

# City of Goodyear Growing Goodyear 2021 October Episode 1

Host: Tammy Vo, Digital Communications Director

Guests: Goodyear Mayor Georgia Lord and Goodyear City Manager Julie Karins

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## **Host Tammy Vo:**

Welcome to Growing Goodyear, a podcast that provides in-depth conversations with the movers and shakers in one of the fastest-growing cities in the nation. People and businesses are flocking to Goodyear, Arizona, which is located just 20 minutes west of downtown Phoenix. It's a great place to live, work and play, and despite its rapid growth, it still feels like everyone's home town. Simply put, it's a great time to be in Goodyear, Arizona.

I'm Tammy Vo, the city's Digital Communications Director. This episode features long-time resident and long-time public servant Mayor Georgia Lord as she shares her memories of living in this city and serving the community of Goodyear. We'll also hear from City Manager Julie Karins as we ask, "How can we continue to have a well-run city while growing at this rapid pace?"

Before we get down to business, let's start off with our Fast Five with Mayor Lord!

## **Host Tammy Vo**

Okay, question one. If you could give a key to the city to someone famous, who would it be?

## **Mayor Lord**

It would be Doris Day.

## **Host Tammy Vo**

What is the longest council meeting you've ever attended?

## **Mayor Lord**

Well, the other night was pretty close to it - ten o'clock.

## **Host Tammy Vo:**

So, essentially five hours?

## **Mayor Lord:**

Five hours.

**Host Tammy Vo**

If you could fly anywhere for lunch, where would you go?

**Mayor Lord**

I'd go to Hong Kong and go shopping.

**Host Tammy Vo**

Speaking of flying, aisle or window seat?

**Mayor Lord**

Window.

**Host Tammy Vo**

What is the best part about being the mayor of Goodyear?

**Mayor Lord**

I like meeting people. I like being able to organize things. I like being very verbal. And this, this was all part of it.

**Host Tammy Vo**

That was fun! Thank you, Mayor. Now, let's switch gears and talk about your history with the city.

**Host Tammy Vo**

Just hearing you and watching how you are, Mayor, it really feels like Goodyear has your heart.

**Mayor Lord**

Oh, it does. It does. I care about my city. And I try very hard not to hurt it in any way that I could and can and do sometimes with my verbal statements. I'm very, I guess you'd say in your face. And I'm not shy to say exactly what I feel. And so, some people interpret that a little differently. And so that makes it, makes me aware that I don't want to hurt anybody's feelings, but I want to finally be the one that tells the truth.

**Host Tammy Vo**

You came to Goodyear in 1997. Is that correct?

**Mayor Lord**

Yes - '97 and contracted a house, and we built it at PebbleCreek.

**Host Tammy Vo**

And over the years. I mean, look where we are now. We're the nation's ninth fastest-growing city. Does it kind of feel like your baby in a way that you watched grow over the years and look where we are now?

**Mayor Lord**

Absolutely. When I finally got involved with the city, I really wanted to do it. I really wanted to be part of it.

**Host Tammy Vo**

When we talk about Goodyear, what makes this such a special moment in time for our city and for you?

**Mayor Lord**

I think to me, the main emphasis here is, I believe, and I say this often, I believe that we have done such a good job of talking about our city, developing our city, that our own our city residents have taken ownership of the city.

**Host Tammy Vo**

For the first time we are getting ready to open Goodyear Civic Square, which is going to be the heart of our city, we're hoping. I mean, I know you your heart and soul is in this project. What is it going to mean to you when those doors finally open?

**Mayor Lord**

A relief? (laughter) It says thank you to the original committee, there were 25 of them on. I mean, we're so fortunate in Goodyear, because we had a clear, clear palette. We didn't have, you know, we started to paint a picture, and we were able to do that with the input of all kinds of people, all kinds of career fields, all kinds of lifestyles. And so, I think that really built a great deal of confidence in me when I decided to run for council. Because I felt like I knew the city. I felt like I knew the people.

**Host Tammy Vo**

What surprises you about the city's growth?

**Mayor Lord**

I didn't expect to be so rapid. That's what surprises me.

