATER DEMAND AND SUPPLY ANALYSIS



initiatives such as the Cochise Conservation & Recharge Network (CCRN). CCRN's recharge projects directly support aquifer replenishment, reduce long-term groundwater overdraft, and provide resilience against drought, flooding, and population growth. Integration of CCRN outcomes into County water planning ensures that recharge activities are aligned with projected needs for residential, agricultural, and commercial uses, while also supporting ecological and community resilience.

supplies and offset groundwater use.

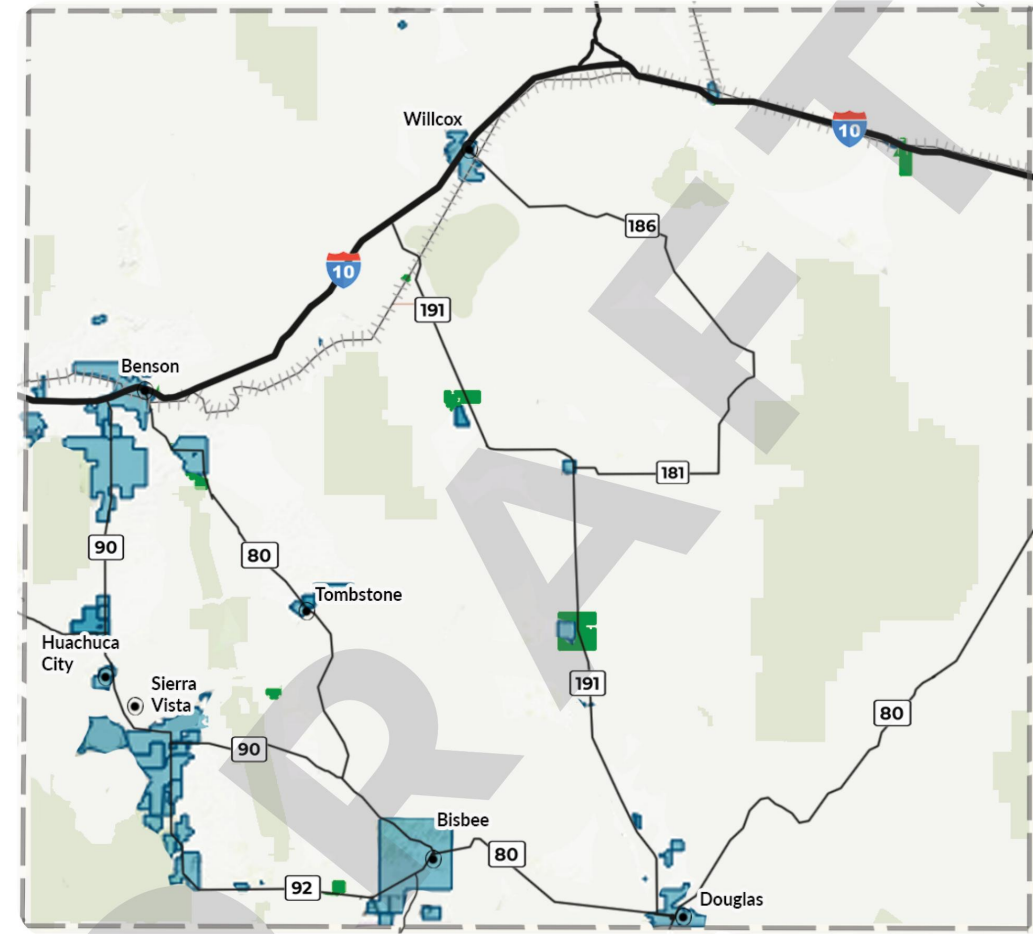
The Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) provides records on legally and physically available supplies, which serve as a foundation for assessing long-term water adequacy. Future water demand will be addressed through a combination of:

- Maximizing efficient use of existing supplies through conservation and reuse
- Supporting recharge and watershed management projects to sustain aquifers and surface water systems.
- Coordinating with ADWR, municipalities, irrigation districts, and private providers to identify additional water resources if needed.
- Collaborative Recharge and Conservation To help offset projected increases in groundwater demand, Cochise County will continue to participate in collaborative

LOCAL IRRIGATION DISTRICTS

Irrigation districts are legally recognized local governmental entities established to manage water delivery, maintain infrastructure, and collect assessments for agricultural and municipal use. In Cochise County, districts such as St. David (established 1920s) and Pistachio Pass (established 1940s) have historically played a central role in managing groundwater resources for farming and local communities. Operating under state law, these districts coordinate with County and state agencies to ensure sustainable water use. Their operations support agricultural and residential needs, contribute to water reliability, maintain water quality, and provide a framework for regional governance. Incorporating irrigation districts into County water planning reinforces coordinated management, supports long-term sustainability, and acknowledges their ongoing role in meeting current and future water

MAP 23: COMMUNITY WATER DISTRICTS & SYSTEMS



Community Water System
Community Water District

Please see <https://cochise.maps.arcgis.com/> for the most detailed and up-to-date information.

CH 5: Energy

Chapter Overview

- **Electricity:** Provided by SSVEC, APS, CEC, and AEPCO; shifting toward cleaner sources including gas turbines, with supplemental low-carbon electricity from regional nuclear plants.
- **Gas & Fuels:** Natural gas, propane, and hazardous liquid pipelines support redundancy.
- **Efficiency & Access:** Focus on energy-efficient buildings, retrofits, and equitable access to renewable energy.
- **Future Opportunities:** Planning for emerging technologies, energy storage, and low-carbon projects, including potential small batch nuclear-adjacent initiatives.

Goals

1. Harness the Wind, Capture the Sun
2. Power Smart, Power Efficient
3. Solar Together – Equitable Energy Access
4. Shovel-Ready for a Low-Carbon Future
5. Protecting What Matters



5: Energy Element

PURPOSE

The Energy Element of the Cochise County Comprehensive Plan provides a framework for managing, conserving, and developing energy resources. Its purpose is to promote a resilient energy system that supports economic growth, protects the environment,

and enhances the well-being of residents. The element identifies strategies for efficient energy use, encourages renewable energy development, and guides policies to ensure reliable and resilient energy services throughout the county.

