

# 2021



# ANNUAL REPORT

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### City Responds to COVID Pandemic

Continually monitoring and responding to the global pandemic, the City was able to fully reopen all facilities in 2021. All departments were affected by these events. Public Safety responded to COVID-related emergency calls, a vaccination clinic was held for El Mirage employees, federal funding was managed and implemented for the benefit of our residents and information was continually shared on all digital channels to inform, serve and assist the public.



### New Veterans Monument at Veterans Park

In partnership with the Cactus Park Neighborhood, the Public Works Department installed a new Veterans Monument in Veterans Park. The Grand Opening featured a flag raising ceremony conducted by the El Mirage Fire Department Honor Guard. The event was attended by Mayor and Councilmembers as well as residents from the neighborhood, committee members, City staff and members of the news media.



### Parks, Recreation and Dysart Schools Agreement

Several parks in El Mirage received upgrades this year through the City's Capital Improvement Plan to expanded play amenities. The City also partnered with Dysart Community School District to make many school fields available to the public after school and on weekends, greatly enhancing quality of life opportunities for families and children.



### City Conducts Community Survey, Receives Feedback

The City commissioned a model input tool through Polco, a national research center, to conduct the first community survey of it's kind in El Mirage. The questionnaire was initially sent to a random sampling of houses, and an online version was then made available to all residents. The feedback will continue to inform budget decisions and strategic planning. Learn the results: [ElMirageAZ.gov](http://ElMirageAZ.gov)



### New El Mirage Public Library Opens Summer 2022

In partnership with Maricopa County Library District, CORE Construction and bo ARCH



**EL MIRAGE COMMUNITY:**

It is my pleasure to present the 2021 Annual Report for the City of El Mirage. This inaugural report is a source of pride for our entire organization, highlighting the major accomplishments and initiatives along with key financial information.

The last two years have been shaped by continuing global public health and economic emergencies. The impact COVID has had on our residents, businesses and region has been tremendous. I am deeply proud that our hardworking employees delivered exemplary service, while advancing the City Council's strategic priorities, and providing needed emergency COVID response.

While there is no question there have been significant challenges, what stood out to me is the unwavering leadership of Mayor and City Councilmembers; and the resiliency and determination of our employees and community members.

Our team remains committed to City Council's vision: "to embrace progress while respecting El Mirage's grand heritage."

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as El Mirage's City Manager.

Respectfully,

*J. Crystal Dyches*

J. Crystal Dyches, El Mirage City Manager



**Mission**

To protect and enhance the quality of life through leadership, partnerships, and the efficient delivery of outstanding service to our diverse community.



**Values**

The City of El Mirage is committed to:

Transparency;  
Fiscal Responsibility;  
Environmental Stewardship;  
Community Engagement; and  
Excellence in all we do.



**Vision**

To embrace progress while respecting El Mirage's grand heritage.





Councilmember  
Mike Hutchinson

Councilmember  
Anita Norton

Councilmember  
Roy Delgado

Mayor  
Alexis Hermosillo

Councilmember  
David Shapera

Vice Mayor  
Monica Dorcey

Councilmember  
Donna Winston

El Mirage Mayor & City Council



# Economic Development

El Mirage is dedicated to commercial revitalization efforts to help business succeed.

Developing strategies to boost economic activity, spur commercial development, redevelopment and retail entrepreneurship is a top City Council priority.



## Accomplishments & Highlights



### Microsoft Datacenter

Microsoft opened its fully-operational, world-class datacenter in El Mirage. Part of its Phoenix datacenter region, it brings highly resilient, secure cloud services, sustainable design and operations, and community investments in water conservation, education and workforce training programs. An additional datacenter adjacent to the existing facility is also planned.

### Villages on Greenway

This 190-unit multi-family development is this first of its kind in more than ten years in El Mirage, featuring 60 triplex units and seven duplexes (phased).

### Tippmann Innovation

Tippmann Innovation/Ti Cold Storage, a nationally-recognized leader in the cold storage industry, broke ground on a 318,000 square-foot unique facility in El Mirage with more than 39,000 pallet positions.

### Cavco

Site plans have been approved for CAVCO, a designer and builder of systems-built structures including manufactured homes, modular homes and commercial buildings. CAVCO plans to construct a 479,000 square-foot building at Copperwing Logistics Center.

### Avanti Windows and Doors

Avanti Windows and Doors is planning to construct a 320,000 square-foot manufacturing plant on a 32-acre parcel of vacant land at 12501 W. Olive Ave., which will employ approximately 430 people.

