

# Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area Management Plan



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Note: This century-long effort has involved literally generations of Yumans. The following list of our partners is a tribute to the community's steadfast efforts to reconnect with the river and preserve our heritage.*

Yuma City Council (1902-Present)  
City Administrator Joyce Wilson  
The Quechan Tribal Council  
The Cocopah Tribal Council  
Arizona Historical Society  
Yuma County Historical Society  
Yuma County Educational Consortium  
Historic District Review Commission  
Riverfront Task Force  
Heritage Area Task Force  
Yuma County Water Users Association  
Yuma Jaycees  
Yuma Convention and Visitors Bureau  
Yuma Chamber of Commerce  
Stewards of the Colorado  
Yuma Main Street Inc  
Caballeros de Yuma  
Yuma Metropolitan Planning Organization  
Marine Corps Air Station Yuma  
Yuma Proving Grounds  
Yuma County  
Yuma Crossing Park Council  
Arizona Public Service Corporation  
Arizona State Parks  
Arizona State Historic Preservation Office  
Arizona Game and Fish  
Arizona Department of Transportation  
United States Bureau of Reclamation  
United States Bureau of Land Management  
United States Fish and Wildlife Service  
United States Environmental Protection Agency  
National Park Service  
Union Pacific Railroad  
Riverfront Team:  
Charles Flynn, Kevin Eatherly, Tina Clark, Roger Blakeley,  
Matthew Spriggs, Dianne Lewis, Greg Hyland (1998-2000)

## Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area Board of Directors

<b>Steven G. Bell, Chairman</b> 4380 E. County 15 <sup>th</sup> Street Yuma, AZ 85365	<b>Mayor Larry Nelson</b> 180 W. 1 <sup>st</sup> St. Yuma, AZ 85364
<b>Steve Binkley, Vice Chairman</b> 6700 E. 30 <sup>th</sup> Street Yuma, AZ 85367	<b>Supervisor Lenore Stuart</b> Yuma County Board of Supervisors 198 S. Main Street Yuma, AZ 85364
<b>Ian A. Watkinson, Secretary/ Treasurer</b> 9474 S. Avenue 8E Yuma, AZ 85365	<b>Rep. Robert Cannell</b> Arizona House of Representatives Capitol Complex 1700 W. Washington Phoenix, AZ 85007-2890
<b>W. Gail Acheson</b> 10409 Fairway Drive Yuma, AZ 85367	<b>Bill Wellman, Superintendent</b> Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument National Park Service Liaison
<b>Roger Beadle</b> 202 S. 1 <sup>st</sup> Ave., Suite 202 Yuma, AZ 85364	<b>Louie Gradias</b> Box 36 Gadsden, AZ 85336
<b>Art Everett</b> 837 Orange Avenue Yuma, AZ 85364	

## Deardorff Design Team

**Deardorff Design Resources / inc.**  
Howard Deardorff, Rob Pulcifer, Dave Campbell  
**Milford Wayne Donaldson Architect**  
Wayne Donaldson  
**Hadley Exhibits Inc.**  
David Johnson  
**Ingram Design & Associates**  
Robert Ingram  
**Paula S. Reed & Associates, Inc.**  
Paula S. Reed, Edie Wallace  
**The Catalyst Group**  
Hydie Hopkins Friend  
**Dahl, Robbins & Associates, Inc.**  
Kevin Dahl  
**Phillips Consulting**  
Fred Phillips—East Wetlands Plan



# Management Plan *for the* Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area

July 2002

*Prepared for:*

**Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area Corporation  
Heritage Area Partners  
The National Park Service, Inter-Mountain Region**

*Prepared by:*

**Deardorff Design Resources, Inc.**

130 S. First Street

Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104

Tel: 734-665-5007

Fax: 734-665-5714

Email: [deardorffdesign@ameritech.net](mailto:deardorffdesign@ameritech.net)



July 2002

This is an exciting time in the life of Yuma. As our community experiences rapid population and economic growth, it is important that we focus on maintaining a "sense of place" and respect for our rich history. That is what the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area is all about.

Our National Heritage Area is now a reality because citizens, civic organizations, and local governments are working in partnership to preserve, promote, and enhance Yuma's cultural, natural, and historic resources.

The Plan involves support for environmental renewal of the Colorado River, historic interpretation of the Yuma Crossing, historic preservation and conservation and celebration of the many cultures of the Yuma community. Above all, the Plan speaks to water as the lifeblood of the Southwest, both as an asset to be carefully managed and as a precious natural resource to be preserved.

As Yuma matures as a metropolitan area, the Heritage Area will uphold and support those authentic and enduring values at the heart of the Yuma community. We look forward to widening the circle of partnerships and invite you to be a part of a future that respects our past.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Bell".

Steve Bell, Chairman  
Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Binkley".

Steve Binkley, Vice Chairman  
Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Larry Nelson".

Larry Nelson, Mayor  
City of Yuma

# Executive Summary

## Background

Seventy years before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock, Hernando de Alarcon sailed up the Colorado River to the confluence with the Gila River, “discovering” Yuma. He made contact with Native American tribes that had farmed the fertile river lands for centuries, living with the cycle of flood and drought so common to the Rio Colorado. Ever since, Yuma has played a unique role in American history, as its peoples have helped shape the destiny of the “American Nile”, just as the river has helped shape its peoples.

The granite outcroppings at the “Yuma Crossing” created one of the few safe and convenient crossings of the once mighty Colorado River. Westward expansion in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century coursed through Yuma, as over 60,000 pioneers in 1849 followed the historic trails west and crossed the Colorado at Yuma during the Gold Rush. Because of its location as crossroads of the river and the trails west, Yuma became a key military post and trans-shipment depot. With the revolution in transportation technology, other crossings quickly followed. The first railroad came into Arizona from California in 1877. In 1915 the opening of the Ocean to Ocean Bridge in Yuma helped link up the first southern transcontinental highway.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Yuma’s importance shifted from its point as a crossing to the role of innovator in the managing, harnessing, and utilization of the Colorado River. The cycle of drought and flood of the Colorado created danger and uncertainty for those trying to make a life in the desert. The first major government dam and diversion system on the Colorado River was built in Yuma, beginning in 1905, ushering in the creation of the Bureau of Reclamation. Bringing water—consistently and safely-- to the fertile farmlands of the Yuma and Gila River Valleys revolutionized farming in the desert. The combination of a secure water source, hearty pioneer farmers, and sunshine 360 days a year created a miracle: a desert blooming with phenomenally productive agriculture that today produces 90% of America’s winter lettuce crop. This early, innovative management of the Colorado River led to ever greater management of the water resource up and down the Colorado River.

## National Heritage Area Designation

The irony of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century was that while Yuma (and the rest of the Southwest) experienced rapid population and economic growth, the community grew away from the river, turning its back on the river as many communities throughout the country did. In the past 30 years, however, Yumans have sought to reconnect with the river and their heritage. In the early 1990’s the community committed itself to a strategic planning process designed to help guide and shape the vigorous growth underway. That community effort culminated in the creation of the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area, a designation by the US Congress recognizing the national importance of a 22 square mile area along the Colorado River, which includes the Crossing, the adjacent historic downtown Yuma and its surrounding historic neighborhoods.

National Heritage Areas are a relatively recent development. They are designed to preserve and enhance the natural, historical, and cultural resources of a community through voluntary and dynamic partnerships among and between all levels of government, the private and non-profit sectors, and individual citizens and civic groups. But it is more than preservation of individual resources: *it is the conserving of a nationally significant landscape*. Until very recently, most of the Heritage Areas were east of the Mississippi River. Yuma is again leading the way in helping shape the development of communities in the West.

## Management Plan

The legislation designating the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area in October of 2000 stipulated that a 10-year Management Plan be developed and that a “management entity” be created to guide its implementation no later than October 2003.

In its preliminary concept plan completed in 1999, the Heritage Area Task Force (whose Executive Committee now lead the Board of the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area Corporation) generally envisioned three major venues for the Heritage Area: East Wetlands, West Wetlands, and the Historic Downtown and its surrounding neighborhoods. In addition, the plan proposed additional interpretive venues and linkages to historic trails of the West.

### West Wetlands

Considerable work on individual projects has already taken place by Heritage Area partners. The City of Yuma—a major funding partner in the Heritage Area—had completed the master plan for the *West Wetlands* in 1999. This 110-acre former landfill site owned by the City of Yuma is being reclaimed as a regional riverfront park, with improved recreational facilities and access to the river. Over \$3 million in federal (non-Heritage Area), state and local funds were amassed to undertake construction on Phase I, which is slated for opening in November 2002. The Heritage Area is proposing to enhance this Park with environmental education programming and a Wetlands Learning and Artisan Center.

## Progress and Challenges

Another proposed Heritage Area project—the rehabilitation and re-opening of the historic Ocean to Ocean Highway Bridge—advanced rapidly to completion in February 2002 through an innovative partnership among the Quechan Indian Nation, the City of Yuma, Yuma County, and state and federal funding partners. The challenge, however, for the Heritage Area was to integrate these existing riverfront initiatives into a cohesive Heritage Area plan; to foster a shared vision for Yuma’s riverfront, and to define a distinct role for the new management entity.

### The River

While many parts of Yuma’s history are significant, the Heritage Area Task Force determined, first and foremost, that the Colorado River will be *the* predominant theme. It is the very source of life in the Southwest. It fuels the phenomenon of abundant desert agriculture. And yet the degradation of its eco-systems must be addressed for the good of both the river and the millions of people it sustains. Naturally, then, the first planning initiative focused on restoration of Yuma East Wetlands. In the process, it became quickly apparent that the Heritage Area would serve a key role as consensus builder and catalyst for action.

### East Wetlands District

The Yuma East Wetlands District is a 1400 acre stretch of the Colorado River: a parched patch of river bottom between two levees, choked by non-native vegetation, starved of water and a haven for the homeless. It was, in effect, a “forgotten land”.

Complicating this challenge was that the fate of this land lay with 28 different “stakeholders”: public and private landowners, state and federal regulatory agencies, and farmers. Fortunately, with the leadership of the Quechan Indian Nation (owner of 40-45% of the project area), and involvement of the City and County of Yuma, as well as private landowners and farmers, a consensus plan slowly

emerged by the end of 2001. This river restoration and revegetation plan can serve not only as a national model for wetlands restoration but as a sterling example of partnerships: the very foundation of a Heritage Area.

## Historic Downtown Yuma

The Heritage Area Plan does not neglect the “built environment”, however. Historic Downtown Yuma represents the historical interplay between the river and its peoples. The cultural, architectural, and archeological resources represent the collective efforts of Yumans to forge a life along the American Nile. The Plan promotes historic preservation and interpretation of the downtown and its surrounding older residential neighborhoods. It also advocates economic revitalization based on conservation of these resources.

## Yuma Crossing

It is at the epicenter of the Heritage Area—at the very intersection of the town and the river—that the story of the Yuma Crossing will be told. Not only will there be an effort to conserve and interpret the National Historic Landmark, but Yuma’s downtown riverfront will be the prime focus of projects and programs during the first five years of the Plan. Those projects include a partnership to develop a Arizona Welcome Center; the conversion of the current City Hall into the Heritage Center; the development of Gateway Park, a recreational and historical river park interpreting the Yuma crossings; and the upgrading of the museum at Yuma Territorial Prison State Historical Park. This concentration of effort is intended to restore Yuma’s downtown riverfront to its former prominence.

## Financial Strategy

Of equal importance is the Plan’s financial strategy for implementing these ambitious programs and projects within the Heritage Area. Again, tangible commitments from Heritage Partners are crucial to provide the local match. The City of Yuma has provided the foundation for the local match with a commitment to provide staffing and a home for the Heritage Area Corporation, the historic Yuma City Hall. The State of Arizona has already provided grants of \$1.35 million for Gateway Park and will match the Heritage Area’s commitment to Yuma Territorial Prison State Historic Park. The Heritage Area is a reality also because of the efforts of many civic groups and volunteers, who have already donated thousands of hours to such activities as tree-plantings and clean-ups. Partners, large and small, are what bring the Heritage Area to life.

## A Sense of Place

In keeping with its heritage, the Yuma community in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century has the opportunity to lead the way for the Great Southwest. The East Wetlands can serve as a model for consensus building and Colorado River wetlands restoration. Preserving a “sense of place” and promoting residential and economic development in historic downtown Yuma will serve as a healthy alternative to uncontrolled sprawl that afflicts many urban areas. The Yuma Crossing will again take its rightful place as the heart of Yuma. Just as Yumans in the 20th Century combined hard work, sunshine, and abundant water to make this an agricultural oasis, so in the 21st Century, will Yumans combine their rich heritage and river lands with a commitment to preservation and innovation to define itself anew as the Capital of the American Nile.

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# 1. Introduction

The entire story to be told by the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area derives from the Colorado River, its tributaries, and the land through which it flows. The effort to develop the historical resources and tell the story of the Colorado River, the Yuma Crossing, the land, the people, and the events, has been a community priority for many years. While the historic, environmental, and cultural heritage of the Yuma area and the Lower Colorado River is not widely known, it nevertheless has national significance. The first Europeans to visit the site arrived in 1540, when Hernando de Alarcon led a small band of sailors up the Colorado River in support of Coronado's expedition into the Southwest. Over the next five and one-half centuries a sequence of events occurred at the Yuma Crossing that are of extraordinary significance in the development of the Southwest, California, and the nation.

This significance was recognized in 1966 when the National Park Service designated a portion of the City of Yuma and a part of the nearby Fort Yuma Indian Reservation as *The Yuma Crossing National Historic Landmark*. More recently, a broadly based coalition of citizens, businesses, and public agencies recognized the potential of the area's historic and natural resources to strengthen community identity, enhance the quality of life of its citizens, and better the urban environment. They developed and sustained a multi-year effort that resulted, in 2000, in the establishment of the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area by the United States Congress.

Within these pages will be presented the Plan for the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area.

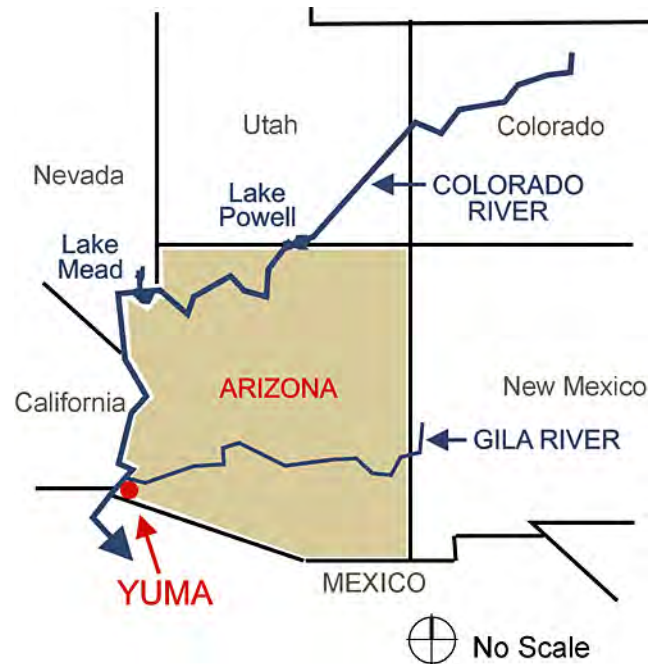


FIGURE 1 *Colorado River Context*

The Plan will outline the significant events that have occurred here, and will detail the historical periods and themes that will give structure to the story of the Yuma Crossing and to the Colorado and Gila Rivers. Herein will be recounted the important community efforts in planning and preparing for the creation of a significant cultural, recreational, and sustainable enterprise. The Heritage Area goals and major themes, key stories, and resources that together provide the substance and direction for interpretative efforts will be outlined. The Partnerships needed for the development, renovation, and conservation of critical venues will be described. These venues will provide the locations and key settings in which the Heritage themes and stories will be interpreted. Finally, the management and financial structure necessary for the long-term viability of the Heritage Area will be discussed, along with intriguing future possibilities.

## *Purpose & Organization*

The Management Plan for the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area summarizes and integrates findings from previous technical studies and presents design and implementation recommendations.

The Plan is intended to provide both a vision for the future and a blueprint for public and private agencies.

Findings and recommendations are organized into the following sections:

### **Introduction**

Gives an overall orientation to the Heritage Area, highlights steps in the planning process, and defines the purpose and organization of this document.

### **Thematic Framework**

Presents the development history of the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area through themes, historic periods, and settings.

### **Interpretive Framework**

Explains how the “Story” will be told and where to tell it.

### **Development Program**

Highlights the Plan, the Concept from which it derived, and defines the development districts, key venues, and options for funding.

### **Implementation Agenda**

Describes the scope of the project; presents a management proposal for implementation and administration of heritage programs, and discusses a phasing strategy for heritage projects.

### **Supporting Materials**

#### **Appendices**

- A. Legislation
- B. Partners
- C. A Thematic History of Yuma Crossing
- D. Summary of Review Process
- E. Heritage Resources
- F. Environmental Assessment

# Heritage Area Boundaries

## Heritage Area

The Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area achieved designation in October, 2000. The Heritage Area includes approximately 22 square miles, extending from the Colorado River on the north and west to Avenue 7E alignment on the east and the 12th street alignment on the south.

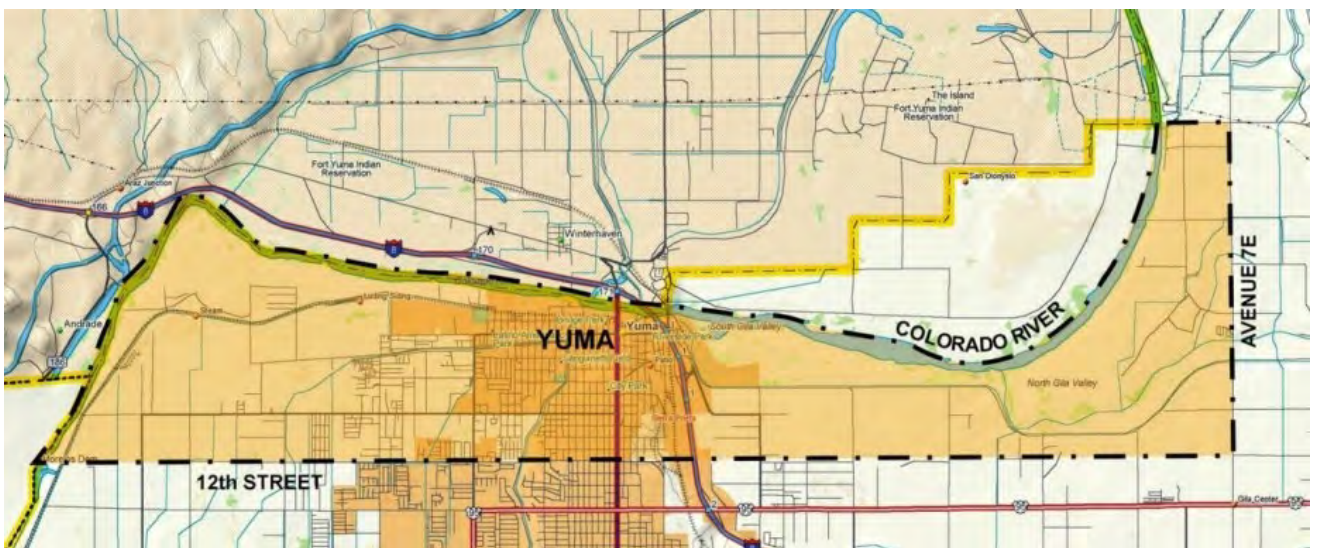


FIGURE 2

Heritage Boundary

## Landmark Boundaries

Among the many historic resources contained within the Yuma Crossing National Heritage area is the Yuma Crossing National Historic Landmark, created by the National Park Service in 1966.



FIGURE 3

Landmark Boundary

## *Vision*

The Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area will conserve, interpret and enhance the natural, cultural and historic resources of the area through education, advocacy, collaboration, and mediation with and among its many public and private sector partners.

This vision for the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area is based on decades of community planning to reconnect to the river and maintain its heritage. This Plan, therefore, is not the product of a consultant but the evolution of a community's dream.

Understanding that evolution is essential to seeing that broader vision of the community. It reflects a 100 year commitment—a legacy of preservation, and a steady determination to succeed despite many obstacles and setbacks.

## *Goals*

The National Park Service has defined a National Heritage Area as a place “where natural, cultural, historic and recreational resources combine to form a nationally distinctive landscape arising from patterns of human activity”.