ELECTRICITY

Electricity is the primary energy source for residential, commercial, and public facilities in Cochise County. The county is served by several electric providers, each with distinct roles in generation, transmission, and distribution. The primary distribution entities within the county are Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative (SSVEC), Arizona Public Service (APS), and Columbus Electric Cooperative (CEC), while Arizona Electric Power Cooperative (AEPCO) provides wholesale generation and transmission services. This section summarizes each provider, their service areas, energy sources, and recent trends.



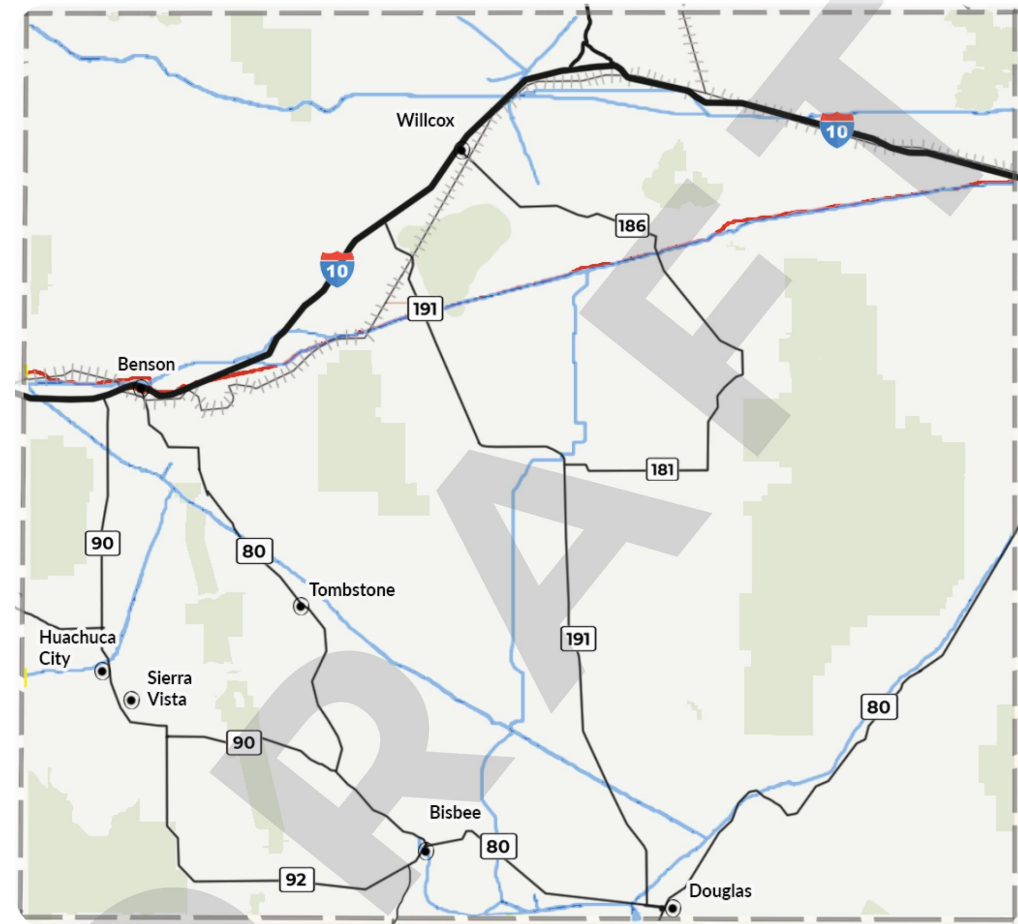
ARIZONA ELECTRIC POWER COOPERATIVE (AEPCO)

AEPCO is a generation and transmission

cooperative that provides wholesale power to distribution cooperatives, including SSVEC and CEC. It owns and operates the Apache Generating Station in Cochise County, with a total generating capacity of 625 MW, and approximately 852 miles of transmission lines.

- Historically, the Apache Generating Station relied on coal and natural gas, but AEPCO has been transitioning toward cleaner

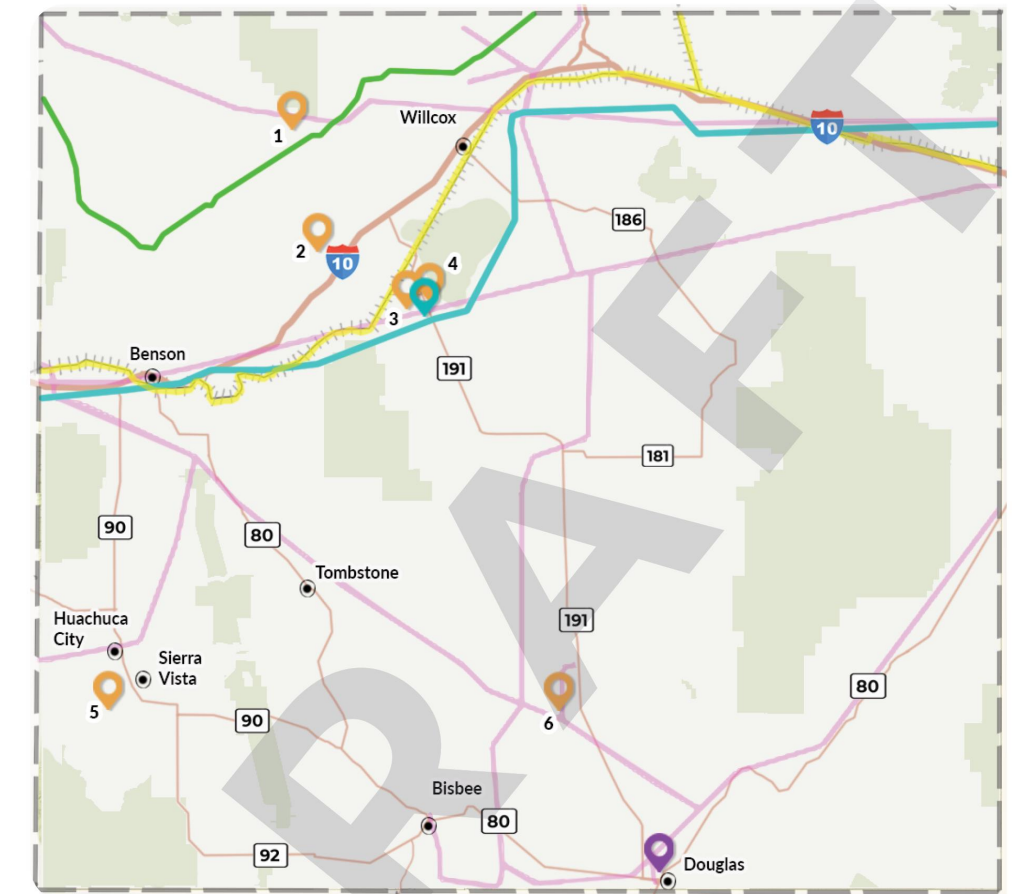
MAP 25: GAS & HAZARDOUS LIQUID PIPELINES



