

**ALTERNATIVE USE PLAN FOR CITY OF TUCSON LAND
AVRA VALLEY, ARIZONA**

Executive Summary

The following recommendations are suggested policies and uses that appear to fall within the City of Tucson framework for managing Avra Valley land.

1. Limit Soil Disturbance

Every effort should be made to limit activities on City-owned lands in Avra Valley that disturb the soil surface and create conditions that encourage the establishment and growth of Russian thistle.

2. Establish Experimental Water-Harvesting Systems

Water harvesting and low-water-use crop demonstration and experimental farming areas should be established on newly acquired land in cooperation with Avra Valley farmers and University of Arizona researchers.

As soon as population pressures warrant, urban and/or industrial water-harvesting demonstration systems should be installed on appropriate retired farmland near other urbanized areas, with the cooperation of private developers.

3. City and County Coordinate Land Use Plan

A coordinated land-use plan for Avra Valley could produce orderly development on non-City land that will impact favorably upon City-owned land.

4. Fence and Secure All Points of Entry

City land in Avra Valley should be fenced. Each point of entry should have a gate and lock. Fencing would not be needed between land parcels owned by the City or where other barriers to trespass already exist.

5. Record Land Treatment Activities

All land treatment activities including disking, mowing, planting, grazing, should be recorded for each farm. These data should include the date, duration, location and type of management practice or other soil disturbances.

6. Pre-retirement Revegetation

The City should plan to revegetate Avra Valley land acquired in the future before the land is retired. The farmer who sells the land could enter into an agreement with the City to participate in the planting and establishment of the plants selected.

7. Maintain Existing Dikes and Flood-Control Structures

All existing dikes and flood-control structures should be maintained to prevent flooding of lands adjoining City-owned areas, however, any dikes that exist for the sole purpose of protecting City land need not be maintained.

8. Pursue Use of City Land by Papagos Using CAP Water

The use of CAP water for irrigation by the Papago Tribe on retired City-owned land in Avra Valley has the potential to: (1) solve many of the problems associated with managing retired farmland, (2) stimulate the agricultural economy of Avra Valley and of the reservation, and (3) minimize ecological problems associated with clearing new cropland on the reservation. This concept, however, will require changes in the new groundwater law and agreements with the Papagos.

9. Pursue Research Activities

Research activities to develop and use retired cropland in Avra Valley for agricultural and nonagricultural purposes should be explored with interested federal, state and local agencies.