

Pilot Projects

Three sites, one in the City of Avondale, one in the City of Buckeye and one in the City of Goodyear, have been selected as pilot project trailheads along the El Rio corridor. The primary purposes of these pilot projects are to promote environmental education and provide passive human interaction and recreational access to the Gila River along the El Rio Trail. The sites selected are uniquely positioned to provide a wide variety of opportunities for education, as well as providing regional and local connectivity. These pilot projects directly connect to other recreational and natural resources in the area and are positioned to serve as templates for future project developments that will enhance the access and usability of this tremendous natural resource.





The pilot projects were selected for this effort by each of the public entities involved with the overall project. The pilot projects were designed to provide examples of possible linkages to the Gila River and the El Rio corridor. They are meant to serve as examples that showcase how public open space can be programmed to provide opportunities for economic revitalization and how private development can build off of public investment. Most importantly, these projects provide safe public access to the Gila River and the paths, trails and linkages to the wide variety of open space and recreational activities that the project area and the region offer.

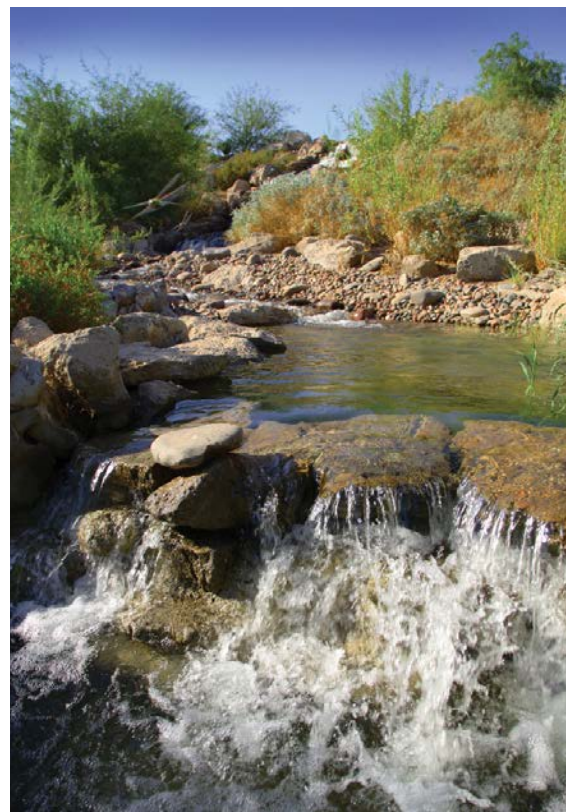
The pilot projects and construction of the El Rio Trail will ultimately open the El Rio area for responsible activities, including access to the Gila River and increasing visitation and visibility, which deters many of the negative and illegal activities (target shooting, wildcat trails created by OHV) that have been an issue. The cities of Avondale, Goodyear, Buckeye and unincorporated Maricopa County, will work with both public and private institutions and local law enforcement agencies to continue to provide and coordinate distribution of educational materials to the public with information on the sensitive riparian species and habitats and the allowable recreation uses in and adjacent to the Gila River.

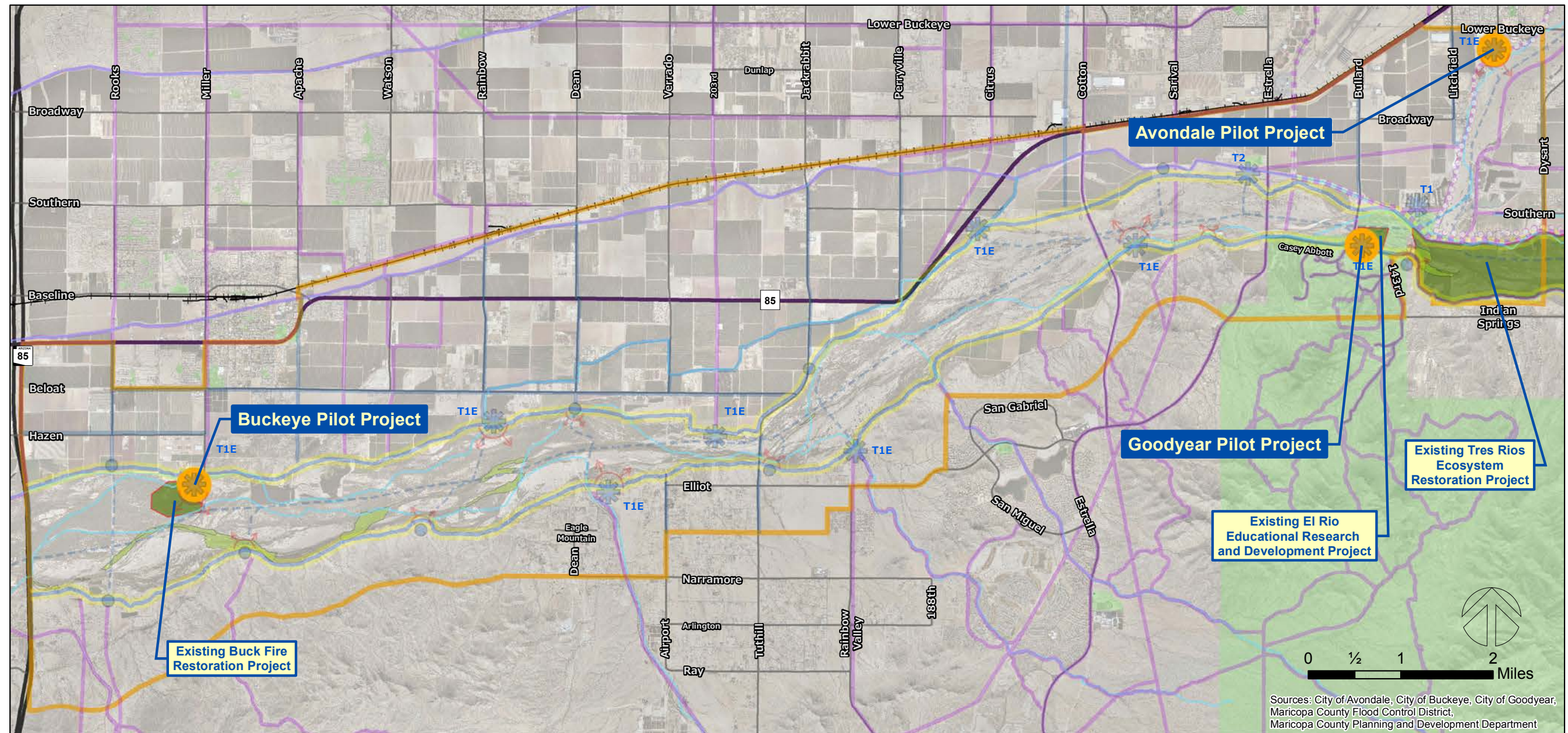
These pilot projects have the potential to demonstrate to the public a wide variety of planning and implementation practices involved with an ecosystem restoration effort. The pilot projects can demonstrate how they provide a focus on a wide variety of issues. These issues may include, but not be limited to: improving water quality, creating an environment for pollution prevention, reestablishing vital wildlife habitats, demonstrating salt cedar eradication and control and educating