— Natural Gas Pipeline
— Hazardous Liquid Pipeline

U.S. Department of Transportation, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration. (n.d.). NPMS Public Viewer. Retrieved September 26, 2025, from <https://www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov/PublicViewer/>

MAP 26: ENERGY & TRANSMISSION LINES



- 1 - Red Horse 2, Solar PV & Wind Turbine; 81 MW
 - 2 - Red Horse 3, Solar PV, 30 MW
 - 3 - MN8 Energy LLC, Solar PV, 20 MW
 - 4 - AZ Electric Pwr Coop (AEP CO), Solar PV & BESS, 30 MW
 - 5 - Tucson Electric Power (TEP), Solar PV, 18 MW
 - 6 - SR McNeal, Solar PV & BESS, 40 MW
- AEP CO, Conventional Steam Coal; Natural Gas Fired Combustion Turbine; Natural Gas Steam Turbine, 548 MW
 - Arizona Public Service (APS), Petroleum, 15 MW
- Natural Gas Pipeline
 - SunZia Transmission Line
 - Southline Transmission
 - Active US Railroad

Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration. "All Energy Infrastructure and Resources." U.S. Energy Atlas. Accessed February 6, 2025

CH 6: Public Services & Facilities

Chapter Overview

- Safety & Emergency Services: Law enforcement, detention, fire districts, EMS, and emergency management coordinated to provide countywide coverage and resilience.
- Health & Human Services: Hospitals, clinics, behavioral health providers, and social services support enhanced access to primary, specialty, and emergency care.
- Community Services: Animal control, libraries, and community centers provide public support, education, and enrichment.
- Coordination & Planning: Facilities integrated with land use, circulation, water, and energy planning to maintain service efficiency and resilience.

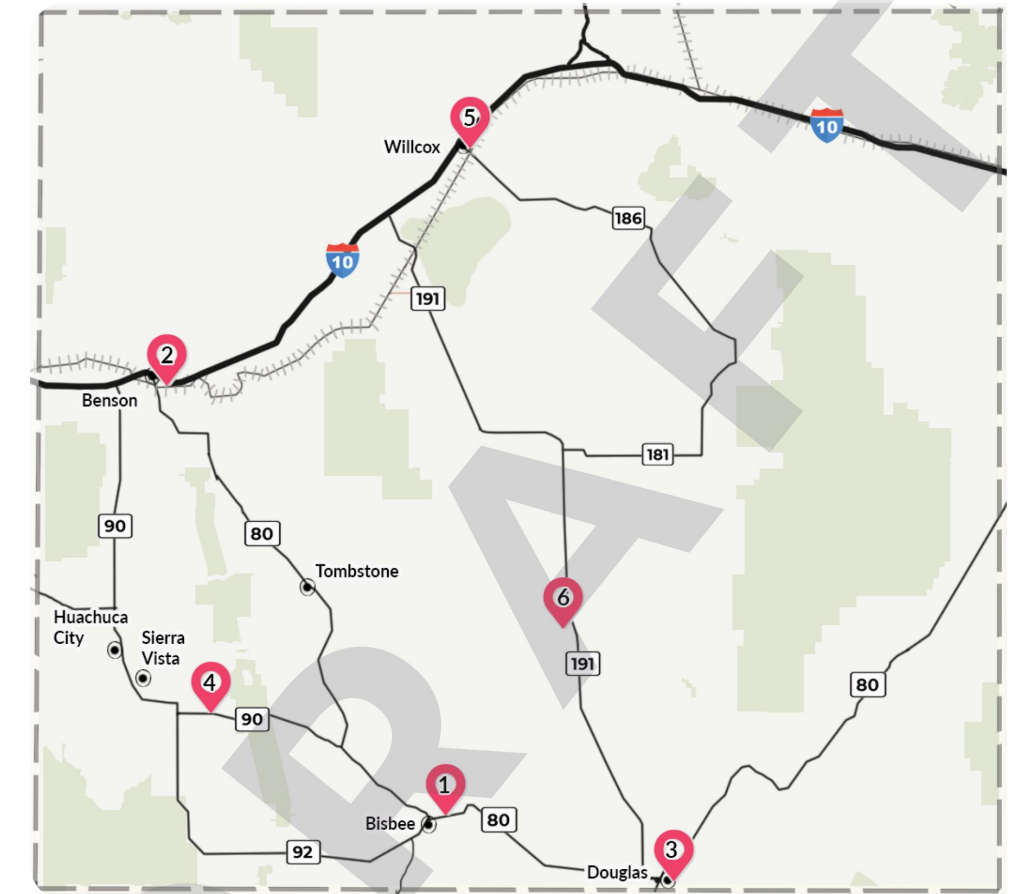
Goals

1. Safe, Secure, and Ready Law Enforcement
2. Strong Fire & EMS Services for Every Community
3. Healthy Communities, Connected Care
4. Modern, Humane Animal Services
5. Libraries & Community Centers for All
6. Smart, Connected Community Facilities



