

[www.superstition-vistas.org](http://www.superstition-vistas.org)

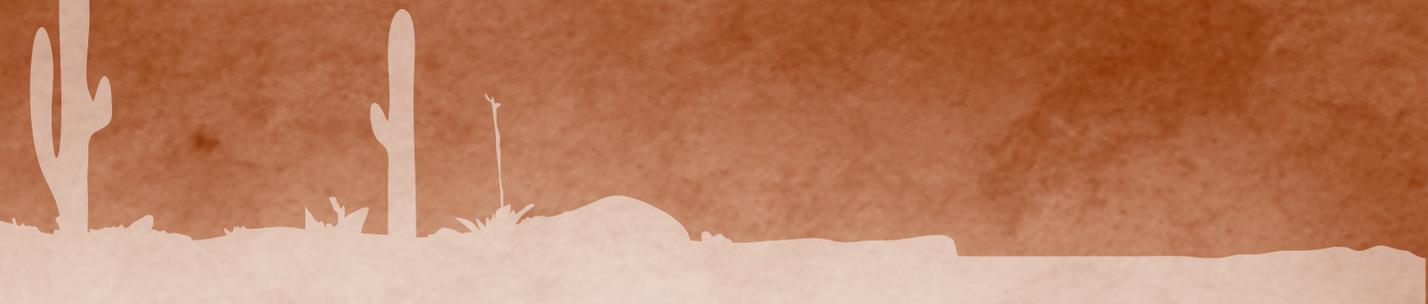
# SUPERSTITION VISTAS: UNLOCKING ITS POTENTIAL

A Vision for 21st Century Opportunities

# SUPERSTITION VISTAS

## An Oasis of Opportunity in Pinal County...

There's a beautiful desert landscape rich in Arizona history that holds one of the keys to the state's future. Superstition Vistas encompasses 275 square miles of state trust land the size of Mesa, Chandler, Tempe and Gilbert combined. In territorial times, miners, ranchers and fortune-seekers roamed this rugged terrain that now lies in the path of the expanding Sun Corridor region - an area that includes Phoenix with Tucson and is projected to grow to 15 million residents by the end of the century.

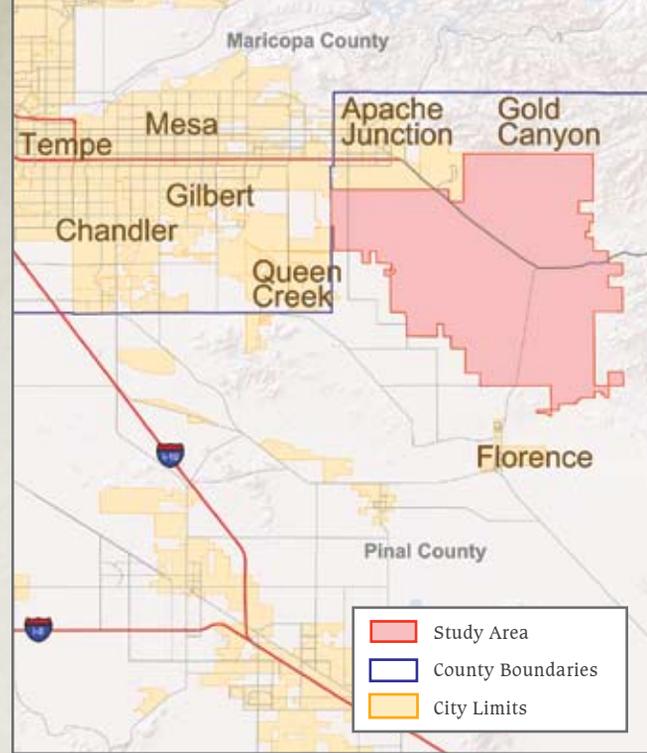


Superstition Vistas has the potential to become a thriving and sustainable community integrating distinct desert neighborhoods that combine the best of urban and rural living – a global model for the 21st century. At the same time, it can foster a network of accessible open spaces and provide an abundance of recreational opportunities for a healthy lifestyle.