the public on environmental concerns. The projects will also encourage both active and passive recreation activities such as: bird watching, fishing, hiking, trail bike riding and equestrian pursuits.

These pilot projects will result in increased coordination and cooperation between the respective Cities, the Flood Control District of Maricopa County, the US Army Corps of Engineers, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Arizona Game and Fish and other public and private agencies and key stakeholders with respect to establishing these pilot projects as a baseline for all future efforts.

These pilot project developments seek to showcase and help foster a better understanding by the public of the importance of the El Rio project area. They will also provide intrinsic links and benefits to the public's health, the economic sustainability of the overall area and, ultimately, to long term community vitality.





Date: 8/11/2015

Legend

El Rio Vista Overlook	Recommended El Rio Trail	Project Boundary	Railroad	Interstate Highway
El Rio Trail Head (T1, T1E, T2)	Recommended El Rio River Trail	Rivers and Major Streams	Arterial Streets	State Highway
El Rio River Access	Recommended Municipal Path or Trail	High Value Habitat	County Highway	Interchange
Pilot Project	Existing or Planned Municipal Path or Trail	Parks	Ramp	
	Maricopa Trail	Existing Habitat Restoration and Demonstration Projects*		
	Sun Circle Trail			

Sources: City of Avondale, City of Buckeye, City of Goodyear, Maricopa County Flood Control District, Maricopa County Planning and Development Department

*Please note that at this scale the limits shown are not accurate but just meant to give an indication that there have been restoration efforts in each general area