The future development, operational, and interpretative efforts within the Heritage Area will be structured around the following major goals:

- 1. Identify and conserve Yuma’s cultural, historical, and geologic resources, recognizing that resource conservation is part of community revitalization.***
- 2. Assist partners to develop a diversity of interpretative opportunities, venues, and heritage sites while distinguishing between different audiences and establishing different levels of the heritage experience.***
- 3. Interpret Yuma’s heritage resources to emphasize their continuing role in a living, evolving community.***
- 4. Support and build upon existing interpretative efforts, creating dynamic partnerships with federal, state, and local entities.***
- 5. Attract visitors, investment and economic opportunity to Yuma to improve the quality of life for its residents.***
- 6. Create a gateway to Yuma to welcome and orient visitors, and to provide an overview of the area’s significance.***

## *Heritage Audience*

The Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area seeks to establish and maintain interpretive exhibits in the Heritage Area, develop recreational resources, increase public awareness of the natural, historical, and architectural resources and sites at the Yuma Crossing. At the same time, the Heritage Area's mission is to encourage, by appropriate means, economic viability in the Heritage Area consistent with the goals of the management plan.

More specifically, the activities and projects undertaken through the Heritage Area will be targeted toward various segments of the general public. For example, Yuma is a fast growing area with many newcomers each year: residents that may not be aware of the unique and significant history of their new community. While tourism is an integral part of the Plan, the audience, first and foremost, includes the 110,000 people who live here year-round. The programs for environmental education and historic interpretation will be targeted to the school age population of kindergarten through community college. Working with the educational consortium, the Heritage Area seeks to inform and motivate local residents on the national significance of the Yuma community.

Winter visitors make up a very substantial percentage of the area population (estimated as high as 50%) during the Winter months. These individuals have traditionally exhibited a great degree of interest in local historical and cultural resources, and will be an important part of the public served by the Heritage Area programming.

The Yuma Crossing has long been a transpor-

tation hub and remains so today. Significant numbers of travelers pass through the Crossing each year, and a key goal of the Heritage Area projects and activities will be to attract and interest these visitors in remaining in the community long enough to enjoy the historic and cultural resources. Also, a growing number of Americans are engaging in "Heritage Tourism" as the awareness of our nation's history be-



*Gathering citizen input for the proposed Orange Avenue improvements.*

comes more important to people in these times. The Yuma Crossing Heritage Area will provide a unique "Heritage" experience to this growing segment of the traveling public.

Similarly, more and more travelers are interested in "eco-tourism," enjoying the natural environmental features of a particular location. The Yuma Crossing Heritage Area will feature unique and important ecological features, including the rehabilitation of wetlands areas along the Lower Colorado that are already attracting national interest.

Perhaps of even more far-reaching importance, the “baby boom” generation, at the height of its economic power and nearing retirement, is interested in vacations that feature an “authentic” heritage experience. The resulting interest in Yuma could lead to corporate relocation, second-home development, or new-style in-town retirement living. All of these possibilities create significant new economic opportunities for the Yuma community.

Finally, the environmental aspects of the Heritage Area program will provide many opportunities for serious research, and it is anticipated that venues will be provided that would attract scientists worldwide with an interest in the unique ecology of the Lower Colorado basin. Success in the East Wetlands as a national model for river restoration could create momentum for a national research center for wetlands development. Again, this type of national visibility is invaluable in marketing the Yuma community.



*Looking East through I-8 at the Ocean-to-Ocean Bridge*

## *Planning Process*

On June 17, 1902 the Yuma Town Council approved a resolution calling for the Federal government to “set aside” the abandoned military reservation on the south bank of the Colorado River for use as a public park, and noted that:

“The waterfront on the Colorado River is very valuable and is most desirable to the town and should always remain open for use of the public . . .”

From then until now, Yuma has gone through a series of attempts—some successful, some less so—to connect the river to the city and to preserve the rich heritage of the region. Today, that land first discussed in 1902 is now part of the Yuma Crossing State Historic Park.

The Yuma Territorial Prison, another critical heritage resource, is now a state park due to strong community action.

One of the conceptual foundations for today’s Heritage Area is the 1984 *Master Plan for the Yuma Crossing National Historic Landmark*. The proposed Yuma Crossing Historical Park – referred to by some as a potential “Williamsburg of the West” – was conceived to showcase Yuma as a venue for “living history.”

In 1989, the City of Yuma initiated a broad-based community planning process which ultimately involved more than 350 citizens and business leaders. This “Yuma Strategic Planning Project” was a reaction to the strong growth of Yuma, and a desire on the part of

community leaders to have organized, informed discussion and consensus building on the critical issues arising from the growth.

Seven “task forces” were created, including Growth and Urban Development, Physical De-



*Citizen Involvement*

velopment and Infrastructure, and Culture and Recreation. Time and again, after extensive discussion and consensus building, the task force recommendations centered on several major themes:

- Promote economic development for increased year-round employment
- Protect wildlife and habitat
- Develop water recreation areas to stimulate and diversify a year-round economy
- Complete a system of parks and recreation areas throughout the community
- Develop the Yuma Crossing Park as a year-round cultural tourist attraction.

## Recommendations

A follow-up citizen planning group in 1992 provided very specific recommendations for riverfront development. These recommendations closely parallel the Implementation Plan for the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area.

Public support remains strong and longstanding. In 1997 and again in 2001, a public opinion survey documented that approximately 80% of Yuma residents endorsed community efforts for riverfront and downtown redevelopment.

### Citizen Planning Recommendations

### Planned Heritage Area Venues

Develop a recreation lake near the Gila-Colorado confluence for low impact uses and for protection and enhancement of the natural environment.	<b><i>East Wetlands</i></b>
Develop additional marshes as part of the lake creation.	<b><i>East Wetlands</i></b>
Develop new riparian lands and maintain existing ones.	<b><i>East Wetlands</i></b>
Designate wildlife protective areas near Prison Hill.	<b><i>East Wetlands</i></b>
Provide only essential support services inside the levee, such as parking, restrooms, telephone, and trash receptacles.	<b><i>East Wetlands</i></b>
Develop additional services outside environmentally sensitive areas to support public use by large numbers of people. Such services could include hotels, retail stores, compatible commercial recreation facilities, and other public uses such as museums, arboretum, or botanical gardens.	<b><i>Downtown Riverfront District</i></b>
Support efforts to obtain, refurbish, open for use, and interpret the Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Bridge.	<b><i>Downtown Riverfront District</i></b>
Complete implementation of the Yuma Crossing Master Plan and promote compatible public, commercial, and residential uses in the surrounding areas.	<b><i>Downtown Riverfront District</i></b>
Develop a riverwalk, linking historic areas with other activities.	<b><i>Downtown Riverfront District</i></b>
Promote historic preservation, rehabilitation, adaptive use and compatible new infill development including: hotels; restaurants; shopping; government uses; museums; public parking.	<b><i>Century Heights, Main Street, SP Rail yard Re-use, Brinley Avenue, Downtown Riverfront District</i></b>
Resurrect planning and development of the recreation park on the site of the former city landfill, with river access and boat launch, and river walk connection to the historic areas of the Yuma Crossing.	<b><i>West Wetlands</i></b>

*Table 1 - Citizen Recommendations and Heritage Venues*

## 2. Thematic Framework

The Interpretive Plan for the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area is a framework for the interpretation of the area's heritage. It will identify opportunities but proposes no specific interpretive activities. The interpretation of specific places, people and events will coincide with the creation of various venues over the course of the Heritage Area's development. The intent of the Interpretive Plan is to provide a context from which individual venues will meet one or more of the overall Heritage Area goals.

The Interpretive Plan will be organized around the major historic periods, the major and related themes, and significant settings contributing to the national significance of the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area.

### *Historic Periods*

The history of the Yuma Crossing can be organized into five thematic periods, each representing a significant era in the evolution and growth of the Crossing and the community. Five key themes emerge from that history. The Interpretive Plan portrays the relationship among the five periods and themes, within certain key settings.

### Prehistoric And Early History: In The Beginning, A River

The entire story to be told by the Heritage Area flows from the Colorado River, its tributaries, and the land through which it flows. This period is the story of the natural setting - the granite outcroppings, the land and the rivers – and the adaptation of the native peoples. Originally, the Colorado River was a highly variable flowing river, serving both as a barrier and a conduit for trade and travel. A safe,



*Early Spanish Explorers*

year-round crossing point, at what became Yuma, allowed prehistoric peoples to cross the Colorado. For centuries various Native American peoples, including the modern-day Quechan and Cocopah tribes, settled and farmed the fertile lands near the confluence of the Gila and Colorado Rivers. Prehistoric cultural resources, petroglyphs and intaglios, lie to the east of Yuma. Visitors can view these rare and protected archeological sites.



*Steamboats were common at the Crossing*

## 1848 To 1876: The Military, Settlement And Riverboats

Opening with the Mexican-American War, this era witnessed the establishment of a permanent settlement at the Crossing, and the discovery of gold in California. The 1850s were pivotal in the settlement around the Yuma Crossing. As thousands of gold-

seekers and emigrants began to cross the Colorado at Yuma, the role of the U. S. Military and private entrepreneurs became increasingly important. Fort Yuma and the Quartermaster's Depot are key extant resources.

## Prior To 1849: Exploration

The Period of Exploration encompasses the early arrival and settlement of the Spanish, to the rugged mountain men and trappers, to the intrepid pioneers on the Kearny Trail and Cooke Wagon Road.

From the time Captain Hernando Alarcón arrived and over a period spanning five hundred years, the Crossing witnessed the travels and travails of tens of thousands of people. Although the story of the period of exploration is important, resources are scarce. Interpretation will have to rely mainly on generalized depictions and recreations.



*Railroad Engine Crew*

## 1877 To 1909: The Railroad And Commercial Enterprise

The coming of the railroad signaled a new era, when the Southern Pacific crossed the Colorado River in 1877 with its first bridge.

The Southern Pacific Railroad provided the second transcontinental route, linking east and west along the 32nd parallel route. Adjacent to the Crossing, a depot, hotel, roundhouse, and other railroad support facilities were developed, generating business activity and jobs.

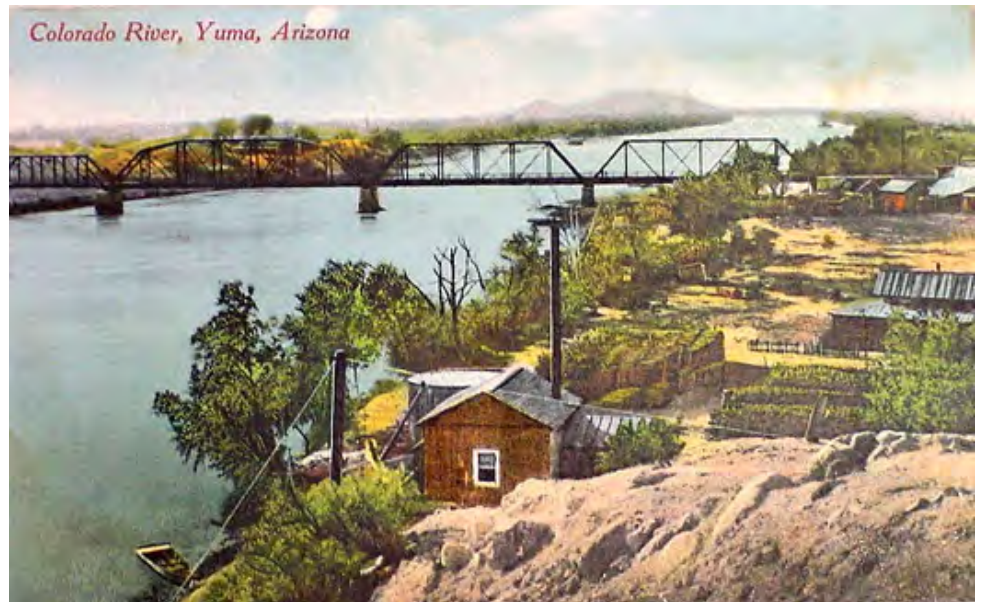
While 20th Century developments have substantially removed these particular resources, the Yuma Territorial Prison and the Brinley District are two of the resources available from this era for conservation and interpretation.

## 1910 To Present: Return To The River

The story of Colorado River water and its impact on the people and land dominated developments in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The Reclamation Act of 1902 enabled the control and management of Colorado River water and brought abundant desert agriculture. The Laguna Dam (1909), the Yuma Siphon (1912), and the extensive network of canals represent key resources for interpretation.

This diversion of the waters of the Colorado and its tributaries for both agricultural and urban purposes has fueled the growth of the American Southwest—a story of national significance. However, it also had an impact on the environment of the river.

The *Return to the River* period is further defined today by Yuma's current efforts to restore the environmental balance to the river.



*Headworks of the Laguna Dam*

## Key Themes

From Yuma's unique setting, its relationship with the Colorado River, and its rich history emerge a major theme and four related themes, which help to interpret the story of the Yuma Crossing and identify the resources that embody it.

### Colorado River

The story of water and its impact on the people and land, not just of Yuma, but also of the larger region and the nation, is the key story in the heritage of the Yuma Crossing.

The Colorado River had a direct impact on the entire Southwest development—and thus the entire nation's development—in the 20th Century. It has made agriculture “king,” even in a desert environment.

The 21st Century presents the challenge of bringing environmental renewal to a river upon which most people and other living things depend for life itself.



*Along the Colorado at Yuma*

### Transportation

This emphasizes the role of linkages — the way the trails, the roads, and the rails connected the nation across the Colorado River at Yuma and how these connections influenced growth in Yuma and beyond.

Major historic connections include the Gila River Valley leading to Yuma Crossing, major historic trail linkages, the first southern trans-continental railroad, and the Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Bridge, to name a few.



*4th Cavalry at Quartermasters Depot*

### Supply and Defense

This emphasizes the role of the military.

Yuma's natural setting provided its strategic importance to supplying missions or military outposts and defending exploration and expansion. That role in the 20th Century reached global proportions.

### Life in Yuma

This chronicles the political, social, and economic evolution of the Yuma community.



*Hotel San Carlos—Art Deco Architecture*

*Life in Yuma* is best portrayed in its architecture. Buildings of all types, from City Hall to the Yuma Territorial Prison, reflect the history of Yuma. The few surviving adobe buildings, such as the Molina Block, are particularly significant and will require particular care and attention. More recently, there are architectural examples from the Art Deco style, Queen Anne, California Bungalow, and other

regional vernacular styles.

The Century Heights Conservancy District, Yuma Main Street and the Brinley Avenue District all provide rich context within which to tell this story.

## Cultural Crossroads

*Cultural Crossroads* is the story of Yuma's peoples and their continuing interaction. It emphasizes the three major cultures—Native American, Hispanic, and Anglo-- that converged at the Crossing. Native Americans have long occupied the region. In the late 17th and early 18th centuries, Spanish priests established missions and attempted to convert the

Native Americans to Catholicism. The Gold Rush of 1849 brought an unending flow of Americans from the East. The result has been a volatile yet rich blend of spiritual traditions.

The music, food, and cultural traditions can best be sustained by their active encouragement within Heritage Area programming.



*Quechan—Traditional Dress, Late 1800's*



*Quechan—Grand Re-opening of the Ocean-to-Ocean Bridge 2002*



*Colorado River at Yuma—1900*

## Key Settings

A setting is an area of strong and lasting historical significance, an important natural resource, an area or building of unique physical attributes, or a collection of all or some of the above.

Many resources exist within the boundaries of the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area including a National Historic Landmark, two state parks preserving historically important venues, three historic districts of national and state significance, dozens of National Register structures, and the Colorado and Gila Rivers themselves.

## The Colorado River

The Colorado is the major river of the

Southwest and has brought water and life to the desert for millennia. It has served as a conduit for exploration and trade, and has created some of the best farmland in the United States. The Colorado flows for a distance of approximately 15 linear miles through the Heritage Area and adjoining the City of Yuma and the Ft. Yuma Indian Reservation.

The Colorado River near Yuma meanders through the Basin and Range Region, which is characterized by broad valleys and plains surrounded by rugged mountain ranges that extend to the northwest and to the northeast. The river falls an average of one foot per mile through this section. This portion of the Lower Colorado River flows through what used to be silt beds, marshes and riparian forests, historically reaching the mouth of the river and emptying into the delta on the Gulf of



FIGURE 4

Water Resource Distribution Context



*The Whipple Party at Yuma Crossing*

California.

The Colorado Delta was at one time described as a species rich expanse, teeming with life. Today, the river encounters a large system of dams that have irreversibly altered its ecosystem. In Arizona there is Glen Canyon Dam, the Hoover (Boulder) Dam, Davis Dam, Parker Dam, Imperial Dam, Laguna Dam and Morales Dam as well as a number of water diversions such as the Central Arizona Project and the All American Canal. The river flow stops at the Mexican border below Yuma except during very high flows, as in 1983 and 1986, when river waters temporarily reached the Gulf of California.

Although dams have unmistakably altered the river system, knowledge of the natural events historically shaping the floodplain is important. Historically, the unregulated river was continuously moving throughout its bed, except where restricted by bedrock. The river meandered back and forth, creating broad alluvial valleys. The current eroded the outer

banks of each meander while depositing new, enriched soils on the inside bank. Understanding this natural cycle gives us the opportunity to revive the environment, enhance flood protection, offer public access, and provide better water resource management.

## The Riverfront

The approximately 11 miles of riverfront within the Heritage Area is largely undeveloped. This area represents an important resource for environmentally sensitive development of all sorts, including wetlands, urban amenities, and educational and interpretative venues. Significant acreage along the riverfront is owned by the City of Yuma, a major Heritage Area partner, and will be developed by the City for recreational purposes over the next several years. This construction provides the Heritage Area with an important partnering opportunity. That partnership will ensure that these sites can also provide interpretative and educational experiences for visitors interested in the story of the Yuma Crossing and the Colorado River.



*Gila River at the Colorado*

## The Gila River

The Gila is the major river of Southern Arizona, draining over 57,000 square miles. The river provided not only a reliable source of water in an arid region, but also a rich habitat for a wide variety of wildlife. The Gila trail was an important route across early Arizona and afforded travelers an all-year trail with ample water and forage. Today, modern railroads and highways follow the same route.

## The Confluence

Historically, the Gila joined the Colorado directly upstream of the high ground at the Yuma Crossing. With modern day dam and levee construction the confluence has moved upstream approximately three miles, creating a large area of bottomland holding great potential for wetlands development. This area, between the levees and largely out of public view, will be the site of a large wetlands development project designed to combine environmental conservation efforts with the creation of recreational and educational opportunities.

## Yuma City Hall

Yuma City Hall is noteworthy as a local landmark and for its exemplary architectural

style. Since its completion in 1921, the building has functioned as the center of local government. To enhance and emphasize this function, the City Council chose to locate the building on a rise at the northern end of the town. Lyman and Place, a distinguished southwestern architectural firm, was hired to design the building. They executed the project in the popular Spanish Colonial Revival style. The exterior retains its historic appearance.

## The Yuma Valley Railroad

The Yuma Valley Railroad was constructed early in the 20th Century by the United States Bureau of Reclamation. The line runs west from downtown Yuma along the Colorado River, turns south with the River, and continues on to the community of Gadsden. Originally, the line was constructed to expedite the construction of the levee system protecting the Yuma Valley farmlands from flooding.

Today, while retained for contingency use by the Bureau of Reclamation, it is used primarily for tourist excursions.



*Old City Hall*

## *The Yuma Crossing National Historic Landmark and Associ- ated Sites*

This area, including the Quartermaster Depot, the Territorial Prison, and Fort Yuma across the Colorado River to the north, was officially designated in 1966 as a National Historic Landmark. Europeans first visited the site in 1540 when Hernando de Alarcon arrived by way of the Colorado River. During the next four centuries, a sequence of events occurred at the locale that are of extraordinary significance in the development of the Southwest. Paths of the Spanish soldiers and missionaries, trails of the American mountain men, wagon roads of the U.S. Army, and the "Forty-Niners," and modern railroads and highways have all converged on the Colorado River at this location.

The Landmark is today endangered and has been placed on the "Threatened" list developed by the United States Department of the Interior. Years of neglect and intrusions have resulted in increasing loss of context. The erosion and recent dismantling of the Southern Pacific Settling Tanks points out the need for a long-range strategy to conserve and interpret the NHL. There are positive indicators, however. Significant environmental remediation within the Landmark has been undertaken by both the private sector and City of Yuma. Gateway Park represents a joint effort by the City of Yuma, State of Arizona, and the Heritage Area to develop a recreational and historical park at the Crossing. TEA-21 funds are being utilized to link the Quartermaster's Depot with the remainder of the Landmark. The City of Yuma is investing funds to remove intrusive utility works within the Landmark and has adopted a

redevelopment plan for a 22 acre area along 1st Street, involving land both inside and outside of the Landmark.

The Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area recognizes the importance of preserving the national Historic Landmark. It will support the funding of interpretive and preservation efforts as a part of this Plan. It will also advocate that any new commercial development respect the historical importance of the site.

Yuma is fortunate in that it is the site of one of the few National Historic Landmarks in the Southwest. This Federal designation recognizes places "that possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating and interpreting the heritage of the United States". The desert crossing at Yuma is a tangible reminder of significant historical events from the date of the first contact between Quechan and Euro-Americans in the sixteenth century to the era of trails, rails, and highways of more modern times.



*State Historic Park Quartermasters Depot*

### **Yuma Crossing State Historic Park/Quartermasters Depot**

The Yuma Crossing State Historic Park became a unit of the Arizona State Parks



*Yuma Territorial Prison*

Department in 1997. At the site are a number of historic structures, some dating from the period of operation of the Yuma Quartermasters' Depot, opening in 1865. It forms a critical piece of the National Landmark and the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area.

## Yuma Territorial Prison State Historical Park

The Territory of Arizona established the Territorial Prison on the high ground at the Yuma Crossing in 1877. The Prison was in use until new facilities were constructed elsewhere in 1909. After housing the local high school for four years, the property fell into disuse and disrepair. Due to efforts by the City of Yuma, the process of decay was arrested and in 1940 a museum structure was constructed at the site. The City operated the Prison as a museum until 1960, when the site became the third facility to be added to the Arizona State Parks System.

## Ocean-To-Ocean Bridge

This historic bridge, constructed in 1915, was the only highway bridge across the Colorado River for 1,200 miles. It was restored and re-opened in February 2002.



*Building the Ocean-to-Ocean Bridge—1915*



*Ocean-to-Ocean Bridge  
grand re-opening in 2002*

## *Brinley Avenue Historic District*

The Brinley Avenue Historic District lies on the western limit of Yuma's 19th century settlement pattern. Brinley Avenue, since renamed as an extension of Madison Avenue, marked the nominal edge of the Yuma Mesa. The district includes the west side of Madison Avenue from 1st Street to 3rd Street and both sides of Second Street from Main Street to Madison Avenue. Developed initially as a residential area which took advantage of the rising elevation on the mesa and being on the edge of town, the streets took on a different character over time. This district is important for a number of reasons. As a residential area, it was the site of homes for some of the prominent people in Yuma's history. The streets became an important commercial area as 2nd Street grew to fulfill the role of a major arterial connecting downtown with agricultural interests in the valley. Constructed in this district were the Sanguinetti Mercantile, the Gandolfo Annex and the Molina Block. With the higher elevation on the edge of the mesa, this area had relief from periodic flooding. As a result, this district contains the highest concentration of adobe buildings in the community.



*Molina Block*



*Century House*

## **Century House Museum**

Once the home of pioneer merchant E.F. Sanguinetti, the museum has exhibits that give an in-depth overview of the Yuma area from pre-history, to the Spanish time period, to the early 1900's. It is located in the colorful gardens where aviaries with exotic and talking birds are maintained as they were at the turn of the century. The Century House is the Yuma home of the Arizona Historical Society.

## **The Molina Block**

The Molina Block, dating from the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, is one of the oldest commercial structures in Yuma. It functioned as an early "shopping center," housing a variety of commercial enterprises within its many rooms. Major flooding of the Colorado and Gila Rivers in 1916 destroyed almost all of the adobe

structures along Madison and First Avenues but spared the Molina Block. In the 1930's, the building was home to Yuma's doctors and dentists. As the old downtown declined during the 1960's the adobe

complex served as a homeless shelter. In 1979 the structure was included in the Brinley Avenue Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places.

In recent years – through a public/private partnership involving the City of Yuma – the Theatre has been completely renovated and is again a useful addition to Yuma's

downtown.



*Gandolfo Theater—Brinley District*

## *Main Street Historic District*

The Main Street Historic District represents the historic center of commerce from Yuma's early days of the 19th century. Building construction

ranges from 1912 to

## **The Gandolfo Theatre**

The Gandolfo Theater is one of the most important landmarks in Yuma. Built by local entrepreneur John Gandolfo, the building was a center of community activity from 1917-1950.

Designed with a seating capacity of 635, the auditorium served as a movie house and theater. Theater offerings were drawn from a touring circuit, which include road shows from New York and Los Angeles. Before a 1927 fire destroyed the third floor, the building also housed dances and meetings of social groups such as the Masons and Elks.

modern times. Early construction was adobe and wood but following the flood of 1916, which destroyed most of the buildings, brick and concrete were used to rebuild downtown.



**LOOKING SOUTH ON MAIN STREET  
YUMA, ARIZONA**

Significant alterations and “slipcovers” have degraded its integrity. However, major restorations and new sensitive in-fill construction have revitalized the area. In addition, five contributing structures within the district are on the National Register.



411. THE DEL MING HOTEL, YUMA, ARIZONA.

112852

## Hotel Del Sol (Del Ming)

The Hotel Del Ming was built in 1926 to respond to the completion of the nearby Southern Pacific Railroad Depot. The Hotel was named after Yuma Mayor F.S. Ming, who headed the investment group that built the facility. Taylor and Taylor of Los Angeles were the architects and the building is an excellent example of Spanish Colonial Revival architecture.

## *The Historic Southern Pacific Railroad Yard*

When the Southern Pacific Railroad (SP) entered Yuma in 1877, one of the first undertakings was the establishment of a freight yard and engine service facilities. The land used for these purposes had been donated to the railroad by the City of Yuma and was located well south of the built-up area of that

time. The site eventually contained a roundhouse and turntable, a machine shop, freight house, fuel storage facilities, and other supporting structures. Yuma was a division point on the Southern Pacific rail line, which meant that crews and engines were changed here and locomotives received routine maintenance.

After the main line relocation in the mid-1920's the yard facilities were augmented with a larger facility built further to the east, but the engine terminal facilities continued in heavy use until the end of the steam era. Today, little remains of the facilities except vacant land.

The only remaining structure is the 1891 Freight Depot – a National Register structure – that until the 1950's handled less-than-carload

freight shipments for the Yuma area.

The Union Pacific Railroad, the successor to the SP, today owns the former yard, historic freight depot and maintenance facilities.

## Southwestern Ice and Cold Storage Company

This large structure dates from the mid-1920's and was constructed to supply ice and cold storage capacity for the local agricultural industry. The railroad shipped most of the agricultural products of the Yuma area and the cars carrying perishables had to be iced prior to and during their journey to market. At one time, the icing platform at this location was the longest in the United States.

The structure has been vacant for many years and today is owned by the City of Yuma.

## *Century Heights Conservancy District*

The Century Heights Conservancy District comprises over 120 buildings, which represent a concentration of a range of distinct early Yuma residential building forms. These include Queen Anne, Western Colonial Revival, Bungalow and several Period Revival styles. This area is significant because it contains the largest, intact grouping of early residential architecture remaining in Yuma. Fifteen buildings within the district are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The period of major construction significance for the district started in 1892 and ended in 1936. The buildings retain a moderate to high degree of integrity, are associated with pioneer families who settled in Yuma, and significantly represent working and middle class residential development.

## *Archeological Resources*

Yuma is rich in archaeological resources. The common denominator with all of the sites is the relationship and proximity to the Colorado and Gila Rivers. The junction of the Colorado and Gila had geographical qualities that made it a destination for travelers in prehistoric and historic times. The granite buttes on each side of the narrows below the junction were important because they created a stable shoreline in flood, the narrowest span of what in other places was a meandering, wide river, and a protective overlook to enhance security.

The epicenter of the Heritage Area, at the intersection of the town and the river, is, of course, the Yuma Crossing. Understandably, the focus of efforts have centered on this important site.

Three primary cultural-geographical components of the landmark were examined through archaeological and historical research procedures (from January 1983 to June 2002), including the 1864-1883 Yuma Quartermaster Depot, the 1876-1909 Arizona Territorial Prison, and an area between the prison and quartermaster Depot which was the site of an early ferry crossing, the Colorado Steam Navigation Company steamboat ways, repair shops and storage sheds, the 1877 Southern Pacific Railroad bridge and station, and the late 1880's City of Yuma water and power generating facility. The objectives of these studies were to identify, inventory, and evaluate archaeological resources within the Arizona portion of the Landmark, and to provide recommendations for the preservation and treatment of these resources. These objectives have been met through the application of archaeological survey and test excavation procedures, and a review of documentary

sources pertaining to the history of the study area.

A total of 27 excavation units within the Landmark have been completed. These excavations resulted in the definition of major archaeological features including: a doorway and foundation for the east wall of the Quartermaster Depot storehouse; a basement located along the east wall of the storehouse; foundations for the east and west walls of the 1881 Southern Pacific Railroad Station, and an adobe wall / charred wood floor feature which would appear to be the remains of a gate house located on the east side of the Quartermaster Depot. All of these archaeological remains are in excellent condition and are amenable to further archaeological examination and interpretive development.

Archaeological investigations in the field also resulted in the identification and recording of several structural and building features located on the ground surface, including large concrete structures associated with the 1895 railroad bridge and the Quartermaster Depot pump-house location.

Outside of the Landmark perhaps the most significant resource is the Juan Bautista De Anza National Historic Trail. Juan Bautista De Anza was the first European to establish an overland route from Mexico, through the Sonoran Desert, to the Pacific coast of California. On January 9, 1743, Captain De Anza reached the Yuma Indian villages at the junction of the Colorado and Gila Rivers. Here De Anza courted the favor of the Yuma chief, Salvador Palma, fording the Colorado and forming a bond with the tribe that would ensure future safe passage at this crucial point in the journey. The Gila River section of the trail would be the basis for the Mormon Battalion route, the Butterfield Overland Mail route, and

the "southern route" many Americans followed to settle California. In 1990, the U.S. Congress created the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail, comprising the overland route of the colonizing expedition from Tubac to San Francisco. The 1996 Management Plan by the National Park Service is an important reference and guide in this regard.

Archaeological investigations have also been conducted outside of the landmark at San Ysidro Ranch and at the original courthouse site at Madison Avenue and 3rd Street.

San Ysidro Ranch, 10 miles east of Yuma on the Gila River, was established as an agricultural working ranch in 1871 and became extraordinarily productive through 1878. Founded by brothers Jose Maria and Jesus Redondo, the ranch was a prototype for agricultural experimentation and high yield in southwestern Arizona. Irrigated by the Redondo Ditch off the Gila River, the ranch supplied Yuma, nearby Fort Yuma, and Los Angeles with a wide variety of staple and experimental crops. In 1975, the ranch was listed on the National Register of Historic Places, in recognition of its architectural qualities and historical significance.

The archaeological surveys in the 1980's recommended stabilization, preservation, and interpretation of the ruins. Further the studies stressed the intrinsic value of the ruins as the remains of one of the most exciting agricultural projects in Arizona.

The northeast corner of Madison and Third Street is the site of the first Courthouse built for Yuma County. Erected in 1873, the single story adobe structure contained a courtroom and offices in the front portion, and a jail with stockade and a gallows site in the rear. The site is currently encapsulated, subsequent to test excavations.

## SUMMARY OF KEY STORIES AND RESOURCES

<b>Major Theme</b> <b>Venue:</b>  <b>Period:</b>	<b>The River and the Land</b> <b>Yuma East Wetlands</b> <b>Gateway Park</b> <b>West Wetlands</b>	<b>Transportation</b>  <i>Hotel del Sol</i> <i>Multi-Model Center</i>	<b>Supply and Defense</b>  <i>Yuma Crossing</i> <i>State Historic Park</i>	<b>Life in Yuma</b>  <i>Molina Block</i> <i>Yuma Territorial Prison</i>	<b>Cultural Cross-roads</b>  <i>Heritage Center</i> <i>Yuma East Wetlands Cultural Center</i>
<b>Prehistoric and Early History</b>  <i>In the Beginning: A River</i>	<b>The Crossing</b> <b>Colorado River</b> <b>Gila River</b> <b>Sears Point Archeological District</b> <b>Quechan Indian Tribe</b>	Foot trails and desert pavement Father Kino Trail Gila River Trail	1540 arrival of Capt. Hernando de Alarcón	Flood plain farming	Native Americans Quechans Cocopahs Mohaves New Spain and Alta California
<b>Prior to 1849</b>  <i>Exploration</i>	<b>Trappers and Mountain Men</b> <b>Control over The Crossing</b>	Pioneers traveling on the Kearny Trail and the Cooke Wagon Road Indians provide ferry services	Kit Carson 1846 "Army of the West" led by Col. Kearny		1779 Franciscan Mission 1690s Father Kino 1770s Father Garces & Juan Bautista de Anza
<b>1849 - 1876</b>  <i>Settlement and the Military</i>	<b>Early ferries</b> <b>1850 Jaeger's Ferry and Steamship Landing</b>	1850s Steamboats arrive "Sea captains in the desert" 1858 first mail coach, Butterfield Overland Mail Co., crosses Colorado at Yuma	1849 Ft. Yuma 1863 Quartermaster Depot	Colorado City 1860 Arizona City 1871 Village of Yuma 1875 Yuma Territorial Prison Adobe Buildings	1849 California Gold Rush 1852 Gadsden Treaty U. S. Port of Entry
<b>1877 - 1909</b>  <i>The Railroad and Commercial Enterprise</i>	<b>Control of Water</b> <b>Irrigated farming</b> <b>1909 Yuma Project</b>	1877- First railroad bridge across the Colorado and the arrival of Southern Pacific Railroad		J. F. Molina E. F. Sanguinetti Charles H. Brinley Molina Block	Immigration
<b>1910 - Present</b>  <i>Return to the River</i>	<b>1912 Yuma Siphon</b> <b>1916 Flood</b> <b>Boom of Agriculture</b> <b>Control of the River</b> <b>Yuma East Wetlands Park</b> <b>Yuma West Wetlands Park</b>	1915 Ocean to Ocean Bridge 1926 New rail alignment along Gila Street 1927 Hotel del Sol 1949 - "City of Yuma" Endurance Flight	Yuma Marine Air Corps Station Yuma Proving Grounds Patton and WW II Armed Services Memorial Park Military Heritage Center	Historic Districts: Main Street Century Heights Brinley Multiple Resources	1912 Statehood 1921 Yuma City Hall 2000 Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area authorization

## 3. Interpretive Framework



*Old City Hall —Proposed Heritage Center*

### *Introducing the Whole Story*

#### Heritage Center

Central to the primary and supplemental venues is the Heritage Center, which holds all of the venues together as the hub in a wheel. The Heritage Center will be located in the former Yuma City Hall, a Spanish Colonial Revival landmark sitting on a rise overlooking the city, the Yuma Main Canal and the River. Convenient to visitors and local residents, the Heritage Center will introduce the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area and provide an overview of local and regional history. Kiosks and other interpretive devices will introduce the major theme of *The River and the Land*, and the resulting themes of *Transportation, Supply and Defense, Life in*

*Yuma, and Cultural Crossroads*. Visitors interested in a particular theme will be directed to the outlying venues, allowing them to focus on their particular interest and expanding their knowledge, interaction and experience of Yuma's past and present.

The Heritage Center could provide the visitor with their initial introduction to the story of the Colorado River and the Yuma Crossing, as well as give the visitor a taste of the remaining historic, cultural and environmental themes that have been born out of the River and the Crossing.

## *Telling the Story of the River and the Land*

The story of The River and the Land is vast; it spans all historic periods, influences all themes and requires multiple interpretive venues.

### **Gateway Park**

The core infrastructure for *Gateway Park* (roads, picnic areas, restrooms, etc) will be built by the City of Yuma. However, the challenge will be to develop an interpretive overlay for the viewing and understanding of the Colorado River and the Yuma Crossing. A central storyline for Gateway Park is how, over the period of centuries, the land was transformed and the river was crossed.

The interpretive possibilities for Gateway Park are limitless. Interpretation of the many crossings can be developed either in context or by interpretation.

Jaeger's Ferry can be interpreted at its approximate location. The view of Fort Yuma is instructive, although obscured by the Interstate 8 bridge. The view of the restored Ocean-to-Ocean Bridge is excellent in the Park's eastern

section, and can be interpreted from the park.

The story of Arizona's first railroad crossing is a fascinating one, whose interpretation will require creativity and ingenuity. The pivot upon the Southern Pacific railroad swing span bridge still exists, and can serve as an interpretive platform and overlook. There are excellent photographs showing the bridge opening to accommodate riverboats.

However, since the railroad bridge, SP Hotel and Depot, and attendant facilities no longer



*Historic Railroad Pivot at Gateway Park*

exist, the exhibits must bring to life an era no longer evident. For example, the former SPRR Depot Hotel could be identified either through marking its foundation footprint or photographs or both.

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of interpretation at the Yuma Crossing is the wholesale change of its important resource: the Colorado River. Today, the river is 20-30 feet lower than it was 150 years ago. Literally, most of today's Gateway Park was under water 150 years ago. This central fact must somehow be conveyed in a most compelling manner.

Another story of the Yuma Crossing is its use as the source of filtered drinking water. Today, the City of Yuma's water treatment is located next to Gateway Park and is available for interpretation ( Access is limited due to security



*Blaisdell Slow Sand Filter, c. 1902*

concerns). However, there does exist the Blaisdell Slow Sand Filter Washing, c. 1902, which was used throughout the United States and played a prominent part in the development of water purification systems. Though disconnected from use in 1954, the machine remains intact and could be located in the Gateway Park along Gila Street Extension.



*East Wetlands District*

## East Wetlands

Wetlands restoration, restored flow through natural channels, and revegetation will make this the keystone project of the Heritage Area.

Two elements will dominate the interpretation within the East Wetlands: the Quechan cultural traditions and environmental renewal of the Colorado River. A Quechan Cultural Center on the mesa overlooking the East Wetlands is proposed. The living traditions of the Quechan Indian Nation will be celebrated not only through interpretation but by active use by the tribe of their ancestral lands for recreation, celebration, and renewal.

Interpretation of the environmental restoration of the river will be accomplished in a variety of ways, primarily through low-impact use. Trails with interpretive signage and guided canoe trips will help tell the story.

Finally, since no construction can take place in the East Wetlands, it is proposed that a Natural Historic Museum, telling the story of the Colorado River, be developed.



*West Wetlands Environmental Volunteers*

## West Wetlands

The Yuma West Wetlands Park provides an additional supplemental venue. Here bird watchers will be able to observe hummingbirds and other wildlife, and environmentalists will be interested in the reclamation project that converted the former landfill to this ecologically sensitive and sound park. The lower terrace is close to the elevation of the ordinary high water mark and will be revegetated with native riparian plants such as Cottonwood and Willow trees.

## *Telling the Stories of Transportation and Supply & Defense*



*Hotel del Sol*

### **Hotel del Sol**

#### **Transportation--a Focal Point**

This Spanish Colonial Revival building, built in 1926, was intentionally sited diagonally from the then new Southern Pacific Railroad Depot. The hotel was a key feature in the transportation nexus of early Yuma and served both rail and bus passengers. Though substantially sound and intact, the Hotel del Sol has been vacant for the last 28 years.

The Yuma Metropolitan Planning Organization and the City of Yuma are committed to the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the del Sol into a multi-modal transportation center. Given this commitment, the Heritage Area can take advantage of this opportunity to interpret Yuma's transportation story.

Currently, the Yuma Crossing State Historical Park is the primary location to tell this story. It does an excellent job of interpreting Yuma's

transportation history and has excellent resources, including a 1909 Model-T, a 1934 Model A truck, a section of the Plank Road, and Southern Pacific Baldwin Locomotive. However, over the long term, that Park may evolve and refocus on its original and primary uses: Quartermaster's Depot and headquarters for

Reclamation's Yuma Project. The Hotel Del Sol would then prove an excellent and appropriate new site for these resources.

While costly to move, the Southern Pacific Baldwin locomotive now on display at Yuma Crossing State Historic Park might be more appropriately sited, either along the Madison Avenue alignment or next to the Hotel Del Sol. If relocation proves infeasible, the visitor can be directed to the Yuma Crossing Park as a supplemental venue. Likewise, the visitor should be guided to visit the proposed Arizona Welcome Center on 4th Avenue to experience the fascinating "City of Yuma" Endurance Flight story (see "The Visitor Experience" below).