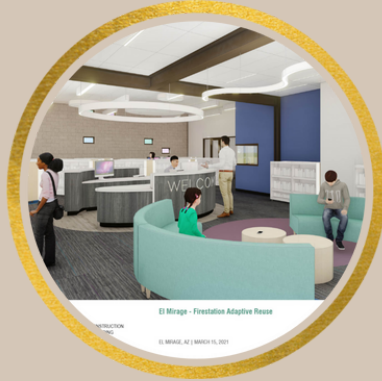




## Accomplishments & Highlights

### New El Mirage Library

The City has partnered with Maricopa County Library District to construct a new library space by renovating a former fire station, 13513 N. El Mirage Road. Features include a 1,100 square-foot programming room and 1,140 square-foot computer lab. At more than 7,000 square feet, the new library will be three times larger than the current library. Completion is scheduled for Summer 2022.



### Flashing Yellow Arrows

Flashing yellow left-turn arrows were installed at eight signalized intersections within the City, replacing the green ball on permissive left-turn movements and conveying the need to yield.

### Dysart Road & Acoma Drive Intersection

The intersection at Dysart Road and Acoma was improved by constructing a flashing-yellow traffic signal, lane enhancements, new ramps and crosswalks.

### Dangerous Building Task Force

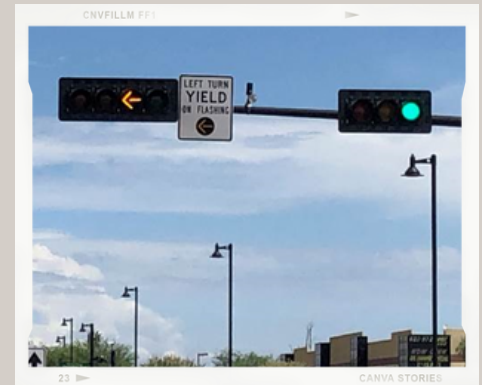
A Code Enforcement and Fire Department partnership was created to address vacant, blighted buildings. With 23 structures identified, property owners were prompted to remove/rehabilitate the buildings.

### City Code Chapter 154 Amendments Underway

A comprehensive review and update to the zoning and land use code ensures compatible land use and can also stimulate development.

# Community Development

The El Mirage Development Services Department ensures responsible planning and development within the current and future city limits and provides quality customer service to all City of El Mirage customers.



**New Library "Wallbreaking" Ceremony**  
August 23, 2021



# Public Safety Police

El Mirage Police Department (EMPD) is dedicated to providing professional police service and a safe, secure community for the residents of El Mirage.

## Accomplishments & Highlights



### Calls for Service & Crime Counts

El Mirage police responded to an average of 1,107 calls for service per month and averaged 1,045 officer-initiated activities monthly.\* Officers averaged 102 arrests per month along with 30 warrant arrests. Many crime categories were down, including burglaries which decreased 40%, with total property crimes down 21%.\* Crime statistics are published monthly on the City's website.

### National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS)

The EMPD successfully passed the Department of Public Safety's stringent guidelines, becoming one of the few certified Arizona NIBRS-compliant police agencies in the state.

### Police Property & Evidence Efficiencies

By law, some evidence must be retained for 100 years, and some can be released upon adjudication or for other reasons. Over the last five years 22,398 items entered the property room and 22,077 exited, resulting in a 98% purge rate, preventing costly facility expansion.

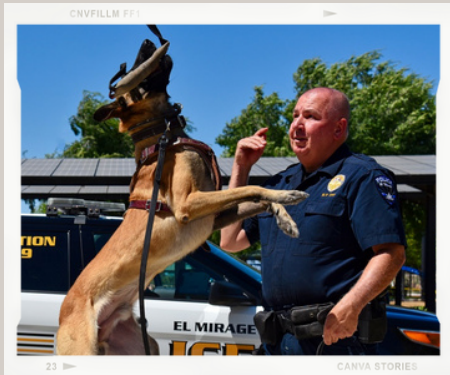
### Document Imaging of Public Records

The department received approval from the Arizona State Library and Archives Department to allow maintenance of electronic copies of documents for reports and supporting documentation.

### National Criminal History Improvement Program Grant

More than 9,000 historical reports and records were meticulously sorted, purged and reorganized through the NCHIP grant program.

*\*Jan. - Nov. 2021, latest figures available at printing*





## Accomplishments & Highlights

### Fire Prevention

There was a 29% reduction of fire loss in the El Mirage community in 2021. The El Mirage Fire Department has increased public education efforts including: presentations and outreach at community schools, fire safety plan reviews and annual fire prevention inspections for businesses.