El Rio Pilot Projects Key Map



8.1 City of Buckeye Preferred Concept “The Pond”

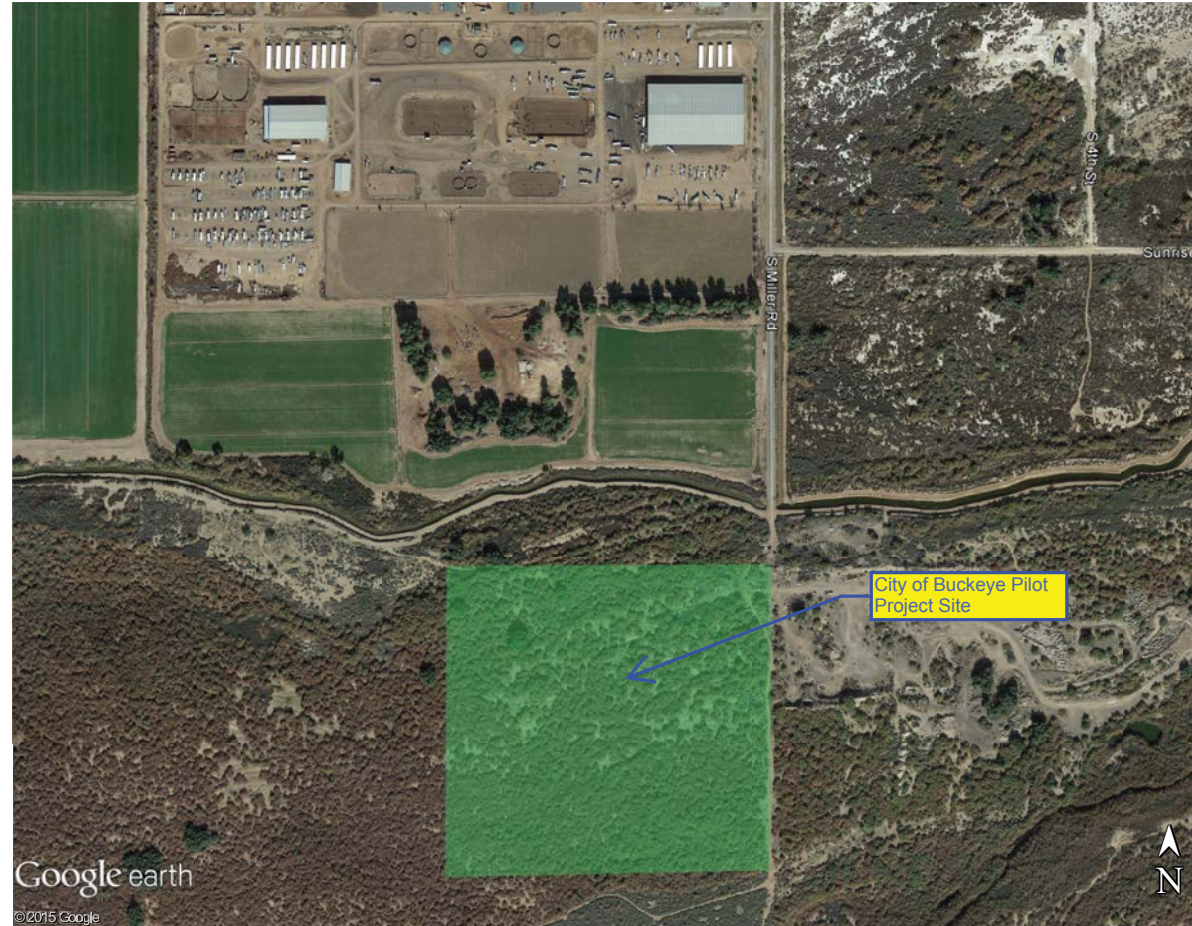
Existing Conditions

The Buckeye pilot project will be located on 40 acres of land at the south end of Miller Road about a half mile south of Hazen Road. The property is currently covered with dense vegetation of mostly Atriplex (saltbush), Tamarix (salt cedar) and a few populus trees (cottonwoods). The site is located within the Gila River floodway and does not have any existing development occurring on the site. There is some evidence of off-road vehicular activities and illegal trash dumping on the site. Land surrounding the site is private property on three sides and it is adjacent to a Bureau of Land Management owned parcel to the south.

Approximately 300-feet north of the site, the planned El Rio Trail will parallel the top of the Buckeye Irrigation District's irrigation canal. Planned secondary trails will run along the river to the south of the site. The South Buckeye Equestrian and Event Center and the River Ridge Veterinary Hospital are located at the southwest corner of Miller Road and Hazen Road just to the north of this site.

Goals

The proposed Buckeye trailhead development will have an equestrian emphasis but will also include amenities for pedestrians and bicyclists. Additionally, strong riparian flora and fauna educational elements will be incorporated into the overall master plan for the site.



Access

Access to the site is from the existing Miller Road alignment, which comes in from the north. The access road is confined to the eastern edge of the site and will provide access to a 130 car parking lot, a bus drop-off/ parking area with space for five buses, and an equestrian parking lot for up to twelve horse trailers.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Amenities

A pedestrian boulevard will connect the bus drop-off area, parking lot, and the 1,200 s.f. restroom building. The pedestrian boulevard will mark the beginning of the bicycle and pedestrian connection to the El Rio Trail with a twelve-foot wide paved multi-use pathway which will include decorative trail signage marking the way to the bicycle and pedestrian staging area. The bicycle and pedestrian staging area is envisioned to have seat walls, drinking fountains, and a small water feature to mark the first decision

Pilot Projects



point along the bicycle and pedestrian connection to the El Rio Trail.

From the bicycle and pedestrian staging area, the pathway will split into two pathways connecting to the El Rio Trail. The east pathway will run along the Miller Road right-of-way alignment up to the El Rio Trail. The west pathway will cut across private property at the northwest corner of the site to connect to the El Rio Trail aligning with the irrigation canal that dips to the south. An access easement or right-of-way will need to be secured from the private land owner to make this western pathway connection. Several picnic ramadas near the parking lot will provide opportunities to rest, gather with friends and/or enjoy a picnic outing.

Equestrian Amenities

Adjacent to the equestrian trailer parking area will be a large open equestrian staging area. The staging area will have a shade structure, hitching rails, water troughs, wash racks, a manure disposal area, a 60-foot round pen and an ADA mounting ramp. Both the equestrian parking and staging area will have an equestrian friendly surface such as compacted dirt or gravel. A soft surface equestrian trail will run north from the staging area to the north property line where it will split and follow the bicycle and pedestrian connector path to the El Rio Trail. It will also flow south to the secondary trail along the river.

Education Amenities

A network of soft surface pathways will meander through the site and connect the pedestrian and equestrian staging areas with the educational components programmed for the site. A seven-acre demonstration wetland with a shaded overlook structure and a large group picnic ramada are to be located in the southwest quadrant of the site. A perimeter trail will provide access to additional viewing areas and educational amenities. A series of five interpretive kiosks are planned along the pathway network to provide interactive and educational information about the area's environmental history and significance. In the shadow of one of the existing "heritage cottonwood trees" located on site, a council ring\outdoor educational and gathering space will provide opportunities for groups to gather to learn about the site and discuss their experiences.