Realizing a shared vision for Superstition Vistas on a grand scale requires a comprehensive plan. Such foresight can guide decision making for several decades. It can create new and vibrant communities where residents live, work and play in Pinal County, preserving the area's unique beauty and economic promise for future generations.

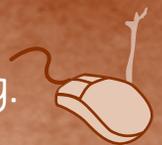
Managed by the Arizona State Land Department (ASLD), Superstition Vistas will generate revenue to benefit ASLD trustees, primarily Arizona's schoolchildren. If the state sold this land without a comprehensive plan, piecemeal development could jeopardize the surrounding communities, damage the natural environment, greatly limit protected open space and reduce the financial return to education. For these reasons, Superstition Vistas is undergoing an unprecedented visioning and planning process to match the scale, scope and potential of this largest of Arizona's undeveloped state trust land areas. In order to maximize success, the effort will require a strong political will and visionary regional leadership, as well as additional authority and resources for the Arizona State Land Department.

Superstition Vistas offers us a rare opportunity. This enormous swath of land sitting in the path of development provides a blank canvas for Arizonans to envision new possibilities. However, its future, and Arizona's inheritance, depends on our ability to achieve a vision by developing and implementing an effective long-range plan.



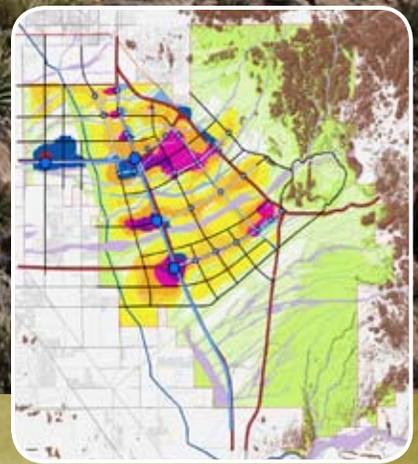
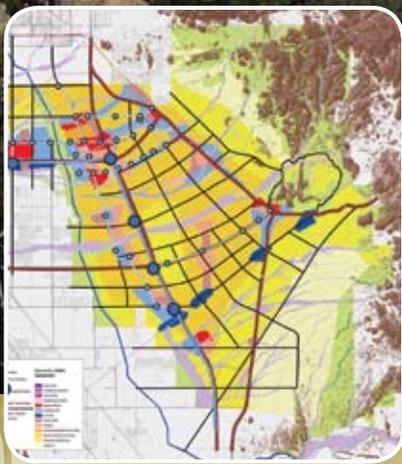
Superstition Vistas extends from Apache Junction and the Superstition Mountains Wilderness Area south to Florence and from the Pinal/Maricopa County line on the west to east of Florence Junction.

For more details, visit [www.superstition-vistas.org](http://www.superstition-vistas.org).



# Envisioning the Potential...

Scenarios serve as stories that help illustrate possible future outcomes for the region.



Local stakeholders worked with consultants to create six possible scenarios for Superstition Vistas to test the impact of various choices, such as housing mix and density, energy and water efficiency, and urban design.

# Lessons Learned

To explore the future potential of Superstition Vistas, local communities and organizations came together over several years in a collaborative effort to work with consultants and Pinal County residents to craft six possible scenarios for the area. (See list of participants on page 19.) Each scenario represents a distinct development pattern that would evolve differently based upon its land use policies, investment in infrastructure (transportation, water supply, utilities, wastewater, etc.) and conservation of renewable and non-renewable resources.

These six scenarios served as stories of how the region could look, feel, grow and function in the future. They ranged from continuing current development patterns to higher density development patterns with access to more protected open space. Density is based on the number of people living in a square-mile area – the more people, the higher the density.

