City of Maricopa Economic Development Strategic Plan 2026 – 2030

July 2026

CITY OF MARICOPA
PROUD HISTORY • PROSPEROUS FUTURE

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Rounds Consulting Group

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PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

Over the past decade, the City of Maricopa (Maricopa or City) has experienced some of the most significant growth in Arizona and across the nation.[1] Incorporated in 2003, the City has experienced remarkable expansion in population, housing, and modest growth in employment, transforming into a dynamic and highly livable community with strong regional connections to the Phoenix metropolitan area and Pinal County.

Today, Maricopa stands at a pivotal point in its development trajectory. Previous growth in the community was primarily focused on expanding the residential base, while also working to enhance job growth and attract businesses. Moving forward, the primary focus will need to shift to securing more businesses to locate within the local community.

The decisions made today regarding investment in business attraction will directly influence the pace of economic growth, the quality of life, and the sustainability of Maricopa's future economy. A weak employment base directly translates into significant levels of retail leakage, fewer tax revenues being collected, lower levels of community investment, and an additional risk to the community's ability to maintain its status as a highly skilled and higher-income community.

The City has been managed well, and budgeting has been responsibly conservative. However, it has only been more recently that additional economic development opportunities have begun to present themselves. This will require current community policymakers and business and workforce leaders to be even more proactive when it comes to managing economic development issues within the City.

The community's previous growth was primarily limited by transportation access. Additional constraints exist due to the lack of larger-scale health care access for area residents, as well as the development of high-wage business clusters, including high-tech employment opportunities.

As the community moves forward with plans to fund significant transportation infrastructure investment, an entirely new economic development trajectory can be realized with the right public policy decisions related to expanding the community's economic development position. The research contained in this

[1] Pinal Central, "Data Show Maricopa among Fastest-Growing Cities in the US." *Pinal Central*, accessed on 26 Feb. 2026, https://www.pinalcentral.com/maricopa_monitor/news/data-show-maricopa-among-fastest-growing-cities-in-the-us/article_da8547f4-6bcf-11ef-9b8d-47f80ef80d1b.html.

economic analysis provides guidance on these matters. However, the majority of the implementation details will be the responsibility of the community's staff, political leaders, and private sector leaders.

Furthermore, the purpose of this economic development plan is not to provide a general strategy that simply notifies community leaders of any economic imbalances. The purpose is to create the framework for a general strategy for advancing the local economy and a list of "action items" for community leaders to help further secure a quality economic future for current and prospective residents, as well as businesses.

It can also be argued that the community has been the victim of its own success. The community presents well in terms of appearance, the infrastructure is relatively new, and higher-wage job opportunities are available to residents who are willing to commute due to the proximity to the high-tech businesses in the Southeast Valley. These same positive attributes also create challenges for designing a community where people can both work and live.

This can either be an opportunity or a threat, depending on how the community chooses to move forward. The fact that the City houses residents who work in the health care industry, just not within the City itself, should be considered an asset as it relates to attracting a hospital and other health care-related businesses. Hospital managers will be very interested in learning about the community's health care employment base.

The same can also be true for high-tech business activities since the City is a major supplier of workers to the high-tech business corridors within the Southeast Valley. This potentially could translate into the attraction of supplier businesses to some of the same high-tech businesses. Communicating the details of these assets will be one of the most important action items that City leaders can pursue.

The accompanying strategy and list of action items are built upon a detailed evaluation of Maricopa's economic fundamentals, including governance practices, workforce readiness, transportation and utility infrastructure, livability, and fiscal health.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rounds Consulting Group, Inc. (RCG) was commissioned by the City of Maricopa to prepare an update to the City's Economic Development Strategic Plan. The purpose of this effort is to evaluate the most recent economic conditions, assess the effectiveness of existing programs and policies, and identify strategies to help guide Maricopa's continued growth and diversification over the next five years.

The research identified 10 primary areas that will help to strengthen the City's economic development profile:

1. *Expand Healthcare Access*
2. *Further Improvements in Transportation Infrastructure*
3. *Focused Community Marketing*
4. *In-Person Economic Development Outreach*
5. *Economic Partnerships*
6. *Tracking Economic Competitiveness*
7. *Healthcare Information Collection*
8. *Private and Public Infrastructure Investment*
9. *Leadership Outreach*
10. *Additional Policy/Economic Considerations*

Additional details on these items are included in the following section of the report. It is important to note that while the economic development tasks can indeed be completed separately, it is the combination of the individual items that will help to define the City of Maricopa's economic development value proposition.

The fact that the City may already have a program that addresses a particular item is irrelevant if that particular area is not producing satisfactory results. The recommendations in this report are not solely about identifying net new programs.

In some cases, there may be programs that are similar to the recommendations contained in this report. However, if the desired results are not being achieved, then improvements in those areas will be required. Having a program that addresses a particular area in economic development versus having a program that produces results are very different things.

SUMMARY OF PRIMARY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The City of Maricopa has an outstanding economic profile, including a diversified workforce, high-income households, economic development support from policymakers, and other key economic development attributes that present opportunities for the City to both expand its economic base and improve the quality of community growth.

Quality of growth is a central theme underlying the City's recommendations. While Maricopa offers a range of local amenities for residents, analysis indicates meaningful economic leakage is occurring, suggesting unmet demand within the community.

The following recommendations were developed based on a review of the community's economic profile, discussions with private and public sector leaders in the community, and meetings with private sector executive management within the high-tech research, development, and manufacturing sectors, among others, including executives within the healthcare industry.

A detailed summary of the economic stakeholder feedback from the various groups is included in the body of the report. However, the primary economic development recommendations are summarized below.

1) Hospital Attraction – Expand Healthcare Access

Attracting a mid- to large-scale hospital that has the ability to expand may be required prior to business executives focusing their attention on the City as a potential expansion location. During the preparation of this report, RCG conducted outreach to two major hospitals and inquired about opportunities to expand into the City of Maricopa.

There is renewed interest in establishing a larger-scale hospital within the community, possibly one that can expand with the community and also be an economic development partner. This means that community leaders will need to advance the marketing recommendations that are included later in this report.

Since this may indeed be a top-tier economic development item, the community may also need to provide a proper incentive package related to a hospital location. However, this can be done to the benefit of both the hospital and the City of Maricopa if managed properly. The assembly of an adequate number of acres of land will also be critical in any decisions made by hospital management.

2) Further Improvements in Transportation Infrastructure

Transportation infrastructure would be listed as the number one item on this list if the funding for SR347 were not already approved. However, additional connections going both North and South will be required for the community to achieve its full potential. This challenge is less about internal mobility and more about regional connectivity, particularly the City's access to and integration with the broader Greater Phoenix area.

Therefore, additional infrastructure investment will be required. Community leaders already point to plans for multiple connections to Interstate 10 and the fact that Interstate 10 is also planned to be widened in the area near the City of Maricopa.

The City has also developed a funding mechanism for regional connectivity through its Commuting Corridors Fund. These dollars will allow the City to bring significant matching funds to the table to pursue federal grants and partnerships that will help quicken the pace of this infrastructure development.

3) Focused Community Marketing

The City of Maricopa appears to possess a stronger set of economic development assets than outsiders realize. The individuals who were interviewed from outside of the community did not possess a clear understanding of the City's economic profile. The only economic profile that these "outside interests" were aware of related to deficiencies with the aforementioned transportation infrastructure connecting the City with the Southeast Valley of Greater Phoenix.

The City's core economic constraints and opportunities became clearer through interviews with current and former executives in high-tech industries across Greater Phoenix. This insight was particularly pronounced among stakeholders affiliated with Southeast Valley technology firms.

For example, a former executive who worked multiple decades within the high-tech submarket was optimistic that the City of Maricopa could eventually secure the location or expansion of select suppliers to the larger high-tech businesses within the City of Chandler and the surrounding areas.

Key sub-category recommendations related to community marketing and improvement are included below.

- Initially, Maricopa could serve as a designated expansion location for select high-tech suppliers offering mid- to high-wage jobs that require substantial land per employee but may not be an optimal fit within Chandler's Price Road Corridor.

- A recommendation unique to Maricopa is that, to attract more high-wage residents, the City may be in a position to strengthen the market with an improved portfolio of distinctive amenities, including high-quality restaurants and entertainment options, so residents can meet their lifestyle needs locally rather than leaving the community on weekends.

- The economic development efforts must not be limited to just the attraction of existing base sector industries, such as entertainment-related establishments, despite what is typically recommended. Because most restaurants and entertainment-related establishments in Arizona operate as small businesses, unlike high-tech industries, their ability to reinvest profits into expansion opportunities is typically limited.

4) In-Person Economic Development Outreach

An extension of the City's current marketing strategy should include an even more proactive outreach effort targeting business interests across Greater Phoenix, with particular emphasis on the Southeast Valley. It is recommended that one or more staff members be designated to lead this expanded outreach, focusing on advancing business attraction and expansion opportunities, particularly among high-tech suppliers and larger base-sector firms.

This recommendation was reinforced throughout the interview process. A former executive from a major Southeast Valley research, development, and manufacturing firm advised proactively engaging businesses along the Price Road Corridor to explore supplier expansion opportunities within the City of Maricopa.

This extension of the marketing efforts will likely produce a high return on investment (ROI) for City taxpayers, given the scale of the economic benefits of even small-scale business locations that offer higher wages and the opportunity for future expansion.

5) Expand on Economic Partnerships

It is recommended that the City take an active role in expanding the discussion by trying to establish a connection between any newly developing local high-tech activities and the University of Arizona. This relationship would be distinctly different than the prior attempts to attract a University of Arizona tech park to the region. Fiscal constraints may limit these opportunities over the next two to three years.

Instead, it is recommended that the City correspond with tech leaders and the University of Arizona as it relates to *individual departments* within the university, rather than the larger tech center model that was previously attempted. Opportunities for the larger tech park model will later arise.

The University was identified because a portion of the high-tech activities that were discussed in the interviews relate to optics and artificial intelligence (AI). The creation of a "High-Tech Optics and AI Corridor" between Maricopa and Tucson, within these categories, could establish the City of Maricopa as a unique leader in an emerging high-tech sector.

6) Tracking Economic Competitiveness

The most meaningful effort to maintain economic development competitiveness would be for City staff to create a document that tracks how Maricopa compares to its primary economic development competitors on the previously listed items.

A concise briefing document can be prepared outlining the City's position on each item, enabling the Mayor and Council to assess whether any of these competitiveness factors may be adversely affecting economic development outcomes. For example, if the City consistently posted a higher sales tax rate than its competitors, as well as higher development fees and additional development constraints, private sector interests would likely diminish.

For a more general perspective, the following table provides the ranking of the most important economic development criteria for 2018 and 2025 as defined by Site Selection Magazine. The same annual survey previously listed transportation infrastructure as number one and workforce skills as number two, with the same categories typically competing for the top ranking each year.

However, with the recent push for the development of data centers, utility costs and reliability became the most prominent category for 2025. The same development activity related to data centers also resulted in the permitting and regulatory procedures being listed above transportation and workforce as the most important items that businesses examine.

Table 1: Most Important Location Criteria Survey Results (2018 versus 2025)

2018 Rank	2025 Rank	Criteria
6	1	Utilities (Availability, Cost, Reliability)
7	2	Ease of Permitting & Regulatory Procedures
2	**3**	**Transportation Infrastructure**
1a	**4**	**Workforce Skills**
NA	5	Quality of Life
3	6	Land/Building Prices and Supply
4	7	State and Local Tax Scheme
1b	8	Workforce Development
8	9	Higher Education Resources
5	10	Economic Development Strategy

Source: Site Selection Magazine

7) Addressing Critical Services – General Healthcare Industry Access

The City of Maricopa, despite its population size, is still without a major hospital within the community. However, what was not expected is that a very small percentage of jobs located within the City relate to health care activities.

In the Greater Phoenix region, there were 328,600 local workers within the healthcare and social services industry in 2023.[2] This represents 6.4% of the Phoenix MSA population. For comparison, within the City of Maricopa, local healthcare employment (healthcare workers who actually work within the city) totaled only 620 and represented 0.9% of its population over the same period.

If Maricopa sought to match the healthcare employment ratio observed across the Greater Phoenix area, the City would need to add approximately 3,800 additional local healthcare and social assistance jobs. If

[2] Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity, accessed on 05 March 2026, https://oeo.az.gov/labor-market/industry-employment

the community were able to secure an additional 3,800 workers within the healthcare occupations, utilizing average wages for each of the occupation categories, a total of 6,300 jobs would be created within the City, and tax collections would increase by $5.0 million dollars per year.

On the surface, this appears to be a deficiency within the community, but it is actually a significant asset. The community has a significant number of healthcare workers who reside locally but work elsewhere. This would be the workforce for the healthcare businesses that choose to relocate within the City.

Table 2: Annual Impact of 3,800 Additional Local Healthcare & Social Assistance Jobs

Impact Type	Direct	Indirect / Induced	Total
Jobs	3,800	2,500	6,300
Labor Income	$263,095,200	$162,787,600	$425,882,800
Economic Output	$483,446,000	$493,587,400	$977,033,400
Tax Revenues	$16,762,300	$9,350,000	$26,112,300
State of Arizona	$10,667,700	$6,563,200	$17,230,900
Pinal County	$2,667,800	$1,254,500	$3,922,300
City of Maricopa	$3,426,800	$1,532,300	$4,959,100

Source: RCG

In addition to workforce statistics, City leaders will increase the odds of locating a hospital if a sufficient number of acres of land are available…not just for currently planned activity, but also for future expansion.

8) Private vs. Public Infrastructure

Building on the aforementioned small-business recommendations, the outreach phase of this assignment identified an area where even modest improvements could potentially result in a significant number of new business locations within the City.

Individuals from the private sector, as well as leaders within the community, expressed the desire for the City to provide additional consistency related to business location and development requirements related to infrastructure investments, and more clearly identify what constituted private versus public infrastructure expenditures.

Road infrastructure is just one area where the City could distinguish more clearly between what is considered public and what is considered private investment. This will also be true for utilities, traffic signals, water and sewer, among other forms of basic infrastructure investment.

9) Leadership Outreach

In a related item, *it is recommended that the City's political leaders consider more aggressively participating in the marketing of the community*. There is a direct relationship between providing favorable marketing information about a community and the extent to which local policymakers assist staff with business development outreach.

10) Additional Policy/Economic Considerations

Several additional recommendations should also be considered by City leaders and staff as it relates to advancing economic development within the area. These are listed in the following bullet points:

- Interviews with various economic development institutions identified a clear desire to *form a better partnership between the various Chambers of Commerce and the City.* Chambers of Commerce serve as an important economic development tool as they identify opportunities for growth, provide referrals within communities, and advocate for local businesses. This will be especially important for local Chambers of Commerce that are either general in terms of their support or focus on specific sub-regions of either an industry or a demographic group.

- A concentrated effort related to *reaching out to federal government entities* is recommended as a means of enhancing transportation infrastructure funding. This can be supported with the recommended marketing materials and aggressive outreach by City staff and City leaders.

- Given the City's economic development potential, there must be a balance between developing new job opportunities and providing housing for workers. ***In the case of the City of Maricopa, a long-term goal related to a jobs-to-population ratio should be between 1:3 and 1:4.*** *However, the City's current ratio is a challenge at 1:10.6.*

The City is approaching an inflection point in its growth potential. During the next decade, the community is either going to begin recruiting more businesses with high-wage opportunities, or the community will simply be a supporting residential area for other cities that provide high-quality jobs.

STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH & FEEDBACK

Stakeholder feedback reflects strong optimism about Maricopa's economic potential, coupled with a clear recognition of the challenges that must be addressed to support sustainable growth.

Participants highlighted the City's rapid population expansion, high household incomes, and business-friendly leadership as key strengths. However, they also emphasized the need for improved connectivity, additional commercial inventory, and greater industry diversification to better align local employment with the City's skilled workforce.

NOTED ECONOMIC STRENGTHS

Stakeholders consistently noted that Maricopa benefits from a highly educated and growing labor force, affordable housing, and a low overall cost of living. The City's strong leadership, proactive approach to economic development, and abundance of developable land provide a foundation for continued investment.

Education was also identified as a major asset, with the presence of Central Arizona College, quality K-12 and charter schools, and partnerships with higher education institutions such as the University of Arizona.

Challenges and Barriers

The most frequently cited barriers to business expansion were the lack of existing commercial and office inventory, limited incubator or shared business space, and the City's relative geographic location.

The absence of direct freeway access and the need for costly infrastructure improvements – particularly floodplain mitigation, rail crossings, and utility extensions – were identified as ongoing constraints. Rising lease rates, driven by low vacancy and limited supply, further restrict opportunities for small- and medium-sized businesses.

Target Industries and Growth Opportunities

Stakeholders identified manufacturing, semiconductor suppliers, and research and development activities as promising opportunities for Maricopa. Other sectors positioned for growth include professional services, healthcare, agriculture, and technology-driven employers that require large parcels but have low water and power demands. Participants emphasized the need to attract a major employer or anchor tenant to catalyze additional business activity and supply-chain development.

Workforce and Talent

Feedback indicated that Maricopa possesses a surplus of skilled labor, with many residents commuting to other cities for work. There is strong local capacity across sectors such as healthcare, business, and technology. Stakeholders expressed that the City's priority should be to attract employers to match this talent base rather than expand training programs alone. Partnerships between local education providers and employers were viewed as critical to aligning workforce skills with target industries.

Infrastructure and Development Priorities

Infrastructure improvements – particularly transportation access, broadband, and utility expansion – were highlighted as essential to future growth. While water availability is currently a competitive advantage, stakeholders stressed the importance of a long-term water acquisition and management strategy. Areas with existing utility access and those located outside of the floodplain, such as the Smith Industrial site, were identified as key opportunities for development.

Quality of Life and Community Assets

Maricopa's strong quality of life was seen as a competitive advantage for both residents and employers. Key community assets include Copper Sky Park, quality schools, recreational amenities, and the City's overall aesthetic appeal. Proximity to the Ak-Chin Indian Community and its cultural and entertainment offerings was also identified as a strength. However, the City lacks a traditional downtown core, and stakeholders saw potential for placemaking initiatives and new mixed-use centers to enhance community identity.

Gaps and Unmet Needs

Stakeholders pointed out remaining gaps in local amenities that could strengthen Maricopa's appeal to residents and businesses. Desired additions include expanded healthcare facilities, senior living options, hotels, dry cleaners, car dealerships, and larger retailers such as Costco or Target. Addressing some of these gaps could help reduce retail leakage and capture more spending locally.

Future Directions

Looking ahead, stakeholders encourage the City to focus on landing a major employer, expanding infrastructure investment, and maintaining the community's affordability and character as growth accelerates. Continued efforts to balance urban development with the interests of rural residents, while ensuring that infrastructure keeps pace with demand, will be essential for long-term success.

RECENT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

Municipalities can influence economic outcomes by aligning housing supply, workforce development, infrastructure investment, and business attraction. For Maricopa, rapid population growth, a strong labor force, and relative housing affordability create both opportunities and challenges.