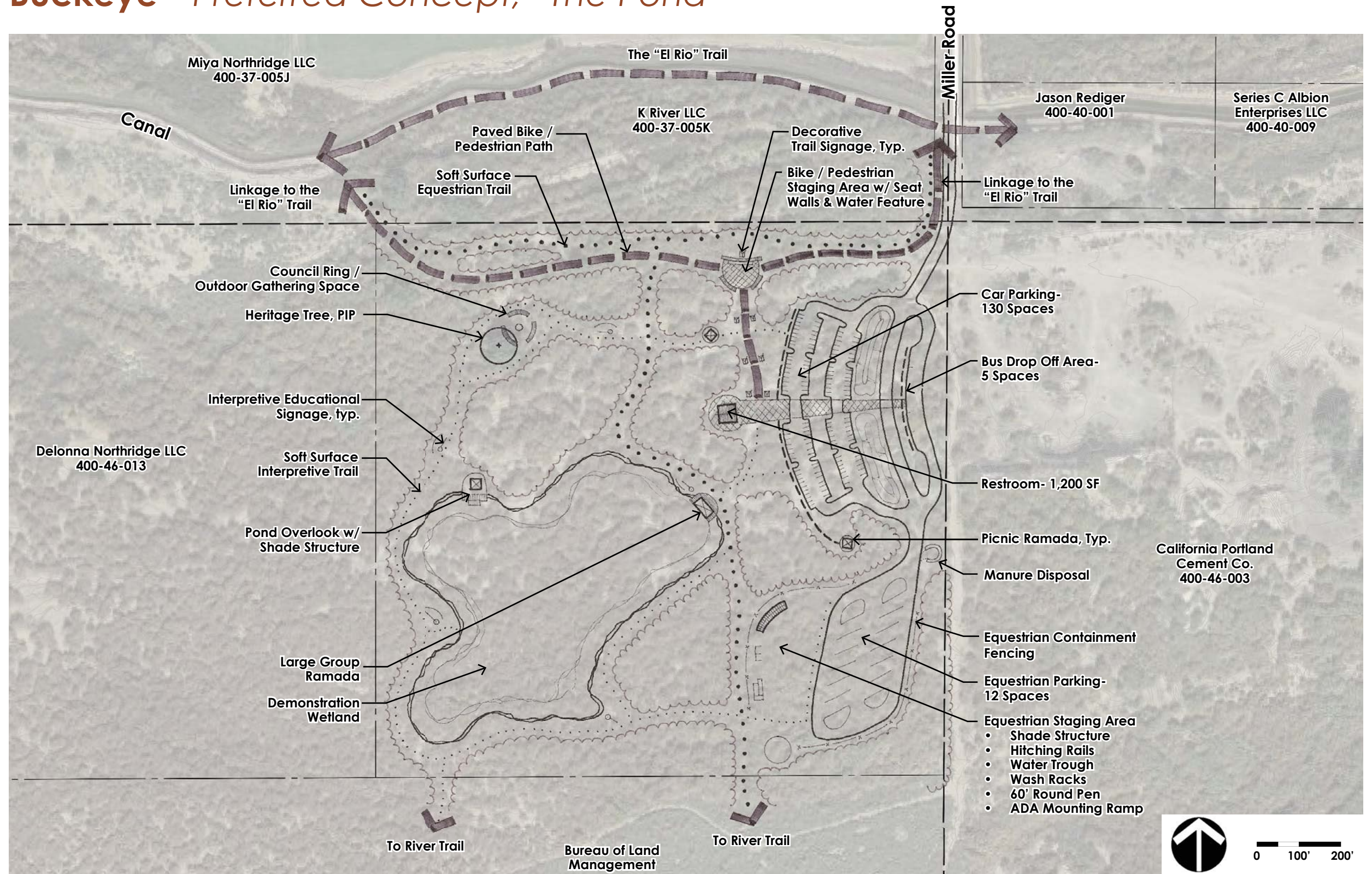


Vegetation

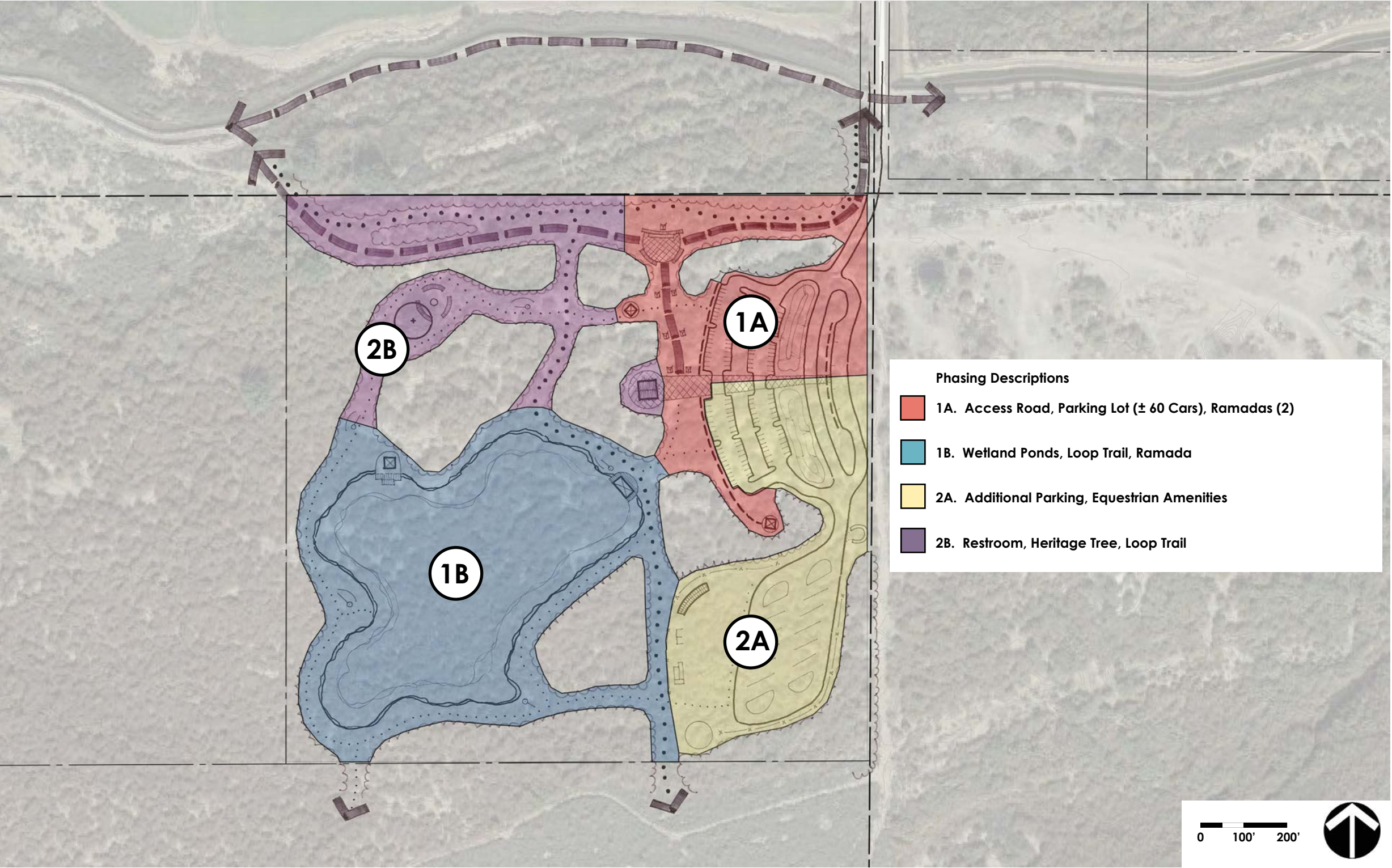
A development goal for the project is to minimize disturbance to the existing site. The utilization of the existing mature vegetation to frame view corridors to the mountains to the south and to screen adjacent uses from each other, has been incorporated into the master plan. Removing the invasive salt cedars and replacing them with plantings of native species would benefit both the environmental health of the site and the educational amenities. The Flood Control District of Maricopa County, in conjunction with the Bureau of Land Management Arizona State office, shared their restoration efforts following the Buck Fire in the Gila River to provide a template for these potential restoration efforts. This demonstration project holds great promise, and will be a solid template for restoring this site's native river ecosystem.



Buckeye - Preferred Concept, "The Pond"



Buckeye - Preferred Concept, Phasing Diagram





Buckeye Site Preferred Concept					
Item	Description	Unit	Qty.*	Unit Cost	Extended Amount
1A	Access Road & Parking Lot (Including Utilities), Ramadas (2)	AC	5.5	\$250,000.00	\$ 1,375,000.00
1B	Wetland Ponds (liners, pumps, filters, etc.), Loop Trail, Ramada	AC	11.7	\$370,000.00	\$ 4,329,000.00