Testing each scenario revealed which of them offered the greatest balance of benefits and lowest costs - and provided these six important lessons:

1. Balancing Priorities Achieves Sustainability
2. Quality Jobs Catalyze Economic Success
3. Transportation Systems & Mixed-Use Centers Drive Vitality
4. Designing for Efficiency Saves Resources
5. Offering Housing Choices to Meet Different Needs
6. Connecting Superstition Vistas Leads to Regional Interactions

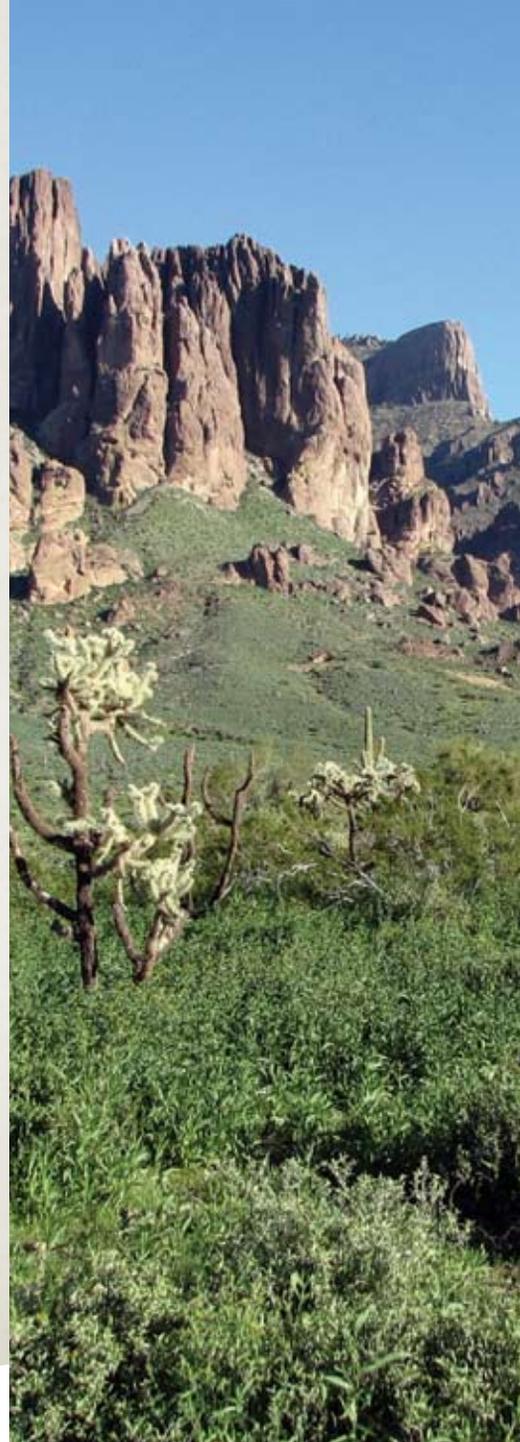
# Balancing Priorities Achieves Sustainability

LESSON 1

Planning for a sustainable Superstition Vistas is all about making tough choices. **Sustainability calls for striking a balance among economic, environmental and community goals**, and requires that we carefully weigh our priorities. A good comparison is to think of sustainability as a three-legged stool: **We need to balance all three areas without favoring one at the expense of another.**

For example, considering only short-term economic gains might diminish other worthy community values and threaten the environment's ability to recharge and replenish. Or thinking only of the environment might reduce revenue and negatively impact Arizona State Land Department beneficiaries, mostly the state's schoolchildren, and the regional economy.

We believe the guiding principles for developing Superstition Vistas must promote practical, achievable ideas that will assure a quality future of our grandchildren and their children. It is important to preserve what makes this region special – our unique heritage, friendly character and healthy lifestyle amidst the natural beauty that surrounds us.



# Quality Jobs Catalyze Economic Success



A strong local economy is critical to building a truly sustainable community. A balance of jobs, shopping and housing choices located near one another results in shorter trips that save time and money and produce less pollution. It also means a higher quality of life for residents as they meet their shopping and other needs close to home.

