

Queen Creek Arizona

June 5–10, 2011



Queen Creek Arizona

Striking a Balance

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About the Urban Land Institute

THE MISSION OF THE URBAN LAND INSTITUTE is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide.

ULI is committed to

- Bringing together leaders from across the fields of real estate and land use policy to exchange best practices and serve community needs;
- Fostering collaboration within and beyond ULI's membership through mentoring, dialogue, and problem solving;
- Exploring issues of urbanization, conservation, regeneration, land use, capital formation, and sustainable development;
- Advancing land use policies and design practices that respect the uniqueness of both built and natural environments;
- Sharing knowledge through education, applied research, publishing, and electronic media; and

- Sustaining a diverse global network of local practice and advisory efforts that address current and future challenges.

Established in 1936, the Institute today has nearly 30,000 members worldwide, representing the entire spectrum of the land use and development disciplines. Professionals represented include developers, builders, property owners, investors, architects, public officials, planners, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, academicians, students, and librarians.

ULI relies heavily on the experience of its members. It is through member involvement and information resources that ULI has been able to set standards of excellence in development practice. The Institute has long been recognized as one of the world's most respected and widely quoted sources of objective information on urban planning, growth, and development.

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About ULI Advisory Services

THE GOAL OF ULI'S Advisory Services Program is to bring the finest expertise in the real estate field to bear on complex land use planning and development projects, programs, and policies. Since 1947, this program has assembled well over 400 ULI-member teams to help sponsors find creative, practical solutions for issues such as downtown redevelopment, land management strategies, evaluation of development potential, growth management, community revitalization, brownfields redevelopment, military base reuse, provision of low-cost and affordable housing, and asset management strategies, among other matters. A wide variety of public, private, and nonprofit organizations have contracted for ULI's Advisory Services.

Each panel team is composed of highly qualified professionals who volunteer their time to ULI. They are chosen for their knowledge of the panel topic and screened to ensure their objectivity. ULI's interdisciplinary panel teams provide a holistic look at development problems. A respected ULI member who has previous panel experience chairs each panel.

The agenda for a panel assignment is intensive. It includes an in-depth briefing composed of a tour of the site and meetings with sponsor representatives; hour-long interviews of key community representatives; and a day of formulating recommendations. Long nights of discussion precede the panel's conclusions. On the final day on site, the panel makes an oral presentation of its findings and conclusions to the sponsor. A written report is prepared and published.

Because the sponsoring entities are responsible for significant preparation before the panel's visit, including sending extensive briefing materials to each member and arranging for the panel to meet with key local community members and stakeholders in the project under consideration,

participants in ULI's panel assignments are able to make accurate assessments of a sponsor's issues and to provide recommendations in a compressed amount of time.

A major strength of the program is ULI's unique ability to draw on the knowledge and expertise of its members, including land developers and owners, public officials, academicians, representatives of financial institutions, and others. In fulfillment of the mission of the Urban Land Institute, this Advisory Services panel report is intended to provide objective advice that will promote the responsible use of land to enhance the environment.

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The panel also wishes to thank the more than 75 town staff, elected and appointed officials, property and business owners, and residents for sparing their valuable time to participate in the interview process. The interview process is one of the key features of a ULI panel and the input and observations from these individuals made the following recommendations possible.

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Foreword: The Panel's Assignment

IN JUNE 2011, THE URBAN LAND INSTITUTE

conducted an Advisory Services panel in Queen Creek, to provide the town with advice and recommendations on a variety of issues and questions associated with real estate and land use policy, including the town's market potential, development options, planning and design concepts, and implementation strategies. The panel was also asked to make recommendations on economic development opportunities, town finances, and associated issues of municipal management. Some of the town's questions included

- What are national trends that could affect the mix of jobs and housing in the town?
- Are the town's target industries still valid?
- How can the town become a more destination-focused community?
- Are there specific sites that can become focus areas for development?
- How can the town successfully manage the transition from a more rural to an urban community?
- Should the town incentivize development in the Town Center?
- How can the town create a transportation network to accommodate growth?
- Can changes to design requirements be a catalyst for new growth?
- What are the best options for achieving the town's long-term financial goals?

Location map.