2A	Equestrian Staging & Trailer Parking Lot	AC	6.2	\$150,000.00	\$ 930,000.00
2B	Restroom, Heritage Tree, Loop Trail	AC	4.7	\$150,000.00	\$ 705,000.00
30% Contingency (Design, Survey, Environmental Clearance, Geotechnical, Miscellaneous)					\$ 2,201,700.00
Total					\$ 9,540,700.00
* Quantities from Master Plan Concepts Rounded to Nearest 1/10 Acre					

8.2 City of Avondale Preferred Concept *(Car and Equestrian Parking)*

Existing Conditions

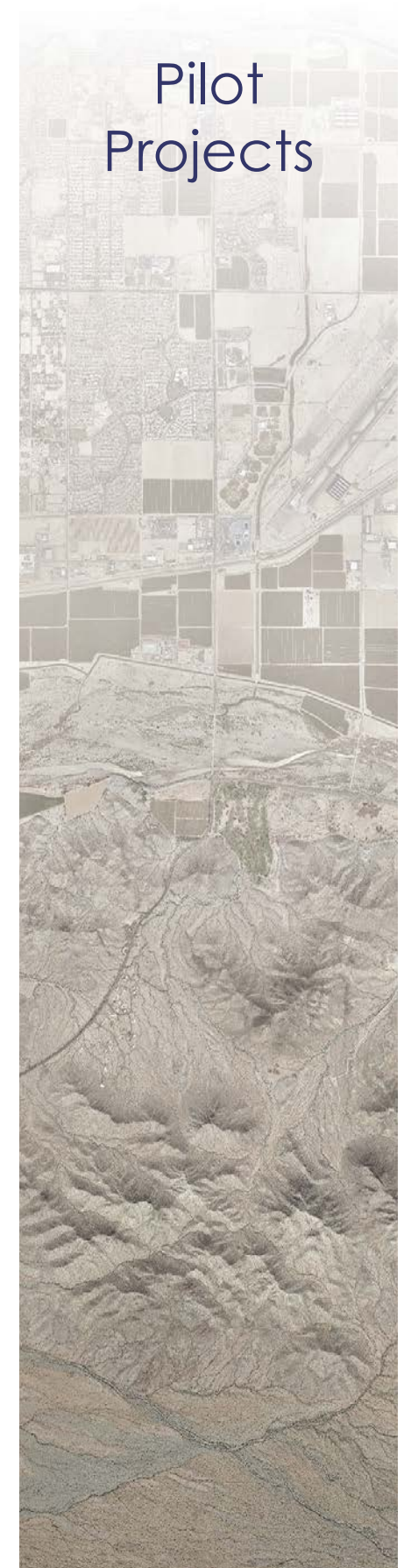
The Avondale pilot project will be located within the City of Avondale's Festival Fields Park at Lower Buckeye Road and the Agua Fria River. The development of a trailhead will be incorporated into the western half of the park that is currently slated for phase 2 development. An existing hard bank levee runs along the south side of the park and protects it from most of the adjacent Agua Fria river flows. The existing levee does not protect the site from all flows as there is a Zone A floodplain behind the existing levee. The land on the far southwest corner of the site is currently unprotected from any levee and would be within the immediate Agua Fria floodway. The El Rio Trail is planned to run along the top of the existing flood control levee and then transition down into the river at the end of the existing levee.