### Response Times

Data analysis and review of station procedures identified opportunities for improvement in response times. A collaborative effort and commitment by each crew member to implement revised practices directly resulted in a reduction of average in-city response times by 35% over the previous year.

*Response times in 2020: 6 minutes 29 seconds.*

*Response times in 2021: 4 minutes 41 seconds.*

### COVID Response

El Mirage Fire Department responded to hundreds of emergency medical calls involving suspected or confirmed COVID patients. Additionally, the department coordinated vaccination clinics and testing for City employees.

### Professional Development

All El Mirage Fire Department personnel attended and completed the nationally recognized "Dare to Lead" leadership training course.



## Public Safety Fire

El Mirage Fire Department's mission is to protect the life, property, and environment of our community, neighbors, and guests by delivering professional life safety and hazard mitigation services.





# Community Services

The Community Services Division administers grants and the benefits attained through funding sources and partners, the Community Action Program (CAP), Dial-a-Ride, Special Events and the Senior Center, providing needed services to our most vulnerable populations.



## Accomplishments & Highlights



### Grants

The City was successful in receiving more than \$1.3 million in new funding to further enhance City safety, parks, special events, paratransit, community services, and community education.

### COVID Relief Funding

Staff managed and implemented more than \$16 million in Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (AZCares) and American Rescue Plan Act (ARP) funding related to the pandemic. Staff worked with State and Federal agencies to meet reporting and submission deadlines, understand program requirements and mandates, and communicate with other departments to ensure compliance and understanding.

### Senior Center

The El Mirage Senior Center reopened in August after an 18-month closure due to the pandemic. Since its reopening, daily attendance and memberships have increased. A new partnership with a local food pantry is providing weekly commodities to our Seniors.

### Special Events

El Mirage Special Events made their return in October with the Fall Harvest Festival attracting 4,500 attendees. Winterfest also returned in December 2021, which was expanded throughout Gentry Park to include a street stage, additional food vendors and activities.





## Accomplishments & Highlights

### New Playground Equipment

North Brisas Park received new playground equipment as a part of the Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) goals to replace older pocket park equipment throughout the city.

### Inclusive Playground at Gateway Park

The Gateway Park Inclusive Playground opened in Spring 2021 featuring accessible playground equipment and funded by a \$55,815 grant from the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community.

### Water and Sewer System Improvements

Many improvements were made to the City's water and sewer systems in 2021 with a focus on security, reliability, and efficiency.

### Pavement Maintenance

Thirty-seven lane miles underwent pavement maintenance improvements: Cactus Park, Dysart Park, Arizona Brisas, Sunnyvale.

### Electronic Vehicle Charging Stations Open

Four electric vehicle charging stations (L2) were installed at 12401 W. Cinnabar Ave. as part of the "APS Take Charge AZ" pilot program. They are open daily to the public and are free of charge.

### Water Usage Mobile App "Dropcountr" Launched

Residents can track their water use in real time using Dropcountr.



## Public Works

The Public Works Department manages quality services related to the City's parks, streets, facilities, fleet, environmental, water, sewer and sanitation systems.