BASIC ECONOMIC STATISTICS

By taking strategic actions now, the City can ensure that it leverages its growth to strengthen the quality of life and economic competitiveness in the Greater Phoenix region.

Population Growth

According to official Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) data, Maricopa's population expanded from 47,600 residents in 2015 to 78,200 in 2025, a 64.3% increase over the 10-year period. From 2024 to 2025, the City's population grew by 6.7%, surpassing state and county trends more than twofold. Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) long-term projections show the City surpassing 100,500 residents by 2030 and continuing toward nearly 160,000 by 2060.

Workforce Dynamics – Employment vs. Population Counts

Employment among City residents grew from roughly 23,100 employed residents in 2015 to nearly 37,800 in 2025, with a strong recovery following the 2020 downturn, according to the Arizona OEO. While approximately 37,800 City residents are employed, only about 7,400 jobs are physically located within the City itself (according to MAG). As a result, a significant share of residents commute to surrounding communities for work.

Based on a population of approximately 78,200 residents and 7,400 jobs within the City, Maricopa's jobs-to-population ratio remains a challenging 1:10.6, or about 9.5%. In other words, there is only one job located within the City for every 10.6 residents. By comparison, the Greater Phoenix area's jobs-to-population ratio is approximately 1:1.62, meaning there is approximately one job for every 1.62 residents. For the City to improve the ratio to that of Greater Phoenix, an additional 40,900 jobs would need to be added to the local employment base.

This is a critical finding. On the surface, it would appear that a realistic goal would be to disproportionately add employment opportunities so that the jobs-to-population ratio becomes more consistent with the broader metro region. However, this can be problematic if workers attracted to new employment opportunities cannot find an adequate housing supply and are ultimately required to pay higher housing prices compared to other parts within the broader region. In this particular case, City leaders should strive for a balance between job creation and housing development moving forward and not try to overcorrect.

Household Income Impacts

Household income is one of the better measures for determining the health of a local economy. U.S. Census data reports that median household income increased by 46.5%, from $65,800 in 2015 to $96,400 in 2024. A household income statistic of nearly $100,000 can be considered a very robust figure. This is especially the case in a community where many individuals must travel to their place of employment due to the large number of residents who work, but a small number of residents who work within the City.

Interestingly, household incomes in Maricopa have grown at a slower rate than the rest of the Phoenix Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), with a 10-year growth of 69.8% (from $52,000 to $88,300). On the surface, one would consider this a negative statistic.

However, since the household income levels are much higher within the City of Maricopa compared to the Greater Phoenix region, it is more difficult to achieve a higher rate of growth. The discrepancy in the rate of income growth, in this particular case, does not reflect disadvantages within the community. It reflects simple math.

Another factor relates to how businesses grow and prosper within a community. For example, a community that has most of the base sector jobs (exporting businesses) for the highly skilled residents being located outside of the community ultimately produces more of the “induced” types of local market employment, including lower-wage retail jobs, which can then deflate the average household income growth within the area to a degree.

Residents within the City of Maricopa offset these external economic constraints through two methods. The first is that the community is relatively young and has a larger household size. This means that there are more workers within each household, thus increasing the household income levels.

From the community's perspective, it doesn't matter if there are two workers earning wages modestly above average, or one worker earning wages significantly above average. It is household spending that drives the City's ability to reinvest in infrastructure and other items that will allow it to grow and prosper into the future.

As previously noted, the area indeed includes many high-skilled workers who will help recruit high-wage supplier businesses to some of the larger businesses within the Southeast Valley.

The second point is that only a small percentage of local workers remain local during the workday and instead need to commute. Previous research conducted on the City by this firm identified that many of the employees within the City of Maricopa are engineers and other high-tech talent within the Southeast Valley, especially within the city of Chandler.

Housing Market Considerations

According to Cromford Report data, the City's average home price was $356,100 as of January 2026, compared to $646,400 within Greater Phoenix as a whole. Over the past five years, City home prices have increased by 51.2%, compared to 82.2% in Greater Phoenix as a whole.

The fact that incomes are relatively high within the City directly implies that affordability, while still a major economic development issue, is slightly less prominent within the City compared to the broader economic region.

Moving forward, the provision of both affordable single-family and multifamily housing units will need to maintain pace with the robust forecasts for population and employment growth within the City.

Commercial Development

While Maricopa's 1.5 million square feet of retail space is nearly half the square footage of identified peer communities such as Buckeye, Casa Grande, and Queen Creek, data from CoStar shows that retail space in Maricopa increased by nearly 597,000 square feet, or 68.0%, from 2015 to 2025. This growth is significant when compared to benchmark peers and the Greater Phoenix region, which only expanded by an average of 22.0% and 6.1%, respectively, over the decade.

Over the same period, Maricopa's office space grew by 11.6% compared to 31.9% in peer communities and 25.9% in Greater Phoenix. Industrial space in Maricopa grew by 18.4% compared to 207.8% in peer communities and 279.7% in the Phoenix MSA over the same 10-year timeframe.

While it is unlikely that Maricopa follows the same trajectory as a large metropolitan area such as the City of Phoenix, this imbalance reflects the City's untapped commercial and industrial potential, with opportunities to diversify its commercial base to support local employment, reduce spending leakage, and strengthen long-term economic resilience.

Planned Development Mix

It was previously noted that the development mix within the City moving forward is not going to follow a generic trend similar to some of the larger communities within Greater Phoenix. Instead, the development mix is going to be heavily dependent on community public policy efforts and addressing very specific economic development items.

In lieu of attempting to change the jobs-to-population ratio from the current low value to as high as the Greater Phoenix region as a whole, the City of Maricopa's long-term goal should be more modest, by slowly increasing the ratio in the short term, modestly increasing it in the midterm, and ultimately reaching an overall recommended goal of providing one job for every three people that live within the City. Keep in mind that this is still a very aggressive economic development approach.

DEMOGRAPHICS AND GENERAL ECONOMIC TRENDS

The sections that follow summarize the key elements of this growth story – population trends and demographics, workforce and income patterns, education and training pipelines, housing supply and affordability, and the current employment and commercial real estate base – to frame Maricopa's opportunities and constraints for long-term economic development.

POPULATION TRENDS

The City's population grew steadily and robustly over the past decade, outpacing both state and regional averages. Understanding the City's demographic composition is critical to evaluating its workforce potential, housing demand, and long-term economic development opportunities.

Population History

The City of Maricopa's population has expanded rapidly, growing from 47,600 residents in 2015 to an estimated 78,200 in 2025, according to the Arizona OEO. This represents a 64.3% increase over the 10 years. Between 2020 and 2025, nearly 20,000 residents moved to Maricopa. The City is growing faster each year, with annual growth rates trending upwards from 5.1% in 2020 to 6.7% in 2025.[3]

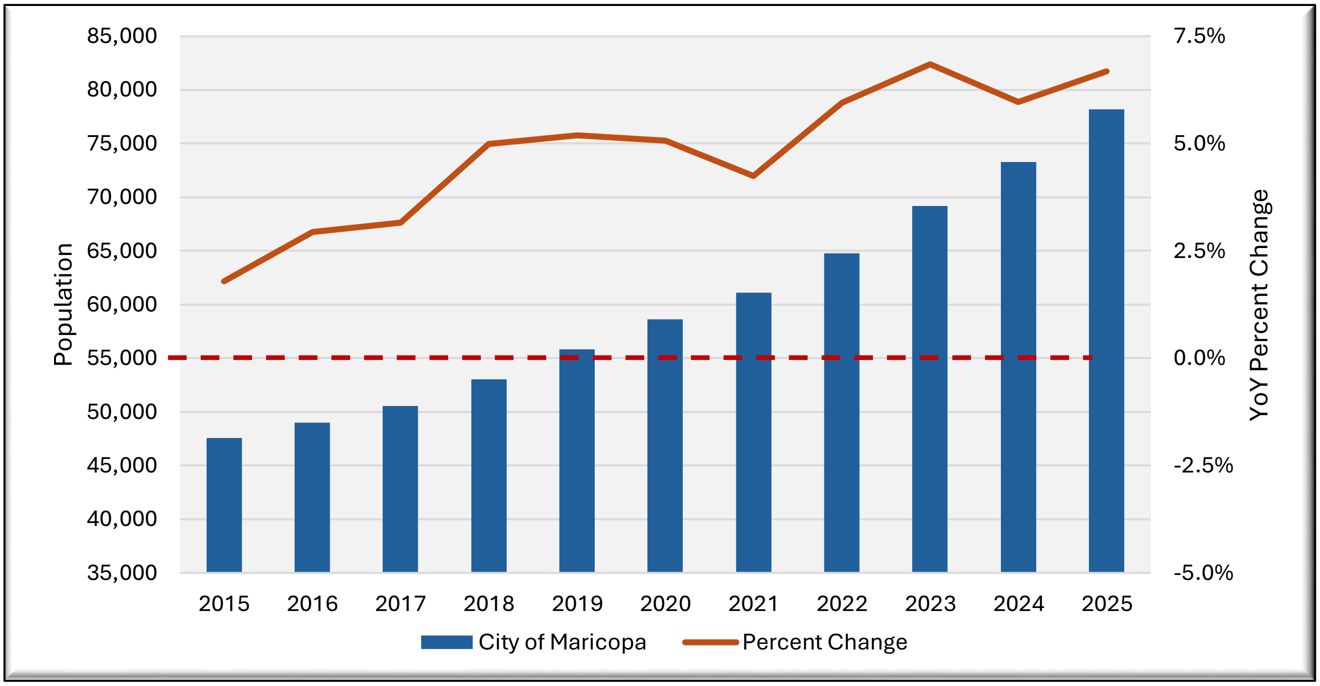
The fact that the City continues to attract demand from residents within the broader region for housing and other amenities indicates a strong effort by local policymakers to maximize the community's opportunities, given historical growth constraints related to transportation infrastructure.

Figure 1 compares population growth in the City of Maricopa, Arizona, and the City of Phoenix. The population of the City of Maricopa is growing at a faster rate than both Phoenix and Arizona. Population growth in Maricopa is trending upwards, accelerating from a 1.8% annual increase in 2015 to nearly 6.7% in 2025.

[3] Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity, "Population Estimates," accessed on 20 Feb. 2026, https://oeo.az.gov/population/estimates.

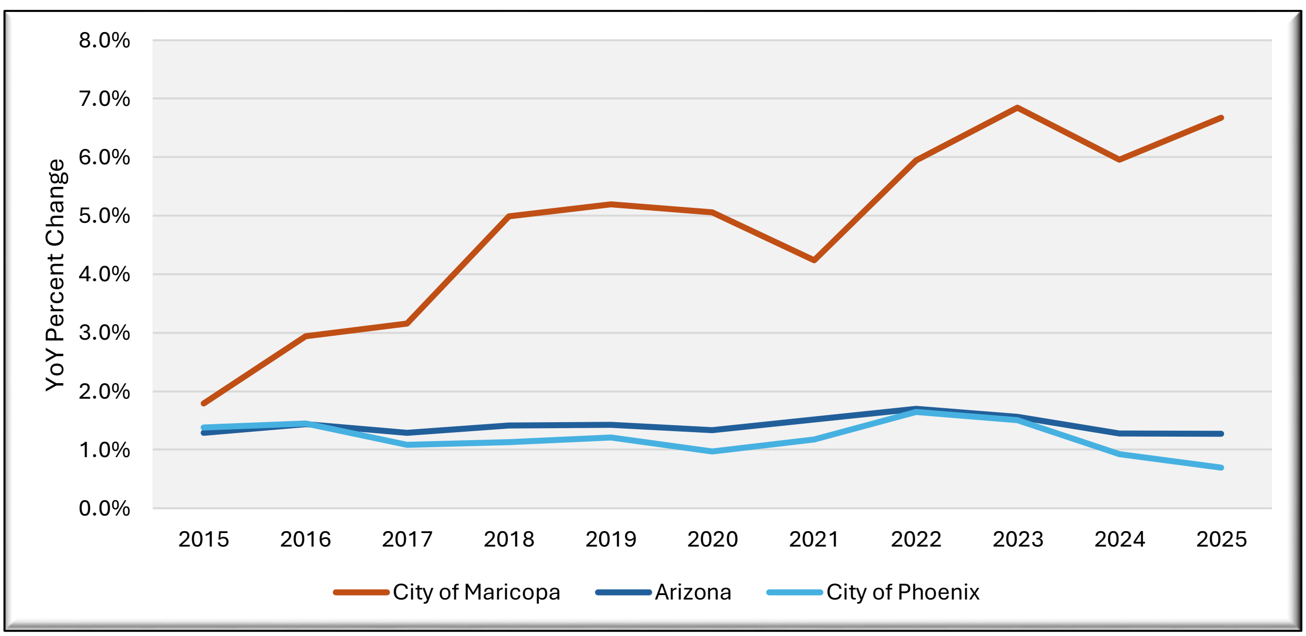
Population growth rates in the Phoenix MSA and throughout Arizona remained relatively constant over the same period, ranging between 1.0% and 1.6% in Phoenix and between 1.3% and 1.7% statewide. These trends underscore Maricopa's emergence as one of the fastest-growing cities in Arizona.

Figure 1: City of Maricopa's Historical Population Growth (2015 – 2025)



Source: Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity

Figure 2: Year/Year Population Growth Comparisons (2015 – 2025)

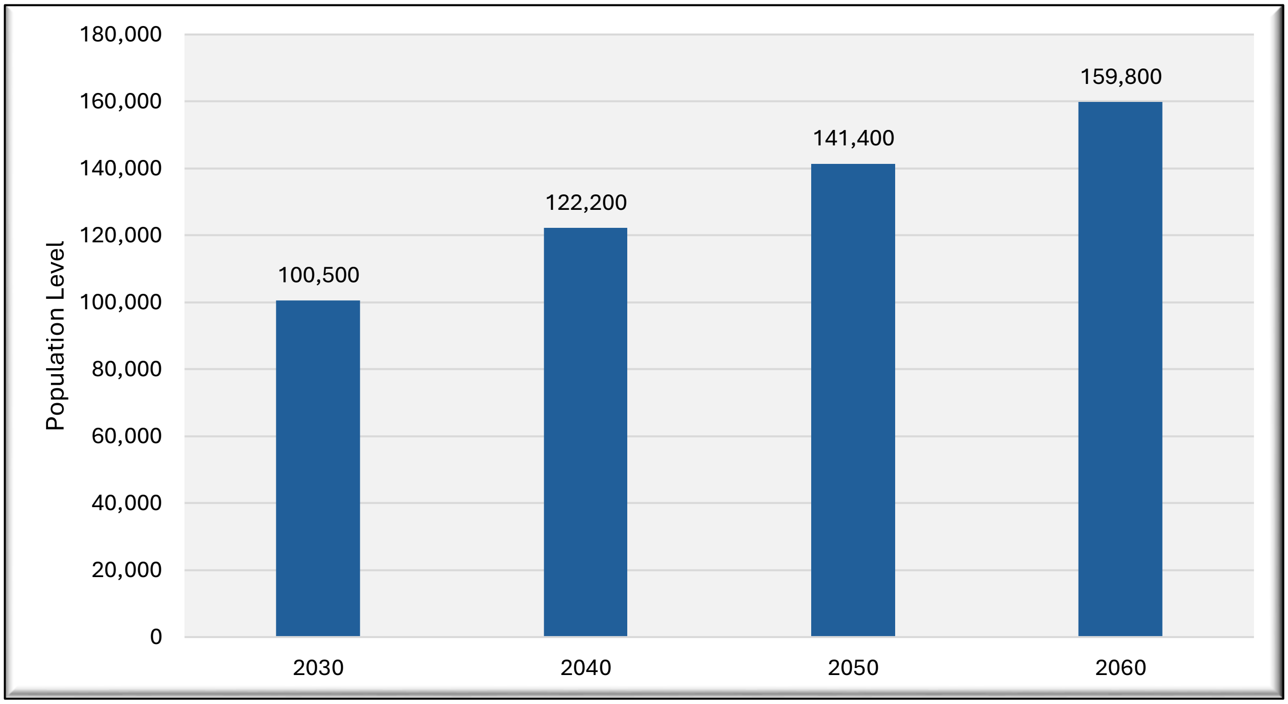


Source: Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity

Population Projections

According to MAG, Municipal Planning Area (MPA) Projections, Maricopa's rapid expansion will continue. Between 2025 and 2030, the City's population is projected to grow by approximately 28.5%, surpassing 100,500 residents.[4]

Figure 3: City of Maricopa Municipal Planning Area Population Projections



Source: Maricopa Association of Governments

The population growth rate is expected to decelerate over time, with projected population growth of 13.0% between 2050 and 2060; however, MAG still anticipates Maricopa's population to more than double (from 78,200 to 160,000) between 2024 and 2060.

The long-term projections suggest that the City will continue to grow in the coming decades. This trajectory underscores the importance of strategic planning to ensure that infrastructure, housing, and workforce development keep pace with demand.

This is another key consideration for City policymakers. The City has done quite well considering the above-average commute time for residents to arrive at their place of work, the low employment count within the City's borders, and also having access to relatively few dollars related to improving the local transportation infrastructure. Given that moving forward the SR 347 will be improved and the potential for additional connections to I-10 also exists.

[4] Maricopa Association of Governments, "Socioeconomic Projections," accessed on 23 Feb. 2026, https://azmag.gov/Programs/Maps-and-Data/Socioeconomic-Projections.

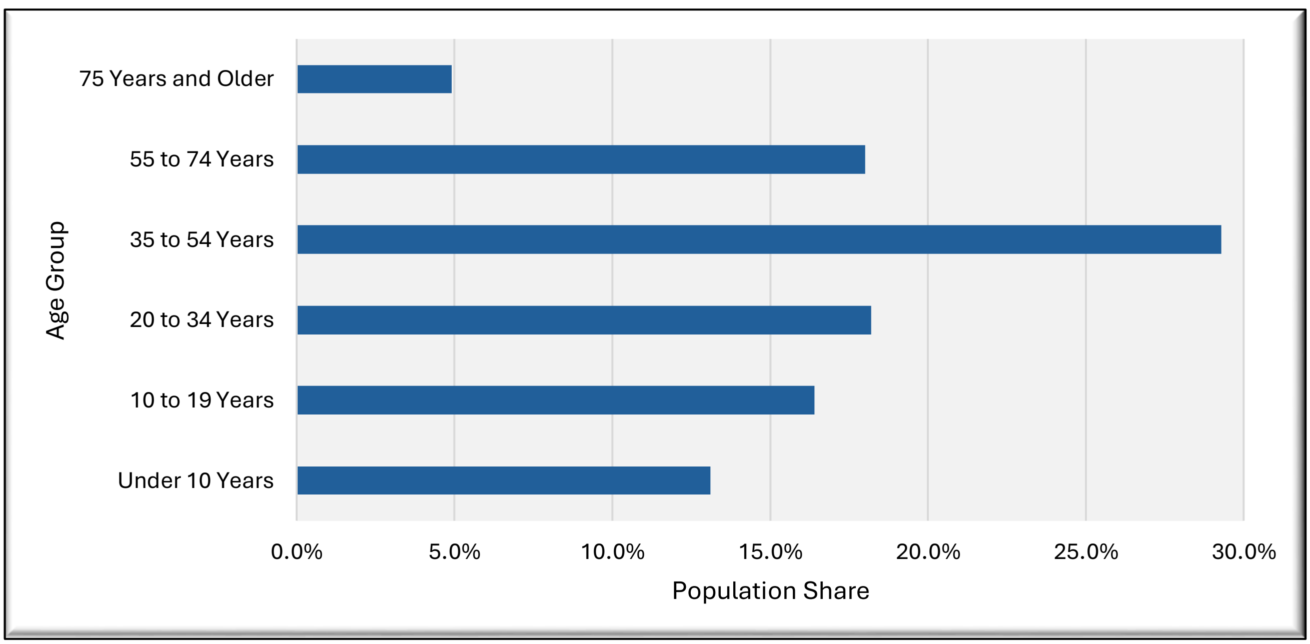
If the planned infrastructure improvements are properly blended with enhancements to the City's economic development efforts, it is very possible that the long-term economic forecast for the City, albeit already healthy, may prove to be conservative.