The most common way a new community develops is by building housing first. But as Superstition Vistas grows, supporting that growth with quality jobs can allow the community to expand in a more sustainable pattern. Focusing on jobs up front also tends to result in more high-paying “head-of-household” incomes.

Significant up-front public investment and partnerships with the private sector will be necessary to attract one or more catalysts to jump-start the local economy. Investment in a needed transport system, for example, could be the key to landing a regional distribution center for a global corporation. Other job catalysts might be a university or research institution, resort complex, medical facilities or other businesses that locate in Superstition Vistas early on. In turn, they will spur early development of an efficient road, water and power infrastructure.

Attracting early investment requires forethought and strategic planning, but it pays almost immediate dividends by creating a diverse economy with more high-paying jobs. This leads to both a higher quality of life and higher land values, which allow the Arizona State Land Department to significantly increase the financial return to trust beneficiaries.





# Transportation Systems and Mixed-Use Centers Drive Vitality

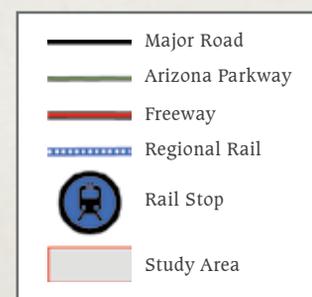
LESSON 3

Locating our daily destinations close to transportation hubs – so we have the option to walk, bike or take light rail and buses – reduces our dependence on cars. Routine destinations such as stores and small shops, restaurants, entertainment, offices, as well as apartments and condominiums, can be grouped into “mixed-use centers” situated along public transportation routes and close to area homes and neighborhoods.

Planning development to include mixed-use centers is one of the most effective means of reducing energy consumption in order to achieve sustainability. When daily destinations are located close to neighborhoods, it reduces drive times and encourages residents to make some trips by foot, bike, light rail and bus.

Market studies show that people will use other transportation options when it is easy and convenient to do so. Similarly, studies indicate that mixed-use centers are popular places to live in or nearby.

Proposed Transport Network





## LESSON 4

# Designing for Efficiency Saves Resources



Flexibility will be vital in designing for the energy efficiency of Superstition Vistas. A strategy will be to adapt to technological advances while at the same time taking into account their affordability.

Increasing energy savings in buildings and fuel-efficient cars has the potential, in addition to the community design, of reducing carbon emissions. Other effective ways to lower energy use include offering higher density housing choices and constructing “green” buildings that are energy and water efficient.

The best development approach is to combine all of these – designing Superstition Vistas to increase energy conservation, as well as to create neighborhoods around transit and mixed-used centers. Additionally, planning for water conservation will be critical to a sustainable future.

Over time, as consumer tastes and technology change, Superstition Vistas will be able to incorporate the latest in green design and appeal to current preferences.

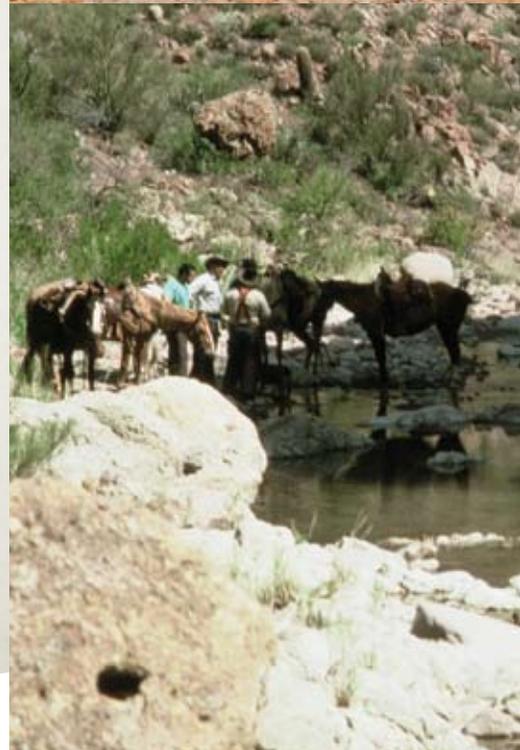
# Offering Housing Choices to Meet Different Needs

LESSON 5

Superstition Vistas needs to provide a broad mix of housing options that appeal to a wide range of needs, ages and incomes. These housing choices can offer residents either urban conveniences or opportunities for rural living, with options ranging from apartments, condominiums and townhomes to single family homes and horse properties. Young people seeking their first jobs, new families buying their first homes, those “moving up” in the marketplace and older adults ready to downsize should find suitable housing in Superstition Vistas.