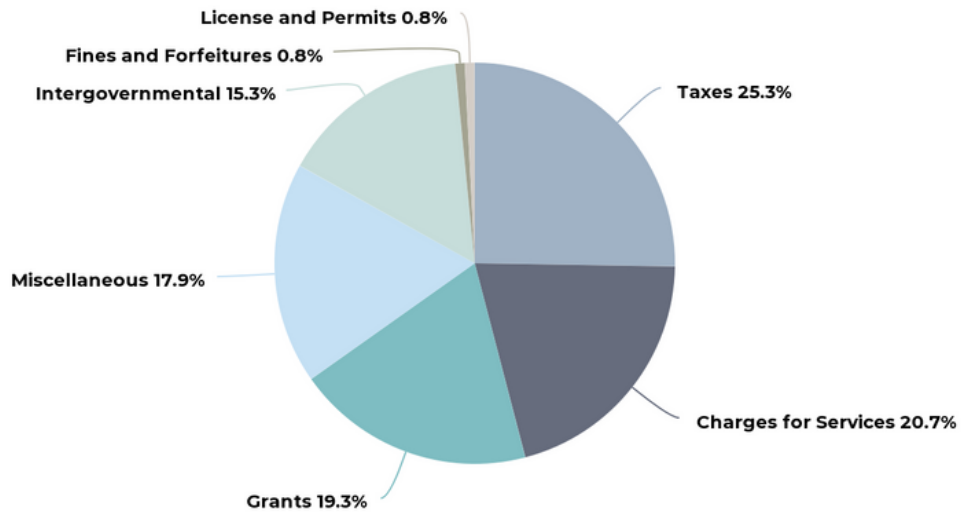


# Budget

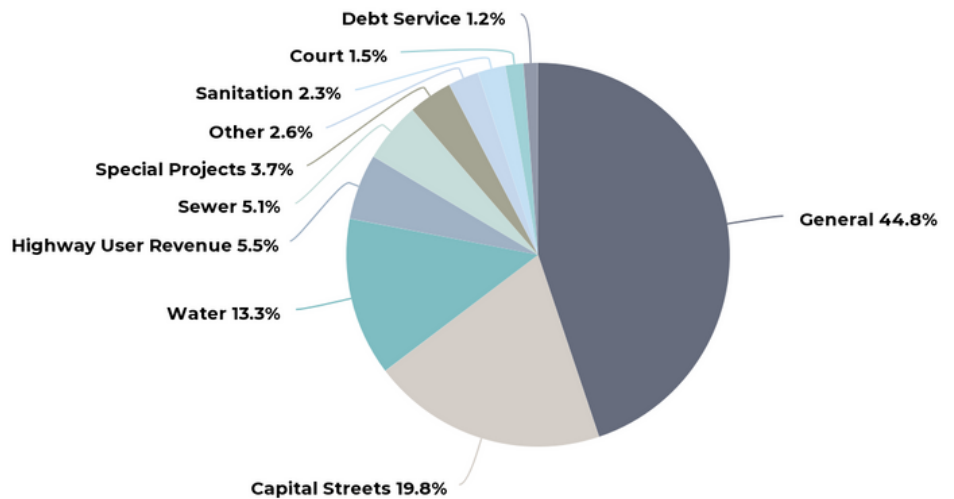
The adopted budget for FY 2022 (July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022) was \$104 million, representing an increase of \$18.1 million from the previous year and included \$34.1 million for the General Fund, the primary fund for most City operations.

The budget is not only a policy document. It also sets the financial course for our community, advancing the City Council's Strategic priorities and vision for the City.

Citywide Budgeted Revenues



Citywide Budgeted Expenditures by Fund



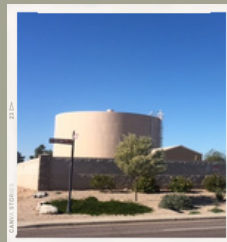
## Vehicle Replacement Program

The City's Vehicle Replacement Program ensures that the City's fleet of vehicles is operating in a safe, efficient and effective manner. Vehicles and all capital items are determined based on specific evaluation criteria and needs assessment.



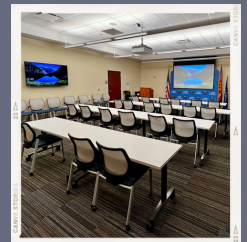
## Rockwood Well Site Security Upgrade

Upgrades at the Rockwood Well site included the construction of a new perimeter wall, an enclosed structure around vital well components, and an HVAC system for temperature control maintenance. The purpose was enhanced security, noise reduction, visual appeal, privacy and utility asset life extension.



## Paul Lazinsky Blue Honor Room Updates

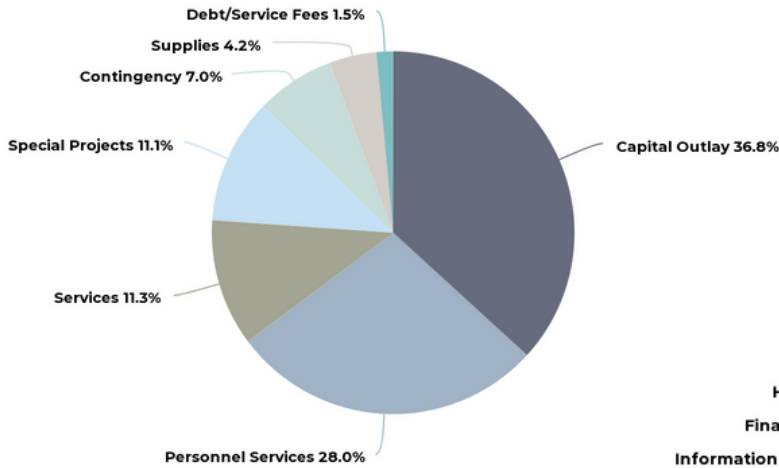
This Police Department Capital Improvement Project included upgrades to the Paul Lazinsky Blue Honor Room. A touch panel to control operations, speakers for improved sound quality and new monitor. This room is used for trainings, press conferences and other public safety activities.