Population Statistics

Maricopa's age distribution reflects its popularity among families and working-age adults. In 2024, 29.3% of residents were ages 35-54, and another 18.2% were young adults ages 20-34. Maricopa's share of youth is among the highest in the nation, with children under 19 making up 29.5% of the City's population. This compares favorably to the City of Phoenix, where 26.5% of the population was under 19, and statewide, 24.3% of individuals were 19 or younger.[5]

Older demographics make up a smaller but notable share: about 18.0% aged 55-74, and just 4.9% aged 75 or older. This relatively young age structure supports a strong labor force pipeline and ongoing demand for schools, housing, and family services.

Figure 4: City of Maricopa Population by Age Distribution (2024)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau; U.S. Department of Commerce

[5] U.S. Census Bureau, "ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates," American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP05, accessed on 23 Feb. 2026, https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP5Y2024.DP05?g=040XX00US04_160XX00US0444410,0455000&d=ACS+5-Year+Estimates+Data+Profiles&moe=false.

Educational Attainment Levels

As with most measures of education quality, Arizona trails behind the national average in college degree attainment. As shown in Table 3, Maricopa's population 25 years and over is educated but skewed toward mid-level educational attainment when compared to the state and Phoenix MSA.

Based on the previous statistics, this would imply that there is a portion of the Maricopa workforce that is very highly skilled, and a portion of the workforce that would benefit from additional workforce development programs. It is these residents, the ones that potentially could satisfy the workforce demand for base sector businesses moving to the City, that may offer some of the greatest opportunities in terms of community promotion.

In other words, the City already has a large supply of highly skilled workers, and potentially a large supply of soon-to-be highly skilled workers under the right workforce training programs. This workforce supply may prove to be one of the greatest assets as it relates to attracting new business locations in the future.

Among Maricopa residents aged 25 and older, 8.3% reported not having graduated from high school in 2024. This is compared to the Phoenix MSA and state averages of 10.3% and 10.6%, respectively. Further, more individuals reported earning a high school diploma or equivalent as their highest educational attainment level in the City, with 28.1% compared to 22.7% in Greater Phoenix and 23.5% statewide.[6]

A larger share of Maricopa's population reported having attended college but did not attain a degree, with 27.8% compared to the Phoenix MSA and Arizona with 22.5% and 23.3%, respectively. This pattern remains among the adult populations that hold an associate's degree, with 12.2% of Maricopa's population compared to 9.2% in the Phoenix MSA and 9.3% in the state.

While Maricopa's mid-educational attainment levels are strong, the City lags both the Phoenix MSA and Arizona as a whole in undergraduate and graduate degree attainment. In 2024, 23.6% of Maricopa's population reported having earned a bachelor's degree or higher compared to 35.3% in Greater Phoenix and 33.3% in Arizona. Among Maricopa residents, 12.2% completed associate's degrees and 15.3% completed bachelor's degrees as their highest level of educational attainment, while 7.4% of residents completed graduate or professional degrees.

Table 3: Educational Attainment Comparisons (2024)

Educational Attainment Level	City of Maricopa	Phoenix MSA	Arizona	U.S.
Less Than High School Diploma	8.3%	10.3%	10.6%	10.4%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	28.1%	22.7%	23.5%	26.0%
Some College, No Degree	27.8%	22.5%	23.3%	19.1%
Associate's Degree	12.2%	9.2%	9.3%	8.8%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	23.6%	35.3%	33.3%	35.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

[6] U.S. Census Bureau, "Selected Social Characteristics in the United States," American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP02, accessed on 23 Feb. 2026, https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP5Y2024.DP02?q=United+States&g=040XX00US04_050XX00US04021_160XX00US0404720,0407940,0410530,0422360,0423760,0428380,0444270,0444410,0449640,0451600,0455000,0457450,0458150,0462140,0471510&d=ACS+5-Year+Estimates+Data+Profiles&moe=false.

There are different approaches to evaluating economic data. In some cases, when one statistic does not compare favorably to another, some may indicate that there is a deficiency. However, as previously noted, the City has great potential in terms of advancing the skill set of members of the population that may appear to be below average currently, but have tremendous upward potential.

Programs that utilize local workforce training activities in partnership with the businesses that will likely be recruited over the next decade will provide some of the highest return on investment values that the City will realize in the near future. This can also be one of the core findings for policymakers to consider.

Household Characteristics

As of 2024, the City of Maricopa had 21,038 households, with an average household size of 3.2 people. Maricopa has a much larger share of families than the rest of the country, and its households are larger than the national average (2.5 people per household).

Roughly 77.8% (nearly 16,400 households) were family households, with an average family size of 3.5 people as of 2024. For perspective on the extent to which Maricopa is a bedroom community, only about 64.2% of households in the U.S. consist of families.[7]

Table 4: City of Maricopa Household Characteristics (2024)

	Estimate	Percent
Total Households	21,038	100.0%
Average Household Size	3.2	-
Family Households	16,358	77.8%
Average Family Size	3.5	-
Married-Couple Family	12,322	75.3%
Female Householder, No Spouse Present	2,249	13.7%
Male Householder, No Spouse Present	1,787	10.9%
Non-Family Households	4,680	22.2%
Householders Living Alone	3,276	-

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Among family households, 75.3% were married-couple families. Another 13.7% of family households had female householders with no spouse present, and the remaining 10.9% had a male head of household with no spouse present.

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[7] U.S. Census Bureau, "Households and Families," American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1101, accessed on 23 Feb 2026, https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2024.S1101?q=united+states&t=Families+and+Household+Characteristics&g=160XX00US0444410&moe=false.

About 4,700 non-family households comprise the remaining 22.2% of Maricopa households, with 3,276 of these residents living alone. These figures reflect Maricopa's strong orientation toward family life, which in turn influences housing demand, school enrollment, and community services.

WORKFORCE AND LABOR FORCE DYNAMICS

Understanding the composition of Maricopa's workforce is essential for evaluating the City's economic strengths, identifying potential gaps, and planning for future growth. Workforce characteristics, such as labor force participation, employment levels, occupational mix, and industry distribution, help illustrate the types of skills available locally and the economic opportunities supported within the community.

This information also provides context for how the City of Maricopa fits within the regional economy and highlights areas where targeted investment or workforce development could enhance competitiveness. While total employment among Maricopa residents has grown substantially to match population growth, most of these jobs are located outside City limits, highlighting a strong pattern of outbound commuting.

Employment History

When reviewing employment data, there needs to be a clear distinction between the number of residents of a community that have jobs, versus the number of jobs within that community. Both data points are important.

However, if the number of working residents in a community significantly exceeds the number of jobs within the community, then there is a significant shortage of employment opportunities for area residents. Imbalances between the supply of workers and the number of jobs within a community create additional costs for the community.

In the case of the City of Maricopa, the local jobs imbalance results in additional retail leakage, which reduces the tax revenue base and restricts the community's ability to invest in infrastructure and other pro-development activities.

Furthermore, additional commuting miles translate into additional transportation infrastructure costs.

Over the past decade, employment of Maricopa residents has generally trended upward, with notable fluctuations tied to broader economic cycles. Employment counts rose from roughly 22,000 in August of 2015 to about 35,900 by August 2025, reflecting steady population and business growth in the area.[8]

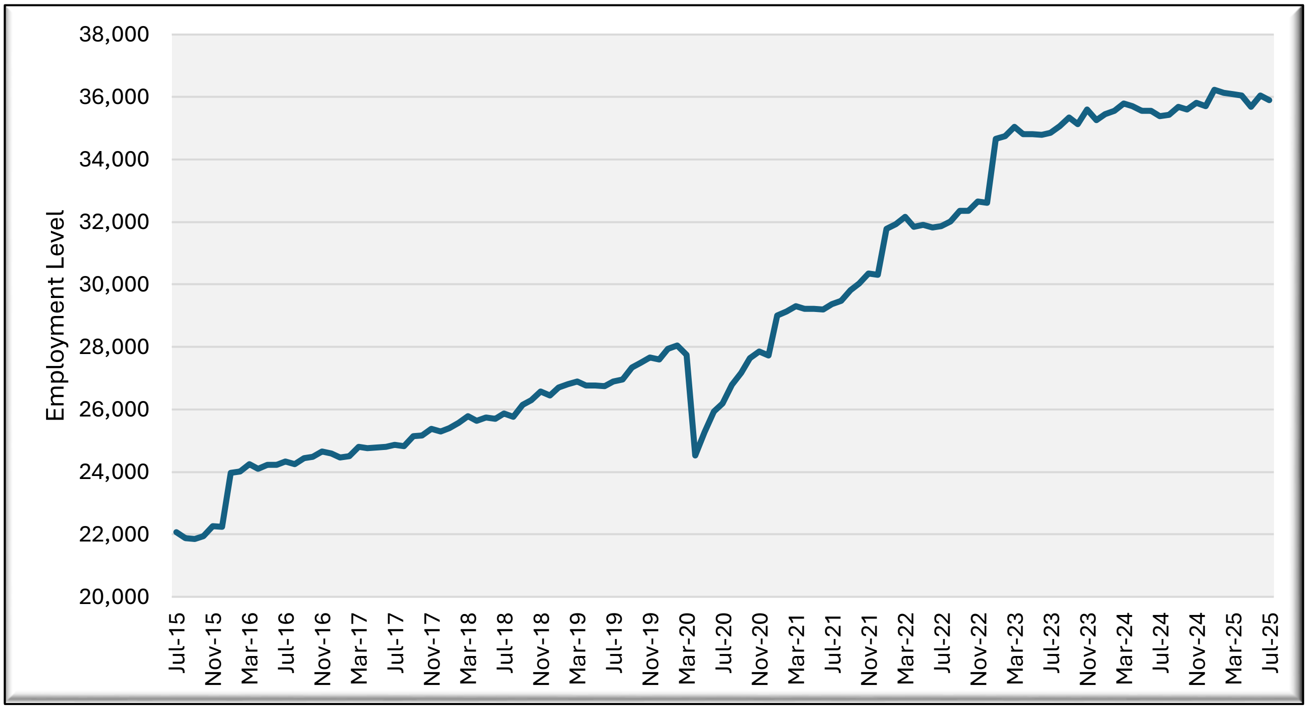
The City's residents experienced a sharp contraction in regional employment in the spring of 2020 due to the pandemic, when employment fell by 8.3%; however, recovery was rapid, and employment surpassed pre-pandemic levels by early 2021 and continues to grow.

Annual job growth rates varied widely over the last decade, peaking at 19.1% (April 2021) during the recovery in 2021 before moderating to an estimated 1.3% in recent months (August 2025). Employment growth in the City of Maricopa has generally remained positive over the past decade, with several distinct cycles. From 2017 to 2020, year-over-year job gains were steady, typically ranging from 2% to 5%.

The sharp decline in 2020 reflects the pandemic shock, followed by an equally sharp rebound in 2021 as sectors reopened and hiring accelerated. Since mid-2022, growth has moderated considerably, settling near zero as the labor market reached capacity and broader economic conditions cooled. This trajectory closely mirrors statewide and national employment trends over the same period.

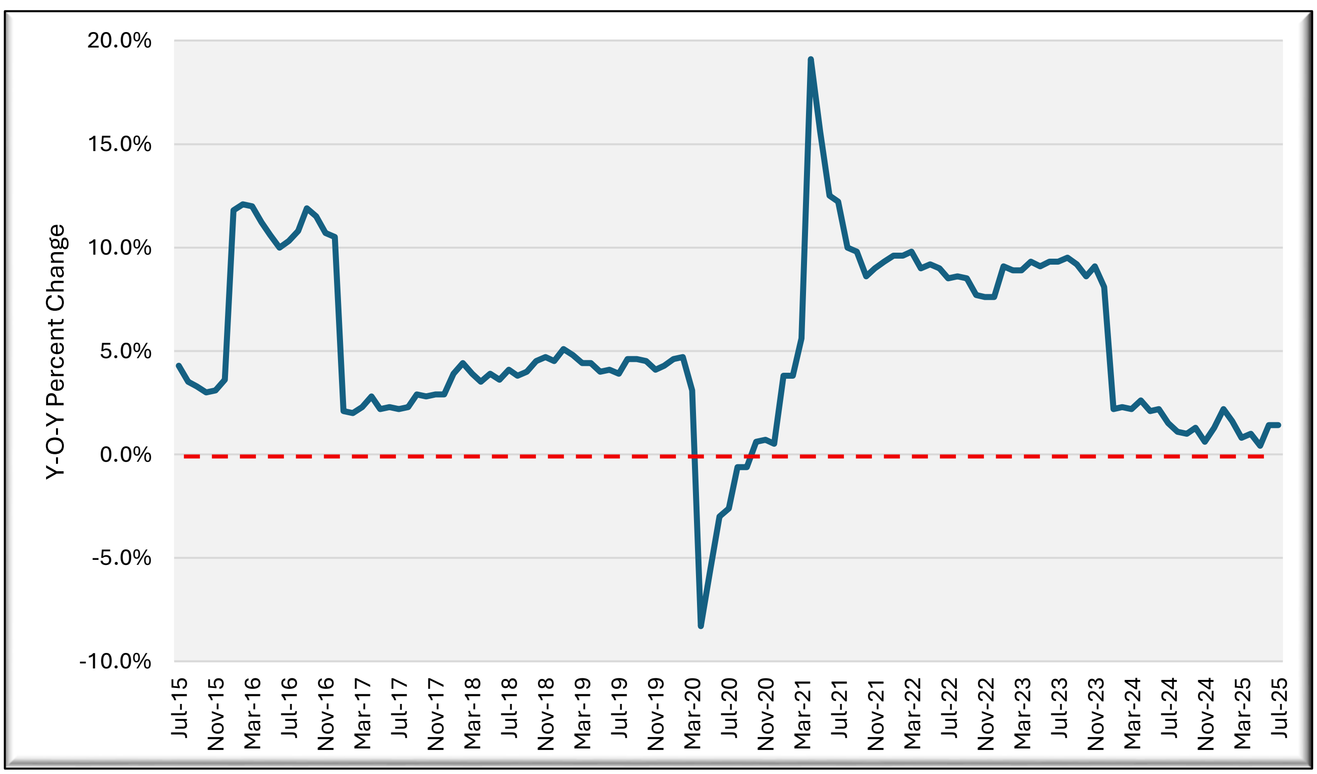
[8] U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Local Area Unemployment Statistics," accessed on 3 Mar 2026, https://data.bls.gov/dataViewer/view/timeseries/LAUCT044441000000005.

Figure 5: City of Maricopa Residents' Employment Levels



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Figure 6: City of Maricopa Resident Employment Annual Percent Change



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Labor Force & Workforce Characteristics

The City of Maricopa's workforce reflects a strong labor force participation rate and a diverse industry and occupational profile. Maricopa has slightly higher labor force participation than Arizona and the United States as a whole. About 65.1% of Maricopa's residents over the age of 16 participated in the labor market in 2024, which was slightly higher than the statewide participation rate (of 60.6%) and the national rate (of 63.5%).[9, 10]

Within the City's labor force of approximately 33,500 people, 3.2% of workers were unemployed in 2024. This was on par with the unadjusted unemployment rates in Arizona (3.1%) and the United States (3.3%) in the same year. About 35.0% of the working-age population is not in the labor force, a group that includes retirees, students, and others outside of formal employment.

Table 5: City of Maricopa's Labor Force & Workforce (2024)		
	Estimate	Percent
Population 16 Years and Over	51,411	-
In Labor Force	33,450	65.1%
Civilian Labor Force	33,383	64.9%
Employed	31,720	61.7%
Unemployed	1,663	3.2%
Armed Forces	67	0.1%
Not in Labor Force	17,961	34.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; U.S. Department of Commerce

Industry Composition

The residents of Maricopa work in a variety of industries across service and goods-producing sectors. In 2024, 18.8% (5,950 individuals) of working Maricopa residents were employed in Education, Healthcare, & Social Assistance. Another 14.0% (4,455 workers) worked in retail, and 11.4% (3,625 workers) worked in Professional, Scientific, Management, and Administrative services.

The fourth-largest sector was Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Rental & Leasing with 10.1% (3,189 workers).[11]

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[9] U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce, "Households and Families," American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1101, accessed on 23 Feb 2026, https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2023.S1101?q=united+states&t=Families+and+Household+Characteristics&moe=false.

[10] U.S. Census Bureau. "Selected Economic Characteristics." *American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP03*, https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP5Y2024.DP03?q=united+states+dp03&t=Families+and+Household+Characteristics. Accessed on 11 May 2026.