### **Yuma Crossing State Historic Park**

This Arizona State Historic Park is the site of the U. S. Quartermaster Depot, which from 1865 supplied military posts in the Southwest

and later served as a U.S. Port of Entry. The historic structures associated with the old depot speak to the Major Theme of *Supply and Defense* as it courses through Yuma's history. The predominant message of the Yuma Crossing Park should be the role of the military, with a supplemental theme of its role in the Yuma Project. The reception center could be reorganized to provide interpretive displays on the military supplying and defending the Crossing, the Southwest territory and the United States. Locations adjacent to the Yuma Main Canal and Siphon could place the Yuma Project in its best context.

The period of 1849 to 1876 is the height of the military presence and the Depot. The extant Office of the Depot Quartermaster, the Commanding Officer's Quarters, the Storehouse and the Corral House are currently interpreted. Attention should be directed toward interpreting how supplies were unloaded from a river steamer and hauled up from the river to the storehouse.

## *Experiencing "Life in Yuma"*

### Molina Block and Campus

The Molina Block is one of the oldest and largest adobe commercial structures in Yuma. Constructed in the late 19th Century, the Molina Block has a long history of use as a commercial complex. The Molina structure is referred to as a "block" because of the number of different businesses it accommodated at any one time. Over its history it has housed doctors, dentists, offices, family living quarters, a homeless mission, and will ultimately be headquarters for the local Arizona Historical Society, Rio Colorado Chapter.

A second building, the Century House, is part of the complex of buildings relating to the Molina Block and is considered to be a significant symbol of Yuma's history and cultural development. From 1890 to 1945 E. F. Sanguinetti, who created the largest and most diverse commercial enterprise in southwestern Arizona, owned the Century House. Today, the house serves as a museum for the Arizona Historical Society and is surrounded by gardens.

Centrally located on Madison Avenue in downtown, this collection of buildings represents Yuma's commercial, industrial and residential growth. The Molina Block campus provides multiple opportunities to interpret Life in Yuma.

Within the Molina Campus there may be an opportunity to display how adobe bricks were made and assembled, and how this early construction method works in the dry desert climate. Interpretative displays about the



*Molina Block Detail*

flood of 1916 could show adobe's vulnerability to water. A map locating the few remaining adobe buildings would provide the visitor the opportunity to view others and to understand how unique and rare adobes structures are.

The foundations of the old county courthouse, which included a jail and gallows, are encapsulated under the new parking area, which supports the new City of Yuma municipal building and the Molina Block.

Local lore tells that, as Yuma's school was across the street from the gallows, the schoolmistress would cancel classes on days of public hangings to spare the students this horror. However, the county issued invitations to the hangings and many parents of the dismissed school students would bring their children to view them. This glimpse into *Life in Yuma* is one of many stories fascinating to adults and children alike.

During this period, the railroad went down the middle of Madison Avenue. A range of interpretive opportunities exist from installing a locomotive and cars in the street to providing photographs, models, artifacts and sound effects to convey the experience of having a train move through the middle of town.

Yuma is fortunate to possess several nearby

historic districts with extant architectural resources that document the city's growth and development. The Molina Block campus should be the introduction to walking tours that provide the visitor with a comprehensive overview of each of Yuma's historic districts and the prominent structures that embody their time and the people behind their construction.



*Yuma Territorial Prison*

## The Yuma Territorial Prison

This most enduring and popular historical attraction in Yuma serves as an important venue for *Life in Yuma*. The establishment of the Yuma Territorial Prison set a direction for the Yuma community in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Its preservation and reuse as a museum in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century is also a story that needs to be told.

The interpretive theme for this site is clear. The focus is not on redefining the historical significance, but rather to upgrade and unify the interpretive experience within the current museum and grounds. Arizona State Parks and the Heritage Area will partner to accomplish this objective.



*Yuma Territorial Prison Cell*

## *Visitor Experience*

The visitor to the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area will experience the historic venues and resources, the various projects and interpretive programming. For the Heritage Area to be successful it must read cohesively to the visitor. It must be visitor-friendly.

### **Arizona Welcome Center**

The first experience for the visitor will most probably be at this proposed facility on Fourth Avenue. A partnership project among the state of Arizona, the Heritage Area, the City of Yuma, US BOR, the Yuma County Water Users Association, Yuma Jaycees, and the Arizona Welcome Center will improve the image and visibility of Arizona's western gateway. Designed to be highly visible from the roadway, visitors to the center will be treated to a dramatic exhibit on the "City of Yuma" Endurance Flight. The plane suspended above a convertible automobile and other artifacts and memorabilia will tell this captivating story in Yuma's history. Operated by the Yuma Convention and Visitors Bureau, the center will direct visitors to the Heritage Center to begin their journey into Yuma's heritage.

### **Consistent Interpretative Signage**

In order to present a cohesive, understandable, environment to the visitor, uniform graphic standards should be developed. Signage, printed materials, interpretive displays and products should be of similar graphic style, font and layout. Where supplemental venues are utilized, i.e., the wetlands and the Territorial Prison, etc., existing or new displays should be

redesigned to incorporate the uniform graphic standards. This will provide the visitor with a coherency to understanding the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area.

### **Wayfinding, Connections, and Unifying Elements**

The Heritage Area is committed to preserving and enhancing the general "sense of place" within the Heritage Area through coordinated and unified signage, informational kiosks, streetscapes, and other environmental features.



*Ramada with Information Kiosk*

### **Environmental Communications: A "Kit of Parts"**

Creating a unified sense of place within the Heritage Area, as well as clearly communicating information and directions, can be substantially furthered through careful and coordinated signage and other environmental appurtenances. Such a system would be grouped within four families of elements:

- identity signs
- directional signs

### 3 INTERPRETIVE FRAMEWORK

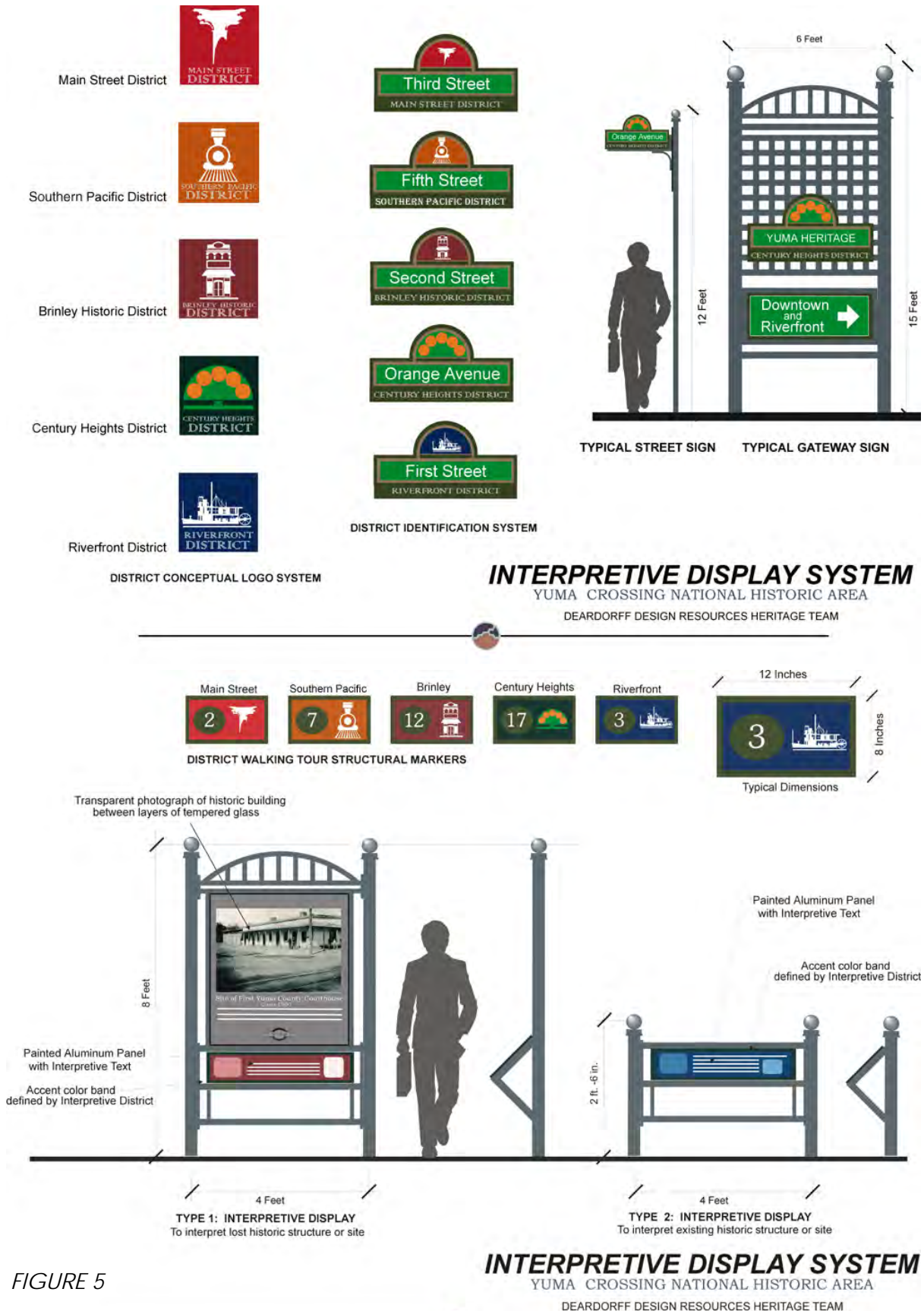


FIGURE 5

# Kit-of-Parts

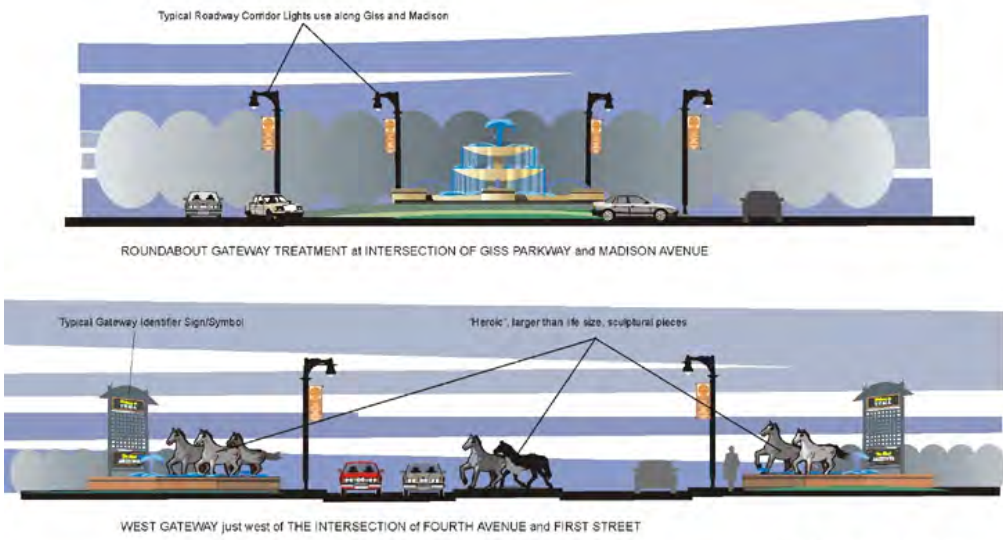


FIGURE 6

## GATEWAYS

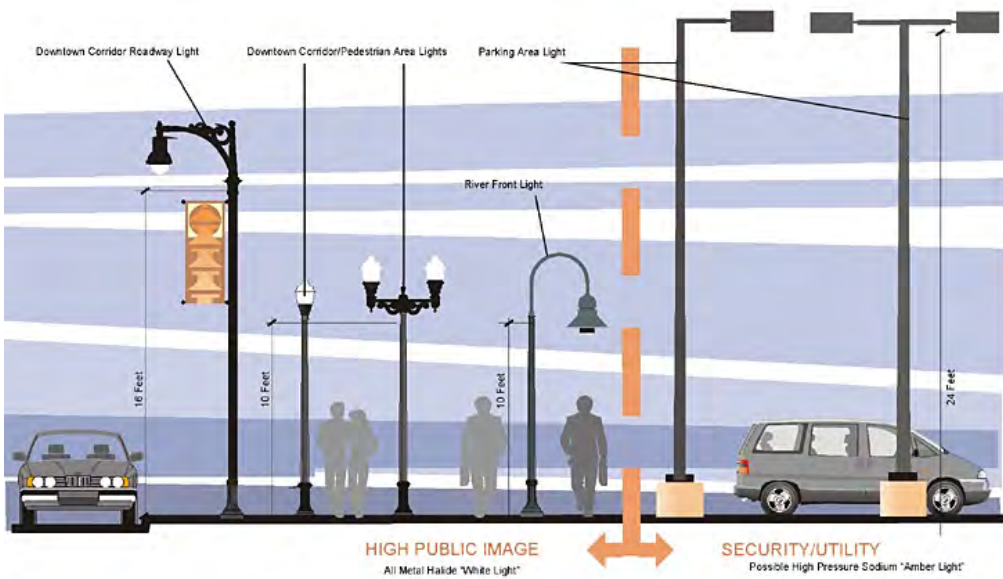


FIGURE 7

## LIGHTING

Kit-of-Parts

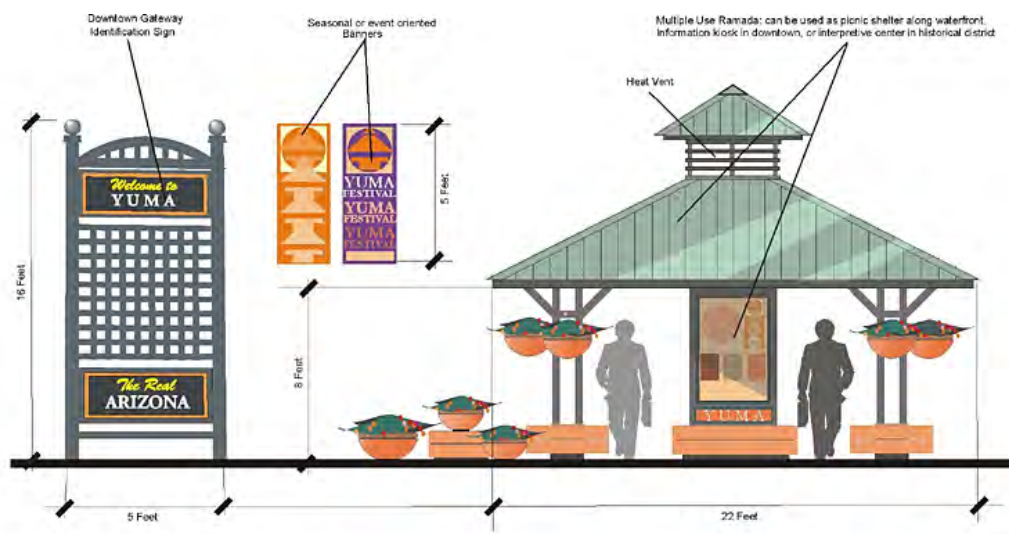


FIGURE 8

UNIFYING ELEMENTS

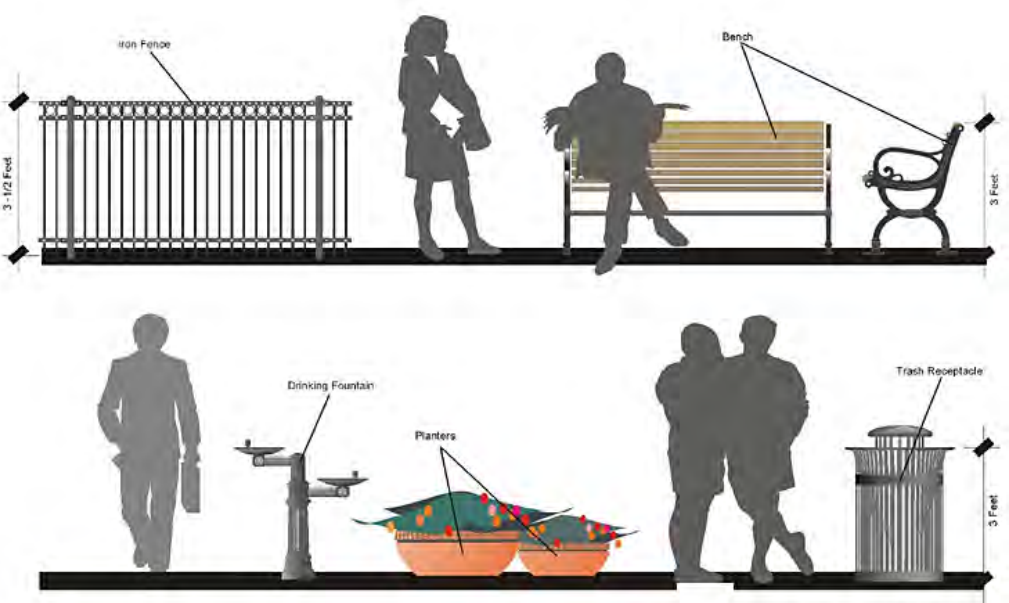


FIGURE 9

STREET FURNISHINGS

- informational displays and kiosks
- street amenities

The following general recommendations are indicative of the kind of design concepts that would be effective in creating the needed sense of place within the Heritage Area.

#### Identity Signs

Identity Signs would serve to mark venues, gateways, and other features associated with the Yuma Crossing Heritage Area. Consistent design and structure would identify Heritage elements and welcome visitors. District Gateways would denote transitions into and away from key Heritage venues, creating a sense of arrival and welcome.

#### Directional Signs

Directional Signs will assist movement into, among, and through the Heritage Area and its varied locations. Interstate signage would direct would-be visitors toward one of the various Heritage Gateways. Corridor markings assist in the orderly movement of vehicles and advance the sense of drama and significance within the area. Pedestrian signage will assist visitors move safely and efficiently between venues and quickly locate facilities and information.

#### Informational Displays and Kiosks

Informational Displays and Kiosks would be a major contributing element in the interpretation of the history and the telling of the story of the Yuma Crossing. These elements might be static, changing infrequently if at all, or could be useful in providing visitors with current and timely information about events and activities. Sophisticated kiosks, employing advanced electronic technology, could provide visitors with not only information but also an interactive experience, adding to the significance and enjoyment of their visit to the Yuma Crossing.



#### Street Amenities

Street Amenities, including street furniture, lighting fixtures, trash receptacles, banners, and other appurtenances, would add to the convenience of the visitor as well as reinforce the sense of community and wholeness within the Heritage Area.

## *Guidelines, a Flexible Framework*

This document provides a guide for future interpretive initiatives. The Interpretative Plan forms the framework for the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area and its interpretation in appropriate venues. It does not, however, provide the substantive detail needed for specific interpretive activities.

The intent of the Interpretative Plan is not to apply a strict guideline of only one period or theme per venue, and certainly not one venue per theme. The guidelines are not meant to suppress local creativity or inhibit flexibility. Rather, they are most relevant to decisions about planning, funding and implementation of permanent exhibits. As new resources and stories come to light, the thematic structure can

serve as a flexible framework for organizing the expanding knowledge about the Heritage Area. Above all, interpretation cannot remain static but must be kept fresh, engaging and updated.

As Federal money is appropriated and locally matched, further review by appropriate agencies and experts will be pursued during the design of and prior to the installation of interpretive exhibits. The assistance and technical review of the National Park Service, Arizona SHPO, Arizona Historical Society and other appropriate experts and agencies, at the appropriate time, will ensure that the most accurate interpretation of Yuma will be provided.

## 4. Development Program

### *Two Key Elements: The River and its Peoples*

The unique climate, geography, ecology, and history of the Colorado River and the Yuma Crossing is based on the juxtaposition of river and desert—and how its peoples have shaped and been shaped by that natural environment.

### **The Natural Environment**

The natural environment of the Yuma area is formed by the Colorado and Gila rivers, and the unique geography at the Yuma Crossing itself. The high bluffs creating a narrows just downstream of the historic confluence with the Gila river creates a natural crossing point on an otherwise very difficult river. The Gila River itself forms a natural, all-season trail across Southern Arizona – important in both pre-historic and modern times.

The annual flooding of the rivers over millennia created bottomlands of rich alluvial soil – a literal oasis in an otherwise inhospitable desert. These river valleys today form some of the best and most productive farming ground in the United States.