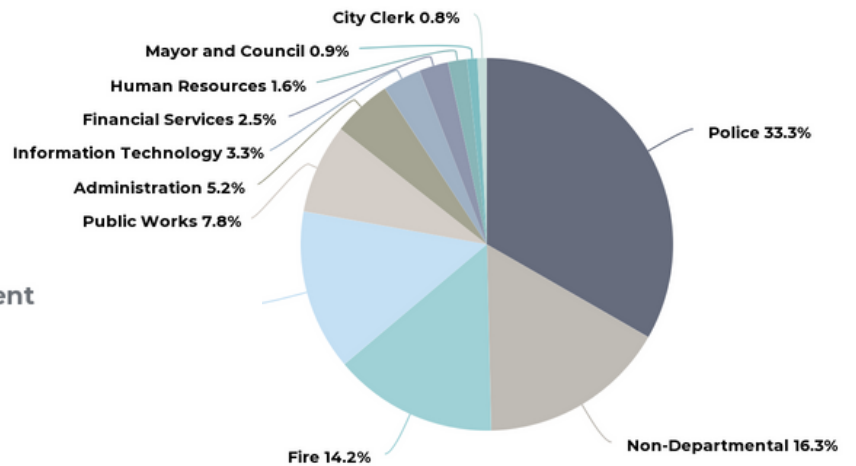


# Budget

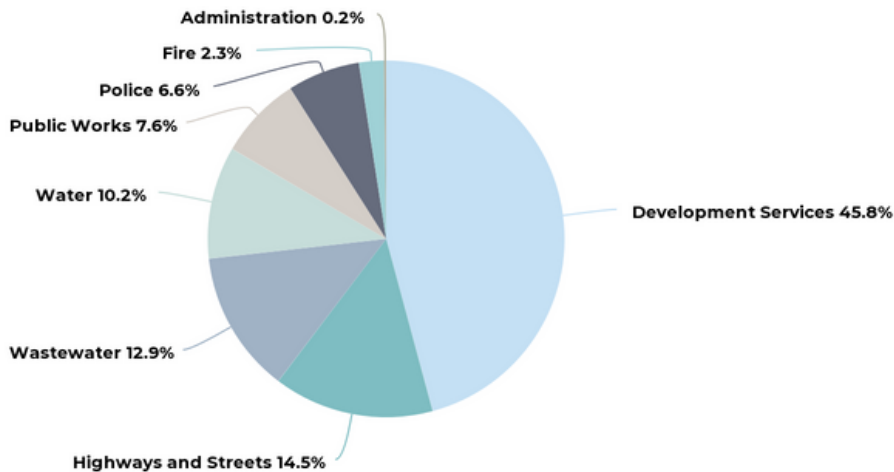
Citywide Budgeted Expenditures Less Exclusions



General Fund Expenditures by Department



Capital Expenditures by Department



## Fire Hydrants Inspected, Flushed and Fixed

Half of all El Mirage fire hydrants (1,350) are inspected and operated each year. Valves are tested and any inoperable hydrant is tagged, reported and repaired.

Additionally, 52 hydrants in Cul-de-Sac locations are flushed once per year for general maintenance.



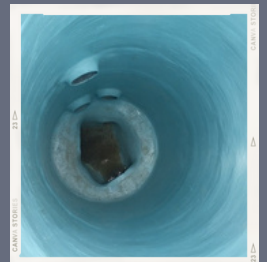
## Budget Book is Digital and Interactive with ClearGov

Residents can view City revenues and expenditures in detail and real time at EIMirageAZ.gov by clicking the "Follow Your Money" icon. ClearGov is a digital tool for the public to examine their tax dollars at work and provide transparency. Copies of the budget book are also available for viewing at City Hall.



## Sewers and Manhole Preventative Maintenance

El Mirage Utilities inspects half of City manholes (1,200) each year to identify/fix potential problems. The Sewer Inspection Program cleans half of sewer system piping annually (160,000 feet) to identify and resolve premature blockages to prevent costly repairs.





# City Clerk

The City Clerk ensures El Mirage’s legislative processes are open and public. The Clerk’s Office is dedicated to excellence in service, performing ethically, honestly and with integrity. The Clerk remains a neutral, impartial and professional link between the citizens and government.



## Accomplishments & Highlights

### Transitioning to Virtual Meetings during COVID

To provide public transparency while maintaining a safe environment for public meetings during the COVID pandemic, the City Clerk’s office implemented on-line access for Council and Planning & Zoning meetings. Councilmembers, Planning & Zoning Commissioners, and the public now have the option to attend these meetings either virtually through Microsoft Teams or in person.