6: Public Services & Facilities Element

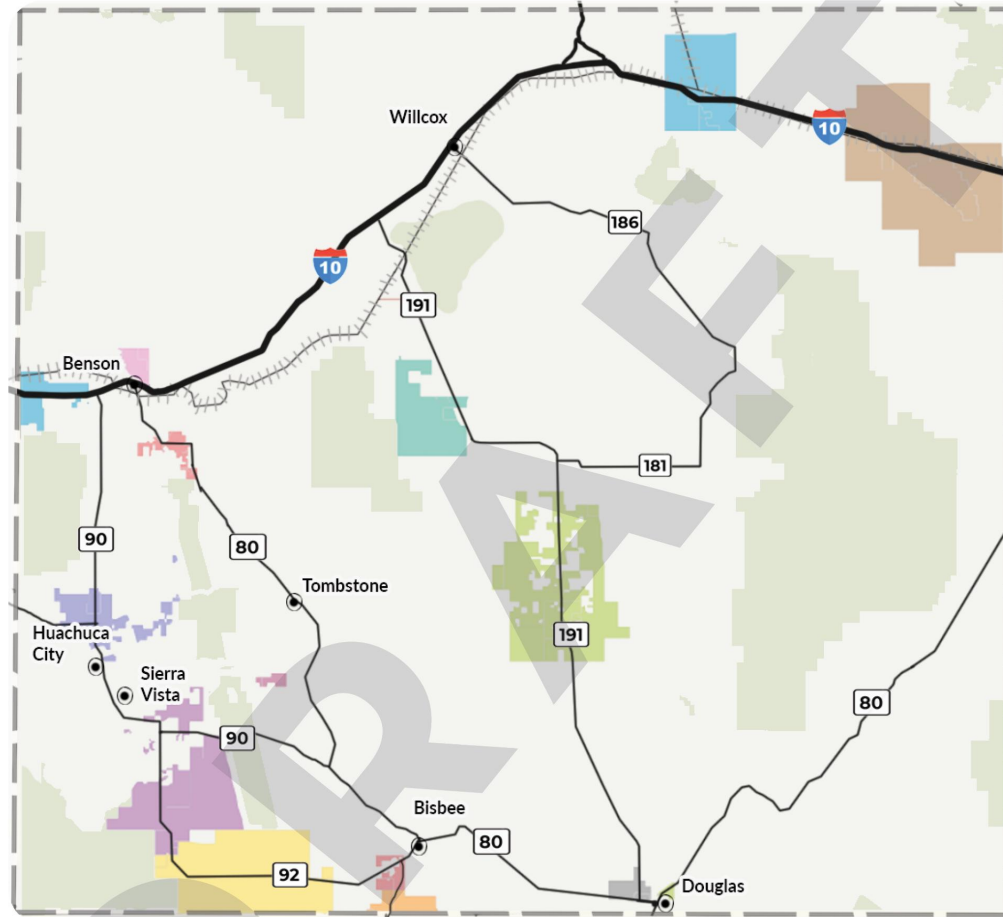
MAP 27: SUBSTATIONS & DETENTION FACILITIES



- 1 - Main Jail & Bisbee Substation
- 2 - Benson Substation
- 3 - Douglas Substation
- 4 - Temporary Holding Facility & Sierra Vista Substation
- 5 - Temporary Holding Facility & Willcox Substation
- 6 - Elfrida Substation

Please see <https://cochise.maps.arcgis.com/> for the most detailed and up-to-date information.

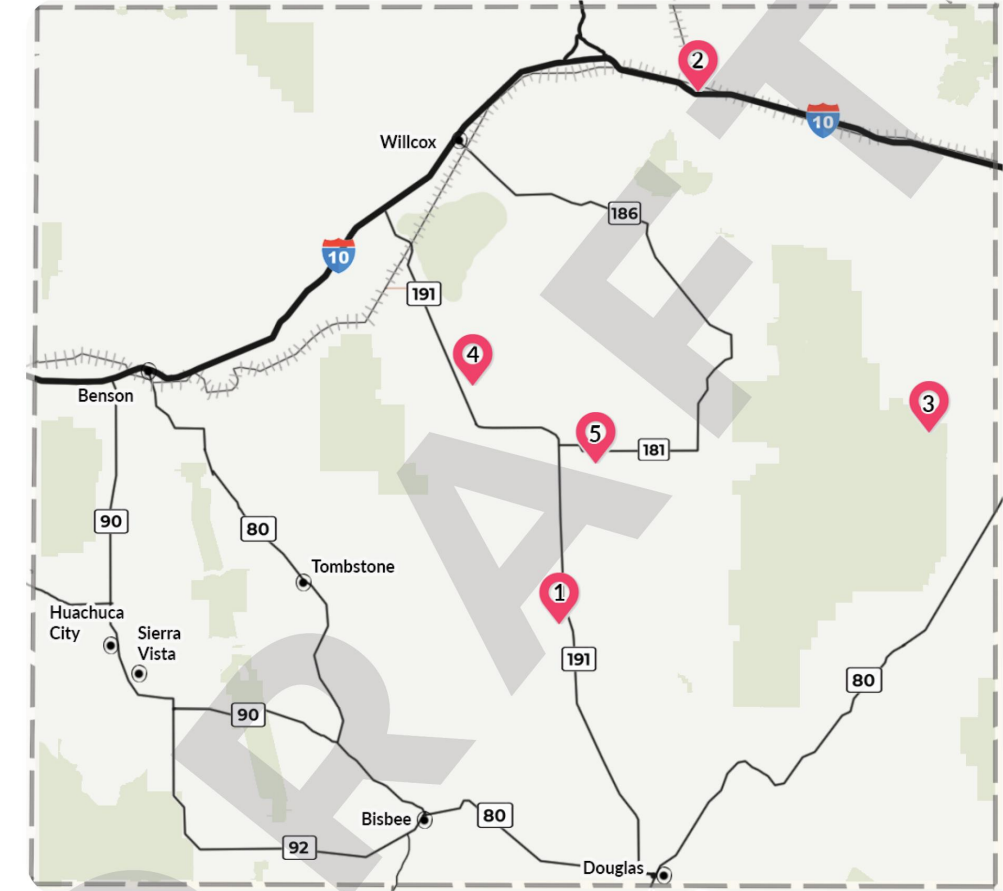
MAP 28: FIRE DISTRICTS



Bowie	Naco	7X(17)	Pomerene
San Simone	San Jose	Whetstone	Sunsite Pearce
Sunnyside	Palominas	St. David	Elfrida
Pirtleville	Fry	Mescal- J6	

Please see <https://cochise.maps.arcgis.com/> for the most detailed and up-to-date information.