The undeveloped portions of the park are largely devoid of vegetation, except within the existing drainage area north of the levee, which has some low desert scrub and trees. Land surrounding the site is private property on the west, park development on the north and east and the Agua Fria River to the south.

This site offers a great opportunity for access to the El Rio Trail system as well as to the Sun Circle and Maricopa Trail system along the Agua Fria River. This site has the opportunity to serve as a major hub for connectivity to the regional trail systems and as an access point to two of Arizona's vitally important river corridors.

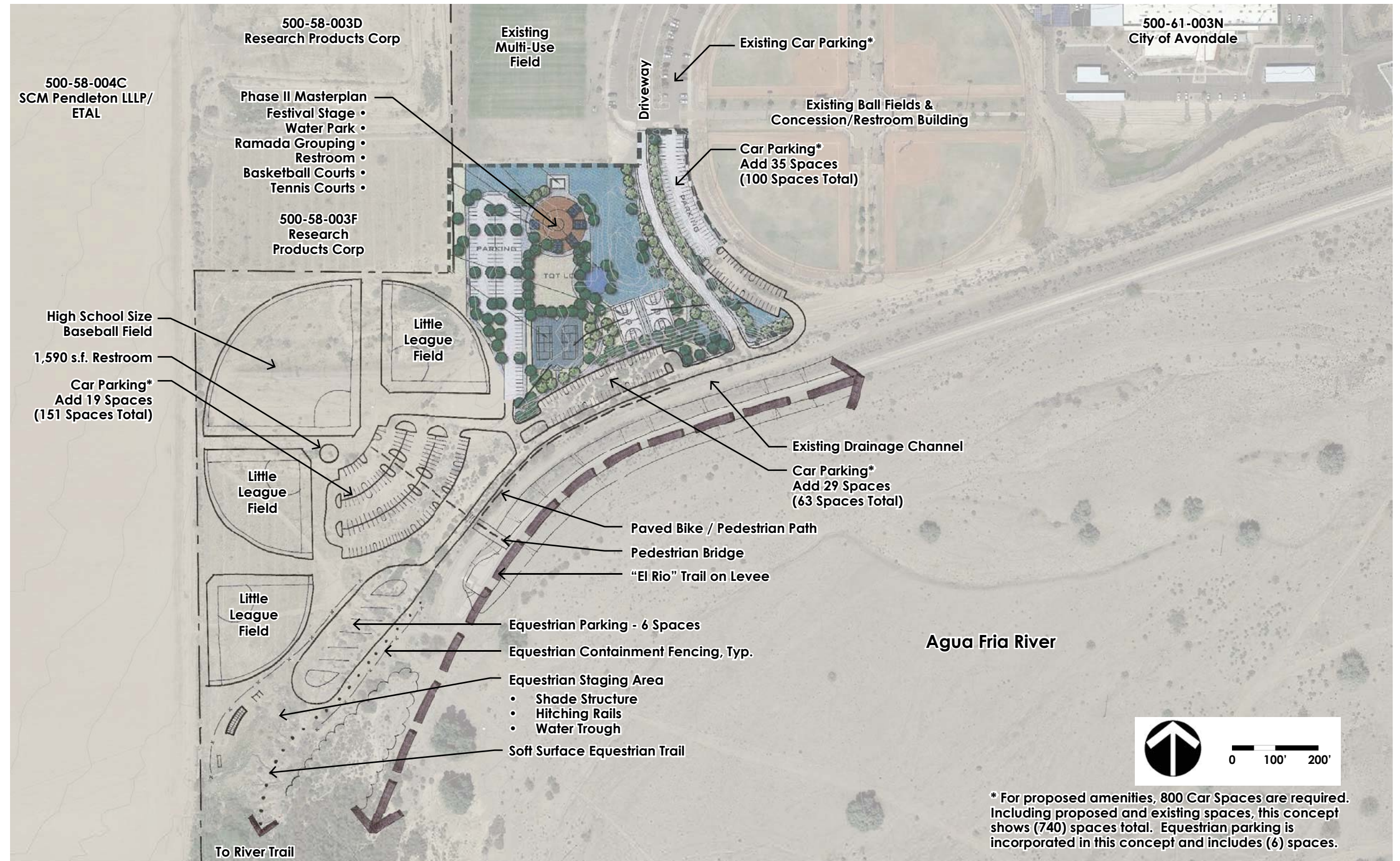


Pilot Projects





Avondale - Concept 1, Car and Equestrian Parking



8.3 City of Goodyear Preferred Concept *(Rio Vista Trailhead)*

Existing Conditions

The Goodyear pilot project will be located within Estrella Mountain Regional Park, a Maricopa County park, at Vineyard Avenue. The development of this pilot project will be incorporated into the existing Flood Control District of Maricopa County demonstration project located east of Bullard Avenue. An existing levee runs along the north side of the site keeping most of the area out of the Gila River floodway. The El Rio Trail is planned to run along the top of the flood control levee and then transition down into the river until such time as flood control measures are implemented in this area. The demonstration site and its associated parking lot and informational kiosk will be reviewed relative to expanding the site to accommodate the City of Goodyear's trailhead desires.

