

**STATEMENT OF INTENT
FOR THE
RIO SALADO PROJECT**

THIS STATEMENT OF INTENT (“Statement of Intent”) is made and entered into as of the ____ day of _____, 2018 by and among the City of Buckeye, City of Goodyear, Gila River Indian Community, City of Avondale, City of Phoenix, City of Tempe, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, City of Mesa, Maricopa County, the State of Arizona (each referred to herein as a “Party” and collectively as the “Parties”).

The Parties to this Statement of Intent agree as follows:

SECTION 1. RECITALS

- A. The Rio Salado (or Salt River) once flowed for 60 miles through the now urban areas of Maricopa County and greater metropolitan Phoenix, Arizona (collectively and commonly known as, the “Valley”), permitting Native Americans and early settlers the ability to endure in the Sonoran Desert.
- B. The perennial Rio Salado was crucial to the future growth and development of the Valley.
- C. The Rio Salado was dammed to create a canal system for water distribution and management in the early 1900s, and as a result was largely rendered a dry riverbed bisecting the Valley. Over time, the river was relegated to a desolate divide punctuated by commercial landfills, refuse dumps, heavy industrial operations and mining pits resulting in the current series of brownfields arrayed along the River with little prospect of redevelopment.
- D. In 1966, Arizona State University Dean James Elmore of the College of Architecture launched an effort to study the “problems and opportunities” created by the Rio Salado. The research and urban planning efforts of the architecture students was published in a community report in 1969.
- E. Valley Forward, which is now known as Arizona Forward, was formed and selected to command the Rio Salado Project and, by 1976, with the direction of James Elmore and the Rio Salado Project Committee presented a master plan for redevelopment of approximately 40 miles of the Rio Salado as it traversed metropolitan Phoenix, Tempe and Mesa (the “Rio Salado Project”).
- F. Valley Forward also promoted the 1980 Arizona legislation to institute the Rio Salado Development District (RSDD or the “District”), tasked with rallying support and preparing the strategic framework plan for the revitalization, funding and implementation of the Rio Salado Project. The District was comprised of a fifteen-member appointed Board of Directors from the Cities of Mesa, Tempe and Phoenix, Maricopa County and the State of Arizona. In 1982, the District unveiled the Rio Salado Master Plan to the public.

- G. Since then, some of the Valley's cities and communities have taken action to improve the Rio Salado and its watershed by developing parks, bike paths, bridges, habitat restoration, flood management and associated river enhancements. The Rio Salado has also undergone a number of significant projects related to flood control, water treatment, environmental quality, ecological restoration and public open space amenities which include the El Rio Watercourse Master Plan, Tres Rios Habitat Restoration and Wetlands, Rio Salado Oeste, Rio Salado Phoenix, Rio Salado Tempe, Rio Salado Mesa and Tempe Town Lake. Some of these projects and improvements have had a positive effect on tourism, employment, housing, the tax base, art and culture, recreation, economic development and wetland and riparian rehabilitation along portions of the river, yet the Rio Salado as a whole remains significantly underdeveloped given its economic potential.
- H. The Valley has not been alone in its historic quest to revitalize a monumental river, as metropolitan areas such as San Antonio, Dallas, Atlanta, New York City and Chicago have all implemented similar concepts to accentuate their rivers and natural landscapes. The Rio Salado Project, however, is one of the largest and oldest of such plans, and with the efforts as set forth herein could become one of the most noteworthy and historical environmental and economic developments in the Valley.
- I. U.S. Senator John McCain has recently championed and catalyzed the charge to complete the Rio Salado Project with the assistance of Arizona State University and the Parties to establish and form a working group to fuel the project and aide in the overall planning, review and approval process for the project.
- J. For purposes of this Statement of Intent, the Rio Salado Project shall encompass portions of the Salt River, Gila River and confluence with Agua Fria rivers. The Rio Salado Project is now envisioned to extend over approximately 45 miles along the river's corridor and up to a mile wide spanning City of Buckeye, City of Goodyear, Gila River Indian Community, City of Avondale, City of Phoenix, City of Tempe, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, and the City of Mesa, as lying within Maricopa Count and as generally depicted on the attached Exhibit A.
- K. The Parties believe that the Rio Salado Project has the potential to be a grand vision for civic identity - an iconic landmark for the Valley which fosters significant economic, recreational and water conservation value of the Rio Salado.
- L. It is the desire of the Parties hereto, along with Arizona State University and other stakeholders, developers and the greater public to unite and create a cooperative public-private relationship, and to organize, design and implement the Rio Salado Project to its fullest economic, recreational and water conservation capacities.
- M. The Parties recognize that the development of the Rio Salado Project will be a long-term, resource intensive project, which will require each Party's cooperation and working cooperatively with adjacent landowners and other stakeholders; but it is also recognized that the Parties' cooperation and the success of the Rio Salado Project will have substantial positive long-term primary and secondary benefits to the Valley and the State of Arizona.

- N. By entering into this Statement of Intent, it is the desire of each Party hereto to collaborate on potential, design, implementation and operation, among other things, with respect to the Rio Salado Project within each Party's respective jurisdiction.

SECTION 2. THEMES FOR THE RIO SALADO PROJECT

The driving themes for the Rio Salado Project include a shared vision and interjurisdictional cooperation for:

- i. Economic development and economic impact;
- ii. Transformation of the blighted river bed into a recreational haven; and
- iii. Water recharge, conservation and flood control.

SECTION 3. PURPOSE/GOALS OF STATEMENT OF INTENT

The purpose of this Statement of Intent is for the Parties hereto to cooperate and pledge support and to acknowledge the contribution from time to time of staff resources for the possible creation of a strong centralized advisory board or committee (the "Rio Salado Authority"), to coordinate and advise, design and develop the Rio Salado Project, including calls to the legislature for action and jurisdiction if needed to enable the Rio Salado Authority to provide such oversight.