### **The Cultural History**

Given the availability of water, the natural crossing point created by the geography, and the east-west route for travelers offered by the Gila River, it was only natural that the Yuma Crossing become a place where people chose to live and form communities. The rich and compelling story of this human settlement forms the Cultural History of the Yuma Crossing.

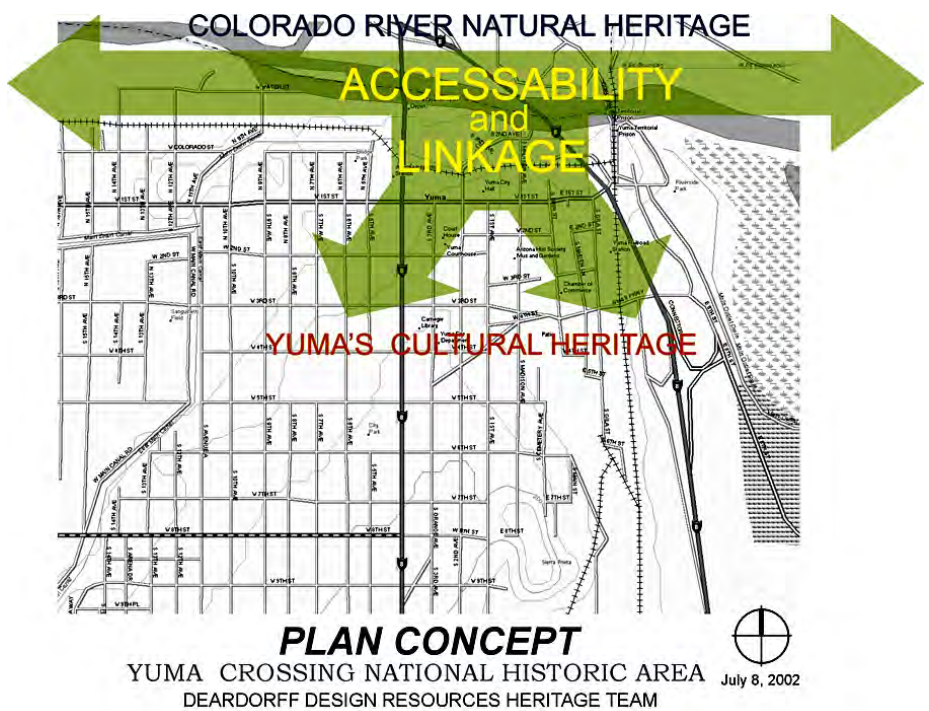


FIGURE 10

## ENVIRONMENTAL RIVER RESOURCES

West Wetlands District		Wetlands Learning & Artisan Center Colorado River Revegetation Demonstration Area Humming Bird Garden Native American Farming Demonstration Area Boat Launch	
Downtown Riverfront District		Visitors Center Heritage Center Yuma Crossing State Park (Crossings) Gateway Park Yuma Territorial State Park Ocean to Ocean Bridge	
East Wetlands District		Colorado River Revegetation Quechan Heritage Center Recreational Facilities Trail System Channelization Project	

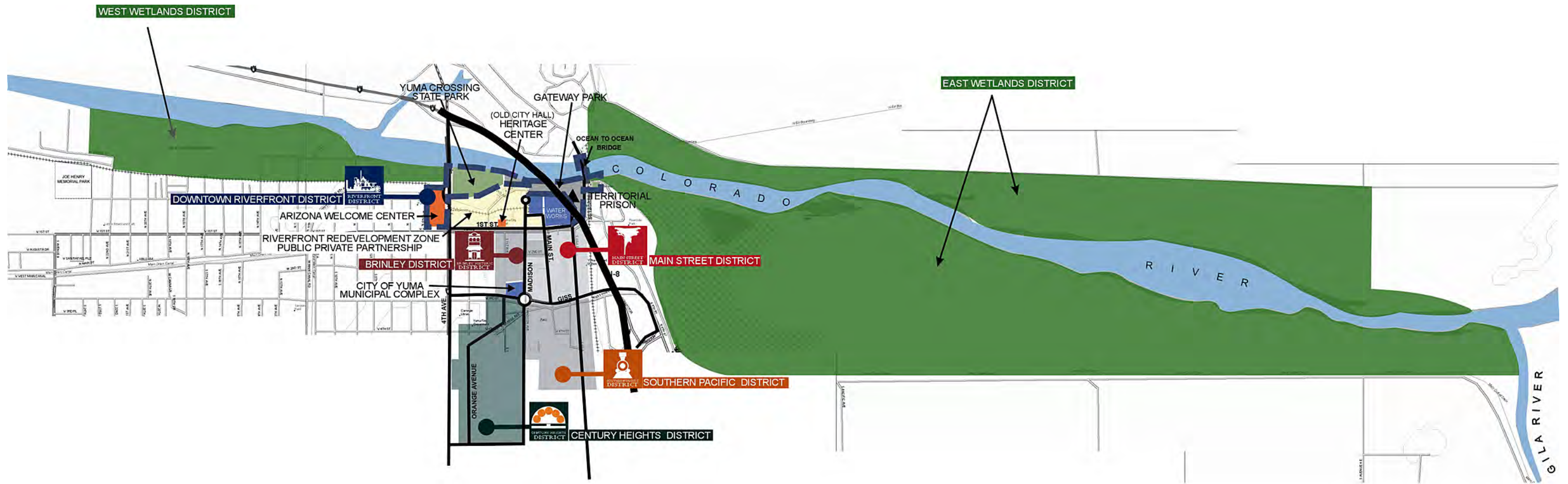
Detail Enlargement of  
Typical District Logo

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

Main Street District		Main Street Festival Street/Plaza Historic Facades National Historic Register Structures
Southern Pacific Reuse District		Old Southern Pacific Depot Numerous Historic Structures
Brinley Historic District		Century House Molina Block Gandolfo Annex Gandolfo Theater Numerous Structures on the National Historic Register
Century Heights District		Orange Avenue Boulevard Improvements Numerous Historic Structures

AN ORGANIZED AND WELL DELINEATED SYSTEM OF HISTORIC DISTRICTS

FIGURE 11



## *The Plan*

### YUMA CROSSING NATIONAL HISTORIC AREA

DEARDORFF DESIGN RESOURCES HERITAGE TEAM

## *The Plan*

The Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area has a large amount of riverfront along the Colorado River which forms its northern and western boundary and a portion of the Gila River from Avenue 7E to the confluence of the two Rivers. Although there are fifteen linear miles of riverfront within the Heritage Area, it is largely undeveloped, except for the two State Parks and Fort Yuma.

The Plan proposes the reclamation and reuse of this riverfront – in a series of three major Development Districts – so as to reaffirm the connection of the Yuma community to its river. These Development Areas are:

- The West Wetlands District
- The East Wetlands District
- Downtown Riverfront District

The Plan also includes the recommendation of a number of significant projects, venues, and activities, organized within a framework of four additional Development Districts. These additional Districts are:

- The Main Street Historic District
- The Brinley Avenue Historic District
- The Southern Pacific Railroad Yard Reuse District
- The Century Heights Historic District



## West Wetlands Development District

The City of Yuma is developing the West Wetlands as a recreational area with both active and passive elements, including access to the Colorado River. West Wetlands provides the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area with a valuable venue for historical,

cultural, and environmental programming. For example, the site is near the routes and campsites of several expeditions through the Yuma Crossing including General Kearney's Army of the West and the Mormon Battalion. These historic trails would be interpreted with appropriate statuary, displays, and exhibits.

The West Wetlands would also provide an ideal Heritage Area venue for the interpretation of the Colorado River. The Wetlands Learning and Artisan Center with outdoor amphitheater will be the site for educational programming and environmental research through partnerships with local educational institutions from Kindergarten through graduate school.



*Volunteers at West Wetlands*

The story of the environmental rehabilitation of the Lower Colorado could be told here, as the East Wetlands does not contain an appropriate site for a permanent teaching and research facility. Interpreting the conversion of this former landfill into a park is also a story to be told.

Funds for programming at the West Wetlands will come from Heritage Area sources with \$100,000 allocated in phase 1 and \$500,000 allocated in phase 2 (second 5 years). Programming will commence at the Wetlands Learning and Artisan Center during the second five-year phase, as Heritage Area funds become available.

## West Wetlands Development District

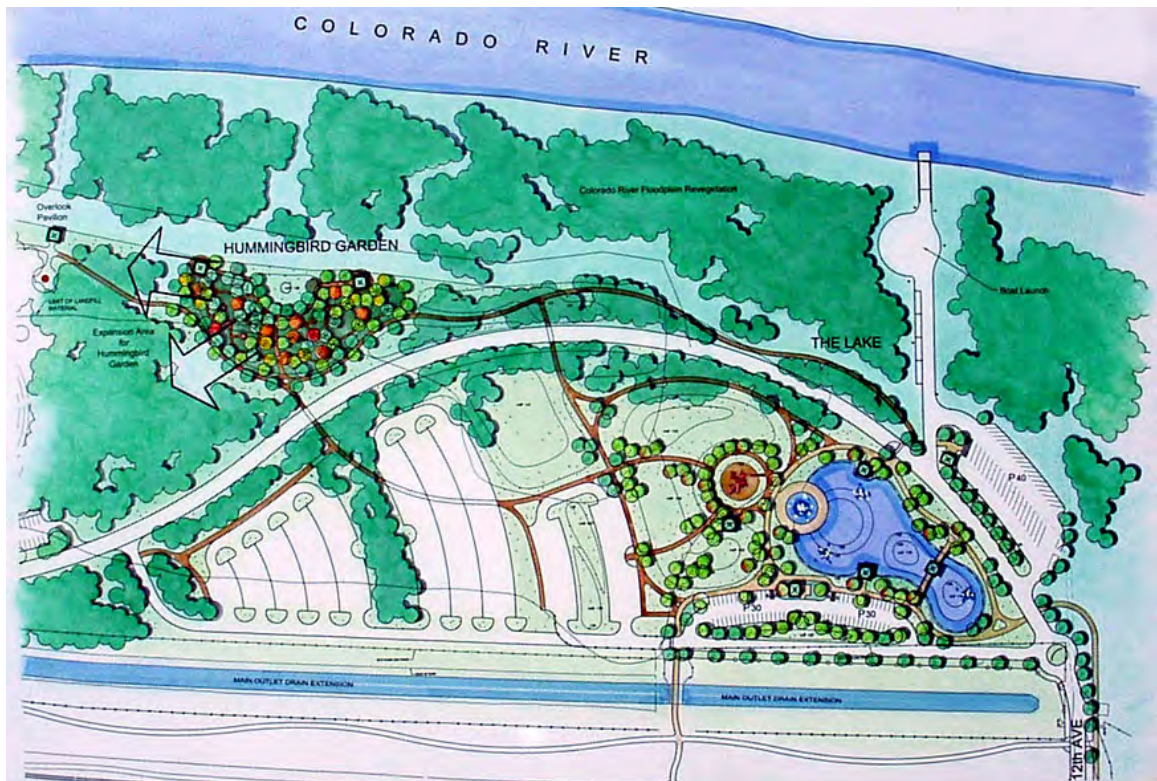


FIGURE 13

*West Wetlands, Phase I  
Includes a Boat Launch, Hummingbird Garden, and Parking*



*West Wetlands, Phase I Under Construction*



## East Wetlands Development District

The continued development of the East Wetlands will require the leadership of the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area. While substantial construction funding will come from Federal agencies other than the National Park Service, the Heritage Area Corporation will provide the leadership in developing the diverse partnerships necessary for the success of the project.

The East Wetlands will proceed through the implementation of three initiatives:

### Channel Stabilization and Wetland Enhancement Plan

Although the river has been altered, the Yuma East Wetlands District is a remnant of the river's dynamic cycle of creation and destruction. The natural processes of hydrology and sediment transport within this river system will allow for sustainable restoration efforts. As a result, after the initial expense of restoring the area, using the natural process of the river's evolution to guide the project will lower the costs associated with the long term maintenance of water control structures and the need for additional maintenance via dredge will be reduced.

### Channel Stabilization and Wetland Enhancement Goals

- Enhance the natural river channel dynamics throughout the Yuma East Wetlands area.
- Manipulate sediment loads to decrease river maintenance requirements, while maximizing wildlife benefit and protecting existing valuable habitat.
- Excavate historic channels to improve water quality and flow in the existing



FIGURE 14

East Wetlands District

wetlands.

- Stabilize excavated channel material, riverbanks, and sensitive lowland sites using revegetation methods.
- Improve hydrology and enhance wetlands and backwaters utilizing new and existing water control structures, such as the filtered decant water from the City of Yuma water plant.
- Create and enhance fish and wildlife habitats in the wetlands.
- Implement Pre and Post restoration water quality, fisheries and geomorphology monitoring to measure success, make future maintenance recommendations, and guide future restoration projects on the Lower Colorado River.

soil salt levels have increased, trees such as the cottonwood and willow, which cannot tolerate high soil salt levels, have been unable to thrive and regenerate. Thus saltcedar (perfectly suited to high salt levels) now thrives in the absence of serious competition from native plant species. Unfortunately, saltcedar, for various reasons, supports less wildlife than native vegetation. Wildlife populations, especially migratory bird populations, have declined with the loss of suitable habitat.

Yuma East Wetlands revegetation activities will commence in areas deemed suitable for revegetation. Site selection criteria will be established to select optimum revegetation areas. Site and soil analyses will be conducted prior to planting, trees will be irrigated until well established, and revegetation sites will be monitored to ensure successful revegetation.



*East Wetlands—before revegetation efforts have begun.*

### Revegetation Plan

Over the past century, riparian areas surrounding the Yuma East Wetlands District have been drastically altered. Fires and human consumption have decimated native stands of cottonwood, willow, and mesquite (honey and screwbean), while non-native saltcedar have overrun the river area. The historic damming and confinement of the river channel have decreased seasonal flooding, thus ending the natural process of soil desalinization. Where

### Revegetation Goals

- Enhance and manage existing native riparian vegetation.
- Establish stands of native vegetation, including cottonwood, willow and mesquite, in areas currently of low wildlife habitat value, primarily saltcedar stands.
- Remove exotic plant species on the existing riverbank and revegetate this lower terrace with cottonwood, willow and native

wetland plants.

- Revegetate a second terrace (created from excavated materials) with mesquite, wolfberry and quailbush, to diversify avifauna habitat.
- Maximize successful establishment of native species and minimize amount of future maintenance required.
- Design stands to minimize threat from wildfire.
- Monitor revegetation activities for success, to guide future maintenance activities and optimize future revegetation projects on the Lower Colorado River.
- Conduct bird censuses to establish base line data, protect sensitive species and monitor success of revegetation efforts.
- Use restored areas for environmental education, recreation and the arts.
- Maintain stands for the benefit of both wildlife and humans.

### Cultural Preservation, Education and Low-Impact Recreation

An interpretive/cultural center and nature park is proposed to act as the main staging area for the entire project. A possible location for this is on Quechan Tribal Land near the Colorado Riverbank at the base of the granite outcropping, adjacent to the Ocean-to-Ocean Bridge. This interpretive/cultural center and nature park will be designed to maximize cultural and educational opportunities, while minimizing the impact on the surrounding environment. This area could accommodate the Yuma East Wetlands offices, a children's center, traditional gardens, ceremonial grounds, a swimming beach and fishing area, picnic areas, shade ramadas, and a trail system that connects the interpretive center with the surrounding historical sites. This area

may also serve as an outdoor, cultural and environmental classroom for community schools and organizations. It will be ideal for hosting traditional community gatherings, field trips, special interest groups, summer camps and act as a staging ground for Yuma East Wetland activities.

Other low-impact recreational opportunities in the Yuma East Wetlands will include bird observation platforms with interpretive signs, a canoe trail along the main river channel with primitive day use facilities and wildlife/bird watching trails in the restored areas. The combined effects of restoration, education and intercommunity involvement will add to the success of this important restoration project. Such environmental programming will be funded in part with Heritage Area grants.

### Cultural Preservation, Education and Recreation Goals:

- Establish Yuma East Wetlands interpretive/cultural center and Nature Park for community members, while using sound environmental building materials and construction techniques.
- Provide environmental/cultural education and low-impact recreation opportunities for the Quechan and Yuma communities while protecting surrounding sensitive habitats.
- Improve safety and aesthetic value by cleaning up illegal dumping sites in the project area.
- Reduce the amount of undesirable and illegal human activities in the Yuma East Wetlands.
- Relocate homeless Yuma East Wetland residents in a respectful and helpful manner.
- Involve the Quechan and Yuma communities throughout all aspects of the

restoration operations.

- Respect Quechan Tribal cultural resources and values throughout the planning and restoration process.
- Provide cultural, educational and economic opportunities for the Yuma and Quechan communities.
- Provide an educational packet using the Yuma East Wetlands project as an outdoor classroom.

### Development Plan

The East Wetlands Development Area will ultimately encompass over 1400 acres of Colorado and Gila River bottomland and will include both the historic and present confluences of the great rivers. Jurisdiction is divided among the City of Yuma, the Quechan Tribe, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Reclamation, Yuma County, and private property owners.

Because of the complex nature of the project, including the multi-jurisdictional issues of land ownership, permitting, and law enforcement, the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area will take the lead in seeing the project through to completion.

Phase 1 will include dredging to reopen the historic channels and sloughs, the channelization project and the revegetation of the area from the historic confluence below the Yuma Territorial Prison to the point approximately one mile east. Included would be substantial areas of backwater providing both recreational opportunities and wildlife habitat, native trails, beach areas, parking facilities, and restrooms.

With continued coordination and collaboration with the Quechan Nation a Quechan Heritage Center could be developed during Phase 1. This Center would be located on tribal land adjacent to the Yuma Crossing Heritage Area

and within the East Wetlands Planning Area. Such a facility could materially augment the goals and themes of the Heritage Area and would provide a venue to tell the story of the early people at the Crossing.

Phase 2 would see the completion of the remainder of the project, as well as the assumption of operational responsibility. It is anticipated that the total cost of the East Wetlands development would be around \$18 million. Heritage funds would be used to leverage and match other funds as they become available. Additionally, \$200,000 to \$300,000 of Heritage funds would be used for programming needs within the East Wetlands Development Area.



## Historic Downtown Riverfront Development District

### Gateway Park

Gateway Park, when developed by the City of Yuma, will provide the Yuma Crossing Heritage Area with an ideal venue to tell the story of river commerce at the Crossing. The substantial history of this unique location could be effectively told with signage and other appropriate exhibits as well as models and recreations.

Within the first 5-year phase of the project Heritage Funds would be used in the amount of \$750,000, as the Yuma Crossing Heritage Area provides interpretative facilities and materials. The project would be completed during the second 5-year phase with the addition of an interpretative overlook structure, a water feature, the gateway connection with Main Street to the south, and the riverbank stabilization and landscaping. It is anticipated that \$1 million in Heritage Area funds would be



FIGURE 15

Gateway Park Master Plan



Gateway Park Aerial

FIGURE 16

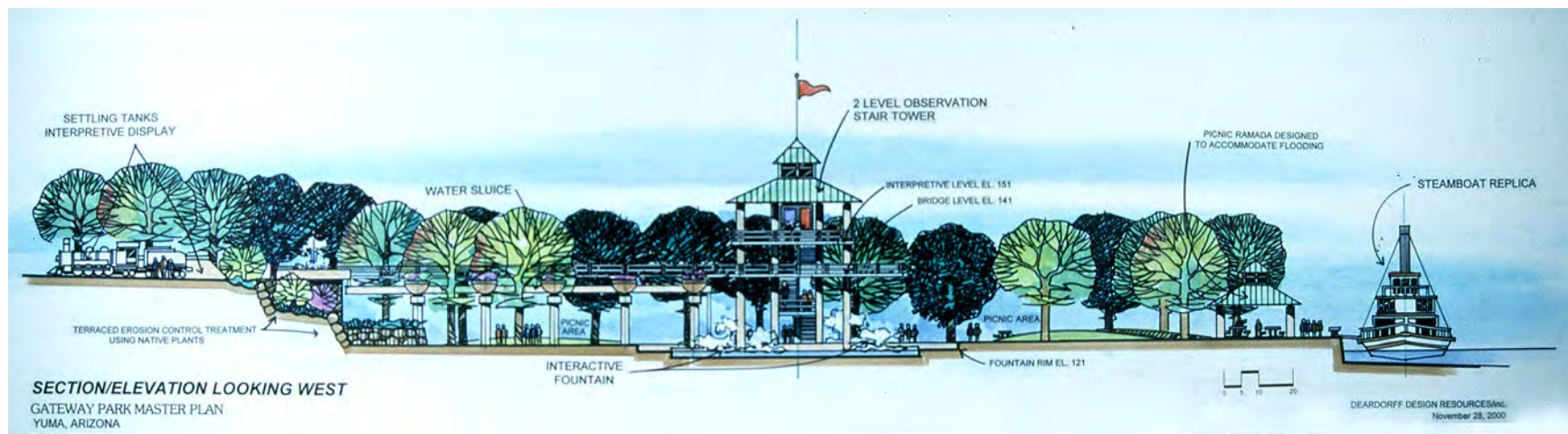


FIGURE 17

Gateway Park Section



FIGURE 18

*Proposed Arizona Welcome Center*

needed for these improvements, as well as \$200,000 for programming and operation during that phase.