MAP 29: COUNTY LIBRARIES



- 1 - Elfrida Library
- 2 - Jimmie Libhart Branch Library - Bowie
- 3 - Myrtle Kraft Library - Portal
- 4 - Sunsites Community Library
- 5 - Sunizona Library

Please see <https://cochise.maps.arcgis.com/> for the most detailed and up-to-date information.

CH 7: Housing

Chapter Overview

- Guides Cochise County’s approach to safe, affordable, and sustainable housing
- Addresses limited supply, aging homes, infrastructure gaps, rising costs, and housing insecurity
- Coordinates federal, state, and local programs (CDBG, HOME, RHS, LIHTC, Section 8)
- Supports renters, homeowners, and low- to moderate-income households
- Provides targeted assistance for Fort Huachuca personnel and colonia residents

Goals

1. Safe, Healthy, and Energy-Efficient Homes
2. Build Smart, Live Green
3. Homes for Every Budget
4. Revitalize Our Neighborhoods
5. Affordable Homes for Renters



7: Housing Element

PURPOSE

The housing element serves as a blueprint for addressing housing issues and guiding new residential development. By focusing on housing needs, affordability, quality, sustainability, and inclusivity, this element helps ensure that the housing market supports the well-being of all residents and contributes to the overall health and

vitality of the community.

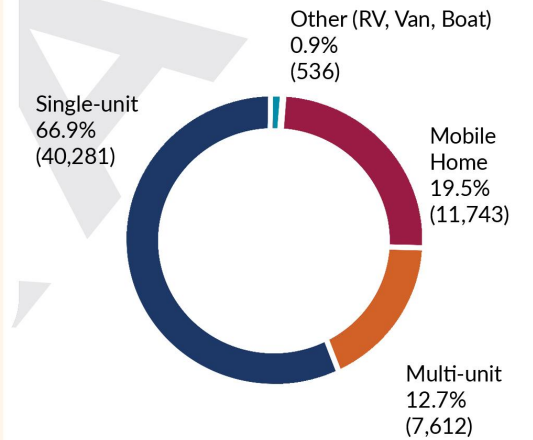
Cochise County faces several housing challenges. This includes a limited supply of quality housing, infrastructure challenges, substandard housing conditions, and external market pressures which increase home purchase and home rental prices.

EXISTING HOUSING SUPPLY

KEY TAKEAWAYS*

- **Single-Unit Structures:** In Cochise County, 66.9% of housing units are single-unit structures, closely aligning with the national average of 67.4%.
- **Multi-Unit Structures:** The county has 12.7% multi-unit housing, significantly lower than Arizona’s 21.1% and the national average of 26.9%.
- **Mobile Homes:** At 19.5%, Cochise County has a higher proportion of mobile homes compared to Arizona (8.9%) and the national average (5.5%).
- **Other Structures:** Boat, RV, van, etc., account for 0.9% in the county, slightly above Arizona’s 0.4% and national average of 0.1%.

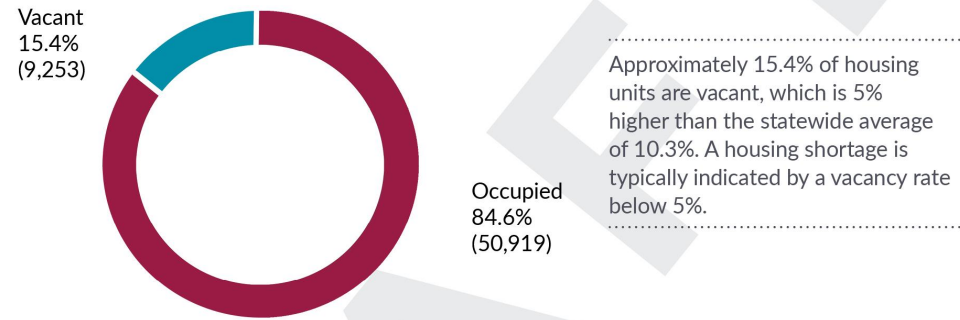
Figure 9: Housing Type*



* Source: United States Census Bureau. QuickFacts: Arizona; Cochise County, Arizona. United States Census Bureau website. Accessed February 26, 2025. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/AZ,cochisecountyarizona/>

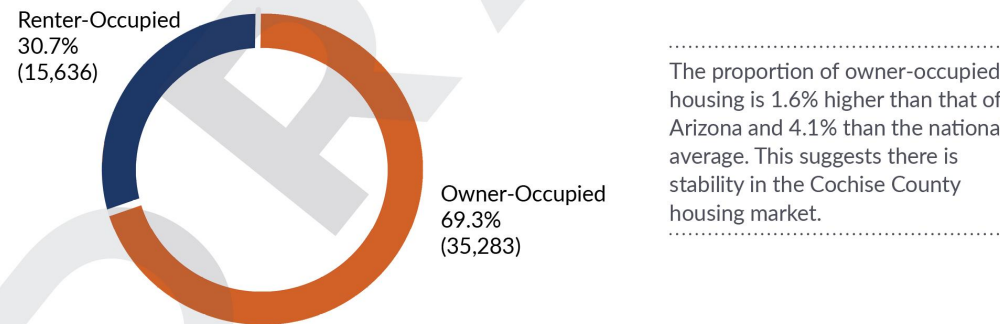
EXISTING HOUSE SUPPLY

Figure 10: Occupied Vs. Vacant Housing*



Approximately 15.4% of housing units are vacant, which is 5% higher than the statewide average of 10.3%. A housing shortage is typically indicated by a vacancy rate below 5%.

Figure 11: Renter Vs. Owner-Occupied Housing*



The proportion of owner-occupied housing is 1.6% higher than that of Arizona and 4.1% than the national average. This suggests there is stability in the Cochise County housing market.