The site has the potential to demonstrate a variety of river biomes from the wetland river open water areas within the Gila River through cottonwood/willow habitat transitioning through mesquite woodland to lower Sonoran near the parking area. The demonstration of these biomes as an educational opportunity is unique to this site. This site offers a great opportunity for access to the El Rio Trail system as well as the potential to connect on the northern banks of the Gila River and connect to the Sun Circle and Maricopa Trail systems. This site has the opportunity to serve as a major hub for connectivity to the regional trail systems and as an access point to two of Arizona's vitally important river corridors.

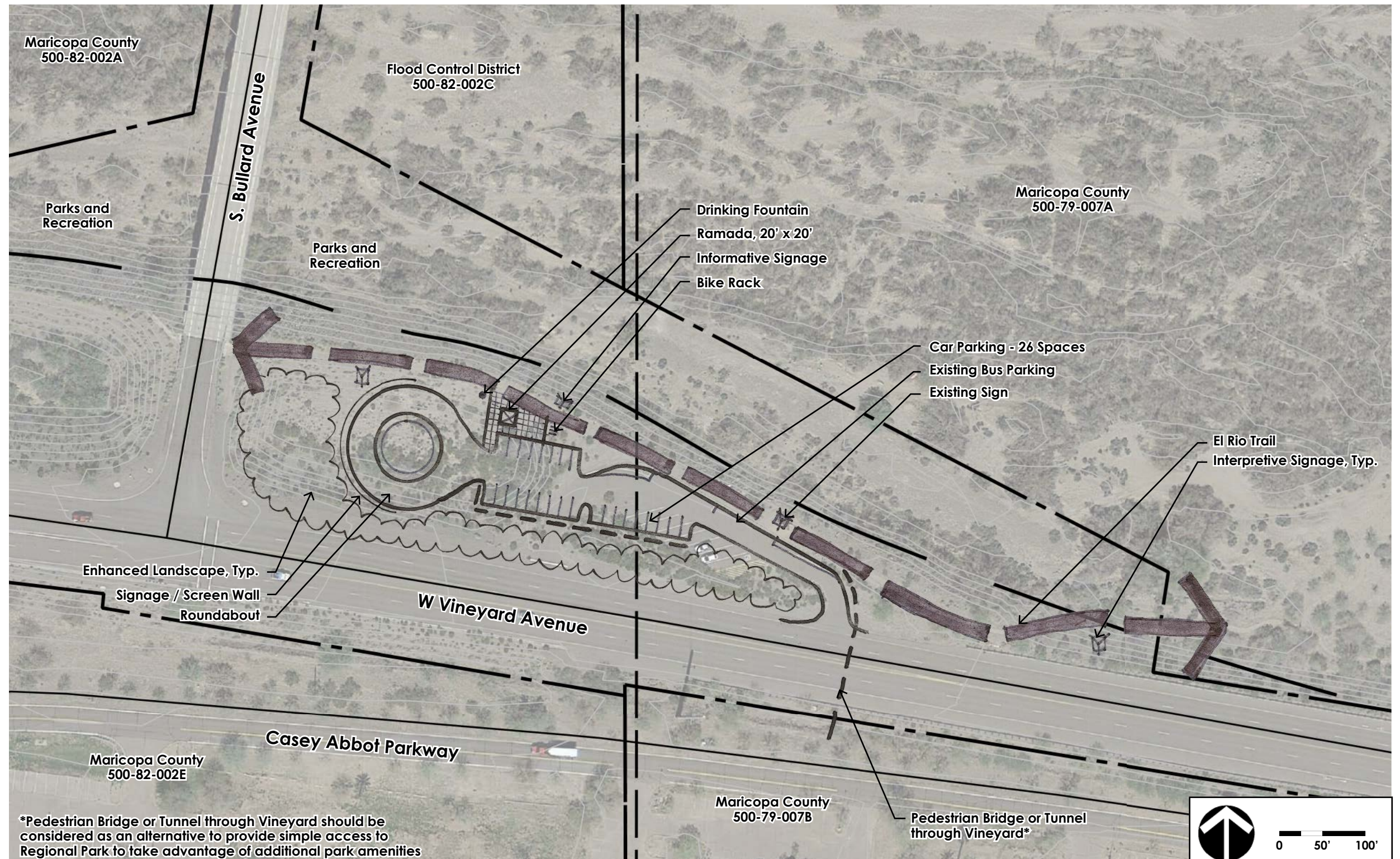


Pilot Projects

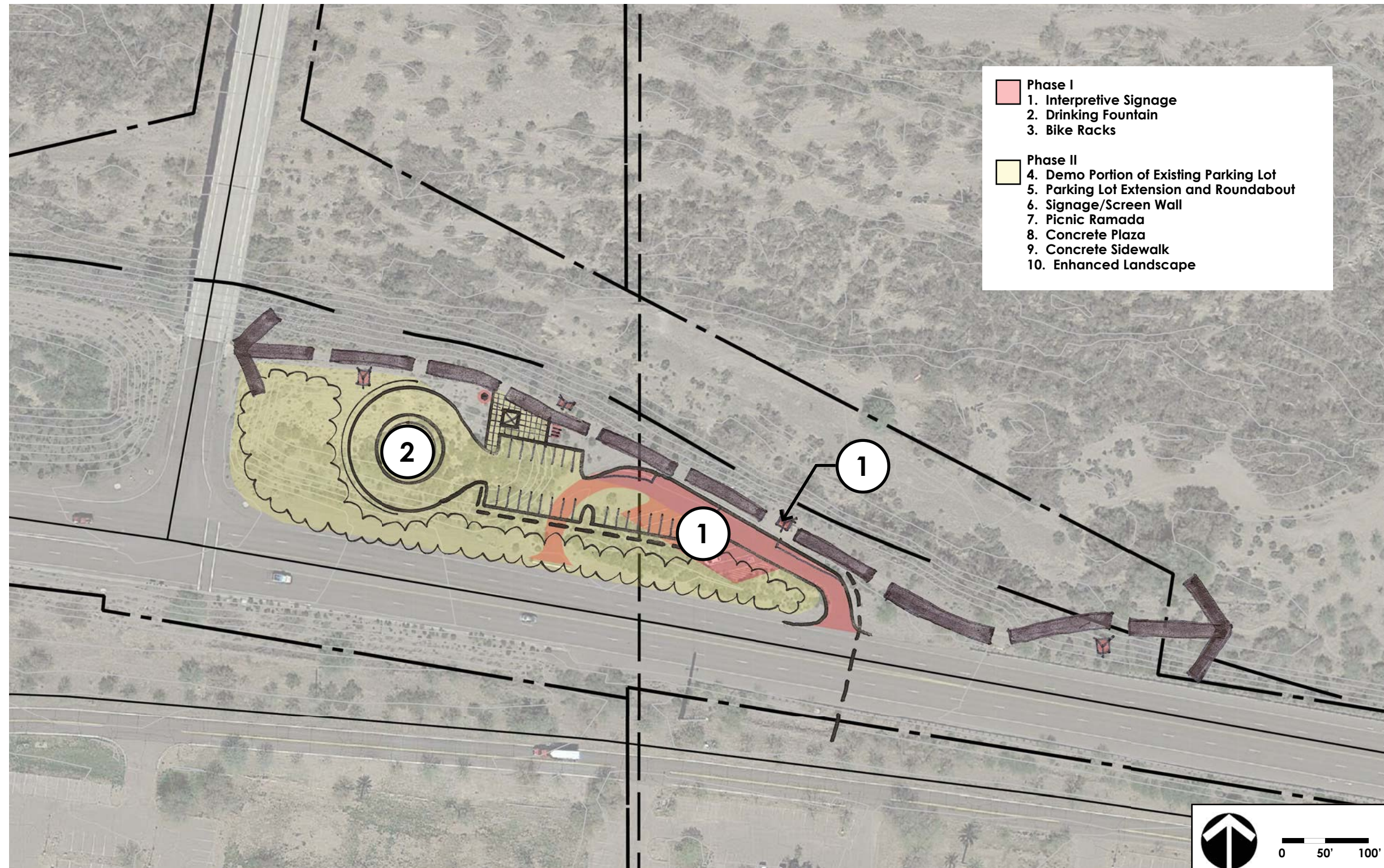




Goodyear - Preferred Concept, "Rio Vista Trailhead"



Goodyear - Preferred Concept, Phasing Diagram



Pilot
Projects



Goodyear Site Preferred Concept					
Item	Description	Unit	Qty.*	Unit Cost	Extended Amount
Phase I					
1.00	Interpretive Signage	EA	3.0	\$3,000.00	\$ 9,000.00