### Election Oversight

The City Clerk’s Office is responsible for local election oversight, from guiding candidates through their requirements to partnering with the Maricopa County Elections Department to run the election on site. City elections are held every even-numbered year. Three Councilmembers were elected, given their respective Oath of Office, and began their four-year terms at the end of 2020.

### Agendas Online

Planning and Zoning Commission meetings were added to the Clerk’s AgendaQuick digital system, which allows residents to sign up and receive agendas and minutes automatically for both Council and Commission meetings using a feature called "Notify Me."

### Tracking and Coordinating Legal Claims

The City Clerk worked closely with the City Attorney and the City Risk Pool on tracking and coordinating legal claims.





## Accomplishments & Highlights



### Regional Homeless Court

Defendants with qualifying cases began participating in the Maricopa County Regional Homeless Court (MCRHC). The goal of MCRHC is to resolve outstanding minor misdemeanor victimless offenses and warrants for homeless individuals who demonstrate a commitment to end their homelessness.

### Improved Access to Justice

El Mirage City Court improved access to justice by including walk-in calendars throughout the week, increasing scheduled court dockets, and increasing access for court users seeking protective orders.

### Criminal Justice Team Established

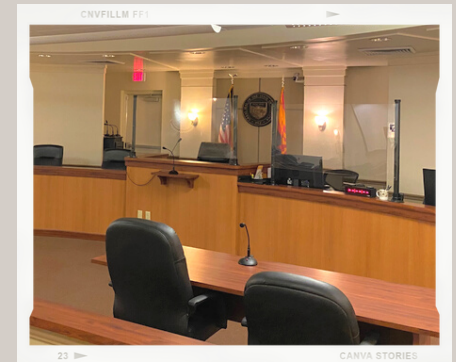
Members of the newly-created Criminal Justice Team include the Presiding Judge, Court Administrator, Chief of Police, City Prosecutor and the Public Defender. The team identifies issues, opportunities and challenges in the El Mirage criminal justice system and finds comprehensive problem-solving solutions that improve access to justice and the successful operation of the system.

### Expanded Outreach and Communication

El Mirage City Court joined the Coalition of West Valley City Courts and the Municipal & Justice Court Presiding Judges' Association to obtain and exchange information, explore mutual opportunities and understand common challenges related to all courts.

## City Court

The El Mirage City Court is responsible for the expedient adjudication of criminal misdemeanors, criminal and civil traffic violations, and El Mirage City Code violations that occur within the city limits.





# Human Resources

The Human Resources Department provides comprehensive programs and support to departments in the areas of recruitment and retention, benefits administration, employee relations, compensation, performance management and compliance.



## Accomplishments & Highlights

### Recruitment, Selection and Hiring

In 2021 staff completed the recruitment, selection, and hiring process for more than 50 new employees.

### Employee Recognition

The City held an annual employee appreciation meeting to honor 35 employees celebrating milestone years of service with the City.

### Classification and Compensation Structure

A new job classification system was implemented that reflects the job requirements and responsibilities, is easy to understand and administer and gives the City flexibility to update classifications and job duties. The new salary structure ties the pay strategy to the 60th percentile of the market, subject to budget limitations.

### Employee Policy Manual

The employee policy manual was rewritten to: comply with changes in the law, align with the City's recruitment and retention strategies, establish responsibilities and levels of performance expectations and explain the benefits the City offers to employees.

### Administrative Policies

Five new administrative policies were created in 2021 regarding: traumatic event counseling, separation payout and over-hire, drug-free workplace, hours of work and supplemental savings plan.





## Accomplishments & Highlights



### Outstanding Financial Reporting Award

The City was awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2020. This is the ninth consecutive year that the City earned this award from the Government Finance Officers Association.

### Automated Financial Processes

The department implemented electronic purchase order requests, acquired an Automated Clearing House (ACH) module to pay vendors electronically, and completed a conversion to a new payroll timekeeping system. A utility billing refund interface to the accounts payable module was also implemented to accelerate the refund process and reduce chances of errors with refunds.

### Business Licenses Code Change

The department initiated changes to City Code related to business licensing following adoption by Council. The change eased the licensing process by not requiring licenses for businesses without a business location within the city limits.

### Reports Available on Website

The City's comprehensive annual financial reports, annual budget books, fee schedules, bids and contracts and capital improvement plans can be accessed at [ElMirageAZ.gov](http://ElMirageAZ.gov).

## Finance

Responsible for all fiscal operations of the City of El Mirage, the Finance Department is dedicated to providing transparent and timely financial reporting to include accounts payable, payroll, asset management and all other necessary financial processes.