### Arizona Welcome Center

A Heritage partner, the Yuma Jaycees, has taken the lead in reclaiming and restoring the “City of Yuma,” a small, single-engine aircraft that set the continuous flight record in 1949. The Welcome Center will provide the opportunity to display this historic aircraft and interpret the history of the endurance flight. The Heritage Area will work with partners to secure funding for a more complete visitor experience, including interpretation of the historic “City of Yuma” airplane and the overall Heritage Area experience.



Deardorff Design Heritage Planning Team

FIGURE 19

## Heritage Center

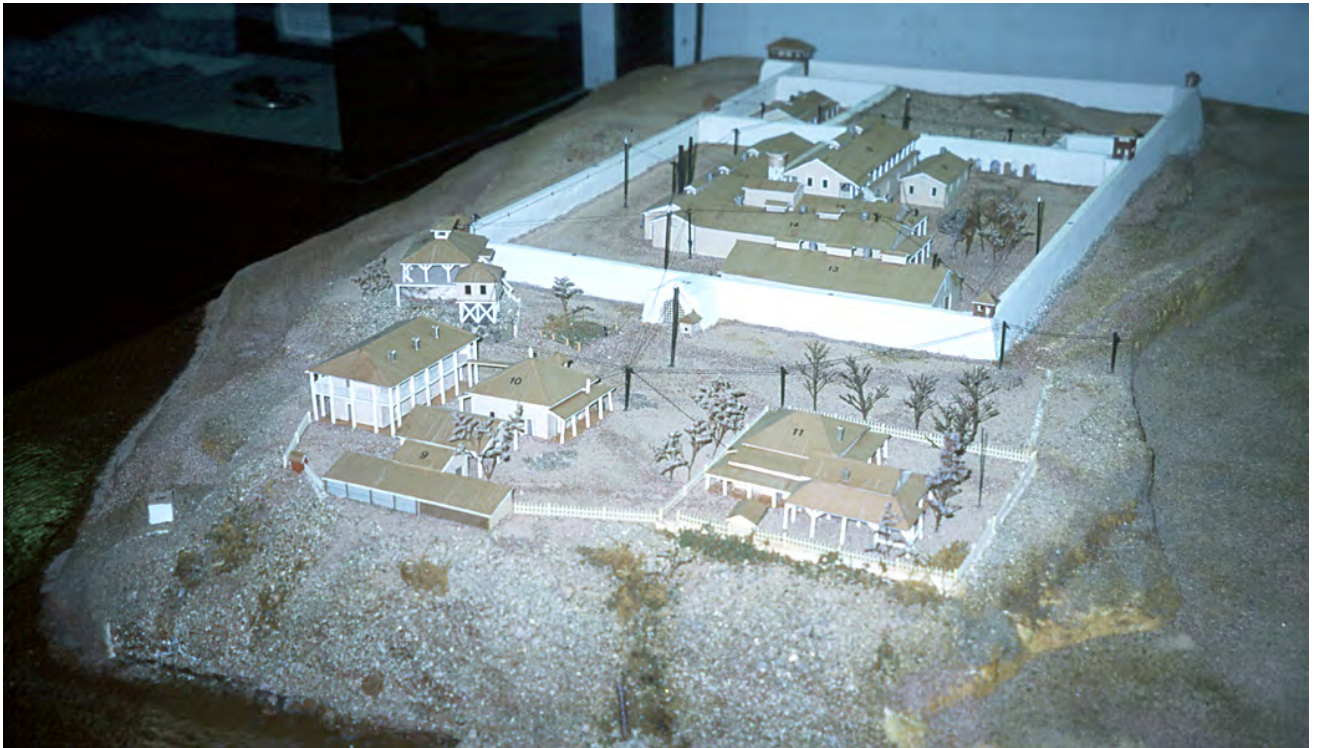
Old City Hall, overlooking the Yuma Crossing Park, the Riverfront Partnership Area, Gateway Park, and the Yuma Siphon, will serve as the home for the Heritage Area Corporation and as an interpretive overview for the Yuma Crossing.

Displays and exhibits will highlight the complete historical record of the Crossing, with references, directions, and connections to other Heritage Area venues.

The Yuma Crossing Heritage Area will partner with the City of Yuma, the Bureau of Reclamation, the Arizona Historical Society, the local military bases, and the agricultural community in creating this focal point facility.

Phase 1 activities will include renovating the building, including removing non-historic portions of the structure. The restoration of the building, and the development of interpretative materials will require Heritage Funding within the first phase.

The second five-year phase will require additional funding for augmented exhibits and expanded programming. The Heritage Area Corporation will be responsible for the long-term maintenance and operation of the Heritage Center facility.



*Display Model in Yuma Territorial Prison Interior Exhibit Area*

## Yuma Territorial Prison

The Yuma Territorial Prison remains one of the most visited State Parks facilities today.

Because of the high degree of interest and visitation at the Prison, the upgrading of the facilities and the original 1960's exhibits is a priority with the Arizona State Parks system. However, because of inevitable resource limitations, the timing of those upgrades is unknown. It is anticipated that within the first five-year phase \$400,000 of Heritage funds would be matched with \$400,000 of State Parks funding in order to accomplish the upgrades.

## Riverfront Development Partnership

The City of Yuma is the major partner for the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area. As a part of the City's long-term interest in redeveloping Yuma's historic North End and Riverfront Area, it has entered into a partnership agreement with a private developer in order to bring about major specific

improvements along the river. These developments, which will include a hotel facility and conference center, are expected to have a significant positive economic impact not only on the North End but also on the entire Yuma community. At the same time there is a clear need for sensitive treatment of development issues within the context established by existing historical resources. The Heritage Area will itself be developing resources and venues adjacent to the private development, and there exist other facilities within the National Landmark that will require careful consideration.

The Yuma Crossing Heritage Area has the opportunity to act as a strong advocate on behalf of the existing historical resources as the Yuma community seeks the development and economic revitalization of the historic riverfront. Although no Federal Heritage Area funding is involved in this project, it is hoped that the City

of Yuma and its private development will weigh the historical importance during the design process. The Heritage Area Corporation will work with the Historic District Review Commission and other local preservation groups in that advocacy role.



## The Main Street Development District

The City of Yuma, with assistance from the Arizona Main Street Program and many private investors and entrepreneurs, led a decade-long revitalization effort that has resulted in significant progress. Almost all structures on Main Street are now in private ownership, there has been substantial public and private investment, and the area is returning to economic viability. Perhaps most importantly, a significant and effective public / private partnership has evolved on Main Street with

the formation and operation of a non-profit corporation – Main Street Inc.

As the historic center of commerce, the Main Street Development Area is a key venue for economic activity and historical interpretation within the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area. The central location of the District, as well as the significant and contributing structures within the area, provide many opportunities for advancing the goals and telling the stories of the Heritage Area. Several projects and activities could be implemented within the District over two, five-year phases.

### Main Street Façade Restoration

While significant restoration efforts have been undertaken on Main Street, there remain a number of buildings that would benefit from façade restoration. Heritage funds within the first phase would provide the planning and design work needed for this project, and would encourage the development of additional



*Existing Main Street*



**PROPOSED MAIN STREET as "CONVERTIBLE" STREET/FESTIVAL PLAZA**  
*FIGURE 20*



FIGURE 21

*Proposed Del Sol as the Multi-Modal Transportation Center*

funding sources. Restoration of the Main Street facades is anticipated within the second five-year phase as a potential project.

### Other Interpretive Activities

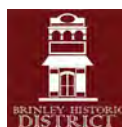
The Main Street District's historical significance and central location within the Heritage Area suggest the development of appropriate interpretative kiosks and other displays, as well as Heritage activities such as self-guided walking tours and other programming.

### Hotel Del Sol Multi-Modal Transportation Center

When completed, the proposed Multi-modal facility would also be an ideal venue for a Transportation Heritage Center featuring the rich history of rail and highway activity at the Yuma Crossing. Featured themes could include the early stage trails, the Southern Pacific Railroad, the Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Bridge, the Plank Road through the sand dunes, the Lee Highway, and the development of the area's modern highway network.

Completion of lobby rehabilitation at the hotel will create the opportunity for a Transportation Heritage Center. Heritage funds would be used to develop the displays and exhibits for this venue.

During the second 5-year phase of the project, activities could include the development of a Military Heritage Center, across from the Hotel Del Sol. This project, undertaken with the assistance of the Chamber of Commerce Military Affairs Committee, local veterans groups, and Yuma's military bases, would provide the venue to tell the 150-year history of the United States military at the Yuma Crossing. Heritage funds would assist the development of displays and exhibits in this important element of the Heritage Area.



### Brinley Avenue Development District

The Brinley Avenue Development District is based on the federally registered Brinley Avenue Historic District, a group of 22 contributing historic structures dating from 1869 to 1924.

### The Molina Block

This unrestored adobe building is owned by the Arizona Historical Society and is adjacent to the Century House Museum and other Historical Society properties. The Molina Block is also adjacent to the new City of Yuma

### Municipal Complex.

The historical significance of the structure and its critical location led the City of Yuma and the Historical Society to develop a preliminary conceptual plan for the restoration and adaptive reuse of the facility as a museum, office complex, and gardens in support of the Historical Society program.

Within the first 5-year phase of the Heritage Area, the design of the Master Plan and construction will be completed, requiring approximately \$1 million of Heritage funds. During phase 2 enhancements to the exhibits, the development of a research facility, and construction of archival storage space will require an additional \$1 million.

### Gandolfo Annex

John Gandolfo constructed the Gandolfo Annex in 1905 as a commercial block and also to

structure has been vacant for many years and is owned by the City of Yuma. The City undertook an adobe stabilization project several years ago, but beyond that the structure has not been renovated.

The Gandolfo Annex represents an excellent opportunity for interpretation of the early commercial period related to the “Life in Yuma” theme. The Heritage Area and the City of Yuma will be seeking grants and/or private partners for the sensitive restoration and reuse of this important structure. Some Heritage funding may be required during phase 1 to enable or leverage other funding sources.



### Southern Pacific Yard Reuse District

The historical nature of the Southern Pacific Yard Reuse District and its key location within the Main Street Historic District creates a

unique opportunity for development that would further the goals of the Heritage Area and benefit the entire North End and Riverfront area. Heritage funds could be used to commence the restoration of the historic Freight House, and the Heritage Area could partner with the City and the Railroad in resolving any environmental issues that remain from the former industrial use of the property. The Heritage Area and its



*Historic Gandolfo Annex—Brinley District*

provide additional hotel rooms for his Gandolfo Hotel on Main Street just to the east. The two-story structure features adobe walls on the first floor with a frame structure above. The

partners would assist in attracting private developers to the project, and would work toward a comprehensive land use and marketing plan.



Adjacent to the Southern Pacific Yard Area are other structures that offer opportunities for restoration and reuse. First, directly to the east of the Freight Station is a small area of homes and commercial structures dating from the late 19th century. This “Railroad Commercial” area has seen some renovation and is essentially in private ownership. The area represents a valuable venue not only for viable economic activity but also for interpretation of the **Life in Yuma** Heritage Theme.

The Heritage Area will work with the private ownership in this area and with the City of Yuma to promote redevelopment compatible with its context. Funding will be sought to facilitate the blending of this area into any new development to the west or east, and to mitigate the impact of a major new roadway planned in the vicinity.

There also exists in the area a second opportunity for renovation and reuse of a major

industrial site: the former Southwest Ice and Cold Storage Company.

The building, now vacant, had been in continuous use as an agricultural processing facility until 1990. The building provides a unique opportunity for the Yuma Crossing Heritage Area to develop an Agricultural Heritage Center. Such a Center would interpret the significant story of agriculture at



*Existing Southern Pacific Freight Depot*

the Yuma Crossing in an authentic context. The building is sound structurally and would provide adequate space for interpretative displays and exhibits, including large agricultural equipment.

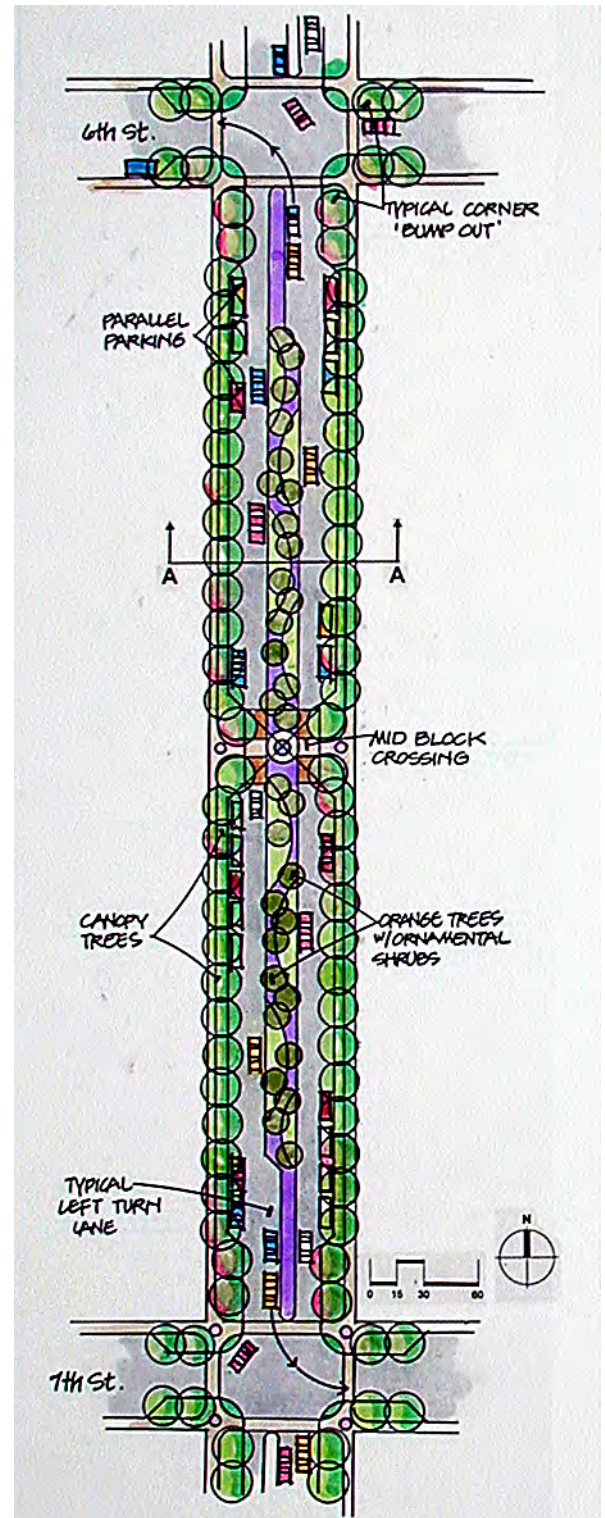
Partners from the local agricultural community would be sought for the development of an Agricultural Heritage Center. Depending on the outcome of those efforts, such a center could be realized within the second 5-year phase of the Heritage Area. Heritage Funds may be needed for the design and construction of some of the interpretive displays.



## Century Heights District

The Century Heights District represents an excellent opportunity to present and interpret the **Life in Yuma** Heritage Theme, as the first extension of urban development beyond the original town site near the River.

The overall condition of structures within the historic district is quite good, as there has been substantial interest in the historic nature of the area for some time. The Yuma Crossing Heritage Area will have the opportunity to advocate for further historic preservation and renovation through grants and private funding, as well as assist in the development of several capital projects designed to add value to this important area. These efforts will take place primarily in the second 5-year phase of Heritage Area funding.



Century Heights Boulevard Plan

FIGURE 23

### Orange Avenue Gateway

Orange Avenue presents an opportunity to develop a gateway and approach into the Heritage Area that will attract residents and visitors. It will help define the boundaries of Century Heights and also provide a transition from modern Yuma into the Historic Districts. A Streetscape Conceptual Design has been developed and reviewed by residents and other stakeholders in the area. A combination of Heritage funds and other funds from the City of Yuma – in the amount of approximately \$1 million – will be needed during Phase 2.

### Clymer Center Façade improvements

The Clymer Center is a city-owned recreation facility located in a small neighborhood park on Orange Avenue. The structure is a functional metal building intrusive to the historic district. With assistance from the Heritage Area, the City of Yuma will design and construct façade improvements for this structure during the second 5-year phase.



FIGURE 24

## Looking Forward

The creation of the Yuma Crossing Heritage Area has created an enormous opportunity for the community to not only develop and preserve the natural and cultural resources as outlined here, but also to look to significant future opportunities. For example, the Redondo ruins just east of Yuma represents a very significant architectural site needing conservation and interpretation. The Gila Trail and its importance to the nation can be interpreted literally for miles across southern Arizona. Sears Point, a key location on the Gila Trail, represents a special opportunity for conservation. Finally, the great diversion dams and canal system of the Lower Colorado – Imperial, Laguna, and Morales -- clearly are a key part of the Yuma Crossing Heritage Area story, and can be included in future planning and programming.

The influence of Hispanic culture on Yuma's heritage clearly needs to be celebrated throughout the heritage area and possibly in its own venue. In concert with key stakeholder groups such as the Cultural Council of Yuma, and the Chavez Family Foundation (Cesar Chavez was born in the Yuma area), the Heritage Area will continue to explore the appropriate interpretive opportunities including the potential of a separate venue for this story.

## Heritage Access

### Overview

The Heritage Area will be served with multiple systems. These include improved passenger rail access via Amtrak and vehicular access across Interstate 8. These both link Tucson and San Diego. Yuma is approximately half way between these two destination points and thus has potential as a logical stopping place. The Colorado River and all of its heritage attractions including the existing Territorial Prison and Yuma Crossing State Parks, West Wetlands District, Gateway Park and the East Wetlands District are linked by a multi-use trail system which extends from West Wetlands to the confluence of the Gila and Colorado Rivers. There will also be equestrian access as well as various options for water craft tours from the confluence of the Gila and Colorado to Mexico. Each of these systems is discussed here in more detail.

### Heritage Area Vehicular Circulation and Parking

#### Heritage Tourism Access

A proposed Multi Modal center will be located in and around the historic Del Sol Hotel. This center will connect the Amtrak Passenger station with local taxi service, rental car service, and anticipated regional bus transportation. Local hotels will also provide shuttle service to the multi modal center. Finally a proposed heritage shuttle will link visitors to the Visitors Center, the Heritage Center (Old City Hall) and other Heritage venues such as Gateway Park and the various Heritage Districts along the river and in the Historic Downtown.

Interstate 8 currently exits at 4th Avenue serv-

ing traffic arriving from either direction (1 on Fig. 26). The Visitors Center will serve not only Yuma and the Heritage Area but as a Welcome Center for the State of Arizona for those arriving from the west. Parking and shuttle service will be provided that will link visitors to the Heritage Center, the Colorado River heritage venues and the historic districts of the downtown. The Visitors Center will promote heritage tourism by providing maps of the heritage area with clear delineation of the locations of parking, heritage tours, accommodations, and other relevant services.