Housing preferences are anticipated to change in the future. It is important to plan for a variety of potential market circumstances, such as fewer people per household, variable income levels, changes in housing affordability, increased mobility, volatile fossil fuel supply and pricing, desire for open space, greater demand for urban living and so on. As a result, the ability to adjust the mix over time and strike a sustainable balance to meet market demands as Superstition Vistas grows is critical.

Offering a mixture of housing types will make Superstition Vistas more desirable, diverse, livable and multi-modal – with people getting around by foot, bike, transit and car. Neighborhood design should also enhance community amenities, including recreational opportunities for community residents, and improved access to open spaces for hikers, equestrians and other outdoor enthusiasts.



# Connecting Superstition Vistas Leads to Regional Interactions



Looking to Arizona's future, Superstition Vistas has the potential to play a central role in sustainable development of the Phoenix-Tucson Sun Corridor megaregion. This 21st century community needs to be connected by road and transit to the broader region – or risk becoming a cul-de-sac at the eastern edge of Phoenix.

To be successful, Superstition Vistas will need access to both a regional freeway system and commuter rail service. Currently, there are plans for two freeways to serve the area – one east-west and the other north-south. Development of these facilities will provide an opportunity not only to connect Superstition Vistas to the region, but also to demonstrate sensitive design and environmental compatibility.

Ultimately, the transportation system will also need to connect to a possible regional commuter rail service linking Phoenix and Tucson. To grow sustainably, the transit system should start small and mature in size and service as more people move to Superstition Vistas.

For more details, visit  
[www.superstition-vistas.org](http://www.superstition-vistas.org).



# Challenges We Face...



# Infrastructure Investments

With proper investment in transportation, electrical, communications and water systems, Superstition Vistas can attract new industry and business with a unique combination of infrastructure, open space, proximity to Phoenix and an existing, capable workforce.

Infrastructure investments are necessary to serve a growing population and stimulate high-quality jobs at the same time. They also require significant up-front funding and political will to be implemented in a timely manner.