**Host Tammy Vo**

What is it about Goodyear? I mean why, why are we the ninth fastest-growing city?

**Mayor Lord**

Because we're prepared. We're prepared for this moment. We have grown so rapidly, but we have grown with improving government, the city hall. I think all the past city managers and council has have contributed to that. I think there was a turning point when our city managers became very sophisticated on how we could improve the way we do things at city hall, and so they produce programs like LEAD and other things where each of the departments learned how to refine their business and then work together.

**Host Tammy Vo**

Well, how important is it that people take pride in their city, in where they live?

**Mayor Lord**

Oh, I think it's very important. I think, a healthy city, a city that's progressing, a city that has so much to offer to the people, a city that makes government close to the people. I just think that has a great effect on what we call really a hometown.

**Host Tammy Vo**

This is your last term. Correct, Mayor?

**Mayor Lord**

Unfortunately, yes. Fortunately, at my age, it's probably right.

**Host Tammy Vo**

When you look over your time and the years you've been here as mayor, when your term is up, what do you want your legacy to be at the city?

**Mayor Lord**

Well, I guess if you look at the construction site, it was probably the city hall, you know, because that's where I started before I was elected. That's why I ran. I ran because I wanted to see that city hall built. But I think that I tried to, to accomplish - whatever we accomplish, it's for the majority of the people.

**Host Tammy Vo**

It's interesting when you talk about how things you know, did work out, sometimes with the project over the years, and then it didn't. It's kind of been a roller coaster with that that project. Tell me more about what was that like for you to have kind of those highs and lows and the disappointments over the years? What have you learned from that? And what could you share with other people about that and just being part of life?

**Mayor Lord**

Don't give up. Another opportunity comes before you, take it.

**Host Tammy Vo**

So, had you not just gone for it, would you be here today doing this?

**Mayor Lord**

No. I grew.

**Host Tammy Vo**

The city of Goodyear's growth didn't just happen overnight. It's the result of years of planning and preparation by the Goodyear City Council and city staff. The council sets the policy for the city, and the person responsible for the city's day-to-day operations is City Manager Julie Karins.

**Host Tammy Vo**

Julie, welcome. Let's just jump right in. My first question for you is what is it like to be the city manager for one of the top 10 fastest-growing cities in the country.

**City Manager Julie Karins**

So being the city manager for Goodyear is the is the greatest honor of my career. So not only do I have a wonderful visionary mayor and council, I have an amazing team here at the city of Goodyear. What's unique about working for a quickly growing city is I'm getting to build the future city of Goodyear. I just don't think that's what a lot of city managers get to do is to really lay down the foundations for a future city. So, it's an incredible honor, a great honor for me.

**Host Tammy Vo**

You and I have spoken I think many times about the future of our city, and I'll never forget when you coined the phrase, "it's a great time to be in Goodyear." And that has just really stuck with me and so many people. What do you think it is that's special about this moment in time for our city?

**City Manager Julie Karins**

The Census Bureau just named us the ninth fastest-growing city in the nation of cities over 50,000, and it truly is a matter of we knew that the city would grow. We have available land and resources and infrastructure. So it wasn't a matter of if it was when. So, we've been planning for this moment in time, but to have a community where our residents love living here. We did a recent citizen satisfaction survey where 94% of our residents say Goodyear is a great or good place to live. And to be able to maintain that quality of life while we're rapidly growing and inviting new residents to our community and new industry and, you know, employees, you

know, to work at those industries, into our community, it really is a special a special time for Goodyear.

**Host Tammy Vo**

Did it surprise you at all that even during the worst of the pandemic that Goodyear continued to grow and expand like crazy?