SECTION 4. VISION & FEATURES OF THE RIO SALADO PROJECT

- A. Significant portions of the public lands comprising the Rio Salado corridor and watershed shall be redeveloped and transformed as part of the Rio Salado Project into public open space to support and drive economic development, recreational amenities and water recharge and conservation.
- B. The Rio Salado Authority is intended to design, implement and maintain the Rio Salado Project with an emphasis on and consideration of promoting and leveraging, as applicable:
 - i. economic development;
 - ii. environmental and water quality;
 - iii. brownfield conversion and development;
 - iv. housing;
 - v. commercial and light industrial development;
 - vi. public transit and transportation;
 - vii. workforce development;
 - viii. job creation;
 - ix. community and long-term sustainability, well-being, vitality and resilience;

- x. special public services (i.e., alternative schools, special museums, cultural centers);
- xi. public amenities and recreational opportunities;
- xii. habitat preservation and restoration;
- xiii. fire prevention;
- xiv. connection between neighborhoods and communities; and
- xv. a positive legacy for the Valley and the State of Arizona.

SECTION 5. ACTION NEEDED FOR THE RIO SALADO PROJECT

- A. The Parties agree to cooperate with each other in an attempt to develop an agreement and plans for the Rio Salado Authority and Rio Salado Project that will establish the general rights and responsibilities with respect to the use and property within the applicable boundaries of the project as agreed to by the respective Party in which the relevant parcel of the Rio Salado Project is located.
- B. The Parties agree to support and encourage the Rio Salado Authority to (i) conduct regular meetings with necessary officials and bodies, (ii) research, collect and analyze data and models, (iii) renovate or make available design studios and workshops and (iv) work with colleges and schools across academic disciplines, particularly Arizona State University, to research and explore project ideas and opportunities in order to carry out the intent hereunder.
- C. The Parties agree to work cooperatively with the Rio Salado Authority, land owners and stake holders in the planning of the Rio Salado Project and its intended uses, while safeguarding residential neighborhoods, private property interests, existing commercial operations and any existing waters.
- D. The Parties, in connection with the Rio Salado Authority, shall research, explore and discuss all options available for public and private financing of the Rio Salado Project, both near and long-term capital and operating costs, including various forms of financing and funding both currently existing and options requiring future legislative action. Such financing mechanisms may include those available to the Parties individually, and/or those granted to the Rio Salado Authority.

SECTION 6. MISCELLANEOUS

- A. Term. This Statement of Intent shall become effective on the date that this Statement of Intent has been executed by all Parties hereto, and shall serve as the statement of the Parties' intent until replaced by other documents, or until terminated by agreement of all of the Parties. Any Party hereto may opt out of the Statement of Intent by providing 90 days prior written notice of its intent to do so.

- B. Financial Obligations. This Statement of Intent is not intended to create any monetary obligations or commitment of general funds on behalf of the Parties, but does in fact acknowledge the voluntary contribution of staff resources by the Parties from time to time.
- C. Non-Binding Effect. The Parties acknowledge and understand that this document is a non-binding statement of intent and understanding and shall not in any way limit the legislative discretion of the State of Arizona, the Board of Supervisors of Maricopa County or the councils or board of directors of any of the cities or Indian tribes or communities who are Parties to this Statement of Intent.
- D. Cancellation. The Parties hereto acknowledge that this Statement of Intent is subject to cancellation pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-511.

[Remainder of page intentionally left blank]

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Parties have caused this Statement of Intent to be executed by their duly authorized representatives and to be effective as provided in Section 6(A).

STATE OF ARIZONA

By: _____
Name: _____
Title: _____
Date: _____

CITY OF BUCKEYE

By: _____
Name: _____
Title: _____
Date: _____

CITY OF GOODYEAR

By: _____
Name: _____
Title: _____
Date: _____

GILA RIVER INDIAN COMMUNITY

By: _____
Name: _____
Title: _____
Date: _____

CITY OF AVONDALE

By: _____
Name: _____
Title: _____
Date: _____

CITY OF PHOENIX

By: _____
Name: _____
Title: _____
Date: _____

CITY OF TEMPE

By: _____
Name: _____
Title: _____
Date: _____

SALT RIVER PIMA-MARICOPA INDIAN COMMUNITY

By: _____
Name: _____
Title: _____
Date: _____

CITY OF MESA

By: _____
Name: _____
Title: _____
Date: _____

MARICOPA COUNTY, ARIZONA

By: _____
Name: _____
Title: _____
Date: _____

EXHIBIT A
RIO SALADO PROJECT MAP

Central Arizona Conservation Alliance
Mapping Portal - BETA

Scale: 0 to 36 miles

Communities and Landmarks:
 Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community
 Phoenix
 Tempe
 Mesa
 Avondale
 Goodyear
 Buckeye
 NINA PULLIAM MASON RIO SALADO AUDUBON CENTER
 LIBERTY WILDLIFE

Project Areas:
 EL RIO WATERCOURSE MASTER PLAN
 TRES RIOS WETLANDS
 RIO SALADO OESTE
 RIO SALADO PHOENIX
 RIO SALADO TEMPE
 VA SHLY' AY AKIMEL

Central Arizona Conservation Alliance
Mapping Portal - BETA

VA SHLY' AY
AKIMEL

**RIO SALADO
MESA**

RIO SALADO
TEMPERIO SALADO
PHOENIX[illegible]TRES RIOS
WETLANDS

EL RIO WATERCOURSE

RIO SALADO PROJECT AREA