Background

Queen Creek is a town of 26,000 people located in the East Valley approximately 30 miles southeast of the Phoenix Central Business District. Incorporated in 1989, the town is steeped in the rural and equestrian history of Arizona. Although the majority of the town is located in Maricopa County, a small portion lies in Pinal County. The town is primarily residential; neighborhoods range from unplanned rural communities and small ranchettes to large-lot, purpose-built, equestrian-oriented, single-family homes to the most recent trend of standard

The Queen Creek Town Hall complex is located in the traditional center of town.



smaller-lot, planned-unit developments. Historically, the commercial center of town was focused on the rural crossroads at Ellsworth and Ocotillo roads. More recently, the center of commercial development has migrated north; it encompasses a large retail area and a new library and civic center adjacent to the new Ellsworth Loop and near Rittenhouse and Ocotillo roads.

Like most communities in the East Valley, Queen Creek acts as a bedroom community for the employment centers in Phoenix, Tempe, and Mesa. However, unlike the nearby cities of Chandler and Gilbert, and the residential areas of Mesa, Queen Creek has made a special effort to retain and promote an equestrian and agricultural lifestyle. The juxtaposition of modern convenient services, parks and civic amenities, and housing and retail adjacent to agricultural uses and the nearby San Tan Mountains establish Queen Creek as a unique community in the East Valley.

The citizens of Queen Creek have relatively high median incomes relative to those in the rest of the East Valley and Phoenix. Noteworthy also, the town has undertaken significant capital improvements and public facilities in the way of parks, a new library and civic center, drainage projects, and road improvements in recent years.

Current Conditions

From 2000 until 2008, Queen Creek experienced explosive growth in residential and retail uses. With the coming of the recession in 2008, both the residential and the commercial real estate markets declined precipitously. In 2011, the anemic housing market continues to be affected by weak job growth, loan underwriting and modification hurdles, loss of home equity, and high residential foreclosures—all of which have hit the East Valley communities hard.

Like most other local governments in Arizona, the town generates revenues for both major capital improvements and ongoing operating costs mainly from a sales tax, not a property tax. During boom times, local governments look to increase the pace of retail

development as a means to supply their coffers. The formula for attracting retail is to ensure that enough rooftops (housing) are in place to support the stores. This arrangement, in essence, guides communities to encourage and approve as many residential units as possible in an effort to convince retailers to locate in their jurisdictions. The formula is further complicated by market share modifications and cannibalization and by multijurisdictional competition for retail uses. The amount of vacant retail space in East Valley communities and throughout the Phoenix metropolitan area shows how these complications have played out.

Summary of Questions for the Panel

Recognizing that the current approach to land use policy is unsustainable and that as the nation and the Phoenix region come out of recession the town needs a more long-term land use and development vision, the town asked ULI to provide strategic advice focused on the following issues:

- *Market Potential:* What uses will compose the future job markets? How can the town position itself for revenue-positive uses? How can the town be more competitive with other East Valley communities? What is the correct mix of housing types and density?
- *Development Strategies:* What are the appropriate development strategies that can be used to address the market without sacrificing the town's vision for the future? Are there specific catalytic sites that can encourage new development? How can Queens Creek successfully facilitate the transition to a more suburban/urban lifestyle? Can open space be protected? What standards will assure that each new development pays its fair share in creating a high-quality recreational network?
- *Planning and Design:* What types of design guidelines should the town institute? How should the surface transportation network be designed to promote accessibility to work and shopping while minimizing the length and frequency of daily trips and improving connectivity?

What roles should paths, bikeways, and open space play in the transportation network? What is the appropriate sequence for residential and nonresidential development? What role should public improvements play in the overall development vision?

- *Implementation:* How should the town achieve a new vision that addresses the new paradigm of real estate development? What public and private financing options should the town pursue to implement the infrastructure necessary to achieve its vision? How can the Comprehensive Plan be modified to reflect the new approach? How can the town foster future quality land development through regulations, incentives, or a combination of the two?

Summary of the Panel's Recommendations

Given Queen Creek's unique character as a combination of urban and rural areas and based on the excellent work already begun in design, transportation improvement, and fiscal responsibility, the panel recommended that the town explore the following approaches:

- *Town Center:* The Town Center should be a superb, well-designed, compact development that offers a rich variety of retail, higher-density residential, entertainment, and civic uses. The retail should focus on "farm to table" products grown locally, which will distinguish it from other retail areas in nearby communities. Uses such as a restaurant incubator, community kitchen, and regular farm-life festivals highlighting local cuisine and farm products will establish the Queen Creek Town Center as a place to visit.
- *Long-Term Land Use Vision:* The long-term land use vision should be to retain primarily rural residential and equestrian uses for most of the town, while encouraging a more dense, mixed-use development in the Town Center environs. Higher-density development and a wider variety of unit types should be focused in the area immediately adjacent to the Town Center with

the goal of creating a sense of place and improving the retail trade in the existing nearby shopping centers. The land use in the northeast portions of the town and nearby county (accomplished through future annexation) should be focused on long-term opportunities that evolve in and around the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport. The land uses in the southeast portion of town should be focused on attracting a cluster of hospital and health care–related facilities.