# Public Affairs

Intergovernmental and Public Affairs provides digital and traditional communications to effectively inform and engage the residents of El Mirage, supports departments in achieving outreach goals and heightens the City's brand awareness using multimedia resources.



## Accomplishments & Highlights



### Launched New Website

A newly designed and upgraded website was launched to modernize EIMirageAZ.gov and improve the ease of finding information that residents are seeking. The website features a new community video, SMS text and email alerts, quick-link buttons and dynamic digital integration with other applications.

### El Mirage Connect Quarterly Newsletter

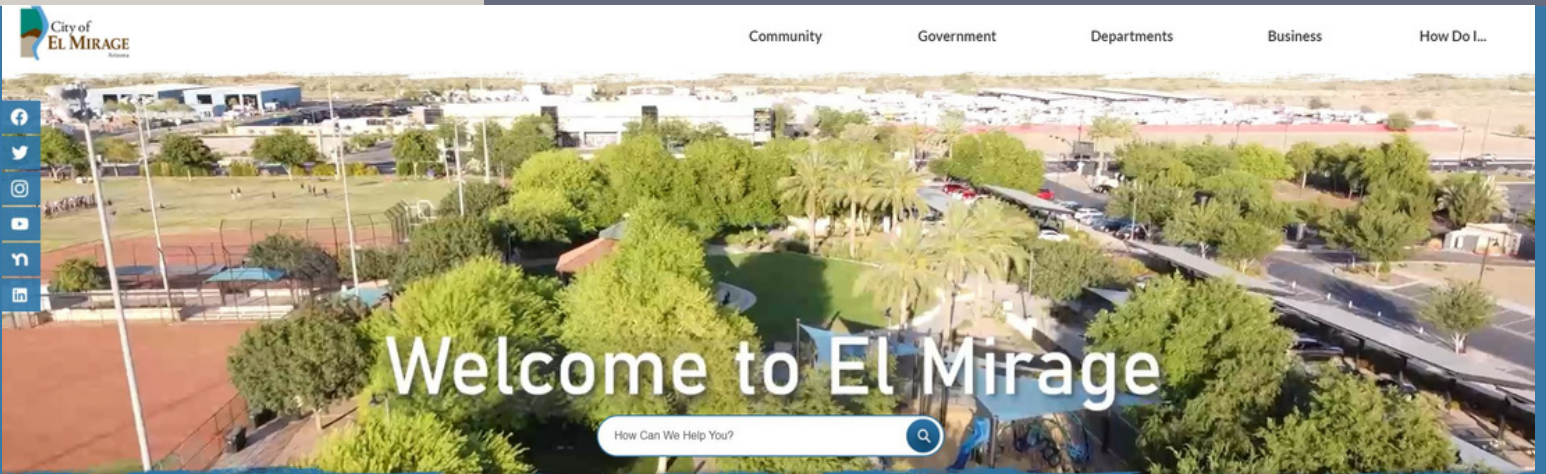
Four quarterly newsletters were published and mailed to all El Mirage households and businesses. The *El Mirage Connect* included special events, recreation, City features and public safety announcements.

### Social Media Engagement

The City utilizes social media platforms to inform and engage followers and create brand awareness, initiating 1,834 posts on the three primary platforms of Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Those City pages attained 774 new followers/fans and engagement grew, including a 138% engagement-rate increase on Facebook. YouTube, Nextdoor and LinkedIn were also utilized.

### Media Stories

Communications staff worked with members of the media, coordinating interviews with City leadership, producing media releases for items of interest to news agencies, and responded to media inquiries for feature stories and public safety incidents.



- Online Bill Pay
- Employment
- Trash & Recycling
- Current Bids
- Meetings &
- Follow Your Money
- Connect With Us



## Accomplishments & Highlights

### El Mirage Fiber Optic Cable Project

In 2021 the City completed fiber optic cable connections from City Hall to Customer Service, City Court and the Fire Station. This capital improvement project allows for a high-speed network throughout City facilities, resulting in long-term savings.

### Multi-Factor Authentication Rollout

Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) was rolled out across all City accounts. This authentication provides a vital level of security that mitigates the effects of a compromised email password. With MFA in place, the City is protected from email accounts being "hacked" and used to send out spam and malicious links.

### City Intranet and Project Management

City Hub, the City's new Intranet, was officially launched this year providing a central location for departments to track projects and share news, policies, forms, and other information.