Source: Census Reporter. Cochise County, AZ. Accessed February 26, 2025. <http://censusreporter.org/profiles/05000US04003-cochise-county-az/>

FEDERAL, STATE, & LOCAL HOUSING FUNDS

safe and affordable housing for low- and moderate-income individuals and families. It will assess current and future housing

needs, set clear goals, guide future policy development, recommend allocation of resources, and promote partnerships.

COLONIAS

In Arizona, a colonia refers to a specific type of community designated by the Arizona Department of Housing (ADOH)

based on criteria established under federal legislation, particularly Section 916 of the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act of 1990. Colonias are located within 150 miles of the U.S.-Mexico border and are characterized by certain deficiencies in infrastructure and housing quality. The community must have existed as a colonia before November 28, 1990. The colonia designation enables these communities to access specific federal and state resources aimed at improving living conditions. For example, Arizona is required to allocate 10% of its annual Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to benefit colonias, focusing on enhancing infrastructure and housing quality.

Cochise County currently has 15 colonias. Their general location is indicated on Map X.

COLONIA*	LOCATION
Patrick Dr./Valley View	Benson
Prickly Pear/Cactus Neighborhood	Benson
Bakerville Neighborhood	Bisbee
Saginaw Neighborhood	Bisbee
Tintown Neighborhood	Bisbee
Zacatecas Neighborhood	Bisbee
Douglas Original Townsite	Douglas
Tombstone (City Limits)	Tombstone
Willcox Original Townsite	Willcox
Railview Neighborhood	Willcox
Bowie	Unincorporated
Fry Townsite	Unincorporated
Lower Huachuca City	Unincorporated
San Simon	Unincorporated
Winchester Heights	Unincorporated

* Source: Arizona Department of Housing. Arizona Designated Colonias as of May 16, 2024. Published May 16, 2024. Accessed March 11, 2025. https://housing.az.gov/sites/default/files/documents/files/ArizonaDesignatedColonias_%205.16.2024

CH 8: Economic Development

Chapter Overview

- Guides policies and strategies to foster a diversified economy
- Focuses on attracting and retaining businesses and high-quality jobs
- Supports workforce development and skills training
- Enhances quality of life through infrastructure, education, and services
- Highlights major employers, including Fort Huachuca, healthcare, and government
- Promotes growth in mining, agriculture, and technology sectors
- Encourages investment in ports of entry, broadband, and creative industries
- Coordinates federal, state, and local programs, including tax incentives

Goals

1. Power Up the Economy – Support Military & Defense Jobs
2. Digging for Success – Expand Mining & Resource Opportunities
3. Grow Our Fields – Strengthen Agriculture & Rural Enterprise
4. Border Opportunities – Maximize Ports of Entry & Trade
5. Connect & Compete – Expand Broadband Access Countywide
6. Film & Fame – Grow the Creative Economy
7. Build Skills, Build Jobs – Workforce Development & Training



8: Economic Development Element

PURPOSE

The purpose of the economic development element is to establish policies and strategies that foster a robust and diversified economy. Although optional, this element specifically aims to:

- Attract and retain businesses: Implement initiatives to draw new businesses and support the retention and expansion of existing ones.
- Enhance employment opportunities: Develop programs that create jobs and improve workforce skills to meet market demands.
- Improve quality of life: Invest in infrastructure, education, and community services to enhance living standards, making the area more appealing to residents and businesses alike.

MAJOR EMPLOYERS

EMPLOYER	INDUSTRY TYPE	# EMPLOYEES
Fort Huachuca	Government	7,956
Cochise County	Government	816
Sierra Vista Unified School District	Education	707
Walmart	Retail	643
Canyon Vista Medical Center	Healthcare	623
Arizona Department of Corrections	Government	615
Cochise College	Education	521
Chiricahua Community Health Centers	Healthcare	500
Douglas Unified School District	Education	492
Copper Queen Community Hospital	Healthcare	430
City of Sierra Vista	Government	407
U.S. Department of Homeland Security	Government	245
Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative	Government	174

Source: Cochise County Economic Development. Major Employers. Cochise County Economic Development. <https://choosecochise.com/our-county/major-employers>. Accessed March 10, 2025.

MAJOR PROJECTS & INFRASTRUCTURE

A NEW PORT OF ENTRY
 One of the largest infrastructure projects underway is the construction of a new port of entry in unincorporated Cochise County west of Douglas. A port of entry is a facility that provides controlled entry into, or departure from, the United States for people or materials. Ports of entry house the U.S. Customs and Border Protection and other federal inspection agencies responsible for enforcing federal laws.

Arizona has ports of entry into the United States in six locations along its border with Mexico. The Douglas port of entry is the second-largest commercial port in the state. It is also the sole port of entry between the cities of Douglas and Agua Prieta. Unlike the San Luis and Nogales ports of entry, where commercial and non-commercial traffic is separated, both modes of traffic currently compete at the Douglas port.

Raul Hector Castro Port Of Entry: Douglas is currently served by the Raul Hector Castro Port of Entry, which was originally constructed in 1933. Although this port was subsequently expanded in 1993, more is needed to adequately meet traffic demands and U.S. Customs and Border Protection requirements. Funding has been dedicated to increasing inspection capacity and modernizing the facility.