- *Transportation:* The primary focus of the town's transportation improvements should be to advocate for direct freeway access and to improve the visual and tangible gateway into the town from Ellsworth Road. Consideration should also be given to additional grade-separated rail crossings, possible mass transit opportunities along the rail line, improved trail connections to San Tan Regional Park, and pedestrian connectivity issues in the Town Center. The town also needs to improve its coordination with other jurisdictions in order to find regional transportation solutions to regional transportation problems.

- *Branding and Identity:* As the overall economy improves and real estate investment begins once again to drive major land use decisions in the public and private sectors, the town should strive to be the “Great Home Town” in the East Valley. The Great Home Town concept entails establishing a variety of residential densities to retain the rural and semirural character near the town's borders to the southeast and west, with excellent public amenities and a connection between the agricultural uses and the retail in the Town Center.

Demographic and Market Overview

UNDERSTANDING THE SOCIOECONOMIC trends that are affecting the study area can help planners and public officials identify the potential and pressure for future economic development and the need for specific land uses. ULI believes that successful urban planning and land use policy can best be described as public action that generates a desirable, widespread, and sustained private market reaction. Therefore, Advisory Panel reports typically have their foundations in market possibilities. The following sections outline the current economic situation from national, regional, and local perspectives.

National Trends

Nationally, the economy continues to struggle with job loss and less spending. As of June 2011, job creation continues to be weak. The number of seasonally adjusted nongovernment jobs in the United States in September 2010 was about 108.5 million—about the same as in June 1999. During this time, the U.S. population grew 9 percent, from 282 million to 308 million.

Incomes were nearly stagnant over the last decade, while the cost of goods and services in education, health care, and energy skyrocketed. Median household income in 2008 was about \$50,300—lower than in 1998. The share of the population living below the poverty line rose from about 12 percent in 1999 to over 13 percent in 2009. Globalization, technology innovation, and off shoring of manufacturing and service jobs have kept employment down. Responses such as low interest rates, significantly lower taxes, reduced influence of unions, Wall Street activity, and regulation of the financial system have not performed as expected.

The housing bubble peaked at about 69 percent homeownership in the summer of 2006. Homeownership fell to 67.6 percent in 2010—the same as in the fall of 2000. Despite the national recession, Arizona's Sun Corridor is one of 11 emerging megaregions in the United States. The greatest future growth in the country is likely to take place in the West, the Sunbelt, and along the I-85 corridor between Raleigh, North Carolina, and Atlanta, Georgia.



The town is composed of a variety of agricultural, residential, and commercial land uses. Agricultural uses are one of the land use components that make Queen Creek unique.

Phoenix MSA and Maricopa County

Greater Phoenix has consistently outpaced the U.S. population growth over the past 18 years. The city of Phoenix projects that the region will grow by nearly 60 percent by 2030, bringing the population to more than 6 million—equivalent to the population of the entire state in 2010. Fully one-third of the state's labor force works in the Phoenix Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).

Manufacturing and tourism are the leading economic drivers for the Phoenix MSA. Major manufacturing industries include aerospace and high technology (56 percent of the manufacturing jobs) electronics, agriculture, air-conditioning equipment, leather goods, and Native American crafts. The warm weather, sunshine, resorts, and lifestyle draw more than 10 million visitors a year from the United States, Canada, and worldwide.

Financial services and banking are a third major engine of the regional economy, especially processing centers and regional headquarters operations for major financial institutions. Job growth sectors include education and health care, trade, leisure and hospitality, and professional and business services. Most of this growth is

occurring in the inner urban core area in downtown Phoenix, Tempe, and Mesa.