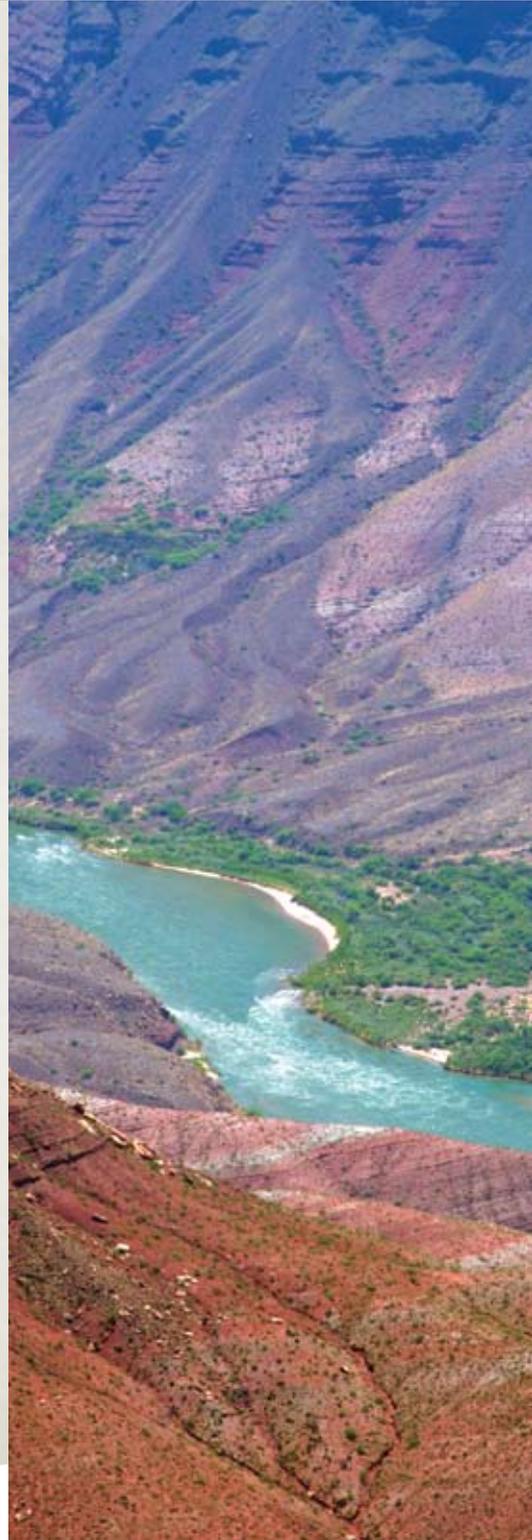
Timing of transportation infrastructure, including rail and transit, can shape the overall development pattern to encourage mixed-used centers and greater density. Water, wastewater, energy and communications infrastructure are necessary to serve the community. Additionally, planning for open space, natural habitats and other community amenities in conjunction with infrastructure can ensure livable communities. For residents, this also improves their quality of life and provides them with a sense of place.

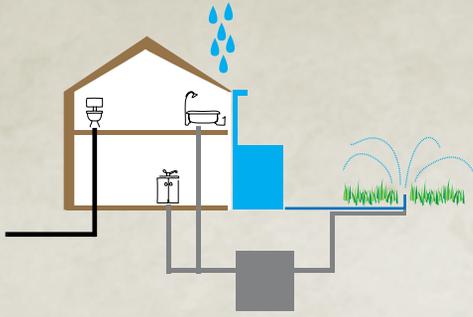
# Water and Energy

Energy and water are essential to the development and ongoing vitality of all Arizona development, including Superstition Vistas.

Farsighted management of these limited, interrelated sources is vital to Superstition Vistas sustainability. While communities will compete for energy and water as the Sun Corridor expands, a balance between quality-of-life issues and judicious environmental stewardship must occur. Efficient use of energy and water resources can be attained by promoting consumer awareness and supporting use of alternative energies, sound science and progressive water management.

The water supply for Superstition Vistas could come from several sources. It will remain an ongoing and challenging effort to secure adequate water, requiring cooperative, integrated planning among diverse public and private partners. Possible future sources include a local groundwater recharge facility near the Central Arizona Project canal, Colorado River water, groundwater imported from other parts of the state, capture and reuse of storm water, harvesting rainwater, use of reclaimed water – and sources not yet developed. Superstition Vistas has a unique opportunity to use best practices and emerging technologies to effectively address water needs.





### Rainwater Capture and Greywater Recycling

Water use in Superstition Vistas could be reduced by greywater recycling and rainwater capture. Greywater recycling is the reuse of wastewater generated from dishwashing, laundry and bathing for irrigation, landscaping and even flushing toilets. Greywater suitable for irrigating landscaping and gardens comprises up to 50 percent to 80 percent of total residential wastewater. Greywater recycling systems may be more efficiently managed on a centralized basis to maintain public health standards. Rainwater capture includes the harvesting of rainfall from roofs or the collection of rain in cisterns for reuse similar to greywater.

Superstition Vistas also will strive to utilize energy resources that balance aesthetic, environmental and cost issues. The community must encourage renewable energy technologies, including solar capacity, and maintain the flexibility to incorporate new technologies as they evolve over time. At the same time, energy delivery must continue to be affordable and reliable. Development of solar power in particular also depends on land for solar facilities and siting of transmission lines. Another strategy may include incorporating smaller scale photovoltaic solar systems on buildings throughout the community.