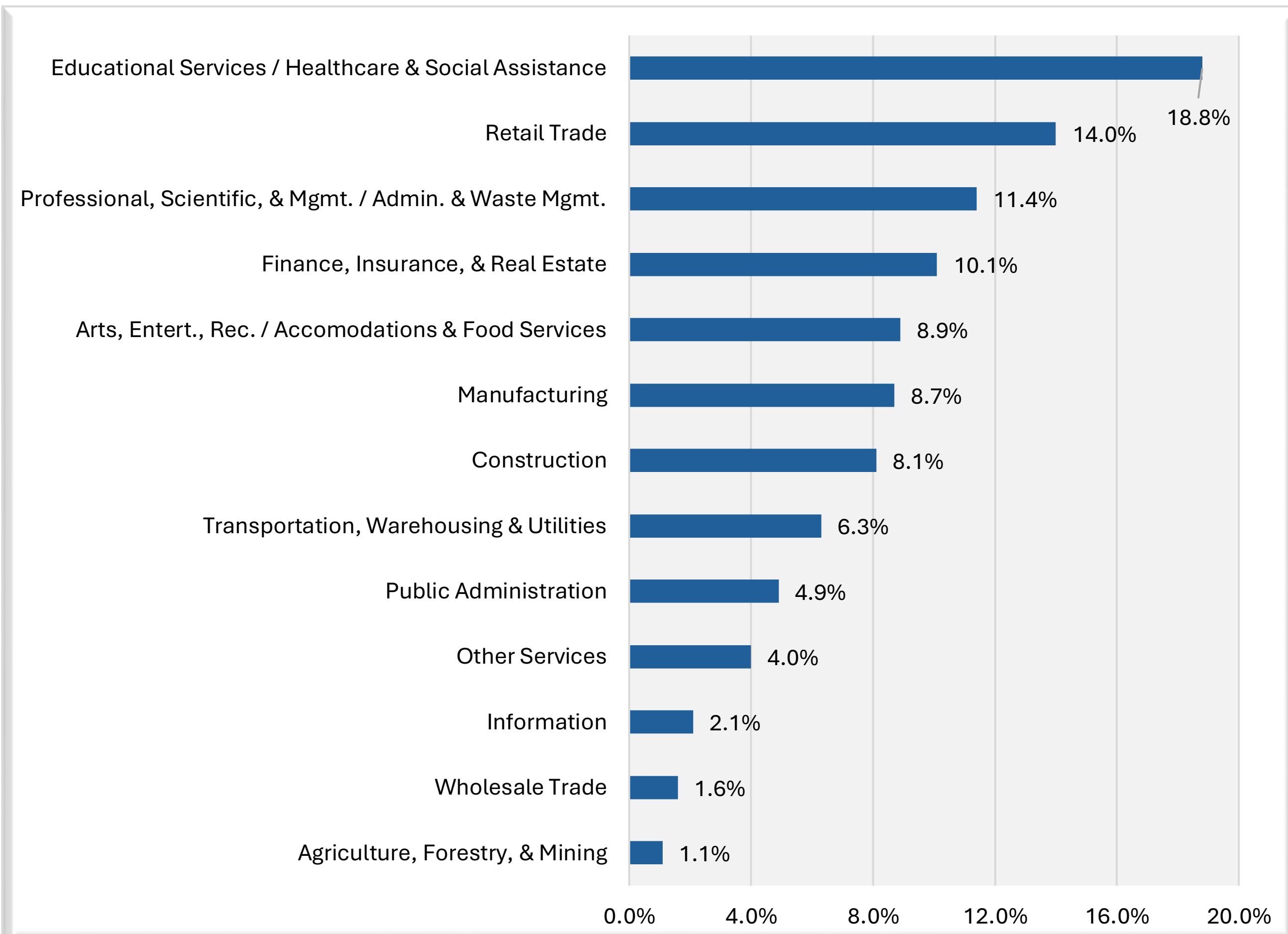
[11] U.S. Census Bureau, "Selected Economic Characteristics," American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP03, accessed on 23 Feb 2026, https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP5Y2024.DP03?t=Industry&g=010XX00US_040XX00US04_160XX00US0444410&moe=false.

Occupational Profile

Employment of Maricopa residents is concentrated in medium and high-skilled occupations, though many of these residents must commute to jobs outside the City.

In 2024, 36.7% (11,656) of employed Maricopa residents had occupations in Management, Business, Science, and Arts occupations, indicating a strong base of professional and educated workers. Another 24.7% (7,829 individuals) were employed in Sales and Office occupations. 14.7% of workers (nearly 4,700 individuals) worked in the service industry.[12]

Figure 7: City of Maricopa Industry Breakdown (2024)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau; U.S. Department of Commerce

[12] U.S. Census Bureau, "Occupation by Sex for the Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over," American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S2401, accessed on February 23, 2026, https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2024.S2401?t=Occupation&g=160XX00US0444410&moe=false.

Trade and production-oriented fields are smaller but still notable, with Production, Transportation, and Material Moving Occupations accounting for 13.7% of workers (4,347 individuals), and Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance occupations accounting for 10.2% of workers (3,228 individuals).

Table 6: City of Maricopa Occupation Mix (2024)

	Estimate	Percent
Civilian employed population 16 years & over	31,720	100.0%
Management, Business, Science, & Arts Occupations	11,656	36.7%
Sales & Office Occupations	7,829	24.7%
Service Occupations	4,660	14.7%
Production, Transportation, & Material Moving Occupations	4,347	13.7%
Natural Resources, Construction, & Maintenance Occupations	3,228	10.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; U.S. Department of Commerce

As of 2024, median earnings in the City of Maricopa varied by occupation, with higher-skilled and specialized roles commanding greater salaries. Workers in Management, Business, Science, and Arts occupations earned the highest median salary of $67,322, significantly above the City-wide median salary of $54,103.[13]

Wages in natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations – critical for ongoing residential construction activity, skilled trades, and infrastructure services – are notably higher in Maricopa ($61,341) than in Arizona ($47,786) or the U.S. ($49,199).

Similarly, production, transportation, and material moving occupations, which align with Maricopa's logistics, transportation, and light industrial employers, show a significant advantage at $52,344 versus statewide and national levels. Management, business, science, and arts occupations are roughly aligned with statewide earnings and only slightly below the national average, suggesting competitive compensation even in higher-skilled sectors.

Service occupations, which support Maricopa's retail, hospitality, and personal services sectors, show a wage advantage, with median earnings of $33,202 compared to $28,650 statewide and $26,804 nationally. Sales and office occupations, which support Maricopa's growing commercial and administrative workforce, also outperform state and national benchmarks.

Table 7: City of Maricopa Occupation Median Earnings (2024)

	Maricopa	Arizona	U.S.
Civilian employed population 16 years & over	$54,103	$48,427	$49,666
Management, Business, Science, & Arts Occupations	$67,322	$71,083	$74,888
Natural Resources, Construction, & Maintenance Occupations	$61,341	$47,786	$49,199
Production, Transportation, & Material Moving Occupations	$52,344	$38,871	$39,989
Sales & Office Occupations	$46,183	$41,420	$40,476
Service Occupations	$33,202	$28,650	$26,804

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; U.S. Department of Commerce

[13] U.S. Census Bureau, "Occupation by Sex and Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months (in 2024 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars) for the Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over," American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S2411, accessed on 23 Feb 2026, https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2024.S2411?t=Earnings+(Individuals)&g=010XX00US_040XX00US04_160XX00US0444410&moe=false.

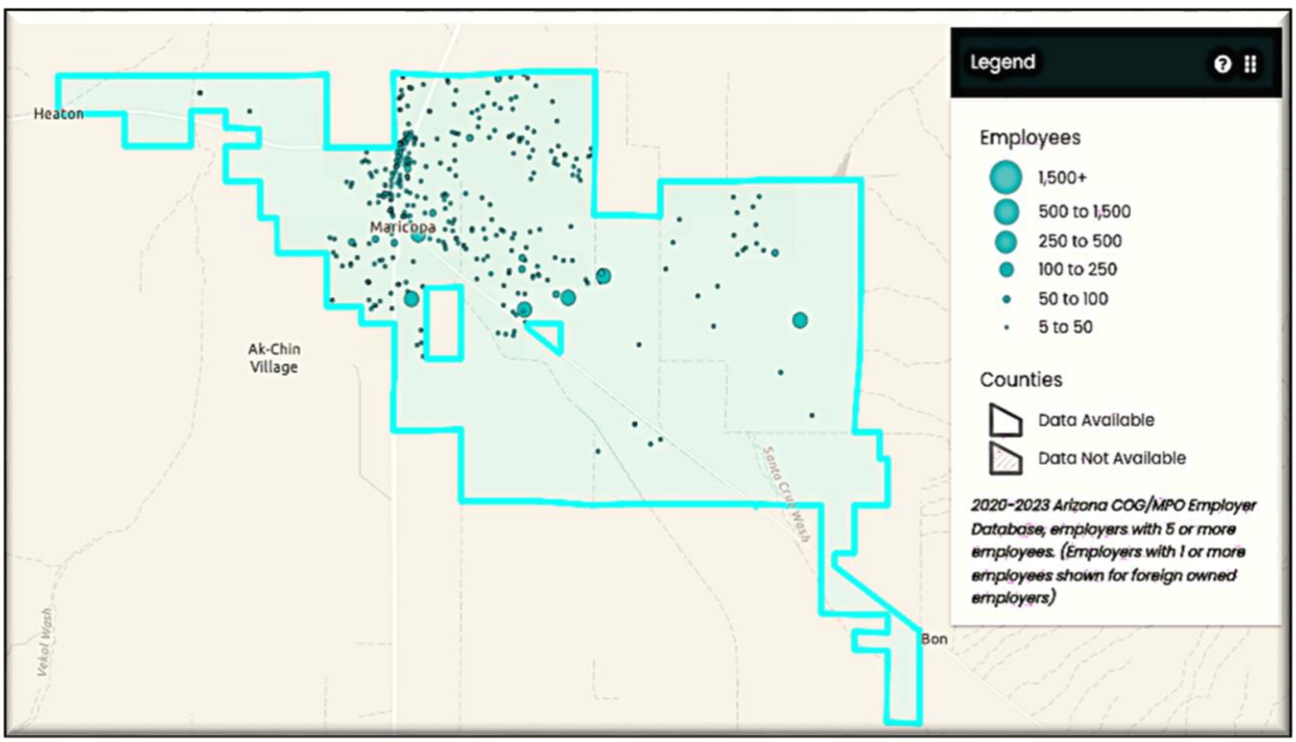
Employers Located in Maricopa

The City of Maricopa's local economy is service-oriented, with most local businesses providing consumer services and goods for the daily lives of the City's residents. The most recent data from MAG indicates the City is home to 466 employers who support approximately 7,400 jobs as of 2025.[14]

The largest share of employers operate in retail, which represents the City's most significant industry cluster, providing 19.1% of local jobs. The second largest cluster is consumer services, which consists of approximately 18.9% of the local jobs. This reflects Maricopa's role as a growing residential community, where service-oriented businesses such as retail, dining, and personal services play a critical role in meeting local demand.

Although there are not enough employers locally in Maricopa to support its resident labor force, the presence of current employers and internationally connected firms creates a foundation for expansion. Continued efforts to broaden the City's employment base – particularly in higher-wage industries – will help reduce worker leakage, shorten commutes, and enhance Maricopa's long-term economic sustainability.

Figure 8: City of Maricopa Employer Viewer



Source: Maricopa Association of Governments

[14] Maricopa Association of Governments, "Arizona Employer Viewer," accessed on 23 Feb 2026, https://geo.azmag.gov/maps/azemployer/#.

Current Local Employment Base

The City of Maricopa's economy in 2025 was concentrated in service-oriented and population-driven sectors, with smaller footprints in advanced and export-oriented industries.

The cluster summary reveals that retail (19.1% of local jobs), consumer services (18.9% of local jobs), education (17.6% of local jobs), government/social services (13.4% of local jobs), and healthcare (10.4% of local jobs) represented the City's largest industry sectors in the same period.[15]

In comparison, 11.3% of jobs across the Phoenix MSA were in consumer services, 7.3% in education, 12.0% in healthcare, and 8.4% in government services in 2025. By contrast, higher-value clusters in Maricopa, such as high-tech manufacturing (0.8% of local jobs), metal-related manufacturing (0.3% of local jobs), and telecommunications (0.4% of local jobs), remain underrepresented.

Although manufacturing and "agritech" (agricultural technology) currently represent small shares of the local economy, they are priority targets for diversification and creating higher-wage jobs. The City can further the growth of high-wage industries by ensuring its residents have sufficient access to higher education and skills training.

The City's top six employers reinforce this service and public-sector orientation, with leading employers being Walmart, City Government, Pinal County, Maricopa Unified School District, Home Depot, and Volkswagen Group of America, Inc.

These employers reflect Maricopa's reliance on retail and education as key anchors of its employment base. While essential for community stability, these sectors primarily serve the local population rather than generating significant regional exports or high-wage growth.

The presence of Volkswagen, however, also signals an opportunity to build on the City's proximity to automotive proving grounds and position itself in the growing autonomous mobility and advanced manufacturing sectors.

[15] Maricopa Association of Governments, "Business, Jobs, and Industry Explorer," accessed on 29 May 2026, https://azmag.gov/Programs/Maps-and-Data/Employment/Business-Jobs-and-Industry-Explorer.

Table 8: Employment Cluster Summary (2025)				
	Employers		Employees	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Retail	45	9.7%	1,410	19.1%
Consumer Services	100	21.5%	1,400	18.9%
Education	24	5.2%	1,300	17.6%
Government, Social, & Advocacy Services	65	13.9%	990	13.4%
Healthcare	77	16.5%	770	10.4%
Construction	37	7.9%	290	3.9%
Business Services	35	7.5%	270	3.6%
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate (FIRE)	25	5.4%	240	3.2%
Hospitality, Tourism, & Recreation	20	4.3%	220	3.0%
Transportation & Distribution	13	2.8%	200	2.7%
Resource-Dependent Activities	7	1.5%	70	0.9%
High Tech Manufacturing & Development	2	0.4%	60	0.8%
Non-Metallic Manufacturing	3	0.6%	60	0.8%
Media, Publishing, & Entertainment	5	1.1%	50	0.7%
Telecommunications	3	0.6%	30	0.4%
Consumer Goods Manufacturing	3	0.6%	20	0.3%
Metal Inputs & Transportation-Related Manufacturing	2	0.4%	20	0.3%

Source: Maricopa Association of Governments

<table>
<tr><th colspan="4">Table 9: Top 5 Employers in the City of Maricopa (2025)</th></tr>
<tr><th>Employer Name</th><th>Employees</th><th>Cluster</th><th>NAICS description</th></tr>
<tr><td>City Government</td><td rowspan="2">>200</td><td>Government</td><td>General Government</td></tr>
<tr><td>Walmart</td><td>Retail</td><td>Warehouse Clubs and Supercenters</td></tr>
<tr><td>Pinal County</td><td><200</td><td>Education</td><td>Junior Colleges</td></tr>
<tr><td>Maricopa Unified School District 20</td><td><200</td><td>Education</td><td>Elementary and Secondary Schools</td></tr>
<tr><td>Home Depot</td><td><200</td><td>Retail</td><td>Home Centers</td></tr>
<tr><td>Volkswagen Group of America Inc.</td><td><200</td><td>Retail</td><td>Automotive Testing and Engineering</td></tr>
</table>

Source: Maricopa Association of Governments

Commuting Patterns

Figure 9 captures commuting patterns of residents employed by businesses within Maricopa County. According to the map, there is high leakage in the East Valley and Central Phoenix. The map demonstrates that Maricopa residents overwhelmingly commute to job centers in Tempe, Chandler, and Phoenix, with the map's red and orange clusters indicating higher concentrations of workers per square mile working in those areas. This reflects strong outbound commuting flows into those economic hubs.

With a limited local workforce, reliance on external employment has practical consequences. Per U.S. Census data, Maricopa residents have one of the longest commute times in Arizona, with an average one-way commute time of 36.6 minutes, about 11.2 minutes longer than the average Arizonan as of 2024.[16]

Additionally, commutes typically begin early in the morning – about 50% of commuters leave before 7 a.m., with 33% departing before 6 a.m. and 18% before 5 a.m. These early departures further reflect the extended travel distances and congestion that many residents experience.

The map highlights a pronounced leakage of employment from the City of Maricopa to external job centers. The extensive outbound commuting presents challenges in terms of traffic congestion, residents' quality of life, and regional infrastructure demand, underscoring the need for enhanced local job growth and reduced commute burdens.

Unemployment

In Maricopa, unemployment rates averaged 4% to 5% between 2016 and early 2020, then spiked to 11.8% in April 2020. This was comparable to Arizona (12.5%) and the Phoenix MSA (13.2%). Following the pandemic, unemployment in Maricopa quickly declined, stabilizing at 3% to 4% between 2022 and 2024, consistent with state and metropolitan averages.[17]

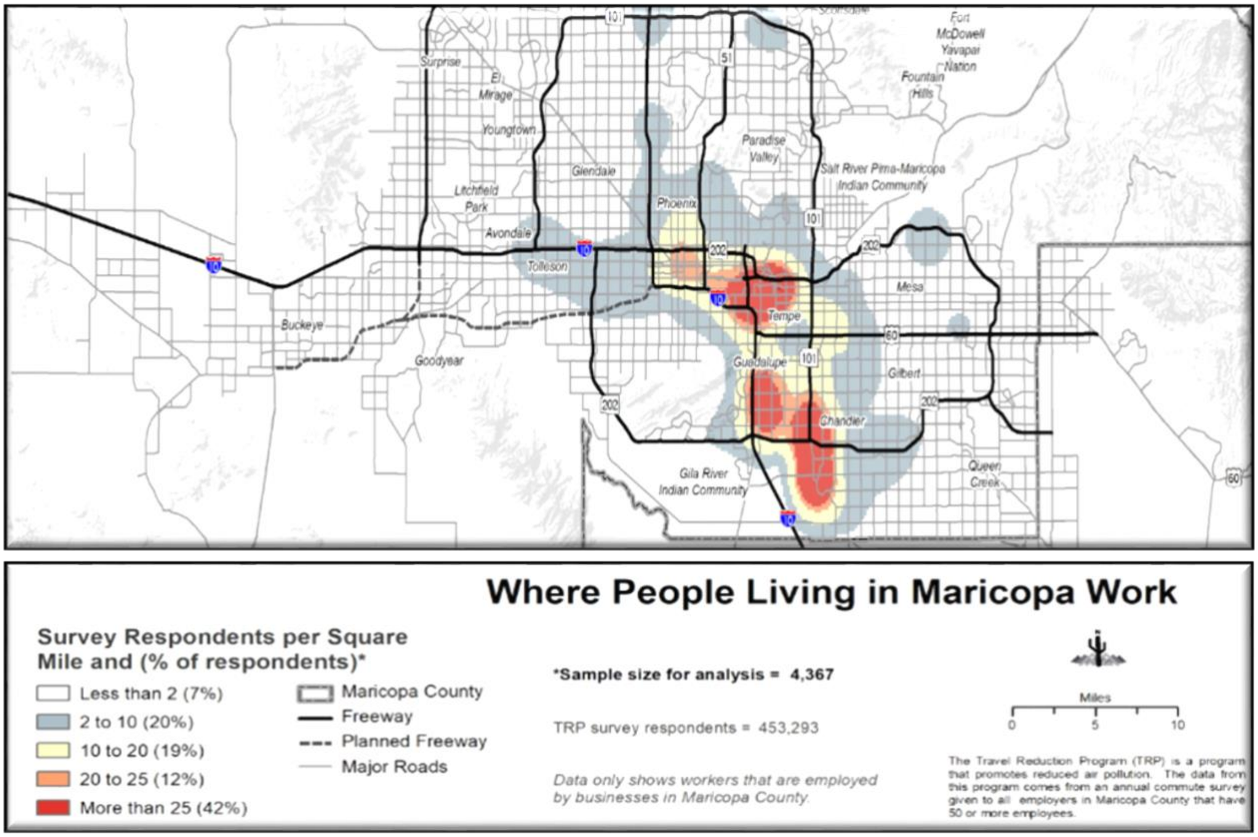
In general, unemployment in the City of Maricopa has tracked closely with the Phoenix MSA and Arizona in the past decade. As depicted in Figure 10, Maricopa generally maintained lower unemployment rates than the state as a whole between 2016 and 2025.

Before the pandemic, unemployment was consistently higher in Arizona than the national average; however, after the pandemic, unemployment in Maricopa and Arizona trended similarly to the rest of the nation.