Until 2007, residential and commercial construction were among the top industries in the Phoenix area. The housing industry was particularly hard hit by the recession and, consequently, that has affected commercial development. Housing supply outstripped demand by about 50,000 units in the fourth quarter of 2010. The number of housing permits is expected to slowly increase, but balance between supply and demand is not anticipated until 2014. Fewer than 15,000 permits are anticipated to be issued in 2012. The one bright spot is multifamily housing because of strong absorption as a consequence of conditions in the single-family market. Vacancy rates are declining; they are expected to be about 9.5 percent at the end of 2011 and about 8.5 percent by the end of 2012. Absorption is expected to reach 5,000 units in 2011 and 2012. Multifamily permits (units) issuances for the entire East Valley in 2011 are projected to be about 1,500 in 2011 and about 3,300 in 2012. As of spring 2011, the housing and commercial markets are considered to be at or past the bottom of the recession; however, the panel suggests that recovery to the market peaks in the mid-decade could take up to five years.

The town is composed of a variety of agricultural, residential, and commercial land uses. Recent subdivisions in Queen Creek include substantial open space and landscape features.





The town is composed of a variety of agricultural, residential, and commercial land uses. Recent retail uses have employed high-quality architectural features that embody the historic feel of the Southwest.

The office, industrial, and retail markets are heavily oversupplied and not projected to reach normal levels until 2014–2015. Vacancy rates were above 25 percent in 2010 (peak) and are expected to fall by only about 1 percent by the end of 2011 and 2012. Industrial vacancy was nearly 16.5 percent in 2010 and is expected to drop by about 1 percent in 2011. Retail vacancy is expected to rise from about 12.3 percent in 2010 to almost 13 percent in 2011. No multitenant office space is under construction in the Valley, and none is expected for the next five years. Absorption is anticipated to be less than 1 million square feet in 2011 and about 1.5 million in 2012. As a result, there is virtually no market for new office space in the East Valley.

Maricopa County/Queen Creek

The 2010 U.S. census showed significant population growth in Queen Creek due in large part to the rapid growth of single-family neighborhoods from 2000 to 2010. The Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) expects

the population of Queen Creek to continue growing during the national and regional recovery. MAG's cooperative forecast shows the Queen Creek population rising to about 75,000 residents by 2030.

Queen Creek is largely family oriented, with a household size of nearly 3.8 persons as of 2007. Children up to age 15 and adults between ages 30 and 45 represent the fastest-growing cohorts. The median age is 31, compared with 35 for Maricopa County and 34 for the state. The white cohort makes up about 77.5 percent of the population. The nonwhite population is mostly Latino, and it dropped significantly, from 36 percent in 1990 to 16 percent in 2009.

Queen Creek has one of the highest household incomes in the county and state—about \$83,400, compared with about \$53,300 in the county and about \$48,700 in the state. Household income above \$75,000 saw a far greater increase between 1990 and 2000 and between 2007 and 2009 than in the county and the

state. Likewise, education achievement in Queen Creek continues to rise. The proportion of people with associate and bachelor's degrees exceeds or matches that in the county and the state. The proportion with graduate and professional degrees is nearly the same as in the county and state.

Unemployment in Queen Creek was 8.5 percent in 2009, compared with about 8.3 percent in the county and 9.1 percent in the state. Queen Creek is primarily a white-collar community, with employment in retailing, finance, arts, education, and professional services and shifting away from agriculture, construction, and manufacturing. Queen Creek is a leader in this trend for the county.

Housing vacancy in Queen Creek, as in the county and state, has risen since 1990 but covers only 12 percent of the housing stock, compared with 14 percent and 17 percent in the county and the state.

Retail uses, which provide the town with a substantial portion of its revenue, are concentrated almost exclusively in community and regional centers, which cater to a much larger retail capture area than the town alone. More information about this aspect of the town's economy is covered in the section on Governance and Finance.

Based on the panel's interviews and collective experience, the panel observes that Queen Creek appeals to a focused group of the white population that is looking for a rural or semirural lifestyle not available in other parts of the Phoenix area.

Market Summary

The economic forces and challenges affecting Queen Creek and Maricopa County mirror those affecting nearly every town, city, and county in the nation. As the national economy improves, however, Queen Creek is positioned to rebound more quickly than most towns and cities. The Sunbelt regions, including Phoenix, continue to lead the nation in population and economic growth, and Queen Creek has the potential to increasingly become one of the

more affluent, well-educated, and desired communities in Maricopa County.

Queen Creek has clearly laid the groundwork to position the town to become the residential community standard for the East Valley. That standard is defined by merging new development with the experience and symbols of a rural quality of life, drawing upon design standards, infrastructure improvements, and local and regional amenities as the drivers of that vision. With its financial reserve and the investment in infrastructure that Queen Creek has made to meet the needs of inevitable growth, the town is well positioned to become the community of choice for future employees around the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport.