A Two-Port Solution: A second commercial port of entry in the Douglas area will improve

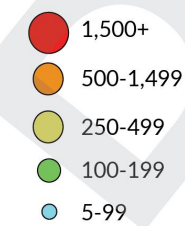
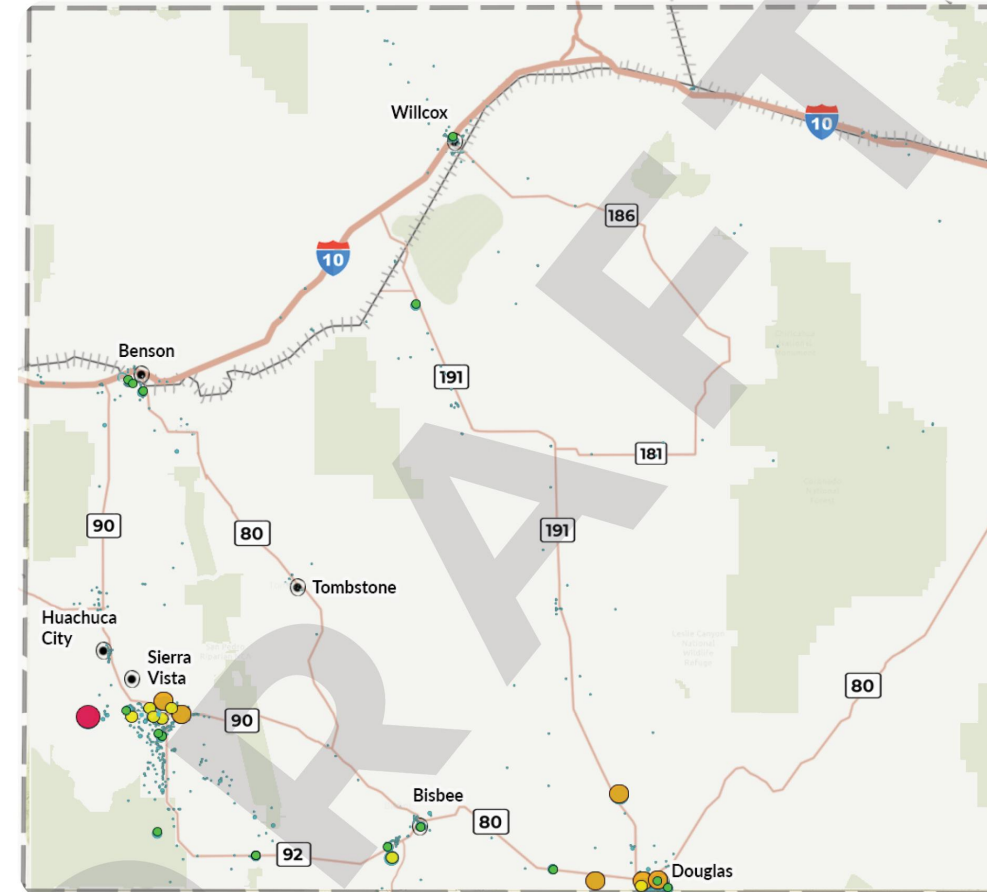


safety, security, and overall operations at the border. It will simultaneously reduce:

- Overcrowding and commercial truck traffic in downtown Douglas;
- Queuing times for everyone, heading north or south; and
- Conflicts between commercial trucks and non-commercial vehicles will increase pedestrian safety.

Economic Impact: The development of a new port of entry is significant due to its

MAP 31: MAJOR EMPLOYERS



Cochise County's employment landscape reflects its rural character, with significant reliance on government and healthcare sectors. In addition, the prominence of Fort Huachuca means that a substantial portion of Cochise County's workforce is concentrated in public administration and defense-related roles.

Please see <https://geo.azmag.gov/maps/azemployer> for the most detailed and up-to-date information.

CH 9: Amendments & Implementation



PURPOSE

The Cochise County Planning and Zoning Commission, the Board of Supervisors, and any other County department, commission, official, or employee acting in an advisory capacity to the Board of Supervisors shall consult, consider, and generally be guided by this Comprehensive Plan. All zoning, subdivision, building, and other land use decisions shall be in substantial conformance with the Comprehensive Plan, consistent with ARS §11-805.

This chapter outlines the process for modifying the Comprehensive Plan to

ensure adaptability to changing property owner needs, growth patterns, and public policy, while maintaining compliance with state law. Specifically, it:

- Defines major and minor amendments;
- Provides amendment procedures for staff- and applicant-initiated requests;
- Lists criteria for amendment evaluation; and
- Establishes record-keeping, periodic review, and implementation tracking.

AMENDMENTS

The Comprehensive Plan may be amended periodically to respond to changes in growth patterns, development needs, or public policy. Amendments to Growth Area Categories and Plan Designations are intended to:

1. Protect the existing character of an area.
2. Ensure that amendments are justified by specific evidence showing that the current land use category no longer reflects the actual or projected growth patterns.

Presumption: Unless such evidence is provided, the existing category should be retained.

AMENDMENT CONSIDERATIONS

When considering a change to a land use category, the following factors shall be

evaluated:

1. Infrastructure and Services: Availability of roads, water, sewer, and utilities to serve the proposed development.
2. Land Use Patterns: Existing zoning, land use, and density compared to the surrounding area.
3. Compatibility with Surrounding Areas: How well the proposed land use fits with nearby uses, including buffers and transitions.
4. Development Plans: Completeness and adequacy of submitted plans, including master or detailed development plans.

Appendices



A1: Key Terms

KEY TERMS

Access: The means for pedestrians, vehicles, and other travel modes to enter or leave a property.

Access Management: A set of policies and standards that manage the number and location of access points on the public road system.

Acre: A measure of land containing 43,560 square feet.

Adaptive Reuse: Rehabilitation or renovation of existing buildings or structures for any use other than the present use.

Affordable Housing: Housing that has a sale price or rental amount that is within the means of a household that may occupy middle-, moderate-, or low-income housing.

Aggregate Material: A category of raw material such as sand, gravel and stone that is used for construction purposes

Agricultural Lands: Lands used primarily for raising crops, forage and livestock.

Agritourism: Tourism that focuses on the enjoyment of, or education about, agricultural and ranching activities.

Airport: Any area of land or water designed and set aside for the landing and take-off of aircraft, including all necessary facilities for the housing and maintenance of aircraft.

All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV): Any motorized, off-road vehicle 50 inches or less in overall width, having a dry weight of 600 pounds or less, designed to travel on three or more low pressure tires, having a seat designed to be straddled by the operator and handle bars for

steering control.

Amendment: A formal revision, addition or suggested change made to an existing plan or statute.

Annexation: The process by which cities extend their municipal services, regulations, voting privileges, and taxing authority to new territory.

Aquifer: An underground geologic formation that contains sufficient saturated, permeable material to yield significant quantities of groundwater to wells and springs.

Area Plan: A plan that covers specific subareas of the county.

Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC): The state agency with regulatory responsibility for incorporation, securities, railroad and pipeline safety, and utilities.

Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ): The agency with regulatory responsibility for air and water quality, as well as for the storage, treatment, and disposal of solid and hazardous waste.

Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT): The agency responsible for developing, operating, and maintaining the state and federal highway infrastructure.

Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR): The agency with regulatory responsibility for managing surface water and groundwater resources in Arizona.

Arizona Game & Fish Department (AGFD): The agency charged with conserving,



A2: Public Outreach

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Cochise County placed community participation at the center of the CP2045 planning process. From mid-2024 through 2025, the County conducted an extensive public outreach campaign to ensure that residents, businesses, and stakeholders across all regions had opportunities to help shape the county's long-term vision.

Engagement combined traditional meetings, open houses, and workshops with a modern online platform that enabled broad, ongoing participation. The goal was to gather input that reflected local priorities, values, and ideas for future growth and development.

Online Engagement: The CP2045 Platform

The County launched CP2045.cochise.az.gov as the central hub for information and participation. The site, built on the EngagementHQ platform, provided a transparent, interactive space where the public could learn about the Comprehensive Plan, participate in surveys, post questions, and follow project updates. Specifically, through the website, residents could:

- Access background materials and event announcements
- Take topic-specific surveys (e.g., Growth Areas, Housing, Economic Development)
- Contribute comments, ideas, or questions directly to planners
- Track plan progress

This approach expanded access for residents in rural and remote areas, allowing for broad, equitable participation in the plan's development.

Community Survey

The CP2045 Community Survey served as the primary tool for collecting broad-based input from the public. The survey invited residents to share perspectives on quality of life, growth, land use, housing, economic development, transportation, and environmental priorities.

A subsequent Growth Areas Survey built upon these findings, allowing participants to identify locations most suitable for development or conservation. Together, the surveys provided data that directly informed the Land Use, Growth Management, and Economic Development elements of the plan.

The following pages report survey findings at a glance.

OUTREACH METRICS

Website Visits: 4,218

Contributions (comments, survey responses): 407

Registrations: 361

Engagement Rate (percent of website visitors that contributed): 10 %

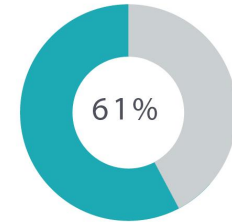
Appendices



A2: Public Outreach

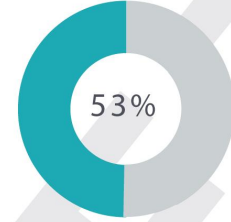
CP2045 SURVEY

A quick look at the most typical responses:



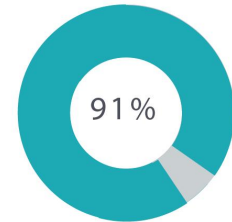
UNINCORPORATED

Where in Cochise County do you live?



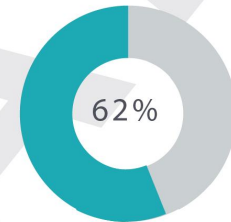
11+ YEARS

How long have you lived in Cochise



OWN RESIDENCE

Do you own or rent your current residence in Cochise County?



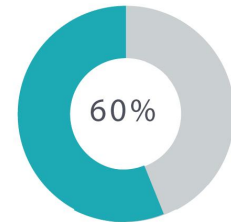
SATISFIED

How satisfied are you with the overall quality of life in Cochise County?



YEAR-ROUND

How many months of the year do you live in Cochise County?



ABOUT THE SAME

How does the quality of life in Cochise County today compare to ten years ago, or since you moved to the community if less than ten years?

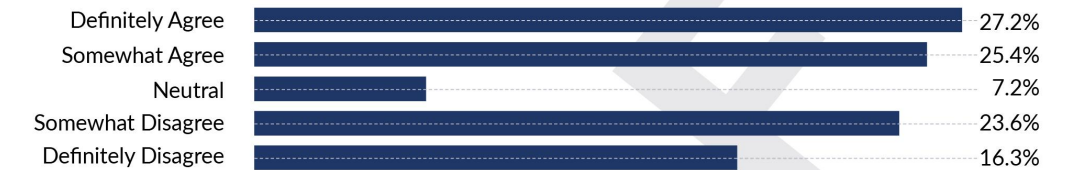


A2: Public Outreach

CP2045 SURVEY

When considering Cochise County's existing transportation networks, state whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:

THE ROADS NEAR ME ARE ABLE TO HANDLE CURRENT TRAFFIC



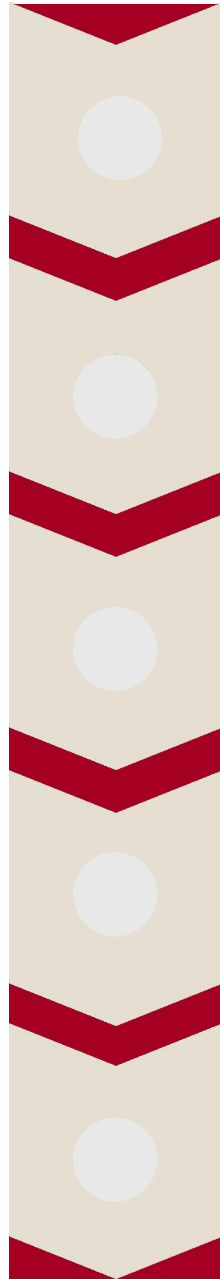
THE ROADS NEAR ME ARE IN GOOD CONDITION



I AM ABLE TO EASILY ACCESS MY PROPERTY REGARDLESS OF THE WEATHER



Next Steps/Adoption



November Work Session Follow Up

Gather Input, Authorize 60-day Review

Agency & Local Review

Post on website, share draft with state agencies, SEAGO, military, neighboring counties, city/town in the county, additional public meetings

Planning Commission Hearing (February)

Commission recommends plan to Board of Supervisors.

Board of Supervisors Hearing

Board may adopt as-is or send changes back to Commission. Adoption by resolution

Follow up

Valid for **10 years** → must be readopted or updated.