[16] U.S. Census Bureau, "Commuting Characteristics by Sex," American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S0801, accessed on 23 Feb 2026, https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2024.S0801?t=Commuting&g=040XX00US04_160XX00US0444410&moe=false.

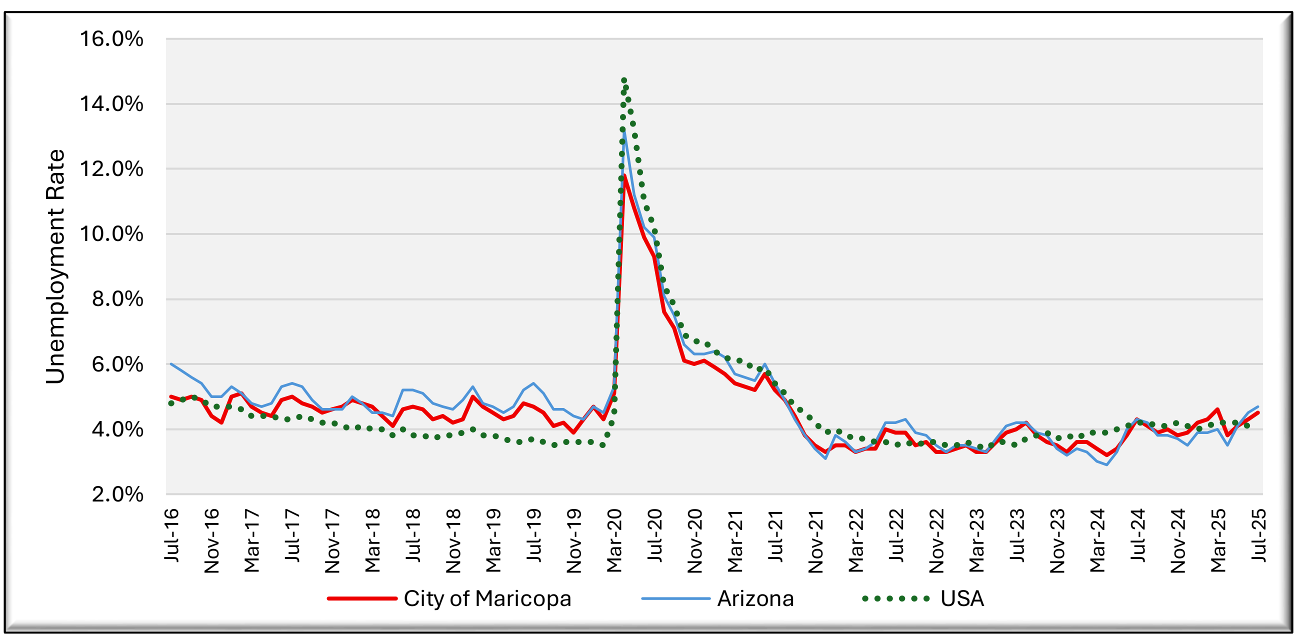
[17] U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "State and Area Unemployment, Hours, and Earnings," Accessed on 3 Mar 2026, https://data.bls.gov/multi-screen?p=3&survey=sm.

Figure 9: Where People in the City of Maricopa Work



Source: Maricopa Association of Governments (Travel Reduction Database, 2022)

Figure 10: Unemployment History (2016 - 2025)



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

ECONOMIC INDICATORS & INCOME TRENDS

Understanding income trends and economic well-being is central to assessing a community's capacity for growth, household stability, and quality of life.

Measures such as median and mean income, household distribution by income bracket, poverty status, and long-term income growth trends provide insights into the City's overall economic health. Compared to the rest of Arizona, income is relatively high in the City of Maricopa; median household earnings are also increasing at a faster rate than the rest of the state.

Comparisons with the Phoenix MSA and the state also highlight where the City of Maricopa aligns with or diverges from regional dynamics. These indicators are essential for guiding economic development strategies, identifying areas of vulnerability, and framing policies that support equitable prosperity.

Household Income Comparisons

In 2014, the median household income in the City of Maricopa was $65,214 (Table 10 and Figure 11). By 2024, that amount rose to $96,391, reflecting a 47.8% increase over the decade. This growth underscores steady incomes for Maricopa households, though year-to-year fluctuations have occurred.[18]

While household incomes in Maricopa remain higher than the state median, the rate of growth was slower than the Phoenix MSA during the previous economic downturn, but has since recovered to its more favorable position of being an income growth leader.

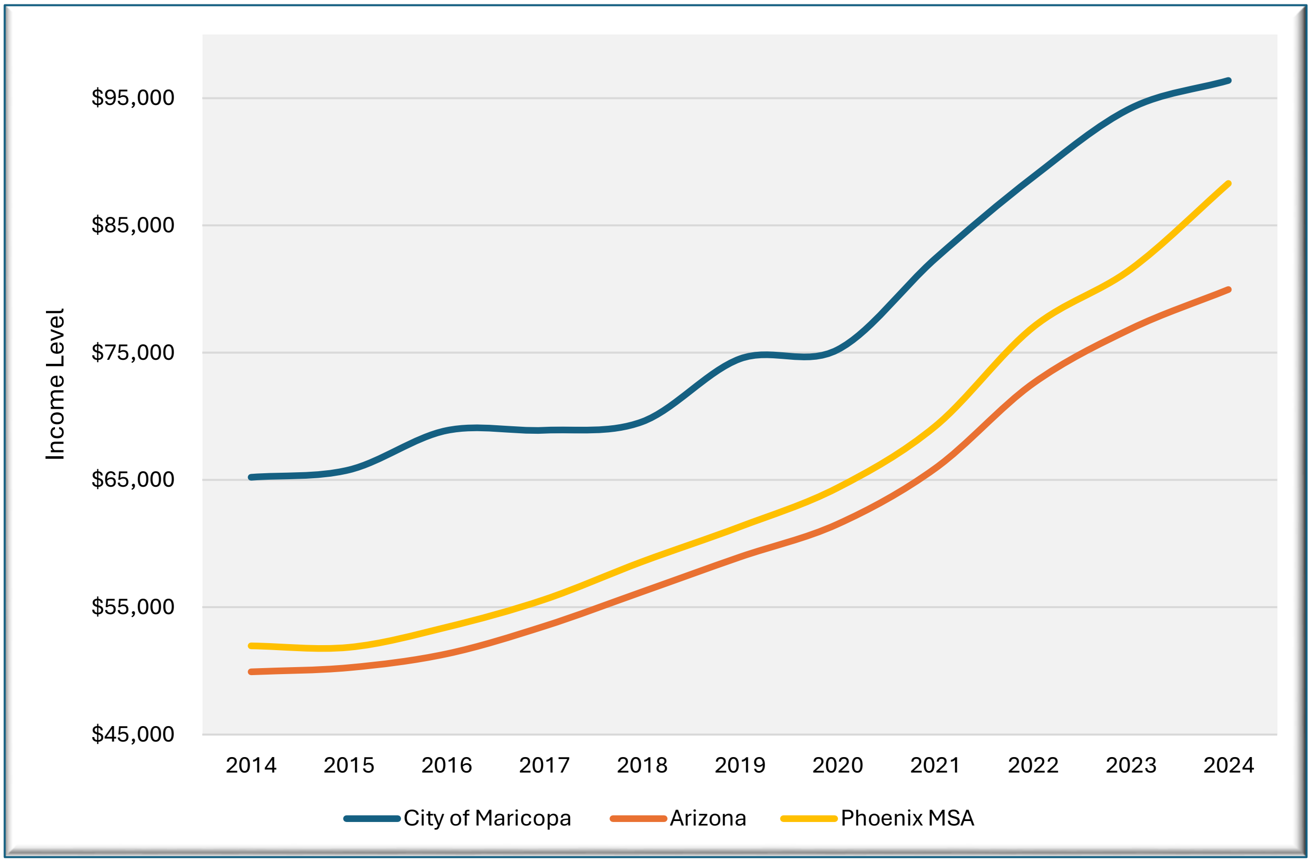
Table 10: Changes in Household Income by Region (2014 vs 2024)

	City of Maricopa	Phoenix MSA	Arizona	United States
Median Household Income (2014)	$65,214	$51,969	$49,928	$53,482
Median Household Income (2024)	$96,391	$88,301	$79,964	$80,734
Percent Increase	**47.8%**	**69.9%**	**60.2%**	**51.0%**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; U.S. Department of Commerce

[18] U.S. Census Bureau, "Income in the Past 12 Months (in 2024 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars)," American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1901, accessed on 23 Feb 2026, https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2024.S1901?t=Income+(Households,+Families,+Individuals)&g=010XX00US_040XX00US04_160XX00US0444410,0455000_310XX00US38060_3810000US620004&moe=false.

Figure 11: Median Household Income (2014 – 2024)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau; U.S. Department of Commerce

Poverty Statistics

The City of Maricopa has significantly less poverty than both the state and the broader Phoenix MSA. According to 2024 Census Bureau estimates, only 5.7% (1,205 households) live below the poverty line, while 94.3% are above it. This is compared to the estimated national poverty rate in 2024, which was 12.6%.[19]

By comparison, Arizona recorded a 12.0% household poverty rate (343,594 households), with 88.0% above the poverty threshold for the same period. The Phoenix MSA reported a poverty rate of 10.4% (196,176 households), with 89.6% of households above the poverty level.

This indicates that the City of Maricopa has a lower poverty prevalence, reflecting its relatively high household incomes and economic stability. Maricopa's comparatively low poverty rates reflect its higher personal and household incomes.

[19] U.S. Census Bureau, "Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months by Household Type by Age of Householder," American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B17017, accessed on 23 Feb 2026, https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2024.B17017?q=b17017&t=Income+and+Poverty&g=010XX00US_040XX00US04_160XX00US0444410_310XX00US38060&moe=false.

Table 11: Household Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months (2024)						
	City of Maricopa		Arizona		Phoenix MSA	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Below Poverty Level	1,205	5.7%	343,594	12.0%	196,176	10.4%
At or Above Poverty Level	19,833	94.3%	2,512,487	88.0%	1,696,437	89.6%
Total Households	21,038	100.0%	2,856,081	100.0%	1,892,613	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce

Higher Education Access & Educational Attainment

While the City of Maricopa has a rapidly growing K-12 school system, higher education opportunities within the City limits remain limited. The City of Maricopa benefits from having a Central Arizona College (CAC) campus within its limits, as well as the University of Arizona Maricopa Agriculture Center, providing residents with direct access to associate degree programs, workforce certificates, adult education, and transfer pathways to Arizona's universities.

The institutions provide a crucial foundation for postsecondary education and workforce training, particularly for students seeking affordable and accessible options near their homes. However, the relatively low share of the Maricopa population aged 25 and older who have completed a college degree may indicate a need to increase enrollment and capacity at these institutions to meet long-term workforce development needs.

Local Institutions

- Central Arizona College (CAC – Maricopa Campus): Located within City limits, CAC provides residents with direct access to associate degree programs. The campus serves as an affordable entry point into higher education and a transfer pathway to Arizona's four-year universities.

- University of Arizona – Maricopa Agricultural Center (MAC): This research farm and experiment station is a research and education hub focused on agriculture, sustainability, and water resource management. It provides opportunities for applied research, internships, and workforce training to its students in one of Arizona's most critical industries. The MAC facility strengthens local ties to the state's land-grant university and enhances opportunities for residents interested in agricultural sciences, technology, and STEM careers.

Regional Options

- Arizona State University (ASU): With campuses in Tempe and Mesa (Polytechnic), ASU is within a 45-minute commute and serves as a leading destination for Maricopa students pursuing bachelor's and graduate degrees.

- Northern Arizona University (NAU): While headquartered in Flagstaff, NAU operates extension programs in Maricopa County and Pinal County as well as online programs, all accessible to the City's residents.

- Grand Canyon University (GCU): Located in Phoenix, GCU provides private university pathways within commuting distance.

Although CAC and the UA Agricultural Center provide in-city access to education and training, many residents seeking bachelor's, graduate, or professional degrees must commute to campuses in the Phoenix metro area. Travel times typically range from over 35 minutes to over an hour, depending on the program location. Online education and hybrid models have expanded opportunities, but transportation remains a barrier for some students.

The CAC and the UA Maricopa Agricultural Center give the City a unique advantage in supporting both general higher education access and industry-specific training in agriculture and sustainability.

Strengthening partnerships between these institutions, local employers, and regional universities could further align educational pathways with Maricopa's workforce needs. Expanding local offerings, such as additional degree programs, workforce certificates, or university satellite hubs, would also reduce access barriers and enhance talent development in the City.

Workforce Development Programs

Workforce development opportunities play a critical role in ensuring that residents of the City of Maricopa have access to the training and resources needed to succeed in a competitive labor market. While K-12 and higher education institutions form the foundation of the pipeline, targeted workforce programs provide direct skills training, industry alignment, and adult education pathways.

Local, Regional and Statewide Access

- Central Arizona College (CAC – Maricopa Campus): In addition to traditional academic programs, CAC offers workforce training and certification programs in healthcare, business, the trades, and technology. The campus provides adult education, GED preparation, and career readiness resources that directly serve Maricopa residents.

- Specialized Training Programs: Regional workforce initiatives provide critical opportunities in advanced manufacturing, technology, and healthcare, among others; however, such training opportunities are limited within the City of Maricopa itself.

- Residents often travel to nearby cities within Pinal and Maricopa Counties to access specialized training in advanced manufacturing, information technology, logistics, and healthcare, among others. Partnerships with institutions such as Arizona State University, the University of Arizona, Northern Arizona University, Grand Canyon University, and other types of organizations have been used to expand these opportunities.

- In addition, the Central Arizona Valley Institute of Technology (CAVIT) campus, planned to open in 2028, represents a significant step toward strengthening the local workforce pipeline, providing career and technical education pathways that better align secondary education with regional industry demand.

  A prominent example of this in the area surrounding the City of Maricopa is Lucid Motors' Drive 48 workforce training center in Coolidge. This was developed in partnership with the Arizona Commerce Authority (ACA).[20] This facility is designed to rapidly train workers for high-demand roles in electric vehicle manufacturing, serving as a model for industry-driven workforce development. Such programs are accessible to Maricopa residents and demonstrate the value of regional collaboration in building a skilled workforce.

- Arizona@Work: As a part of the statewide workforce system, Arizona@Work connects residents to job training, apprenticeships, and career counseling.[21] Although the nearest full-service centers are located outside Maricopa city limits, Maricopa residents have access to the full list of programs available.

HOUSING & DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

Understanding housing and development patterns is critical to evaluating the City of Maricopa's long-term economic development capacity. Housing supply, affordability, and diversity of unit types directly influence the community's ability to attract and retain residents, support workforce needs, and sustain local spending. The housing stock in the City of Maricopa has been increasing, although development must continue at a suitable pace to meet population growth.

Housing Characteristics

Between 2014 and 2024, Maricopa's housing stock grew from 18,013 units to 23,233 units, representing a 29.0% increase over the 10 years. Importantly, the share of occupied units rose from 80.4% in 2014 (14,481 units) to 90.6% in 2024 (21,038 units), a 45.3% increase over the period. At the same time, the vacant units declined from 19.6% (3,532 units) in 2014 to 9.9% (2,195 units) in 2024.[22]

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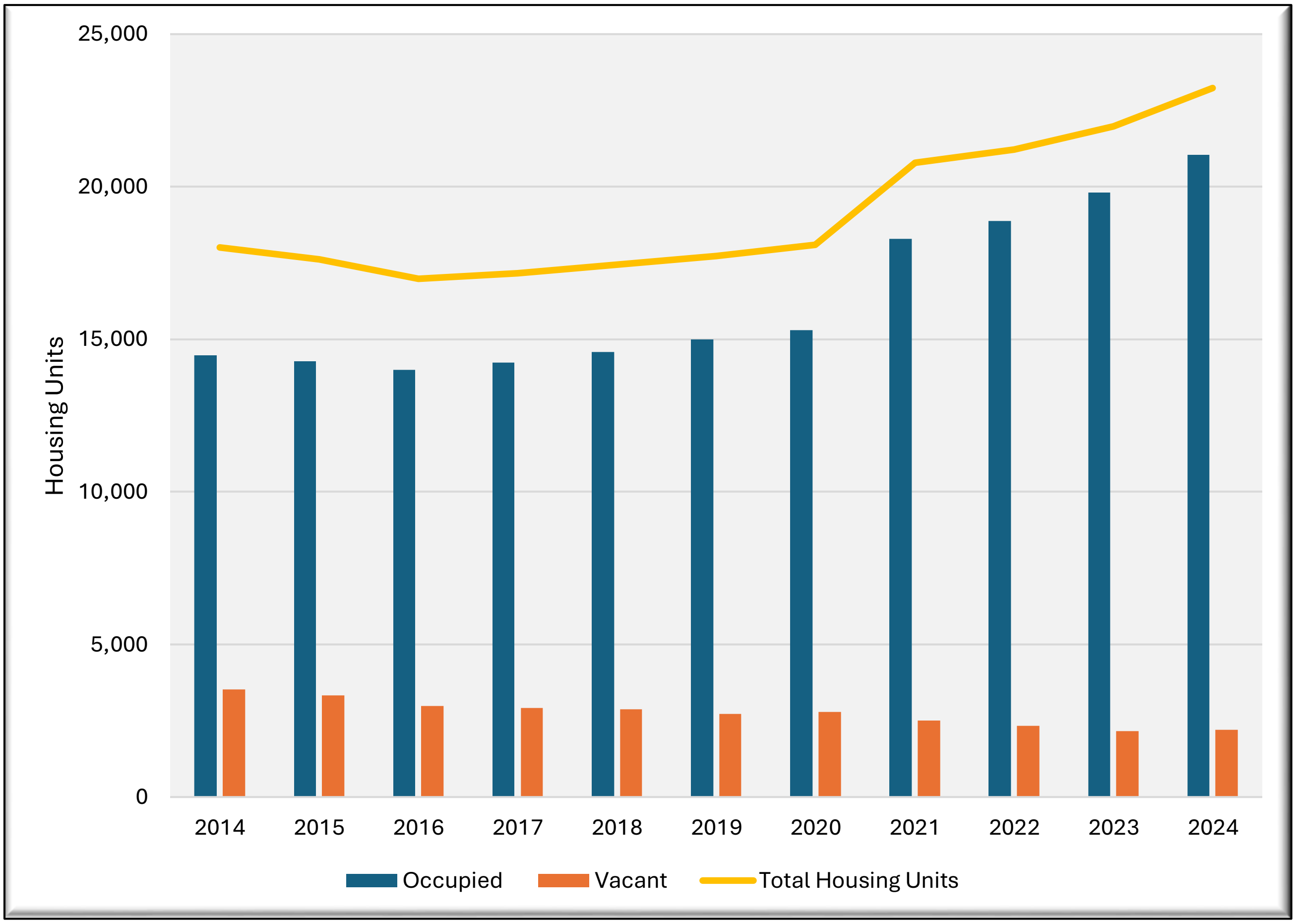
[20] Arizona Commerce Authority, "Future48 Workforce Accelerators," accessed on 23 Feb. 2026, https://www.azcommerce.com/future48-workforce-accelerators/.

