

Arizona Republic

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SURVEY: MARICOPA IS YOUNG, AFFLUENT *Carl Holcombe, The Arizona Republic*

The "new" Scottsdale could be just an hour away in Pinal County.

So there are no shopping malls, resorts or nightclubs yet with carloads of new residents arriving every day, Maricopa city officials contend a new demographics survey shows their young city most closely resembles the Valley city with a national Reputation for affluence.

Survey results reveal a combination of youth, smarts and higher incomes. Officials hope this will help them attract knowledge based jobs to the bedroom community.

"We want self-sustaining city 100 years into the future," Maricopa City Manager Rick Buss said. "Rooftops won't do it"

The unscientific survey was mailed to 4,030 Maricopa households and 650, or 16 percent, responded, city officials said.

More than half of responding households have a bachelors degree or higher. Less than half of Scottsdale's population has a bachelor's degree or higher. Household incomes and median ages in the two cities are similar.

Scottsdale Mayor Mary Manross said that for years her city has been seen as a benchmark type of community that other cities around the country compare themselves to.

"The Number 1 thing (industries) look at in tl1is new economy is education and environment," Manross said. "It's all interconnected."

Maricopa hopes the survey results will attract jobs related to science, engineering, biotech, computers and information technology, said Economic Development Director Ioanna Morfessis. Right now, most Maricopa residents battle daily gridlocked commutes along h1terstate 10 to jobs in the Valley.

"With great authority, we can say we have *one* of tile highest-educated populations in the state and maybe higher than other markets on a national level," Morfessis said. "It gives us a case to make to employers that we have a small but talented workforce already in place. As our population grows, the increases will mirror this survey."

Other Valley cities have successfully used their demographics to attract knowledge-based businesses in recent years. Intel recently expanded chip-making facilities at its Chandler campus. Tempe now has the Translational! Genomics Research Institute. Scottsdale is home to the Biodesign Institute at Arizona State University.

"We compare favorably, but it's not about competition with our neighbors," Buss said. "We want to show the state and the country we have a foundation for knowledge-based businesses. Economic development doesn't happen at points on a map, it happens regionally."

The survey is just part of Maricopa's push to attract new jobs.

Maricopa hired America West Airlines founder Ed Beauvais to develop a business air park modeled after Scottsdale's.

Morfessis, who founded the Greater Phoenix Economic Council, was hired as a consultant to oversee economic development. An ethanol plant that officials say could generate \$100 million in annual revenue is under construction.

Maricopa's demographics

The city in Pinal County recently released the results of an unscientific household survey of its residents.

44 percent of the households include someone with a management or professional job.

15 percent include someone with a technical or trade job.

45 percent have lived in Arizona five years or less.

66 percent have a household income of at least \$50,000 .

55 percent are between the ages of 24 and 44.

59 percent have no more than two people in their household.

City of Maricopa

How Maricopa measures up:

Maricopa released an informal survey it sent to 4,030 of its approximately 17,000 residents. About 650, or 16 percent, responded.

Maricopa

Median age: 38

Median household Income: \$57,500

Bachelor's degree or higher education: 52%

Median home price: \$213,073"

Scottsdale

Median Age: 41

Median household income: \$57,484

Bachelor's degree or higher education: 44%

Median home price: \$744,795-

Chandler

Median age: 32

Median household income: \$63,143

Bachelor's degree or higher education: 21 %

Median home price: \$330,610"

Gilbert

Median age: 30

Median household income: \$68,032

Bachelor's degree or higher education: 36%

Median home price: \$285,585*

Tempe

Median age: 29

Median household income: \$42,361

Bachelor's degree or higher education: 24%

Median home price: \$237,000

Surprise

Median age: 46

Median household income: \$44,156

Bachelor's degree or better: 21%

Median home price: \$247,100.

Phoenix

Median age: 31

Median household income: \$41,207

Bachelor's degree or higher education: 23%

Median home price: \$245,120.

*Median home prices are as of the third quarter of 2005

Maricopa survey.

Arizona Republic

MARICOPA MAPPING JOB, HOME GROWTH

EXPANDING CITY SEEKING BALANCE

Carl J Holcombe, The Arizona Republic

Maricopa is hurtling along as one of the nation's fastest-growing cities, and the last thing officials want to become is another Valley suburban "bedroom community."

With that in mind, city planners are developing a General Plan that encourages growth of jobs as well as rooftops through 2025.

Three growth options were originally proposed, ranging from 54,000 homes or apartments and 150,000 people to a plan that pushed the city to 178,000 dwelling units and 500,000 people. Planners are now leaning toward a compromise draft plan that calls for about 125,000 homes and 350,000 people, a population nearing Mesa's.

"We want to be a city of balance," said Jim Chasten, a General Plan advisory team member and Maricopa Unified School District No. 20 board member. "Ultimately, we're trying to back away from being a bedroom community."

With the preferred plan, more focus on local jobs will mean a reduced need for transportation infrastructure and less spending on roads, less traffic congestion, less pollution, more city money for parks and other amenities, and a better quality of life, said David Williams, a General Plan consultant hired by the city.

The City Council is expected to approve a final General Plan late this year, and then it will go to Maricopa voters for approval. The plan will act as a guide over the next 20 years for zoning, annexations, residential and commercial development, and job growth within current city limits. It will also include the city's projected annexation areas.

"It's a blueprint for your city and a starting point for what citizens want for their city," said Maricopa City Manager Rick Buss.

City officials hope to turn the state's second-youngest city, currently with about 11,000 residents, into a living and working destination. The city incorporated with about 1,500 residents and a limited job and tax base in October 2003. But the effort to develop a General Plan is raising rooftops, as the youthful town is on a sizzling pace to issue 6,071 single-family building permits in 2005.

"The growth is so rapid that it's a challenge to do a plan for them," Williams said.

Medium-density neighborhoods will make up 70 percent of the projected housing stock, according to the draft Rural, low density and high-density areas will each make up 10 percent of the housing stock.

The draft also includes goals of 187,000 new jobs within the city, based on a projected formula of 1.5 jobs per home. According to a city development impact fee study, there are currently about 3,394 jobs within city boundaries, with 39 percent of those in retail operations and another 30 percent industrial-related, including agriculture, construction and manufacturing. Six percent of the job base is office-related.

Officials say they hope to attract more and better-paying jobs than the new retail opportunities they're getting now. The plan will identify tax and other incentives to attract employers. A University of Arizona center already within the city, which conducts crop and livestock research, could be used as a base to attract biotech-oriented companies and employers, Williams said.

The plan will require developers to set aside acres for open space and parks to assure that there is a park within a half-mile of every new home, Williams said. A transportation element likely will include expansion of the four-lane Arizona 347 and two-lane Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway, a direct connection to Interstate 10. The draft also calls for a university campus, airport

expansion, a stadium or arena and a theme park or resort.

Maricopa's possible General Plan

Population: 350,000.

Dwelling units: 125,000.

Jobs: 187,000.

Commercial space: 12.25 million square feet.

Acres of rural land (one dwelling unit per 3 acres): 12,500.

Acres of low-density developments (one unit per acre): 12,500.

Acres of medium-density developments (three units per acre): 87,500.

Acres of high-density developments (10 units per acre): 12,500 .

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