From a strategic land use perspective, there are opportunities for the town to annex areas of Pinal County in the northeastern part of the town's planning area near the proposed SR-24 freeway and the airport in order to capture tax revenues and obtain freeway access. In the panel's opinion, it would be a mistake for properties in the central, eastern, southern, and western portions of the town to be rezoned to attract the types of industrial, office, and employment-oriented growth that are most likely to characterize the land surrounding the airport. There is an abundance of land already designated for these uses in the city of Mesa nearer the airport with easy access from the 202 freeway. Instead, the town should focus on the support retail, professional services, and convenience commercial uses that support the residential portions of the town. In addition, specialty retail and specialty services associated with agriculture and a rural lifestyle should be explored.

The remaining portions of this report focus on how the town can realize its vision and seize the opportunities to create a "Queen Creek sense of place" and provide the opportunities for diversity that are needed to embrace a cross-section of ages, incomes, and interests. One of the goals should be to establish the town to become the absolute best place to live in the entire East Valley.

The Vision

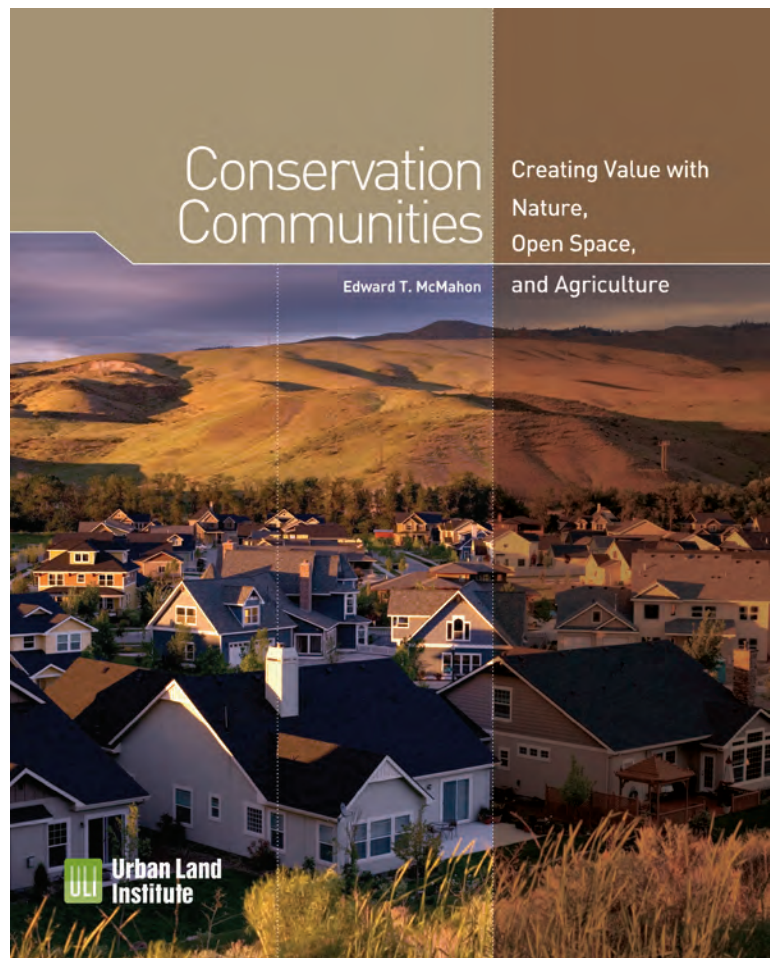
ACCORDING TO THE TOWN'S General Plan, "Queen Creek desires to be a community different from others in the Phoenix metropolitan area. The town's vision is to provide a quality community environment with a focus on enhancement of our equestrian, historic, environmental, economic, cultural, physical, architectural, and aesthetic amenities. The unique character of Queen Creek will be maintained by promoting orderly development in accordance with the goals and policies described in our General Plan, which provides for a range of land uses and lifestyles consistent with our desired community character. Following this course of action, the goal is to 'Keep Queen Creek Unique.'"

The Participants

Three primary stakeholders are involved in defining Queen Creek's future. One is the business community—the individuals and companies that own, manage, and invest in businesses and properties in the area. The collective entrepreneurial skill and experience of the current and future business leaders in Queen Creek are critical to its success. The second participant is the town government—the elected officials and department managers who set public policy and allocate resources. Strong and consistent leadership from the town is needed to achieve the vision for the future. The third and most significant group is the citizens—the civic leaders and residents who call Queen Creek home. It is incumbent on all stakeholders to work closely together in addressing the issues that affect the town's future.

