

## **1960 to 1980 in Phoenix**

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The purpose of this paper is to analyze 1960-1980 in Phoenix, and provide an overview of the community building techniques used for the challenges surrounding the area during this time period. In addition, it will be important to provide an overview of the built environment, the community assets, and a description of what civic life was like during each of these time periods. In order to address these time periods appropriately, it will be important to address them separately and in chronological order. Perhaps structuring the essay in this manner will provide more insight into the evolution of Phoenix.

### **1960-1980: Sunbelt Center and Growth Away from Downtown Phoenix**

Phoenix's economic momentum generated during the 1950s carried into the 1960s and 1970s, as its manufacturing companies continued to thrive and its new found technological companies began to further establish themselves. Companies such as General Electric, AiResearch, and Motorola, which contained upward of eighteen thousand employees by 1980, further assisted in diversifying Phoenix's economy. The lifestyle in Phoenix also enabled the city to become an ideal place to live for many citizens across the country. Many residents of the area praised the open community type of living and the feel of relaxation they received from the atmosphere surrounding civic life in Phoenix. The atmosphere surrounding the civic life in Phoenix actually earned the area the reputation of being a boom-town that carried a small-town type of lifestyle, which appealed to many. This economic prosperity accompanied with other assets such as the city's attractive climate and lifestyle allowed the city to flourish in terms of the city's overall growth. In fact, although many would consider the post-World War II era the time period in which Phoenix experienced the most population and economic growth, Phoenix

experienced its highest level of spatial growth in the following decades, as the city that covered just over 187 miles in 1960 covered close to 330 miles by 1980. However, perhaps this growth did not necessarily entail development and many would argue that this twenty year stretch is where urban sprawl, one of the primary community challenges in the city, began to take hold in Phoenix. It was not until the 1970s where the idea of controlling some of this growth was considered a necessary precaution, as leapfrog development left massive patches of vacant land throughout the city. This uncontrolled growth had reached a point during the era in which many of the housing developments in the area were completely sold before any houses, sewers, or streets had been built to connect the area. This type of development created the need for infill development, as nearly 40 percent of land inside the city was considered vacant, and led to what many would consider the decline of the Phoenix metropolitan area and the almost complete erosion of Phoenix's downtown area. In addition to many of the problems associated with sprawl, such as transportation issues, pollution, a city's inability to effectively provide basic services, etc., the city also encountered its fair share of problems with organized crime, high murder rates, as well as an increasing rate of white collar crimes (Luckingham, 1989).

### Works Cited

City of Phoenix. (2014). *History*. Retrieved January 18, 2014, from City of Phoenix Official Website: <http://phoenix.gov/citygovernment/facts/history/>

Luckingham, B. (1989). *Phoenix: The History of the Southwest Metropolis*. The University of Arizona Press.