**City Manager Julie Karins**

We certainly went into the pandemic cautious. It was uncharted territory for us, so we adopted that year's budget, you know, looking very conservatively not sure what was going to happen. And at the end of the day, we ended up with one month of sales tax revenues that were lower than the year prior. That was the month of April 2020 when everything was kind of you know, closed down. So truly it didn't, it didn't slow Goodyear down at all. When we look at not only are we adding residents, and again ninth-fastest growing community in the nation, we've been adding jobs, and that's not reflected in the Census data. So, a couple of the indicators we look to is we've added more than 8,000 jobs in the past 10 years to Goodyear, that's a 36% increase. But we also, you know, still have a lot of residents who desire again to come to Goodyear for our quality of life and that didn't slow down during the pandemic. We had a 38% increase in single family home permits year over year, during the pandemic, and so I think as people around the nation were perhaps reevaluating their quality of life, whether it was weather related or the ability to telecommute, I think that Goodyear just continues to be a really attractive place where people and industry wants to be

**Host Tammy Vo**

I'm glad you brought up the topic of jobs, because you know there might be some outside of Goodyear who perceived Goodyear or even the West Valley is being really just a bedroom community. Can you talk about how that perception is changing?

**City Manager Julie Karins**

Goodyear definitely started as a as a bedroom community, and people were attracted to Goodyear because of the wide-open spaces and affordable living, and then they would commute into the central city for work. And that is slowly beginning to change. We, as a city, our mayor and council and the rest of the Goodyear team, it's a high priority for us to bring high quality jobs to Goodyear to improve the quality of life of our residents. If someone can spend an extra hour a day not commuting, they have more time to spend with their family or volunteering or doing sporting, you know, activities at our new recreation campus, it just improves their overall quality of life if they can live and work in play in their own communities. So, you know, it's a transition that we're going through. I often hear comments about, "Well, we have a lot of warehouses," for example, and we have a great transportation story. We are within a day's truck drive of California. We have the connectivity between the I- 10, the 303 and

the 101, so we are a natural, desirable location for warehouse, but I also think that a lot more happens inside those buildings than people understand. We have a lot of advanced manufacturing, and advanced manufacturing are good paying jobs. And they are creating some incredible projects, you get to go tour and see what they are building and creating in Goodyear.

But again, that's just the beginning. When you add the population, when you add the density of people coming into Goodyear to work, you now are creating an environment in a market where your restaurant, retail and entertainment organizations companies want to be. That's why they are going to want to invest in Goodyear, because they now know we have the market to support them. We're transitioning from the bedroom community to an employment corridor that, in turn, brings your restaurant retail and entertainment, and I believe our next chapter is going to be an office community. We have a lot of land available in Goodyear to develop, and so this is just a moment in that transition for us added a lot more to come

**Host Tammy Vo**

What I'm hearing you say is that if I, let's say I'm a resident in Goodyear who connects with things that are real tangible to me, so let's say a restaurant or a hair salon, you're saying that indirectly, when I'm looking at something like a new warehouse, going up, for example, or a new manufacturing facility that that in some way, can influence the things that I really appreciate, like the restaurants and the hair salon?

**City Manager Julie Karins**

Absolutely. It's when I'm a private restaurateur looking to locate a business, I want to know how many people are going to support my business at lunchtime, how many are going to support my business in the evening and on the weekend. And by adding these workers to Goodyear, again brings the density which will make that business successful. It's not an accident that we are now, after bringing these 8000 jobs to Goodyear, that we are now seeing more restaurants being announced that are opening here in Goodyear.

**Host Tammy Vo**

Switching topics now, thinking about the future projections of our city, some of the number crunchers in the county, they crunch their numbers and they say, "Well, we think the population projections over the next 30 years are going to bring Goodyear to about 250,000 residents," and I should note that right now we're at just about 95,000. When you when you look at those numbers, and you're the city manager of this city, what kinds of things start to become really important to think about in terms of future planning, whether it be water or housing or, or infrastructure. What are the top things that really weigh on your mind when you're thinking about this?

**City Manager Julie Karins**

It really comes down to planning. As I mentioned, this is not an if we grow, this is when we grow. We do know this is happening. It's incumbent upon us to make sure that we're prepared, and it really starts with the General Plan. The General Plan is the overall land use of the developed undeveloped areas of Goodyear. This is a process that happens over a number of years and involves residents, but it's ultimately voted on by residents. Every 10 years, the residents of Goodyear will vote on our General Plan, which begins to set forth "What do we believe is going to happen in all of these open spaces? "

After the General Plan, we have many different what we call master plans. We have a master plan for Parks and Recreation, saying, "Where is that next park going to go? Where is the need going to be for the next library?" We have transportation master plans, which say, "These are going to be our major transportation corridors in the community. How do we make sure that we're prepared for increasing traffic counts?" We have a water master plan. And water, of course, has been a, very much top of mind, considering that we now have a shortage on the Colorado River.