[21] Arizona@Work, "Training Programs," accessed on 23 Feb. 2026, https://arizonaatwork.com/recruit-talent/training-programs.

[22] U.S. Census Bureau, "Selected Housing Characteristics," American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP04, accessed on March 3, 2026, https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP5Y2024.DP04?q=Maricopa+city,+Arizona&t=Housing:Housing+Units&g=310XX00US38060&d=ACS+5-Year+Estimates+Data+Profiles&moe=false.

Figure 12: City of Maricopa Housing Supply By Units and Occupancy Status



Source: U.S. Census Bureau; U.S. Department of Commerce

In 2024, most of the City's housing stock was single-family homes, with 98.1% of occupied units (22,787 homes) classified as single-family residences. Multifamily units accounted for just 0.9% (211 units), while 1.0% (235 units) were mobile homes or other housing types.

This composition indicates Maricopa's continued reliance on single-family development, a trend that has persisted for more than a decade. As shown in Table 12, the City's housing mix in 2014 closely mirrored current patterns, demonstrating both the growth and stability of its residential base and the limited diversification into multifamily or alternative housing options.

It is important to note, however, that multifamily development activity has accelerated within the past five years. Beyond reported existing structures, building permit data indicate that the City has averaged approximately 617 multifamily permits annually in recent years, with 2024 alone accounting for roughly 1,200 permits.[23]

While much of this recent activity has not yet fully translated into occupied housing stock reflected in ACS data, it signals a meaningful shift in development patterns that will likely increase the City's

[23] City of Maricopa

multifamily share in future inventories while diversifying housing options to support a growing workforce and strengthen economic resilience.

Table 12: Occupied Housing Units by Structure Type				
	2014		2024	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Single-Family	17,391	96.5%	22,787	98.1%
Multifamily	117	0.6%	211	0.9%
Mobile Home or Other Housing Type	276	1.5%	235	1.0%
Total	**18,013**	**100.0%**	**23,233**	**100.0%**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; U.S. Department of Commerce

Housing Development Pipeline

Over the past decade, residential permitting in Maricopa has reinforced the City's growth and shifting housing needs. Single-family construction has historically dominated, with permits peaking at 1,844 in 2021. In recent years, multifamily development has accelerated, with 1,200 units permitted in 2024 compared to 986 single-family units, signaling a rebalancing of the City's housing market.

Continued development in Maricopa's multifamily housing inventory will be important for long-term economic development as it expands housing supply to support population growth, provides additional affordable housing options for a diverse workforce, and generates new economic activity through construction and long-term household spending.

By diversifying the City's housing stock while continuing to add units at scale, Maricopa will strengthen its ability to attract residents and businesses, ensuring the community balances growth with competitiveness.

Home Price And Affordability

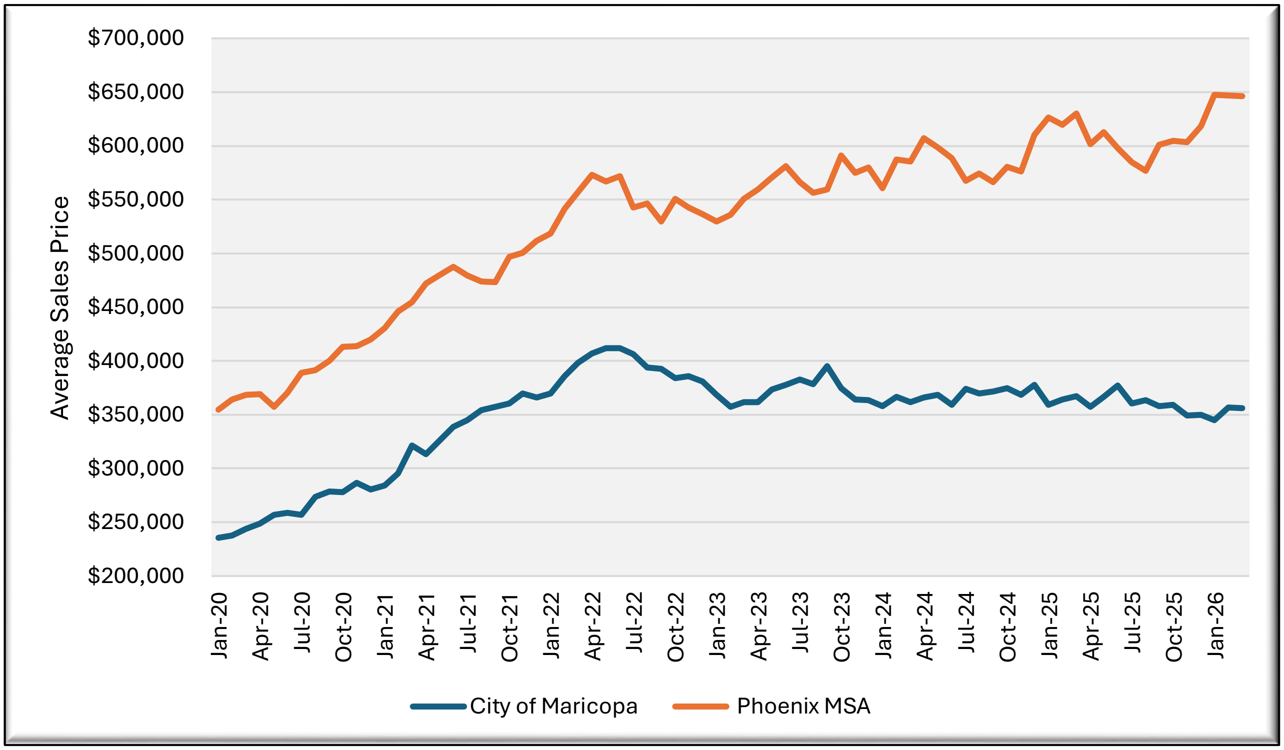
Housing affordability is a critical factor shaping Maricopa's population growth, workforce stability, and long-term economic competitiveness. While home prices have risen steadily in recent years, home prices in Maricopa remain lower than those in the broader Phoenix metropolitan area.

Figure 13 demonstrates the monthly average sales price of a home (of all types) from January 2020 to January 2026, gathered from Cromford Associates LLC. In January 2020, the average home price in Maricopa was $235,500, compared to $354,700 in the Phoenix MSA. By January 2026, Maricopa's average price reached $356,100, while the MSA average climbed to $646,400.[24]

This means that home prices in Maricopa rose by about 51.2% from 2020 to 2026, while home prices in the greater Phoenix MSA rose by almost 82.2%. Despite appreciation, Maricopa homes remain roughly $290,300 less expensive than the metro average, sustaining the City's role as an attractive entry point for new households and/or families.

[24] Cromford Associates LLC.

Figure 13: Monthly Average Sales Price of a Home (of All Types)



Source: Cromford Associates LLC.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

The following section utilizes data gathered from CoStar Group, an industry-leading provider of commercial real estate market research and analytics, and provides an overview of retail, office, and industrial inventory in the City of Maricopa.

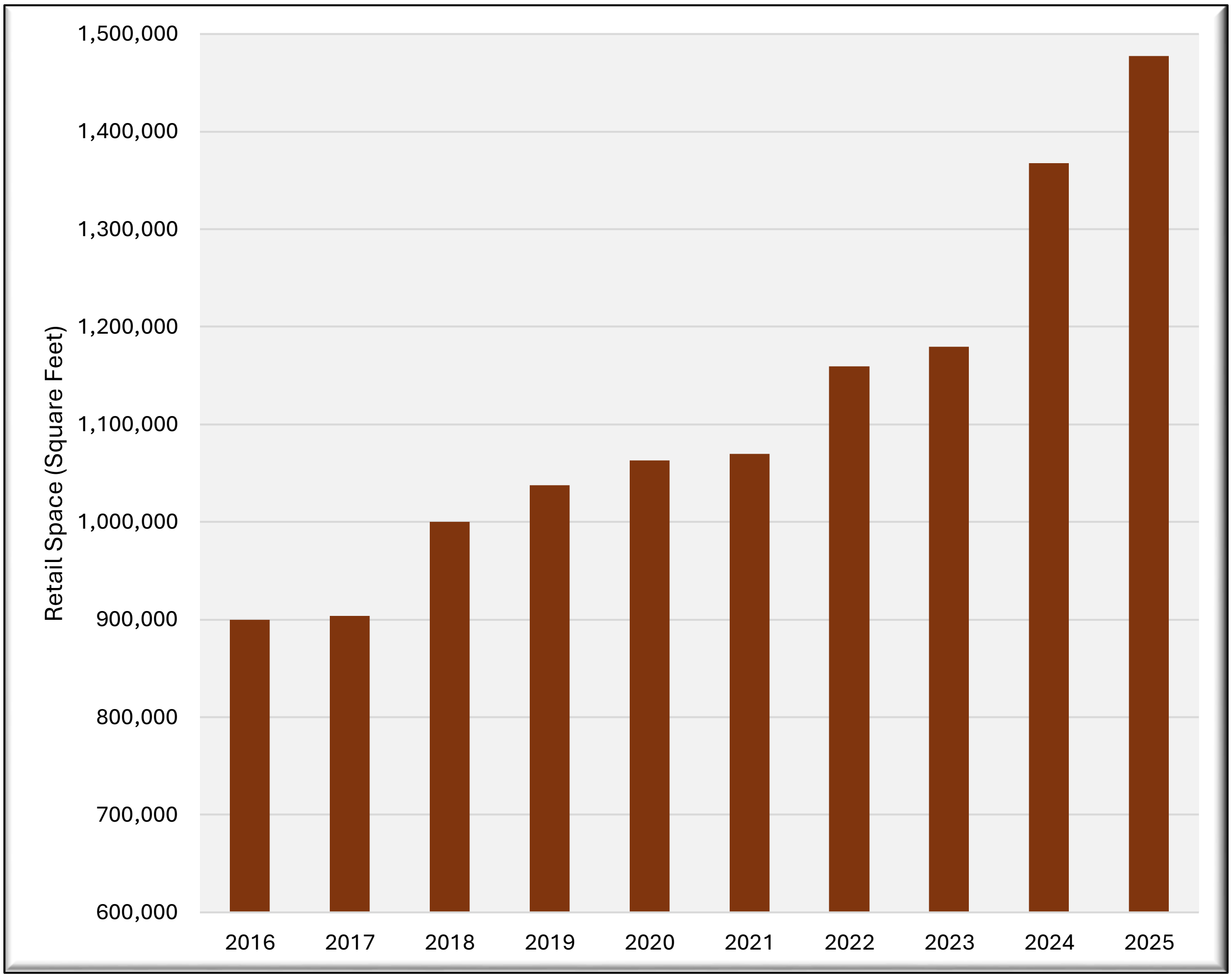
This information is intended to highlight how the community's commercial base has evolved and to provide context for future economic development planning. Importantly, a comparative analysis is provided in Appendix B of this Strategic Plan that assesses how Maricopa's retail, office, and industrial inventory profiles compare with identified peers and regional averages.

Retail Inventory

Retail inventory in Maricopa has grown steadily, expanding from 72 buildings and 900,000 square feet in 2016 to 107 buildings and nearly 1.5 million square feet year-to-date in 2025. Growth was gradual through 2020 but accelerated in 2022 with the completion of larger commercial projects.

In total, 35 new retail buildings (nearly 580,000 square feet) have been constructed over the past decade. The 64.2% increase in square footage reflects rising demand from a growing population and efforts to capture more local spending.

Figure 14: City of Maricopa Retail Inventory (Sq. Ft.)



Source: CoStar

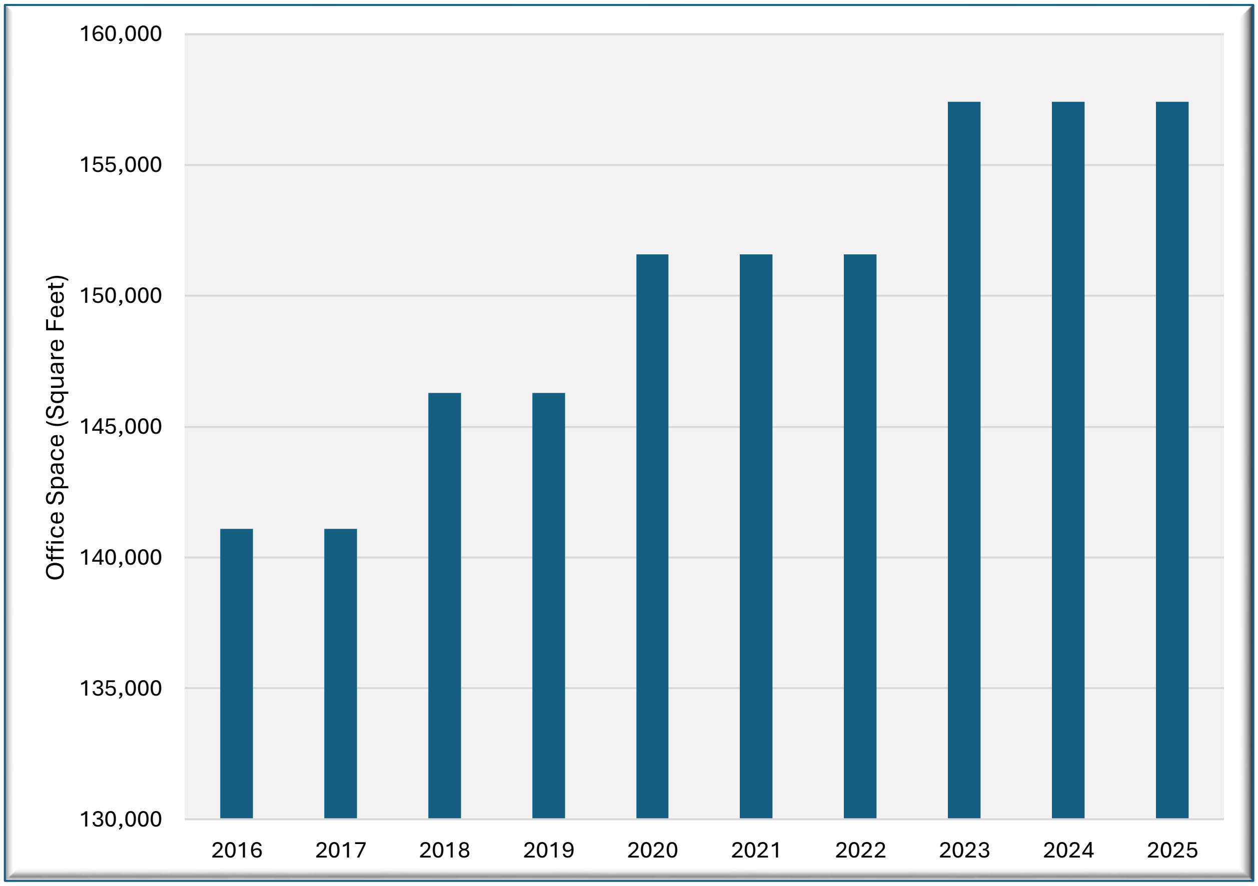
Office Inventory

Office inventory in Maricopa has grown modestly over the past decade, increasing from 24 buildings with 141,000 square feet in 2016 to 27 buildings and approximately 157,000 square feet as of 2025. Most of this growth occurred between 2018 and 2020, with minimal change since then. Since 2016, the City has added just three office buildings (16,000 square feet), an increase of about 11.6%, highlighting slower expansion compared to retail development.

The stagnation in office development post-2020 is not unique to Maricopa; the COVID-19 pandemic fundamentally disrupted office demand nationwide, accelerating remote and hybrid work patterns that suppressed new office construction across virtually every market for the better part of a decade.

However, this context should not obscure the underlying need: as Maricopa continues to attract employers and diversify its economic base, the near absence of new office inventory represents a structural gap that will increasingly constrain the City's ability to accommodate professional, medical, and business service employers that require dedicated office space.

Figure 15: City of Maricopa Office Inventory (Sq. Ft.)



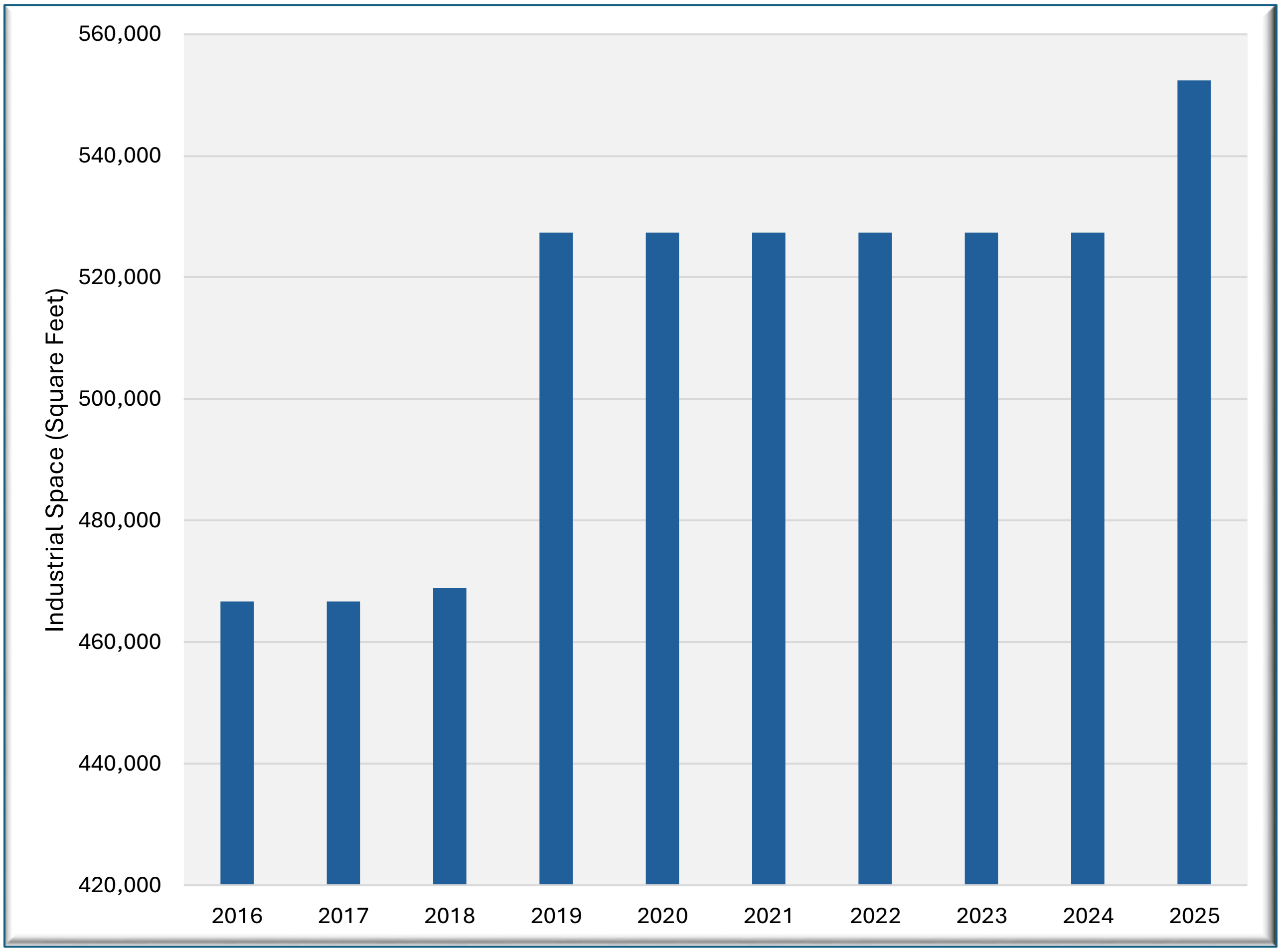
Source: CoStar

Industrial Inventory

Industrial inventory in Maricopa has grown gradually, rising from 25 buildings (467,000 square feet) in 2016 to 28 buildings and 552,000 square feet in 2025 year-to-date. Most of the growth occurred in 2019, with the construction of approximately 58,500 square feet of new industrial space.