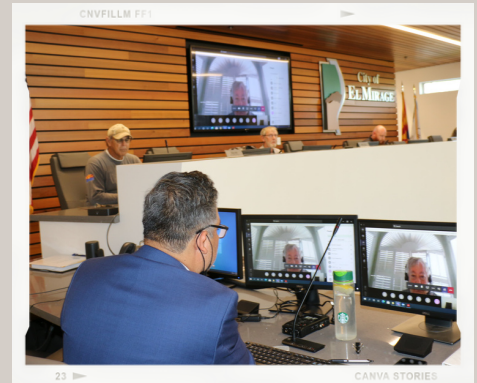
### Interactive Voice Response (IVR) System Upgrades

Police and City Court Interactive Voice Response (IVR) systems were upgraded and streamlined to provide an improved menu system, updated with both English and Spanish responses.



## Information & Technology

The Information Technology Department manages the City's technology infrastructure providing secure, reliable solutions in alignment with administrative and City Council goals, while delivering excellence in customer service.





El Mirage officially turned 70 years old on June 25, 2021. The Town of El Mirage incorporated in 1951 after a group of interested citizens met to appoint a Council of five representatives including the Town's first Mayor. The population was 1,111. The Town purchased a used 1947 Ford Fire Truck in 1952. They also bought a used garbage truck that year for \$400.

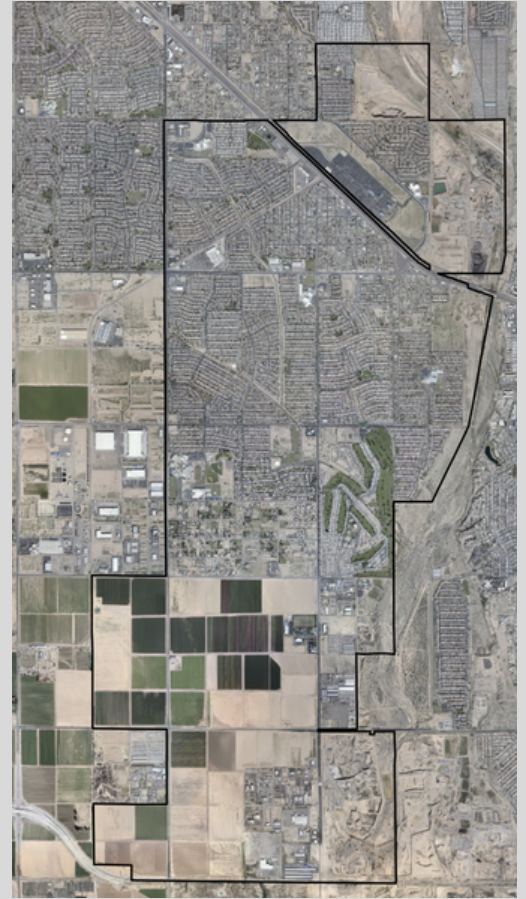


## A Look Back

Aerial maps show City's growth over time.



El Mirage Aerial 1949



El Mirage Aerial 2018





## I Remember When

Employees share fond memories.

Growing up in El Mirage I can remember how my siblings and I would beg our mom to drive the back way into El Mirage to go home so we could roll down our windows and smell the fields of fresh roses. Since then, El Mirage has grown and become a modernized, sustainable community. All these changes have made my heart happy to be part of El Mirage history.

--Valerie Ojeda, *El Mirage Finance Department*

I remember when I moved to El Mirage in the late 1960's and attended El Mirage Elementary School. There were military barracks located at the school and my sixth grade classroom was located in the barracks.

I have remained a resident of El Mirage for most of my life, raised my family here and have worked for the Public Works Department for over 20 years. I have enjoyed seeing all the great changes to my City and how we have grown from a farming community to the best City in the West Valley!

I am thankful for having an opportunity to serve my community and for a great place to call home.

--Elias Navarrette, *Public Works Facilities, City of El Mirage employee since 2000*



I remember responding to a call in which a teenager remembered me from a "Stop, Drop and Roll" presentation when this teen was in kindergarten at El Mirage Elementary.

This community connection early in my career has always reminded me of the life-changing impact each of us can have in the role we fill within the City."

--Chris Richardson, *Assist. Fire Chief*

I remember when El Mirage Road from Peoria south to Northern was just a two way street with no sidewalks or street lights.

--Carmen Jimenez, *Laboratory Technician*

# Census Shows City Population Grew 12.6%

The 2020 Census released its official data reports in 2021 showing El Mirage grew 12.6% since 2010. El Mirage's population totaled 35,805, adding an estimated 4,008 people in the last ten years. Housing units totaled 11,481.





City of El Mirage  
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ElMirageAZ.gov | (623) 935-6405