2.00	Drinking Fountain	EA	1.0	\$5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
3.00	Bike Racks	EA	3.0	\$500.00	\$ 1,500.00
30% Contingency (Design, Survey, Environmental Clearance, Geotechnical, Miscellaneous)					\$ 4,650.00
Phase I Total					\$ 20,150.00
* Quantities from Master Plan Concepts Rounded to Nearest 1/10 Acre					
Phase II					
4.00	Demo Portion of Existing Parking Lot	SF	4,600.0	\$11.00	\$ 50,600.00
5.00	Parking Lot Extension and Roundabout	SY	2,218.0	\$30.00	\$ 66,540.00
6.00	Signage / Screen Wall	LF	200.0	\$ 250.00	\$ 50,000.00
7.00	Picnic Ramada (20' x 20')	EA	1.0	\$30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00
8.00	Concrete Plaza	SF	2,120.0	\$8.00	\$ 16,960.00
9.00	Concrete Sidewalk	SF	2,280.0	\$5.00	\$ 11,400.00
10.00	Enhanced Landscape	SF	20,700.0	\$1.50	\$ 31,050.00
30% Contingency (Design, Survey, Environmental Clearance, Geotechnical, Miscellaneous)					\$ 76,965.00
Phase II Total					\$ 333,515.00
* Quantities from Master Plan Concepts Rounded to Nearest 1/10 Acre					
Phase I & II Total					\$ 353,665.00