Since then, additions have been minimal, with only one new building of 25,000 square feet added between 2020 and 2025. Overall, industrial space has increased by 85,700 square feet, an 18.4% gain over the past decade.

Figure 16: City of Maricopa Industrial Inventory (Sq. Ft.)



Source: CoStar

CITY OF MARICOPA – ECONOMIC FORECASTS

The following section provides forecasting scenarios for Maricopa's population, employment, housing development, and retail space inventory. While these forecasts are grounded in historical trends and the most reliable data available, future economic conditions may diverge from past patterns. Therefore, multiple scenario-based models are used to capture a range of possible outcomes under differing demographic and market conditions.

Forecasts in this analysis were developed by RCG, informed by historical data from trusted public sources, including the Arizona OEO, the U.S. Census Bureau, MAG, and CoStar Group. Long-term growth rates were derived by analyzing past trends in population, total industry employment, housing (occupied and available units), land use, and residential and commercial development.

These scenarios are not predictions, but carefully constructed possibilities designed to reflect realistic trajectories based on how Maricopa, Pinal County, and the broader Phoenix metropolitan region have grown over time.

By integrating several key community indicators, this section provides a forward-looking framework for understanding how the community may evolve and what level of demand may be placed on City services, infrastructure, and land use. Together, these forecasts help stakeholders anticipate growth pressures, evaluate capacity constraints, and identify strategic opportunities, supporting long-range planning.

POPULATION FORECAST

Over the past decade, the City of Maricopa has experienced significant sustained population growth, reflecting both strong regional migration trends and the community's emergence as a desirable suburban market in the Phoenix metropolitan area.

Between 2016 and 2025, the City's population grew at an average annual rate of 6.0%, far exceeding growth in both Pinal County and the state. Over the same period, Pinal County grew by 2.8% annually, while the statewide population grew at just 1.4% per year.[25]

While Maricopa may continue to grow significantly more than state and county averages over the next decade, there is also a possibility that population growth stabilizes at a slower rate. To reflect a range of possible growth outcomes over the next decade, from 2025 to 2035, three growth scenarios were prepared based on MAG projections.

[25] Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity, "Population Estimates," accessed on February 19, 2026, https://oeo.az.gov/population/estimates.

The low scenario reflects the most conservative forecast, mirroring the state's 10-year historical average annual growth rate, according to estimates from OEO. The medium scenario applies MAG's annual growth rate projections between 2026 and 2035 to the current base (2025). The high scenario extends Maricopa's strong historical growth (according to OEO), assuming that in-migration patterns are sustained and that the community delivers a housing inventory and economic development activity that can support it.

- Under the **Low Scenario**, Maricopa's population would increase from 78,200 in 2025 to approximately 90,100 by 2035, a gain of 11,900 residents over the forecast period.
- The **Medium Scenario** shows more robust expansion, reaching an estimated 108,300 residents by 2035 and adding 30,100 new residents.
- The **High Scenario** reflects the strongest trajectory, with the City potentially growing to 122,600 residents by 2035, representing an increase of approximately 44,400 residents over 10 years.

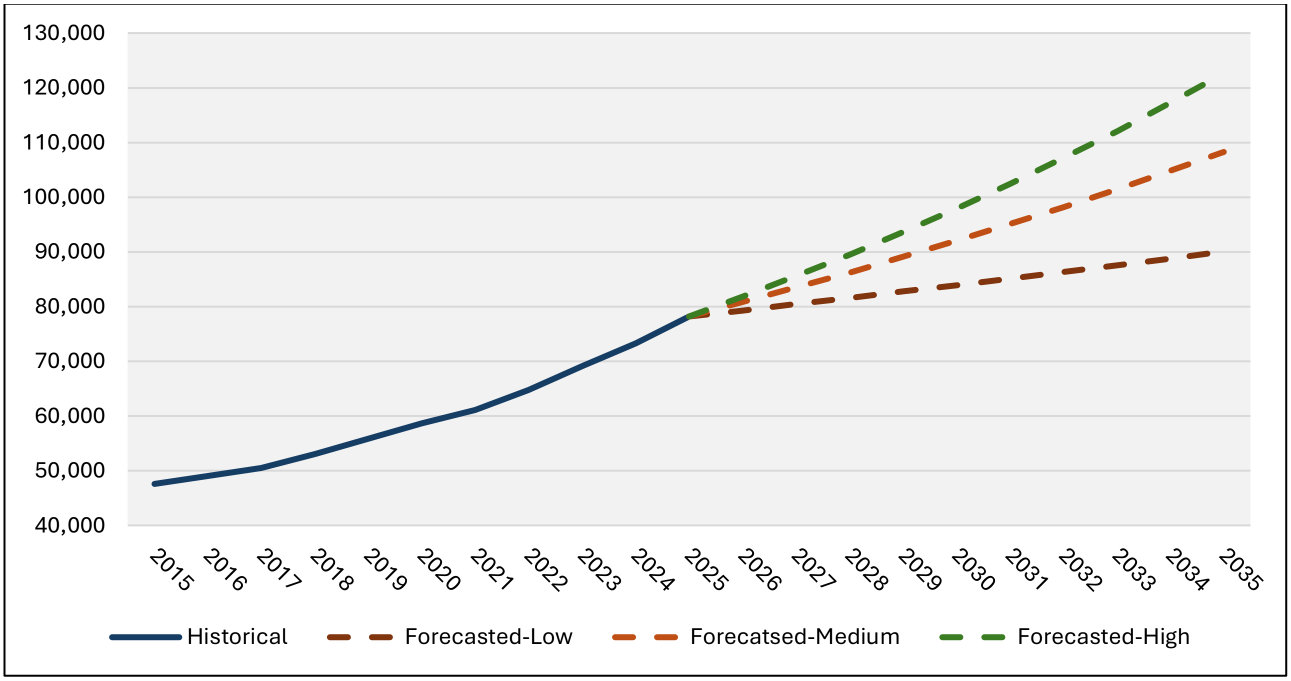
Collectively, these scenarios provide a structured framework for evaluating future land use, infrastructure needs, and fiscal impacts by illustrating how varying growth dynamics may shape Maricopa's long-term development outlook.

Table 13: Maricopa City Population Growth Scenarios (2025 – 2035)

Year	Low Scenario	Medium Scenario	High Scenario
2025	78,200	78,200	78,200
2035	90,100	108,300	122,600
10-Year Change	**11,900**	**30,100**	**44,400**

Note: May not sum due to rounding.
Source: Rounds Consulting Group; Maricopa Association of Governments; Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity

Figure 17: City of Maricopa Forecasted Population Growth (2025 – 2035)



Source: Rounds Consulting Group; Maricopa Association of Governments; Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity

EMPLOYMENT FORECAST

As with its population, Maricopa has experienced greater-than-average growth in the number of employed residents from 2016 to 2025. Over the past decade, employment among Maricopa residents, including those who commute outside the City for work, has expanded by an average annual rate of 5.5%. This is compared to the average annual rates in Pinal County and the State of 4.5% and 2.0%, respectively, over the same period.[26]

These historical patterns highlight Maricopa as an emerging labor market, driven primarily by rapid residential growth and the increasing number of residents participating in the regional workforce. Importantly, these figures represent residents who are employed regardless of job location, rather than jobs located within the City itself.

To capture a range of potential employment trajectories over the next decade, a low, medium, and high scenario was modeled based on MAG and OEO projections that parallels the growth assumptions used in the population forecasts. Therefore, the conservative low scenario assumes that future employment expansions will align with the statewide expansions, the medium scenario with Pinal County additions, and the high scenario a continuance of Maricopa's historical employment growth rate.

- Under the **Low Scenario**, Maricopa's employment base would increase from 37,800 in 2025 to 47,100 in 2035, an addition of 9,200 employed individuals over the decade.

[26] Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity, "Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment and Labor Force Estimates," accessed on February 20, 2026, https://oeo.az.gov/labor-market/unemployment.

- The **Medium Scenario** shows a more accelerated trajectory, adding 17,500 to the City's employment base and reaching approximately 55,300 by 2035.

- The optimistic **High Scenario** would see Maricopa's employment base increasing by 24,500 individuals to 62,300.

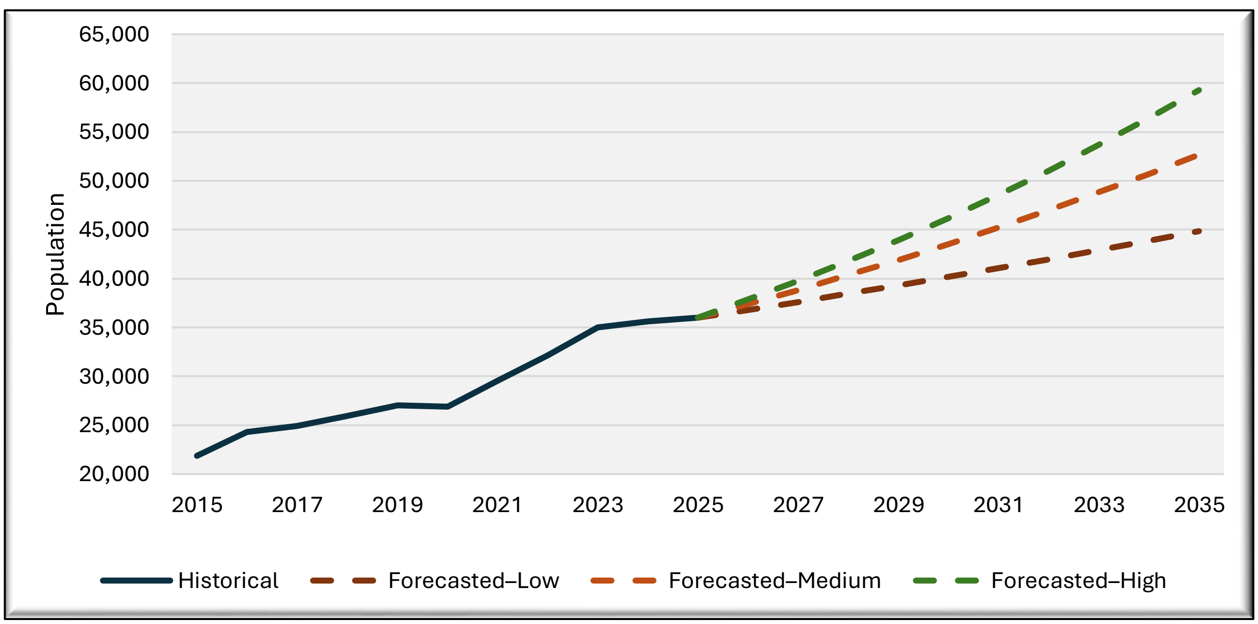
Importantly, the state's base economic forecast related to job creation is based on population and job growth relationships across the Greater Phoenix area and not specifically on the City of Maricopa's historical data. Otherwise, the job count forecast would likely be lower. For this reason, the employment forecast is likely to be overstated unless the community begins to realize the economic development opportunities that are noted in this report.

Table 14: Maricopa City Employment Forecast Scenarios (2025 – 2035)

Year	Low-Scenario	Medium-Scenario	High-Scenario
2025	37,800	37,800	37,800
2035	47,100	55,300	62,300
10-Year Change	**9,200**	**17,500**	**24,500**

Note: May not sum due to rounding.
Source: Rounds Consulting Group; Maricopa Association of Governments; Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity

Figure 18: City of Maricopa Forecasted Employment Growth (2025 – 2035)



Source: Rounds Consulting Group; Maricopa Association of Governments; Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity

SWOT ANALYSIS

A SWOT analysis is a strategic planning tool used to evaluate the internal and external factors that influence a community's growth and development. It organizes information into four categories: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.

Strengths and weaknesses represent internal conditions that the City can directly influence, while opportunities and threats capture external trends and risks that may shape future development. This framework provides a structured way to assess Maricopa's current position, identify challenges, and highlight areas of potential advantage in shaping long-term economic and community strategies.

The SWOT analysis highlights both the opportunities and risks inherent in Maricopa's rapid expansion. To sustain growth, the City must continue leveraging its strengths – affordable housing, location, and community identity – while addressing weaknesses such as workforce opportunities and infrastructure strain.

By pursuing opportunities like industry recruitment, healthcare expansion, and regional collaboration, Maricopa can move beyond its bedroom-community image and establish itself as a regional employment and innovation hub. However, mitigating threats – particularly transportation challenges, competitive pressures, and long-term water supply risks – will be essential to ensure that Maricopa's economic growth is both resilient and sustainable.

STRENGTHS

Synopsis - Strengths: The City of Maricopa has a number of favorable attributes, including higher-income household levels, quality in-City transportation infrastructure, and favorable future transportation corridors, all combined with a highly skilled workforce and the favorable conditions that are necessary to allow the community to continue to attract residents.

- **Population Growth**: Rapid population growth is creating strong consumer demand.
- **Demographics Poised for Economic Development**: A young, family-oriented demographic profile with rising educational attainment.
- **Housing Costs**: Affordable housing relative to the Phoenix metro area is attracting new residents.
- **Planning and Development Capacity**: Growing municipal planning and economic development capabilities.
- **Land Availability**: Availability of undeveloped land suitable for industrial, commercial, and residential uses.
- **Community Amenities**: Investments in parks, recreation, and quality of life amenities.
- **Business Climate**: Pro-business climate with City leadership supportive of development.

WEAKNESSES

Synopsis - Weaknesses: The City of Maricopa also possesses a number of weaknesses within its economic profile. The gap between the number of people who have a job and the number of people who have a job within the City is significant and is adding to the opportunity costs of not collecting an optimal level of tax revenue. This is due to the retail leakage, which continues to restrict its ability to invest.

- **Workforce Leakage**: High reliance on out-commuting; most residents work outside the City.
- **Infrastructure Constraints**: Infrastructure capacity struggles to keep pace with growth (roads, utilities, schools).
- **Lack of Healthcare Facilities**: Limited healthcare services and the absence of a major hospital.
- **Retail Leakage**: Retail leakage and lack of diverse commercial options.
- **Public Perception**: Perception of being a “bedroom community” rather than an employment hub.
- **Limited Commercial Inventory**: Limited availability of Class A office and higher-end commercial real estate.

- **Limited Public Transportation**: Public transit options are minimal, limiting connectivity.

- **Underdeveloped Tax Base**: The tax base is still heavily dependent on residential growth.

- Topographical Limitations: The City contains three Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHAs). The risk of flooding entails upfront costs for flood-proof construction, recurring asset destruction, and mandatory land-use restrictions.

OPPORTUNITIES

Synopsis - Opportunities: There is a familiar saying that "people vote with their feet." This means that individuals identify quality locations and choose to move to those locations. The City continues to attract new residents despite the economic challenges that are listed in this report. There appears to be an inherent amount of optimism about the community that is not necessarily reflected in the current economic data, but will be on display when more businesses locate in the area.

- **Advanced Manufacturing**: Attract advanced manufacturing related to the semiconductor industry, logistics, and aerospace industries, given proximity to I-10 and rail.

- **Local Business Growth**: Expand retail, dining, and entertainment to reduce leakage and enhance livability.

- **Significant Population Growth**: Leverage rapid population growth to attract higher education partners and workforce accelerators.

- **Tourism Attraction**: Develop regional amenities (e.g., sports, recreation, cultural facilities) to draw tourism and outside spending.

- **Infrastructure Investment**: Invest in long-term infrastructure: transportation corridors (SR 347 upgrades, I-11), broadband, and utilities.

- **Regional Logistics**: Position as a regional logistics hub, given the location between Phoenix and Tucson.

- **Entrepreneurship and Innovation**: Promote innovation and entrepreneurship through business incubators and partnerships.

- **Health Center/Facility Implementation**: Build the healthcare cluster with urgent care, clinics, and additional hospital facilities.

- **Regional Collaboration**: Strengthen regional collaboration with Pinal County to align on growth.

- **Local Job Growth**: Expand local higher-wage employment to reduce commuting and increase retention.

THREATS

Synopsis - Threats: The primary threat to the City's future economic development potential is the risk of community leaders not taking aggressive action as it relates to promoting the community, encouraging business development, being a friendly host to both businesses and residents, and planning for a robust future that will happen only under the right circumstances.

- **Road Congestion**: Persistent congestion and safety issues on SR 347 may deter investment and residents.

- **Regional Competition**: Increasing competition from the Southwest and Northwest portions of the Valley.

- **Macroeconomic Risks**: Changes in the condition of the business cycle could limit economic development activity over the next 18 months.

- **Public Misalignment**: Potential community pushback to rapid development and land use changes.

APPENDIX A: PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT PROFILES

To better understand Maricopa's development trajectory and market position, the following section utilizes 2025 CoStar data and examines the City's existing inventory of multifamily, retail, office, and industrial spaces. Assessing the scale, utilization, rents, and 10-year growth of these types of developments provides essential context for identifying competitive strengths, gaps, and long-term patterns that influence the City's economy.

MULTIFAMILY

Maricopa has 3,106 multifamily units as of 2025, significantly below the overall benchmark average of 5,212 units and drastically below high-growth suburban rental markets like Surprise (11,673 units) or Casa Grande (15,290 units). Despite this smaller scale, Maricopa's 10-year multifamily growth rate is unmatched by any of the identified benchmarks, reflecting aggressive establishment from a nonexistent sector. As of 2015, Maricopa was reported to have only 3 multifamily units.

Maricopa's multifamily unit vacancy rate is high at 52.5%, compared to the peer average of 14.4%. This signifies the recent delivery of units introduced into the community. According to CoStar data, there were 1,895 multifamily units in Maricopa in 2024. Therefore, 1,211 units were delivered over the previous year, increasing the number of units by 63.9% year-over-year.

The effective rent in Maricopa is $1.64 per square foot, which is 7.7% above the peer average of $1.52 per square foot. However, Maricopa is on par with its benchmark suburban peers, as the average effective rents in Queen Creek, Casa Grande, Marana, Prescott Valley, Surprise, Buckeye, Goodyear, and Avondale range from $1.40 to $1.83 per square foot.

The overall benchmark average is primarily driven by the rural communities of Nogales ($1.04 per square foot), Florence ($1.30 per square foot), and Eloy ($0.81 per square foot). Compared to the Phoenix MSA's average effective rent per square foot of $1.73, Maricopa's effective rents are much more aligned, signaling a competitive market that has not yet caught up with recent deliveries.