We have a team of specialists here in Goodyear who are highly focused on water. It is a very precious resource to anyone who is here in the southwest, and we have a robust water portfolio that means we are not being affected by the shortage that's been talked about in the media, and we have a plan for the future. In Goodyear, every empty piece of land has a dedicated amount of water that we know can be supported on that piece of property. When a new locate comes into the city, they're not taking anything away from our existing residents. For example. There are water resources that we have that we planned for, dedicated to serve that particular parcel. So, water in Arizona is very complicated, and it's a very detailed, specialized area, but we spend absolutely the needed resources to make sure that that we are very well planned for the growth in Goodyear.

**Host Tammy Vo**

One thing I've noticed about the residents of Goodyear is that they're very passionate, and when we especially engage on platforms like social media, they're very engaged and want to know more about their city genuinely. For the residents of Goodyear, or really any other resident out there, even if you don't live in Goodyear, what would you tell them about the importance of shaping the future of their city and getting involved in some of the processes?

**City Manager Julie Karins**

We love to have an engaged community, and as you mentioned, our residents here in Goodyear, they have a high level of faith and trust in in local government. And we welcome their engagement. We have boards and commissions that our residents can volunteer on. Matter of fact, we'll have one coming up for that General Plan that I mentioned. We have



volunteer opportunities at the city, if there's something, say someone's moved to Goodyear, and they're retired, and would like to do a little bit of work still and contribute. We have volunteer opportunities. And then of course, we're always looking for who the next council members will be serving the residents of Goodyear. We have an upcoming LEAD class, which is basically a Citizens Academy for anyone who's just wanting to really understand how the city works better.

**Host Tammy Vo**

Julie, for those who may not know anything about Goodyear, let's say they don't live here, maybe they've never visited here before - what might be the one thing you tell them about their city as to either what makes us special or why they might want to come check us out?

**City Manager Julie Karins**

The city of Goodyear has a lot to offer. As I mentioned, the residents who live here already believe that it's a great place to be. We have a beautiful new recreation campus. We're building a brand-new city hall with a beautiful two story 25,000-square foot-library with a special children's area. We have the Goodyear Ballpark that proudly hosts spring training for the Cleveland Indians and the Cincinnati Reds. And we just have a lot to offer for the quality of life of our community. We have a diversity of housing options, everything from starter homes through family homes, executive housing - we really have it all in our community. And at the end of the day, we have a mayor and council who are passionate and dedicated to the quality of life of our community. As we grow, we will absolutely keep the quality of life for our existing residents top of mind. We want that Trader Joe's, we all live in our community, we want that Trader Joe's as much as our residents. And, our job is to tell the story of Goodyear, and to make sure that our desired restaurant, retailers and entertainers know that we welcome them and that our residents will support them. It's just a very special time to be in Goodyear.

**Host Tammy Vo**

If you were to look into your crystal ball 10 years from now, for the city, what comes to mind? What do you think Goodyear will be like?

**City Manager Julie Karins**

I think we're going to continue to grow responsibly, and I would like to believe, well, no, let me say this, we will have our first office locate. So, we have a speculative class A office building going up now, and it will be ready by June of next year. I just truly believe that we've only just begun. We are going to have even a more diverse level of employment for our existing residents. We will continue to grow and add, just to have a complete community, a high-quality community, and so 10 years from now - we have all the plans for the infrastructure and to support it, but I think it's going to just continue to grow upon what we already have been doing really well.

**Host Tammy Vo**

As you heard today, the mayor volunteered her time and served on a committee before running for council and eventually mayor – because she wanted to make a difference. No matter where you live, you too have the opportunity to make a difference and help shape your community by being engaged with your local government.

This wraps up our first episode of Growing Goodyear. If you have questions or comments, email us at [communications@goodyearaz.gov](mailto:communications@goodyearaz.gov), and don't forget to follow us on the city of Goodyear's social media pages.