#### Local Community Vehicular Access

Currently, community residents access the downtown primarily along 4th Avenue coming from the south as well as along I-8 exiting at the Giss Parkway exit and proceeding west to

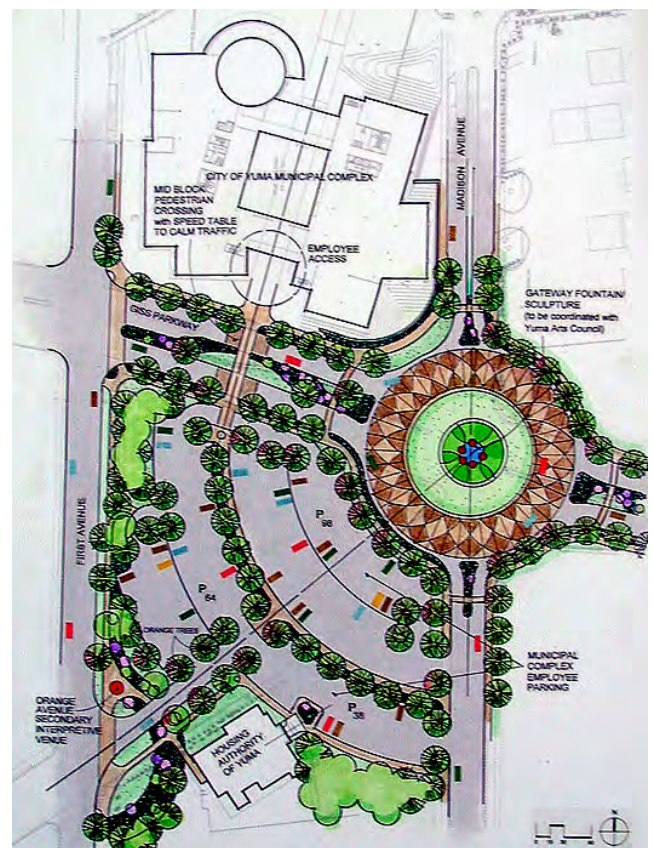
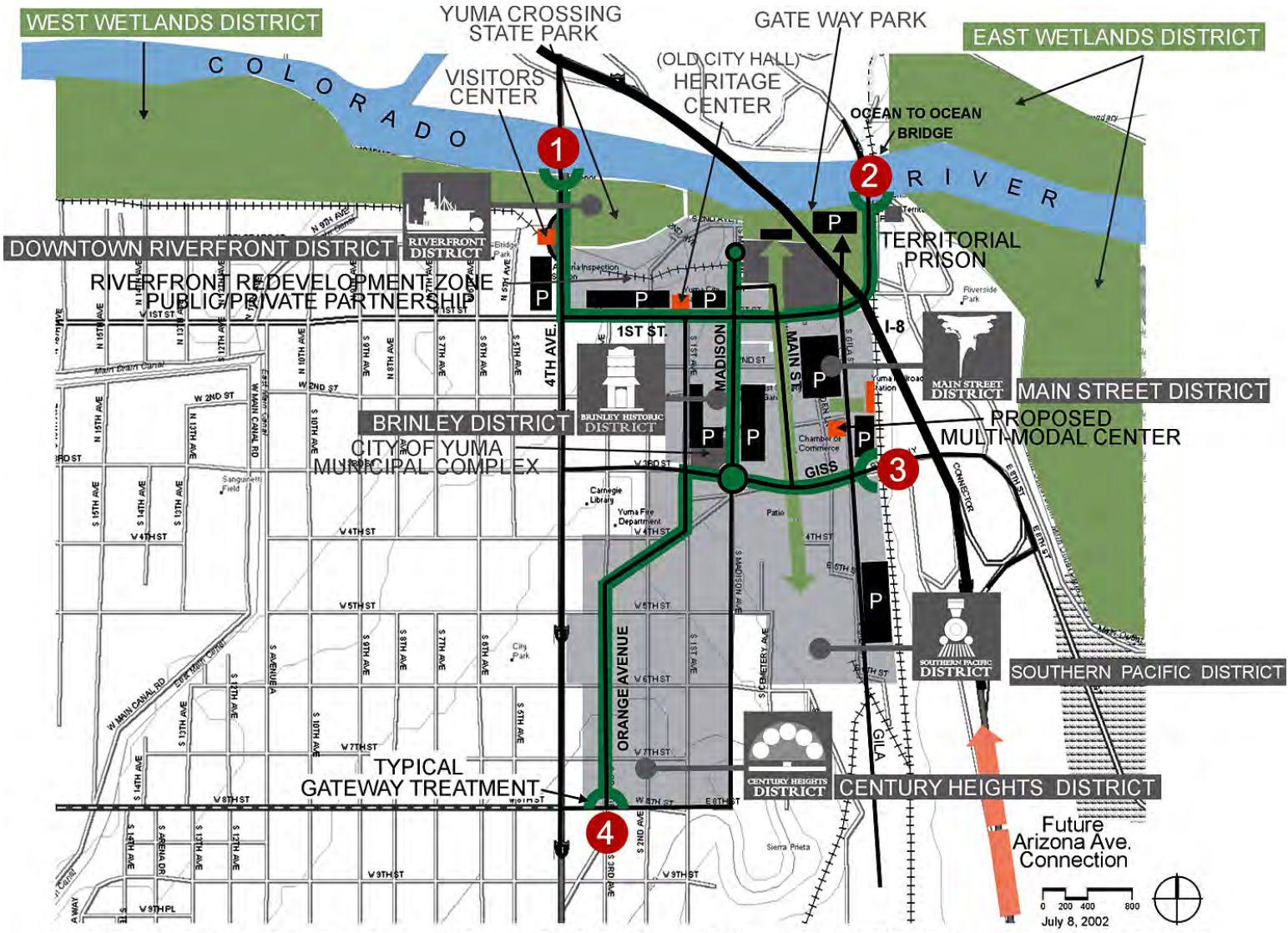


FIGURE 25

Giss Roundabout Plan



**HISTORIC DOWNTOWN YUMA: CIRCULATION and PARKING FRAMEWORK**  
 YUMA CROSSING NATIONAL HISTORIC AREA DEARDORFF DESIGN RESOURCES HERITAGE TEAM

FIGURE 26

Main Street or Madison to existing surface parking. In the future Arizona Avenue will provide a third alternative. In terms of those who are showing visitors the heritage of Yuma, the heritage routes will have special signs and landscape treatments that will provide more leisurely, gateway corridors to the Historic Downtown and the Downtown Riverfront District. These corridors include the approach across the Ocean-to-Ocean Bridge (2 on Fig. 26) along Penitentiary/1st Street, Giss Parkway to the roundabout gateway feature at Madison and Giss (3 on Fig. 26), and the Orange Avenue Gateway corridor (4 on Fig. 26).

The goal is to provide smooth and compatible, vehicular access for both heritage tourists and local residents that, while providing easy access to heritage venues, will also provide minimal conflict with local residents living and working within the heritage area.

## Heritage Area Trail and River Access

There will be four linear systems for access throughout the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area.

1. The River
2. The Railroad
3. The Multi-Use Trail
4. The Equestrian Trail

The goal of these systems is to:

- strengthen pedestrian and bicycle access linking the historic downtown with the Colorado River,
- provide a linear venue that links various site specific historic districts and venues,
- and provide a far reaching trail system for recreational use by both tourists and local residents.

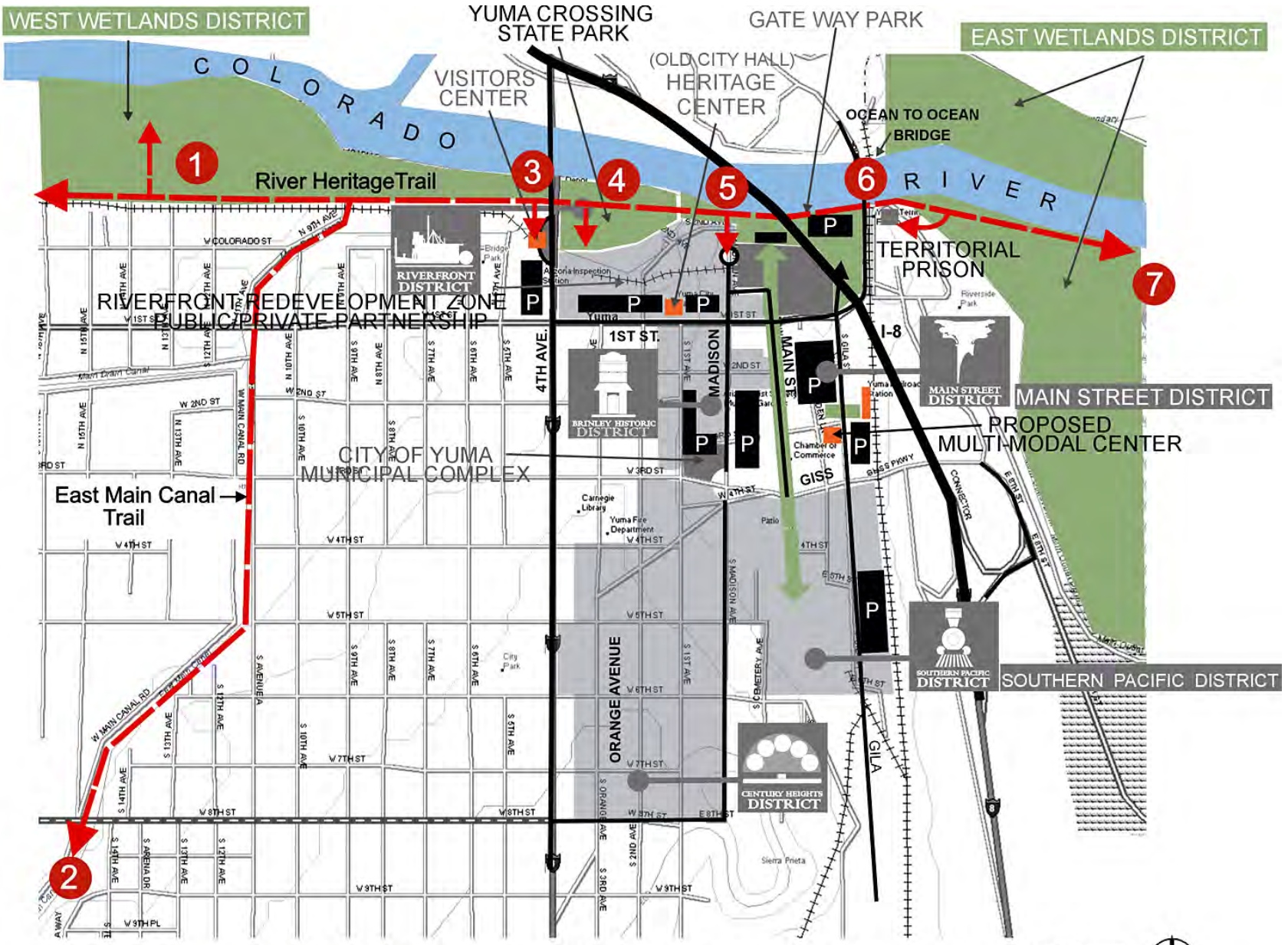
## The River as a Linear Transportation System

From the confluence of the Gila and Colorado to the West Wetlands District and even beyond to the Arizona / Mexico border, heritage tourists can currently experience the river from organized tours using canoes, kayaks, and motorized group tour boats. Tours will begin up river at the confluence and exit the river at West Wetlands Park or, in the case of the group tour

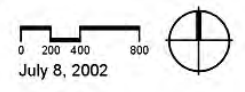


*Canoeing on the Colorado River—Yuma, AZ*

FIGURE 27



**HISTORIC DOWNTOWN YUMA: MULTI USE TRAIL SYSTEM**  
YUMA CROSSING NATIONAL HISTORIC AREA DEARDORFF DESIGN RESOURCES HERITAGE TEAM



boats, dock in Gateway Park. Currently, knowledgeable tour guides interpret the natural and cultural history along the river.

### The Yuma Railroad Tour

The Yuma Valley Livesteamers train journeys along the Colorado River, past vast fields of agriculture, native wildlife, the last dam built on the Colorado River, the Yucca Power Plant, and the US Bureau of Reclamation desalting plant, the only desalting water treatment plant of this type in the world.



*East Canal Multi-Use Trail*

### The Multi-Use Trail System

The City of Yuma, Department of Parks and Recreation has been working over the past decade to develop an extensive multi-use trail system as shown on the graphic titled Multi-use Trail System (Fig. 27). This River Heritage Trail connects the heritage venues along the river. It also connects primary residential neighborhoods. In general, this path will be paved, twelve feet wide, lighted, and serve pedestrians, bicyclists, and inline skaters. A few

key venues are numbered on the graphic and defined below.

#### *West Wetlands District*

This will include extensive environmental/cultural education facilities such as the Hummingbird Garden, the Heritage Cultural Center, Wetland Revegetation teaching and research area, Butterfly Garden, Birding Pavilions, Natural History Museum, Native American Indian agricultural demonstration area, a major performance amphitheater with capacity of 10,000, the Millennium Grove, and a variety of interpretive displays and recreational facilities.

#### *James P. Deyo Regional City Park*

This 240 acre recreation area is the City of Yuma's largest park. It will be the southern destination anchor for the East Main Canal Trail. Major facilities include the City Civic and Convention Center, the Ray Crock Baseball complex, Desert Sun Stadium, the Arroyo Dunes Golf Course, and the Desert Hills Golf Course.

#### *The Arizona Welcome Center*

This, as previously described, will be the gateway to river and historic downtown heritage districts and the riverfront.

#### *Yuma Crossing State Park*

This includes the Quartermaster's Depot, as well as a number of significant historic structures.

## Downtown Riverfront Development District

Includes retail, restaurant, riverfront hotel, and all the heritage amenities provided by Gateway Park.

### *The Territorial Prison*

This State Park is Yuma's most visited Heritage attraction at present.

### *East Wetlands District*

The trail will extend to the confluence of the Colorado and Gila rivers through what is envisioned as the most extensive revegetation and wild life habitats along the Colorado River. The emphasis in terms of users is eco-tourism.

The multi-use trail will also provide access points connecting Main Street and Madison Street to the River. Gateway Park will also provide a large 120 space parking lot with barrier free access close to the river and near the trail . The section of trail between the Yuma Crossing State Park and the Territorial Prison will include provision for a rubber-tired tram to provide a linkage between these two heritage venues and the historic downtown.

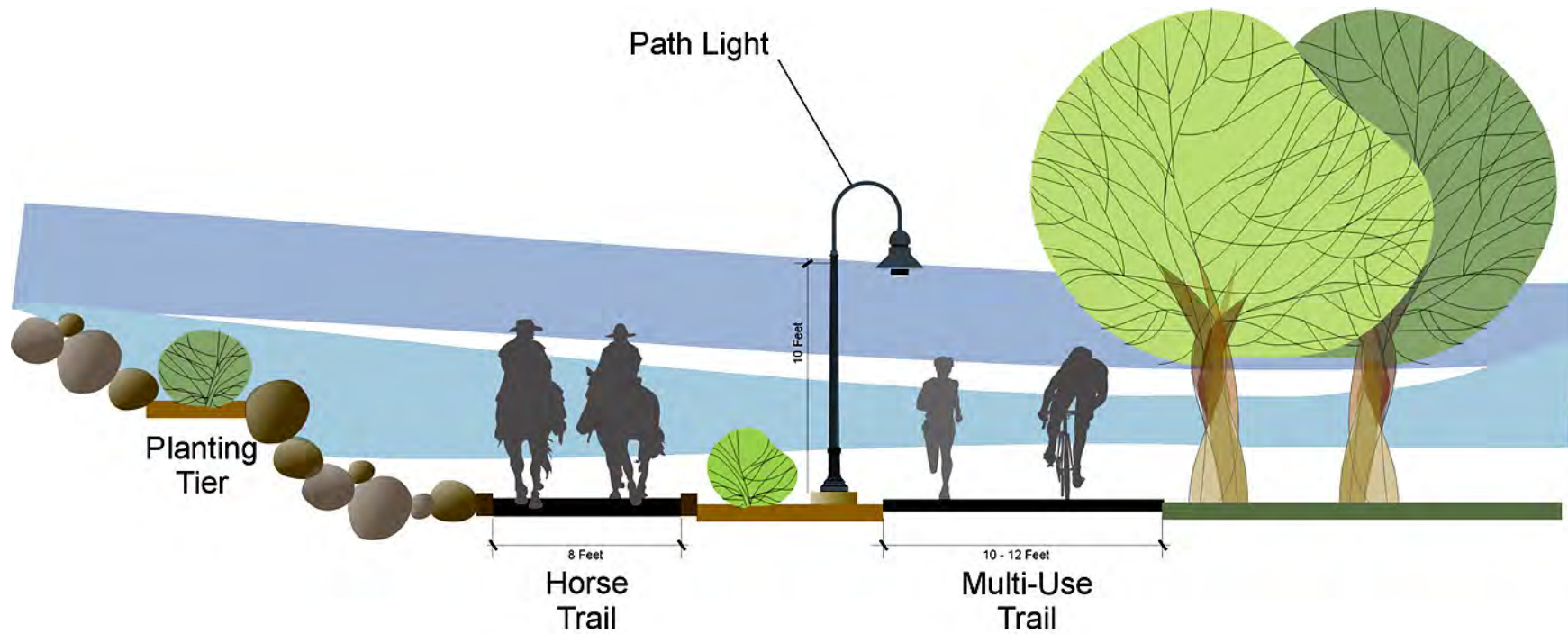
## The Equestrian Trail

Both tour groups and individual riding enthusiasts will use this trail which will parallel the River Heritage Trail. It will connect the East and West Wetland Districts. Individuals will be provided with a horse trailer loading and unloading ramp at the west entrance to West Wetlands Park. The trail varies in width from 12 to 8 ft. While it is occasionally in close proximity to the multi-use trail, as shown by Figure 28, in general the equestrian trail will be separated from other trails. Long term, there is the potential to extend the equestrian trail system as a multi-use trail further to the east, which could also be used by mountain bike enthusiasts eastward along the Gila River to take ad-

vantage of overnight tour opportunities to destinations such as the Sears Point archeological site.

These four linear systems will provide a variety of choices for users of all ages and interests. The overall goal is to provide alternatives to driving from one venue to another, thus relieving congestion in the historic downtown, along the river, and in adjoining residential neighborhoods.

The Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area will be well served by the combination of motorized and non-motorized systems. The systems will accommodate all age groups with barrier free accessibility . It is designed to serve both heritage tourism as well as local community residents providing easy access to employment settings, homes, and community services. A focus of the plan is to provide strong alternatives to driving in the historic downtown and to various heritages venues and districts. The four linear systems proposed here will do that effectively.



## PRELIMINARY DESIGN DETAILS

## Trail System

Deardorff Design Resources / inc.  
June 14, 2002

FIGURE 28

## 5. Implementation Agenda

### *Management Entity*

As suggested in the Congressional authorizing legislation, a locally based, citizen-led, private non-profit corporation entitled the **Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area Corporation** will serve as the “management entity” of the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area.

A Heritage Area Corporation is best situated to be the management vehicle for the project. The Heritage Area encompasses 22 square miles including the jurisdictions of the City of Yuma, Yuma County, the State of Arizona, and the multi-jurisdictional Colorado River. Though the City of Yuma has been and will continue to be a key partner of the Heritage Area, the Heritage Area Corporation is structured so as to bridge political boundaries, seeking private donations, foundation assistance, and volunteer involvement. Experience in other heritage areas indicates that foundations, private philanthropists and ordinary citizens will be more forthcoming if the heritage organization is perceived as a citizen-based, not governmental, organization. The Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area Corporation is established as a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization under the laws of the State of Arizona.

The Corporation’s commitment to diversity is reflected in the articles of incorporation and by-laws, which promotes representation from a broad cross-section of the individuals, agencies, organizations, and governments that have already been involved in the initial planning of the Heritage Area.

### **Administration: Board Structure**

The incorporation of the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area Corporation took place in early 2002. The Board of Directors reflects a broad cross-section of the individuals, agencies, organizations, and governments that have been involved in the initial planning and development of the Heritage Area. The Board composition represents a natural evolution of the Riverfront Task Force, which has promoted the development of the heritage area and has met regularly since 1998. The proposed eleven member board is comprised accordingly:

1. A citizen of the Yuma community nominated by the Board and elected as Chairman.
2. A Designee selected to represent the Arizona Historical Society and the Yuma County Historical Society. (Three nominees will be submitted jointly by the historical societies and the Board will select one.)
3. A Designee of the Yuma business community who shall represent the Yuma County Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Yuma Economic Development Council. (Three nominees will be submitted jointly and the Board will select one.
4. Citizen appointed by Yuma City Council.
5. Citizen appointed by Yuma City Council.
6. A citizen of the Yuma community, nominated by Board nominating committee.
7. A citizen of the Yuma community

- nominated by the Board nominating committee.
8. Governor of the State of Arizona or his/her designee.
  9. Designee of the Yuma County Board of Supervisors.
  10. Mayor of the City of Yuma or his/her designee.
  11. Secretary of the U. S. Department of the Interior, or his/her designee being a staff person of the National Park Service.