Table 15: Multifamily Development Inventory Comparison Summary

	City of Maricopa	Benchmark	Phoenix MSA
Units	3,106	5,212	652,904
Vacancy Rate	52.5%	14.4%	12.2%
Effective Rent per SF	$1.64	$1.52	$1.73
10-Year Unit Percent Change	103,433.3%	111.2%	33.3%

Source: CoStar

RETAIL

Maricopa maintains a modest retail footprint of 1.5 million square feet, nearly half the benchmark community average and far below other fast-growing suburban markets like Surprise (9.0 million square feet), Casa Grande (4.9 million square feet), and Queen Creek (4.6 million square feet).

However, the City's retail market is growing at a substantial pace. Over the last decade, Maricopa has increased its retail square footage by 68.0%. This is significantly higher than the retail footprint growth in both the Phoenix MSA and the benchmark averages of 6.1% and 22.0%, respectively, over the same period.

Of the selected benchmark municipalities, Maricopa's 10-year retail footprint growth is only exceeded by Queen Creek, which has grown its footprint by 75.2%. Other notable retail markets that have emerged from 2015 to 2025 were primarily in suburban communities, such as Marana (58.4% increase), Buckeye (48.0% increase), and Surprise (36.4% increase).

With its smaller base and significant growth trends, Maricopa's retail vacancy rate is exceptionally low at 1.8%. This indicates an elevated retail space demand compared to benchmark communities and the Phoenix MSA, with vacancy rates of 5.2% and 4.7%, respectively.

Reinforcing its retail competitiveness, Maricopa's average triple net rate (reflecting all expenses associated with a tenant's proportional share of building occupancy) of $36.0 per square foot is also significantly higher in relation to the benchmark communities' $26.38 per square foot and the Phoenix MSA's $20.08 per square foot. Since 2015, Maricopa's overall triple net rate has increased by 167.7%, dwarfing both benchmark and Phoenix averages.

Table 16: Retail Development Inventory Summary

	City of Maricopa	Benchmark	Phoenix MSA
Square Footage	1,475,573	3,005,555	244,716,908
10-Year SF Percent Change	68.0%	22.0%	6.1%
Vacant Square Footage	1.8%	5.2%	4.7%
Overall NNN Rent (2025)	$36.00	$26.38	$20.08
10-Year NNN Percent Change	167.7%	75.7%	42.9%

Source: CoStar

OFFICE

In contrast, Maricopa's commercial office market is extremely small, at 157,414 square feet in 2025, below the benchmark average of 634,463 and substantially below the employment hubs of select benchmark communities, such as Surprise (1.76 million square feet) and Casa Grande (1.19 million square feet). Therefore, the City's commercial office market more closely aligns with smaller communities like Florence (183,418 square feet) and Nogales (279,789 square feet), despite having proximity to a major urbanized population center.

Maricopa's office vacancy rate, as well as current and historical gross rents, are unreported, which is common among areas with a small sample size. However, Maricopa's commercial office growth also indicates underdevelopment.

Between 2015 and 2025, office space in the City has grown 11.6%, well below the benchmark average of 38.8% and significantly behind Marana, with 173.4% growth in office property over the same period. This suggests that Maricopa has not yet developed a substantial office ecosystem and remains a residential community with limited internal employment opportunities.

Table 17: Office Development Inventory Summary

	City of Maricopa	Benchmark	Phoenix MSA
Square Footage	157,414	634,463	194,159,625
10-Year SF Percent Change	11.6%	31.9%	7.8%
Vacant Square Footage	-	7.5%	16.4%
Overall Gross Rent (2025)	-	$28.68	$30.24
10-Year Overall Gross Rent Percent Change	-	83.9%	39.1%

Source: CoStar

INDUSTRIAL

The City's industrial footprint of 552,358 square feet is also significantly below the benchmark average of 6.6 million square feet and is dwarfed by industrial centers like Casa Grande (10.5 million square feet) and Surprise (7.1 million square feet). This reflects Maricopa's minimal capture of regional logistics and manufacturing growth.

The 10-year growth of Maricopa's industrial footprint, 18.4%, is modest compared to the peer average of 207.8%, which is largely driven by explosive expansion in Marana (678.5%), Queen Creek (546.4%), and Goodyear (386.0%).

These less urban markets, like Maricopa, where industrial activity is less prevalent, are more sensitive to major developments, which typically demand significant acreage. For example, a new LG battery manufacturing complex in Queen Creek drove the Town's industrial property footprint by 228.8% in 2024 alone.

While vacant square footage data suggests a relatively stable industrial market in Maricopa at 5.3%, this is likely more of a function of the City's limited industrial inventory rather than a large or diversified industrial economy. The more measured development activity experienced in Maricopa compared to several other benchmark communities has helped keep vacancy levels moderate.

With the absence of triple net rates in Maricopa's industrial development inventory, as well as sensitivity to single, large-scale developments, it is difficult to fully evaluate market competitiveness or forecast future performance.

These conditions suggest that the City's industrial market is best characterized as small and emerging, with stability driven by limited supply rather than broad demand. As a result, near-term industrial growth is likely to remain selective and project-driven rather than reflective of sustained, market-wide expansion.

Table 18: Industrial Development Inventory Summary			
	City of Maricopa	Benchmark	Phoenix MSA
Square Footage	552,358	6,569,435	480,599,723
10-Year SF Percent Change	18.4%	207.8%	55.6%
Vacant Square Footage	5.3%	16.7%	12.4%
Overall NNN Rent (2025)	-	$11.84	$12.11
10-Year NNN Percent Change	-	116.0%	102.2%

Source: CoStar

APPENDIX B - TARGET INDUSTRY ANALYSIS

A critical step in developing an effective economic development strategy is understanding both the structure of the existing economy and the industries that hold the greatest potential for future growth.

This involves analyzing the current employment base, identifying the largest employers, and evaluating the City's position within regional and global industry trends. Together, this provides a framework for aligning workforce development, infrastructure investment, and business attraction strategies with the City's long-term vision for economic sustainability.

As Maricopa continues to grow, diversifying its economy beyond retail, consumer services, and government is essential for long-term resilience. The City's rapid residential expansion has created strong population-serving sectors, but to position itself as a regional employment hub, Maricopa must attract industries that generate higher-wage jobs, export goods and services beyond the local market, and foster research and innovation.

By strategically focusing on industries aligned with Maricopa's assets – such as location, workforce potential, and research facilities – the City can transition into a dynamic center for advanced industries. Targeting the right sectors also ensures that investments in infrastructure and workforce training generate the maximum return in terms of jobs, income, and long-term competitiveness.

The following includes potential target industries for the City of Maricopa to pursue, recommended by RCG. To review the largest employers by employment in Maricopa, see Appendix A.

- Advanced Manufacturing & Semiconductors: Manufacturing is currently underrepresented locally, but regional anchors like Intel and Lucid Motors provide strong momentum.

  Attract suppliers in the semiconductor and electric vehicle supply chains, leveraging Maricopa's available land and proximity to the I-10 corridor. Innovation can be encouraged through R&D partnerships with manufacturers, particularly in the fields of materials science and automation technologies.

- Agribusiness & Agritech: Agriculture has long been part of Maricopa's identity, and the City houses significant research assets, including the University of Arizona Maricopa Agricultural Center and the USDA Arid-Land Agriculture Research Center.

  Attract agriculture startups that can scale regionally and nationally. Position Maricopa as a national leader in desert agriculture innovation, with specialization in precision agriculture, water conservation technologies, and controlled environment farming.

- Automotive & Autonomous Mobility: The presence of automotive proving grounds (Volkswagen & Nissan) and regional investment in EV manufacturing (Lucid Motors in Casa Grande) creates a strong foundation. Attract firms that engage in testing, software development, and component manufacturing for electric and autonomous vehicles. Position Maricopa as a testbed for mobility innovation, supported by partnerships with engineering programs and private R&D groups.

- Healthcare & MedTech: Healthcare is one of the top employment clusters, yet the community lacks a major hospital and sufficient specialized facilities. Expand healthcare infrastructure to meet local demand, while also attracting MedTech companies in diagnostics, health IT, and medical devices.

  Build on the healthcare demand to support clinical trials, digital health startups, and partnerships with regional universities and research institutions.

- Retail & Local Services**:** Maricopa experiences significant retail leakage, with many residents traveling outside the City for shopping, services, and entertainment. Expanding the retail base through recruitment of major anchors such as Costco or Target would attract complementary smaller retailers, improve resident convenience, and strengthen local tax revenues.

  Retail expansion would also support broader quality-of-life goals by fostering community hubs, reducing commuter outflow, and encouraging local reinvestment.

APPENDIX C: PEER COMMUNITY BENCHMARK MATRIX

	Maricopa	Queen Creek	Casa Grande	Sahuarita	Marana	Oro Valley	Prescott Valley	Surprise	Buckeye	Goodyear	Avondale	Nogales	Florence	Eloy
Population (2025)	78,194	88,050	69,405	38,421	66,736	48,967	52,682	172,943	119,317	122,569	100,686	19,994	25,065	19,531
10-Year Population Growth	5.1%	9.9%	3.3%	3.0%	4.7%	1.1%	2.5%	3.1%	6.4%	4.6%	2.2%	-0.1%	-0.6%	1.4%
Median Age	36.1	37.2	37.8	36.4	41.5	54.6	47.3	41.6	35.4	40.8	32.4	37.0	43.0	41.0
Average Household Size	3.2	3.2	2.8	2.9	2.6	2.2	2.4	2.7	3.1	2.7	3.1	2.9	2.3	2.6
Education:														
Less than High School	8.3%	2.8%	10.9%	5.4%	4.1%	3.2%	9.3%	5.7%	10.1%	7.4%	15.0%	31.8%	19.4%	23.6%
High School Diploma	28.1%	19.5%	34.4%	17.9%	17.4%	12.1%	28.2%	25.2%	27.8%	19.8%	28.6%	27.2%	30.7%	34.4%
Some College, No Degree	27.8%	22.8%	23.7%	23.4%	21.9%	18.6%	29.2%	26.7%	26.0%	23.2%	24.0%	16.6%	25.7%	23.3%
Associate Degree	27.8%	10.0%	10.0%	10.9%	9.6%	8.7%	9.5%	11.3%	12.0%	14.0%	11.2%	6.0%	7.5%	6.1%
Bachelor's Degree	12.2%	30.0%	13.3%	23.7%	29.7%	32.2%	14.0%	19.9%	16.0%	22.2%	14.3%	11.9%	12.0%	9.3%
Graduate or Professional Degree	23.6%	14.8%	7.8%	18.7%	17.3%	25.2%	10.0%	11.1%	8.1%	13.3%	6.8%	6.5%	4.6%	3.3%
Civilian Labor Force	36,996	40,333	29,606	14,848	28,157	20,165	22,498	76,627	49,436	55,355	50,917	8,452	4,512	4,798
Employment	35,604	39,219	28,406	14,356	27,332	19,473	21,751	74,110	47,633	53,488	49,186	7,738	4,350	4,616
Labor Force Participation	50.5%	49.3%	44.9%	39.4%	44.9%	41.0%	43.7%	46.2%	43.6%	47.4%	52.6%	42.3%	18.7%	25.3%
Unemployment Rate	3.8%	2.8%	4.1%	3.3%	2.9%	3.4%	3.3%	3.3%	3.6%	3.4%	3.4%	8.4%	3.6%	3.8%
Income:														
Median Household Income	$94,539	$150,591	$71,302	$106,551	$117,926	$114,066	$75,723	$101,367	$106,504	$112,816	$88,849	$42,115	$76,645	$65,979
Per Capita Income	$35,907	$58,155	$34,644	$47,120	$55,038	$68,526	$40,784	$45,195	$41,891	$46,719	$32,783	$22,016	$24,811	$20,144
Local Jobs	6,019	15,750	20,166	5,212	18,135	12,943	13,777	27,499	13,860	41,256	23,295			
Local Jobs as % of Employment	16.9%	40.2%	71.0%	36.3%	66.4%	66.5%	63.3%	37.1%	29.1%	77.1%	47.4%			54.9%
Transportation Infrastructure:														
Centerline Miles per Square Mile	3.4		3.5		5.5		6.5		3.5	3.5			1.0	1.8
Centerline Miles per 1,000	2.0		5.9		10.6		5.1		19.8	9.4			2.6	10.9
Commute Times:														
Less than 15 Minutes	18.8%	20.0%	39.4%	22.3%	12.8%	22.2%	33.2%	20.6%	15.2%	20.0%	20.8%	44.6%	40.5%	29.3%
15 to 30 Minutes	12.6%	24.2%	31.0%	34.6%	40.0%	36.4%	42.8%	32.0%	29.4%	33.0%	34.1%	35.7%	21.1%	27.9%
30 to 45 Minutes	29.2%	23.0%	13.5%	26.4%	33.6%	26.2%	16.8%	23.9%	27.3%	24.8%	24.7%	9.6%	10.2%	21.7%
45 Minutes to One Hour	20.3%	18.3%	7.2%	11.2%	9.3%	11.2%	2.7%	11.1%	14.5%	12.4%	9.7%	2.6%	9.2%	7.0%
Over One Hour	39.4%	25.9%	16.2%	16.8%	13.7%	15.2%	7.1%	23.5%	13.6%	9.9%	10.7%	10.1%	28.2%	21.1%
Worker Commute:														
Living and Employed In	7.7%	7.5%	22.8%	30.8%	14.6%	15.6%	36.4%	10.2%	7.9%	10.0%	4.9%	37.2%	14.2%	19.0%
Living In and Employed Outside	92.3%	92.5%	77.2%	69.2%	85.4%	84.4%	63.6%	89.8%	92.1%	90.0%	95.1%	62.8%	85.8%	81.0%
Percent Income for Mortgage	25.8%	25.4%	29.9%	22.1%	21.5%	25.4%	35.4%	29.0%	27.1%	27.7%	28.5%	29.8%	30.3%	31.1%
Housing Units:	23,233	23,569	25,137	13,682	23,432	24,112	22,301	62,098	35,276	42,159	31,547	7,414	8,067	5,146
Single Family	98.1%	96.1%	72.0%	90.7%	89.8%	79.7%	74.0%	87.4%	94.4%	86.1%	76.4%	61.6%	71.9%	73.2%
Multifamily	0.9%	3.4%	12.2%	5.2%	7.9%	18.9%	13.6%	8.5%	2.8%	12.9%	20.1%	29.7%	8.2%	11.8%
Other	1.0%	0.5%	15.7%	4.0%	2.3%	1.3%	12.6%	4.2%	2.9%	0.9%	3.4%	8.8%	19.9%	14.9%
Multifamily Info:														
Units	3,106	4,322	15,290	169	1,201	1,725	2,165	11,673	5,195	12,199	9,304	1,024	3,029	455
Vacancy Rate	52.5%	17.5%	15.2%	5.9%	32.9%	8.3%	9.7%	14.8%	22.4%	22.0%	17.6%	2.5%	11.0%	7.9%
Effective Rent per SF	$1.64	$1.83	$1.49	-	$1.62	$2.05	$1.82	$1.74	$1.40	$1.63	$1.54	$1.04	$1.30	$0.81
Retail Sales Tax Rates:														
Local	2.50%	2.30%	2.00%	2.00%	2.50%	2.50%	2.80%	2.80%	3.00%	2.50%	2.50%	2.00%	2.00%	3.00%
Combined (State, County, Local)	9.20%	8.60%	8.70%	8.10%	8.60%	8.60%	9.15%	9.10%	9.30%	8.80%	8.80%	8.60%	8.70%	9.70%

Commercial Property Info:	Maricopa	Queen Creek	Casa Grande	Sahuarita	Marana	Oro Valley	Prescott Valley	Surprise	Buckeye	Goodyear	Avondale	Nogales	Florence	Eloy
Retail Leakage:														
Sales Taxes per Capita	$505	$1,364	$933	$264	$1,085	$635	$782	$814	$753	$926	$898	$789	$429	$579
Combined Property Tax Rate	20.0927	11.0950	12.2420	15.5406	108.3197	13.9710	10.8906	9.5226	12.1190	11.5276	11.2518	12.2671	12.8895	15.2216
Effective Property Tax Rate	2.0%	1.1%	1.2%	1.6%	10.8%	1.4%	1.1%	1.0%	1.2%	1.2%	1.1%	1.2%	1.3%	1.5%
Development Fees:														
Commercial/Retail	$15,459	$2,109	$5,870	-	$5,063	$2,859	$3,940	$4,254	$5,244	$4,129	$3,880	-	$6,207	$4,231
Overall NNN Rent (2025)	$36.00	$48.75	$16.49	-	-	$24.66	$29.70	$22.20	$39.55	$33.68	$23.69	$11.03	$14.00	-
10-Year NNN Percent Change	167.7%	207.6%	50.6%	-	-	21.2%	124.0%	31.9%	74.5%	140.2%	43.9%	-12.3%	-	-
Retail Vacant	1.8%	0.7%	18.9%	0.5%	13.0%	12.0%	1.5%	1.0%	1.1%	4.2%	0.9%	9.9%	0.9%	3.3%
10-Year SF Percent Change	68.0%	75.2%	2.9%	10.7%	58.4%	4.4%	6.4%	36.4%	48.0%	11.6%	8.5%	2.7%	12.5%	7.7%
Office														
Square Footage	157,414	437,852	1,197,755	54,935	81,916	871,256	533,608	1,762,872	534,164	1,648,489	-	279,789	183,418	27,506
Overall Office Gross Rent (2025)	-	$49.42	$22.31	-	-	$17.98	$17.12	$33.06	$39.34	$34.25	-	$13.08	$31.58	-
10-Year Overall Office Gross Rent Percent Change	-	100.2%	44.4%	-	-	0.9%	-	40.6%	41.6%	78.4%	-	-6.2%	371.3%	-
Vacancy Rate	-	3.9%	5.1%	-	-	17.9%	12.1%	5.4%	2.3%	9.2%	-	7.0%	4.3%	-
10-Year SF Percent Change	11.6%	39.3%	1.5%	0.0%	173.4%	8.6%	N/A	9.7%	45.5%	33.6%	-	0.0%	7.1%	-
Industrial														
Square Footage	552,358	2,000,673	10,536,412	118,564	1,164,671	38,583	997,353	7,134,807	10,571,242	40,830,130	6,155,594	3,707,257	149,495	1,997,874
Overall NNN Rent (2025)	-	$24.02	$11.27	-	-	-	$13.43	$15.04	-	$8.18	$10.33	$0.59	-	-
10-Year NNN Percent Change	-	-	204.6%	-	-	-	122.4%	227.0%	-	142.7%	86.8%	-87.7%	-	-
Vacancy Rate	5.3%	19.0%	1.5%	-	81.3%	-	4.4%	35.6%	4.9%	22.3%	8.7%	2.9%	2.1%	1.1%
10-Year SF Percent Change	18.4%	546.4%	44.5%	37.0%	678.5%	-	7.0%	253.6%	331.7%	386.0%	115.9%	19.8%	43.1%	30.1%