## Ways to Conserve Water and Energy

- Use reclaimed water produced by Superstition Vistas on site.
- Plan land uses with low water demands and high water use efficiency.
- Offset local groundwater use by recharging treated effluent and storm water into the local aquifer.
- Plan development to include mixed-use centers along public transportation routes and close to neighborhoods.
- Increase energy savings in buildings.

For more water and energy conservation ideas, visit [www.superstition-vistas.org](http://www.superstition-vistas.org).





# Climate and Urban Heat Island

An unintended effect of urban development in the Sun Corridor has been the urban heat island, mostly caused by dark, unshaded surfaces that trap and spread heat. With temperatures forecasted to rise in the future, any development in Superstition Vistas will need to incorporate community designs that help maintain lower regional air temperatures.



## Ways to Reduce Heat Island Effect

- Incorporate light-colored buildings, roofs and streets.
- Design streets so that buildings provide shade during the heat of the day.
- Plant drought-resistant shade trees with a large leaf canopy along streets and in public areas (even if it increases water consumption slightly).
- Use innovative designs to reduce urban heat and adapt to our desert environment.

The image above shows the surface temperature that results from different paving treatments. The dark street asphalt heats up to above 82 degrees, while the gravel and street trees stay relatively cool.

For more heat reduction ideas, visit [www.superstition-vistas.org](http://www.superstition-vistas.org).





## Governance and Public Policy

Laws need to be changed and Arizona State Land Department resources increased in order to maximize the agency's ability to achieve the Superstition Vistas vision. This will result in a higher return for Arizona's schoolchildren and allow for more comprehensive planning of the Superstition Vistas community. A few key actions would include enhancing the ability of the State to: implement plans at the scale of Superstition Vistas, participate as a partner in the development of the community, reallocate land values and participate in alternative methods of infrastructure financing.

Governance of Superstition Vistas also must be designed in collaboration with public and private partners to realize the potential and maintain the long-range vision for this unique community.

## Joining Hands for Our Grandchildren...and Their Children

There is so much Superstition Vistas can do as a community to create a sustainable legacy for our families. None of these actions should be taken in a vacuum. They should be discussed and planned for in a way that is seamless, integrated and thoughtful.

## Together, We Can Achieve the Vision of Superstition Vistas If We...

- Engage in important community discussions that will shape the future of Superstition Vistas and our entire region.
- Provide a safe, neighborly place for our grandchildren and their children to live and work.
- Design a community that uses fewer resources.
- Build healthy, vibrant and livable neighborhoods, open spaces, and communities.
- Create new options for infrastructure development and financing.
- Provide a business friendly place that will foster the creation of quality jobs.
- Do all of the above in a way that can greatly increase the return to Arizona State Trust Land beneficiaries, and all Arizonans.

## Next Steps...

- Finalize the Arizona State Land Department Conceptual Plan for Superstition Vistas.
- Complete the Major Amendment Process for the Pinal County Comprehensive Plan.
- Engage with neighbors and community leaders to develop and implement the Superstition Vistas vision.



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## What is the Superstition Vistas Steering Committee?

A few years ago, a group of diverse stakeholders interested in the future of Superstition Vistas initiated a visioning process to guide development in these 275 square miles of Arizona state trust land. The Superstition Vistas Steering Committee, as these stakeholders came to be known, worked with a consulting team and local community members to conduct a survey and investigate the region's deeply-held values. With this information, they then built and tested six possible scenarios for how this enormous area could best develop and grow, in accordance with those values. This document outlines the six important lessons learned from this process. They are intended to guide the realization of the Superstition Vistas vision for future generations. While this brochure represents the collective vision of the Superstition Vistas Steering Committee members, it does not reflect the official views or policies of their member organizations. Please join us in our ongoing efforts to create this model desert community.

## GET INVOLVED AND LEARN MORE

visit:

[www.superstition-vistas.org](http://www.superstition-vistas.org)



or contact:

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