The first seven members listed above comprise an Executive Committee and will act as the primary vehicle for operation and policy of the Heritage Area Corporation. The Board of Directors will ensure that the mission of the Corporation is carried out, serve as a sounding board and governmental feedback for the Executive Committee and Corporation staff or committees, measuring progress and ensuring accountability for the activities of the Heritage Area Corporation. Appropriate bylaws and rules of procedure have been adopted with particular attention given to the nomination process of board members. The issues of potential conflicts of interest are addressed.

## Administration: Professional Management And Staffing

Professional management staff, tailored to the scale of the Corporation's operations, will implement the mission and activities of the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area Corporation.

An executive director, reporting to the Executive Committee, will manage the Heritage Area Corporation and its activities. The director will have administrative responsibilities for several staff, each bringing professional expertise to the primary activities of the

Heritage Area Corporation: planning and zoning, grant-writing, program development, project design and construction management, and park development.

In this regard, the City of Yuma can play a pivotal role in providing staff and the resulting local match for Federal Heritage Area funds. The present City of Yuma Office of Riverfront Development has an experienced staff of professionals involved in several of the early action projects within the Heritage Area. This staff has already been working closely with the Heritage Area Board of Directors. The "tasking" of this staff to the Heritage Area Corporation will assure expedited program and project development in the Heritage Area.

The director may also choose to hire consultants to bring specific expertise to the operations and projects of the Heritage Area Corporation. Project specific advisory committees may also be established to add depth and expertise to the heritage staff.

## *Authorities and Duties*

The foremost responsibility of the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area Corporation is to prepare and implement The Plan for the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area (The Plan). The Heritage Area Corporation, for the purposes of preparing and implementing The Plan, may use funds to make grants available, enter into cooperative agreements, to hire and compensate staff, and to enter into contracts for goods and services.

In addition to developing The Plan, the Heritage Area Corporation shall:

Give priority to implementing actions set forth in The Plan, including steps to assist units of government, regional planning organizations,

and non-profit organizations in preserving and enhancing the Heritage Area.

Assist units of government, regional planning organizations, and non-profit organizations by

- Establishing and maintaining interpretive exhibits in the Heritage Area;
- Developing recreational resources in the Heritage Area;
- Increasing public awareness of and appreciation for the natural, historical, and architectural resources and sites in the Heritage Area;
- Restoring any historic building relating to the themes of the Heritage Area;
- Ensuring that clear, consistent, and environmentally appropriate signs identifying access points and sites of interest are placed throughout the Heritage Area.
- Encouraging, by appropriate means, economic viability in the Heritage Area consistent with the goals of The Plan.
- Encouraging local governments to adopt land use policies consistent with the management of the Heritage Area and the goals of The Plan.
- Considering the interests of diverse governmental, business, and nonprofit groups within the Heritage Area.
- Conducting public “open houses” periodically regarding the implementation of The Plan.
- For any year in which Federal funds have been received under its authorization legislation, meeting auditing and record requirements.

# *Management Objectives*

## **Mission**

Heritage areas, as defined by the National Park Service, are places “where natural, cultural, historic and recreational resources combine to form a nationally distinctive landscape arising from patterns of human activity.” Heritage conservation efforts are grounded in a community’s pride in its history and traditions, and its interest in seeing retained. Preserving the integrity of the cultural landscape and local stories means that future generations of the community will be able to understand and define who they are, where they come from, and what ties them to their home. Heritage areas are designed to protect large, regional landscapes and resources that make up the story of its residents.

The primary mission of the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area Corporation will be to conserve, interpret and promote the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area, and by doing so, to achieve compatible economic development and the education and general welfare of the people.

## **Objectives**

As outlined in its authorizing legislation, the objectives of the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area are:

1. To recognize the role of the Yuma Crossing in the development of the United States, with particular emphasis on the role of the Crossing as an important landmark in the westward expansion during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.
2. To promote, interpret, and develop the

physical and recreational resources of the communities surrounding the Yuma Crossing, which have almost 500 years of recorded history and outstanding cultural, historic, and architectural assets, for the education and benefit of present and future generations.

3. To foster a close working relationship with all levels of government, the private sector, and the local communities in the Yuma community and empower the community to conserve its heritage while continuing to pursue economic opportunities.
4. To provide recreational opportunities for visitors to the Yuma Crossing and to preserve natural resources within the Heritage Area.
5. To improve the Yuma region's ability to serve visitors and enhance the local economy through the completion of the major projects identified within the Heritage Area.

The Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area Corporation may not use the Federal funds it receives through its authorization legislation to acquire real property or an interest in real property. However, nothing precludes the Heritage Area Corporation from using Federal funds from other sources for their permitted purposes. Additionally, the Heritage Area Corporation may spend Federal funds directly on non-Federally owned property to further the purposes of the Heritage Area in assisting units of government in appropriate treatment of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

## **Corporate Principles & Philosophy**

Each proposed project and program associated

with the Heritage Area should further the mission and objectives as set forth in the Plan for the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area.

The Corporation will act primarily as a *catalyst* for project and program development and community enhancement, rather than as a large entity with extensive staffing and considerable day-to-day operating responsibilities. Only by focusing on being a catalyst or change agent can the Heritage Area maintain project momentum.

Each proposed project and program associated with the Heritage Area should strive to become self-sustaining for the Heritage Area Corporation.

Whenever and wherever possible, Heritage Area projects will be accomplished through partnerships either in the public or private sector. In particular, as projects are completed, the Heritage Area will look to its partners to assume ongoing operating responsibilities.

The investment of Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area funds into a project owned or operated by a Heritage Partner will be through a cooperative agreement in which mutually agreed upon expectations, terms and conditions are defined.

The Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area will read cohesively. Signage, graphics, media materials should conform to defined graphic standards developed by the Heritage Area Corporation.

Appropriate private investment in the Heritage Area is encouraged, private property rights are protected, and a collaborative approach between the public and private sectors to problem solving is promoted.

Should new private investment generate new public revenues, the Heritage Area encourages the public sector to reinvest those new revenues within the Heritage Area.

The Heritage Area Corporation should be viewed as a resource to the community, providing technical assistance and expertise either directly or through its Heritage Partners.

## Heritage Partners

A successful Heritage Area can only be achieved through the development of dynamic partnerships and the fostering of “win-win” situations. The Heritage Area Corporation cannot and should not attempt to undertake directly all the activities in the Plan. Numerous individuals, agencies, organizations, and governments have been involved in the planning process and designation of the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area and are recognized as Heritage Partners (a complete listing is provided in this document). Heritage Partners range from those providing funding and technical assistance, such as National Park Service or the State of Arizona, to those organizations delivering interpretive services, such as the Arizona Historical Society. Public agencies such as the City of Yuma and its departments of Parks and Recreation, Community Development and Public Works are Heritage Partners. Other cultural and educational institutions, as Arizona Western College, and volunteer organizations such as the Jaycees are important Heritage Partners.

These are only a few of the powerful partnerships that have shaped the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area and will provide the direction, guidance and support. It is only through these partnerships that the Management Framework Plan can be implemented, assuring the accomplishments and success of the Heritage Area.

## Key Activities

In support of its mission and objectives, the Heritage Area Corporation will direct and

coordinate the diverse conservation, development, programming, educational interpretive activities in the Heritage Area. Key activities include:

Promote the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area's significant heritage resources;

Ensure the conservation of the Area's historical, cultural, and natural resources;

Lead in efforts to educate the public about the significance of these resources and the heritage of the Yuma area targeting visitors as well as local residents.

Promote future growth for the Yuma community in a manner consistent with its heritage and resources;

Ensure successful development of the Heritage Area and its principal features as specified in the Plan; to undertake further planning and design as necessary to achieve this objective;

Manage and operate Heritage facilities, where appropriate;

Cooperate and partner with entities whose goals and purposes are consistent with the goals and purposes of the Corporation;

Coordinate and support the activities of the Heritage partners and the operation of heritage and cultural tourism attractions in the region so as to create a unified project;

Provide technical assistance to cultural heritage efforts and develop design standards for physical and educational/interpretive programs;

Encourage intergovernmental and interagency cooperation in the achievement of these objectives;

Market the Heritage Area, the Yuma community, and its resources as a destination for international, national and regional visitors;

Promote local and regional development of

environmental and recreational opportunities, linkages, and facilities;

Create a series of public/private partnerships to finance projects and initiatives of the Heritage Area;

Seek funding from public (local, state and federal) agencies and private individuals, foundations and corporations;

Accomplish the above in a way that will promote the economic development of the Yuma community.

### Project Development

Project development will be the primary responsibility for the executive director and staff in order to manage initial development projects and coordinate the development of projects, which arise out of public/private partnerships. This project management will include duties such as development programming, contracting and coordinating design and construction services, construction management, and even leasing and/or sale of properties.

### Operations And Maintenance

As the primary activity of the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area Corporation is project development, the primary day-to-day operation and maintenance of venues and programs should reside with appropriate Heritage Partners. For instance, the Arizona Welcome Center featuring the Yuma Endurance Flight exhibits and housing multiple agencies will develop with funding from the Heritage Area Corporation, the Arizona Department of transportation and the State of Arizona. The on-going operations and maintenance could rest with the Yuma Convention and Visitors Bureau and other Heritage partners. One instance where it is more appropriate for the Heritage Area Corporation to assume primary responsibility for programming, operations and

maintenance is the Heritage Center.

### **Programming**

Programming is another major activity of the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area Corporation. The Heritage Area Corporation will develop programs and manage special projects in the four major areas of Interpretation and Visitor Services, Conservation and Reuse, Economic Development and Marketing, and Special Projects.

**Interpretation and Visitor Services** – The Corporation will have the responsibility of coordinating the interpretive, educational and cultural programs that support the Heritage Area effort. For the Heritage Center, the Arizona Welcome Center and the interpretive venues, the Heritage Area Corporation will ensure that the interpretive program retains a high level of consistency and quality. This will draw on the expertise and resources of the NPS, Heritage Area consultants and the Heritage Partners to develop and implement the interpretive program recommended in the Plan. The Arizona Historical Society and the Arizona State Parks provide exceptional resources for interpreting Yuma's heritage.

Benefiting present and future generations, interpretation activities provide educational resources for local schools and residents in addition to contributing to the visitor experience.

**Conservation and Reuse** – One of the most important programs that the Heritage Area will support are programs for the conservation of Yuma's natural environment, the Colorado River, and the adaptive reuse of its historic structures. Yuma has been proactive in the environmental restoration and conservation of the East and West Wetlands. Extensive wetlands planning, supported by broad-based public input, has produced a multi-year work

program in collaboration with Heritage Partners. The Wetlands provide recreational opportunities as well as preserving natural resources.

The Interpretive Framework Plan identifies venues that utilize existing historic resources as settings to tell the story of Yuma's heritage. The conversion and reuse of the former City Hall as the Heritage Center is a primary example. The Heritage Area Corporation should also promote a façade rehabilitation program for Main Street, providing grants and technical assistance to property owners who return their "slipcovered" buildings to their original architecture.

**Economic Development** – Enhancing the local economy through the completion of major projects is an important function of the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area Corporation. Private development adjacent to Gateway Park provides an opportunity for the Heritage Area to collaborate with private enterprise to create a major contribution to the economic future of Yuma, particularly its downtown. The primary partner is the Clark-Lankford Group and the anticipated investment in 40-50 million dollars. While Clark-Lankford is the primary partner, there are numerous opportunities for private initiatives throughout the Heritage Area. The Heritage Area will advocate that new public revenues generated by private investment within the Heritage Area be re-invested in the Heritage Area, helping it to become more self-sufficient.

**Special Projects** – The Plan for the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area cannot be a static document and projects may arise in the coming years that meet the Mission of the Corporation. The Heritage Area Corporation, through its partnerships and resources, should be poised to support appropriate special projects that meet its mission and objectives.

## *Budget Planning*

### Introduction

Financing for the operations, projects, and programs of the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area reflects the varied partnerships that comprise the Heritage Area. While initially the City of Yuma will provide a significant portion of the local match, there will be a broadening of financial support over time, with other partners increasing their commitments.

The Corporation's operational viability is founded on a commitment by the City of Yuma to "task" its Riverfront Development Team to the Heritage Area Corporation. The budget for personnel and operations for the Riverfront Development Team is \$343,000 for FY 2002-2003. In addition, the City of Yuma is currently providing office space as an in-kind contribution. Eventually, the historic City Hall will be converted into the "Heritage Center"—a significant in-kind match from the City.

### Phase I (Years 1 through 5)

The first five years of the Heritage Area focuses predominantly on projects, while the second five years is more program-oriented. With staffing in place, the Heritage Area budgets are shaped by the current and projected financial commitments by Heritage Partners.

An "early action" priority project is Gateway Park, the recreational and historical park on Yuma's downtown riverfront. The State of Arizona has already committed \$1.35 million in funds toward the Park. The City of Yuma has also committed \$600,000 for improved vehicular access to the Park. A projected \$750,000 in Federal Heritage Area funds will provide for interpreting the historical

significance of the Yuma crossings. Thus, a significant local "overmatch" will be achieved for Heritage funding to undertake \$2.7 million in park construction. Additional over-match is provided through substantial grading work provided as a community service by Arizona Public Service.

The Molina Block, owned by the Arizona Historical Society, is another first phase project. The City of Yuma has committed approximately \$450,000 in funds for clearance of non-historic buildings, archeological research work, landscaping, and the development of joint parking for the Arizona Historical Society and the City of Yuma. The State of Arizona has committed another \$60,000, with an in-kind match from the Historical Society of \$40,000. Based on this match and projected new non-Federal commitments, the Molina Block is projected to receive \$1,075,000 in Heritage Area funding in the first phase for adobe restoration and redevelopment of the Molina Block "campus".

The Arizona Welcome Center along 4th Avenue involves a significant funding partnership. The City of Yuma is collaborating with the Yuma County Water Users Association and the Bureau of Reclamation to provide the land for the Visitors Center. Funding from ADOT is being sought for improvements to the current Truck Inspection Station and road improvements associated with the Welcome Center. Finally, it is envisioned that the State of Arizona will match on an equal basis the \$1,450,000 in projected Federal Heritage Area funding. Of equal significance is the commitment of the Yuma Jaycees/City Yuma Endurance Flight Plane Committee to loan the restored plane as the key exhibit of the Visitor Center.

Conversion of the historic Yuma City Hall into the "Heritage Center" will involve both

restoration of the building and development of interpretive exhibits. The major local match is the commitment of the City of Yuma to contribute the use of the building for this purpose. While additional grants will be sought, the adaptive reuse of the building will involve \$450,000 in Federal Heritage Area funds.

The most visited historical site in Yuma—and one of the most popular in the state system-- is the Yuma Territorial State Historical Park. Arizona State Parks and the Heritage Area agree that they need to share equally the \$800,000 cost of updating the museum and interpretive exhibits. Thus, \$400,000 in Federal Heritage Area funds are committed to this project in Phase I.

The balance of the Federal Heritage Area funds in Phase I is projected for programming, and to a lesser extent, administrative support for the Heritage Area staff. Since the City of Yuma will bring West Wetlands Park on-line in 2002-2003, it is projected that approximately \$200,000 of Federal Heritage Area funding will be provided for environmental education programming. The City of Yuma's Park and Recreation Staff will be committing an equal amount for operations and programming within that Park. East Wetlands will also receive \$100,000 for interpretive programming during Phase I. The match will come from in-kind efforts from both the City of Yuma Parks and Recreation Department and the Quechan Indian Nation.

Historic preservation and interpretive programming of \$100,000 will involve technical assistance to the Historic District Review Commission (HDRC) toward the inventory and conservation of historic sites and structures. The match will be provided by HDRC volunteer and staff support. Interpretive programming for the Heritage Center of \$300,000 will ensure

exhibit development and will be matched by local operational support of the Heritage Area and matching state and private foundation grants for interpretation.

Implementation of the East Wetlands Restoration plan over a 5-7 year period will be carried out by the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area Corporation with funds other than Federal Heritage funds. The Bureau of Reclamation is the most probable major funding partner, but other partners include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Agriculture, Environmental Protection Agency, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, State of Arizona Water Protection Fund, and private foundations supporting environmental preservation. The estimated long range cost is \$18 million.

### Phase II (Years 6-10)

The focus on Phase II will be to enrich and enliven venues being built by Heritage Partners with environmental/historical interpretation and educational programs. In addition, there will be important new initiatives to tell Yuma's "stories" involving its agricultural, Hispanic, and military heritage.

The only major "project" commitment will be \$1 million toward the construction of the interpretive tower and overlook at Gateway Park. This project will connect the upper and lower sections of the park, and unify the interpretive elements within the park. The significant local overmatch during construction of the park—plus the ongoing maintenance commitment by the City of Yuma Parks and Recreation Department—will provide the local match.

Environmental education programming for East and West Wetlands will continue at an increased level of support. Funds will be committed to match the City of Yuma's

commitment to converting Orange Avenue to a pedestrian-friendly gateway and border for Century Heights. Arizona State Parks will again match funding to re-position the historic interpretation within the Yuma Crossing State Historical Park so as to support the interpretive master plan. Interpretive programming and new exhibits will be the focus of efforts within the Yuma Heritage Center. Funds will also be secured to assist the Historic District Review Commission to expand the historic property and site inventory (including archeological sites); add new historic districts; provide technical assistance to homeowners wishing to restore their historic properties; and provide grants on both an emergency and non-emergency basis for conservation and restoration of historic properties.

Administrative support for the Heritage Area will also supplement the City of Yuma's staffing commitment.

Perhaps one of the most significant initiatives during Phase II will be to collaborate with three important sectors of Yuma: the agricultural, military and Hispanic communities. These are vital stories to tell in order to fully appreciate the growth of Yuma in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. During Phase I, it is expected that three distinct working groups will be formed to help tell a part of their stories in the Yuma Heritage. During Phase II, then, the Heritage Area will collaborate with these working groups to find an appropriate venue and media through which to bring their stories to life.

## Phase I Proposed Budget

	PROJECT	Heritage Area	State of Arizona	City of Yuma	In-Kind	Arizona Historical Society	Arizona State Parks	Arizona Public Service	East Wetlands Partners	ADOT	TOTALS
<b>West Wetlands</b>	West Wetlands	\$200,000		\$200,000							\$400,000
<b>Downtown Riverfront</b>	Arizona Visitor Center	\$1,400,000	\$1,500,000	\$450,000						\$500,000	\$3,850,000
	Gateway Park	\$750,000	\$1,350,000	\$600,000	\$500,000					\$500,000	\$4,700,000
	Heritage Center	\$725,000		\$1,250,000							1,975,000
	Yuma Territorial Prison	\$400,000					\$400,000				\$800,000
<b>East Wetlands</b>	East Wetlands	\$100,000		\$100,000					18.1 Million		\$18.3 Million
<b>Brinley Avenue</b>	Molina Block	\$1,075,000	\$60,000	\$700,000		\$440,000					\$2,275,000
<b>Century Heights</b>	Historic Preservation	\$100,000		\$100,000							\$200,000
<b>No District</b>	Administration	\$250,000		\$1,750,000							\$2,000,000
	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>Heritage Funds</b>	<b>\$5,000,000</b>	<b>Outside Sources</b>	<b>\$29,500,000</b>	<b>Five-Year Total</b>				<b>\$34,500,000</b>	

Table 3

## Phase II Proposed Budget

	PROJECT	Heritage Area	State of Arizona	City of Yuma	In-Kind	Arizona Historical Society	Arizona State Parks	Arizona Public Service	East Wetlands Partners	Heritage Partners	TOTALS
<b>West Wetlands</b>	West Wetlands	\$400,000		\$400,000							\$800,000
	Gateway Park	\$1,000,000									\$1,000,000
<b>Downtown Riverfront</b>	Heritage Center	\$400,000									\$400,000
	Yuma Crossing Historic Park	\$400,000					\$400,000				\$800,000
<b>East Wetlands</b>	East Wetlands	\$400,000							\$400,000		\$800,000
<b>Century Heights</b>	Historic Preservation & Orange Ave	\$800,000		\$800,000							\$1,600,000
	Agricultural Heritage Center	\$400,000								\$400,000	\$800,000
	Military Heritage Center	\$400,000								\$400,000	\$800,000
<b>No District</b>	Hispanic Heritage Center	\$400,000								\$400,000	\$800,000
	Administration	\$250,000		\$1,750,000							\$2,000,000
	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>Heritage Funds</b>	<b>\$5,000,000</b>	<b>Outside Sources</b>	<b>\$4,950,000</b>	<b>Five-Year Total</b>	<b>\$9,950,000</b>				

Table 4