Guiding Principles

Basic values are inherent in any economic strategy. It is important to articulate these beliefs in a set of guiding principles. The panel suggests the following principles as a framework within which priorities can be established and decisions made about Queen Creek's future:



Conservation Communities: Creating Value with Nature, Open Space, and Agriculture by Edward T. McMahon, ULI senior resident fellow and the ULI/Charles Fraser Chair for Sustainable Development and Environmental Policy, outlines many of the development concepts that are characteristic of development in Queen Creek, including clustered lots, continuous open space, access to recreation trails, and preservation of community character.

- *Create economic prosperity:* The growth of Queen Creek's economy will create numerous opportunities for residents and businesses to benefit and prosper. The benefits of high-paying jobs, investment opportunities, and rising property values can be attained through economic expansion. It is important to retain and encourage the expansion of existing businesses as well as to recruit and facilitate the development of new businesses in Queen Creek.
- *Improve quality of life:* The fundamental goal of the effort is to improve the livability of and quality of life in Queen Creek. This can be accomplished by making Queen Creek a convenient, safe, and attractive place to visit, live, and work. Investment of public and private resources will be required to create and maintain the variety of amenities, public use areas, open spaces, and services necessary to satisfy the needs of residents, workers, and visitors.
- *Build on existing strengths:* The strategy for improving the economic vitality of Queen Creek must embrace the existing strengths of the town. Building on Queen Creek's assets will result in market-driven, strength-based initiatives that offer the greatest opportunities for economic success.
- *Accept change:* Change is the constant that binds a community together. Towns like Queen Creek are in a state of flux—either improving or becoming less desirable. Resistance to change can impede the progress of a community along the path to greatness. This is not to say that all changes are good but that the residents and leaders in Queen Creek all must be open to new ideas and possibilities for the town.
- *Establish priorities:* There are limits to the resources—human, financial, and physical—that are available to Queen Creek. Therefore, it is important to establish priorities in the application of these resources. Return on investment, both near-term and long-term, should be an important factor in establishing investment priorities for resources.

Queen Creek's Unique Assets

Successful communities build their visions from a unique combination of defining characteristics. These attributes include environmental, historical, cultural, architectural, and institutional elements. Queen Creek has an impressive set of assets that not only support the area's economic vitality but also differentiate it from other towns and suburban activity centers in the East Valley area.

Regional Assets

The town of Queen Creek shares the same regional assets as other East Valley communities. These assets include the following:

- *Mountain vistas:* The mountain formations to the north and south form an iconic backdrop.
- *Hiking/riding trails network:* Scenic multiuse trails and paths meander through the rural and natural areas. The Millennials and Gen-Yers require these types of amenities as a prerequisite to putting down roots.
- *Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport and ASU:* The proximity of an emerging airport and growing university is vital to the economic expansion of the East Valley.
- *San Tan Mountain Regional Park:* Located on the town's southern edge, the park is a natural preserve consisting of more than 10,000 acres of desert that provide a variety of recreational opportunities.

Town Assets

Compared with other towns in the East Valley, Queen Creek has significant civic assets:

- *Horseshoe Park and Equestrian Centre:* a facility of regional significance that reflects the equestrian heritage of the town and should be viewed as an engine for economic development
- *The Olive Mill:* a farm-based business and attraction that is iconic in character

- *Schnepf Farms*: a farm venue for events, gatherings, and experiences centered on locally produced food and specialty items
- *Town Center*: a mix of attractive residential, commercial, entertainment, and civic uses (library, government center, the Communiversality, etc.) that create vibrancy and vitality
- *System of parks, trails, and open spaces*: a network of trails and open spaces, particularly the multiuse trails planned in the natural Queen Creek and Sonoqui washes, that provides recreational opportunities and links the special facilities and destinations located throughout the town
- *Barney Family Sports Complex*: high-quality indoor and outdoor training and practice facilities
- *Banner Ironwood Medical Center*: a facility that will serve the medical needs of the growing population and attract related medical office users and seniors' housing; proposed to be annexed into the town
- *Performing Arts Center*: a theatre with over 700 seats hosting local and national shows year-round
- *The community's agricultural heritage*: a pattern of land use that includes farm fields, horse stalls, and dairies juxtaposed with apartments, shopping centers, and residential neighborhoods.

These assets and special features combine to give Queen Creek a sense of place. Collectively, these special attractions can be leveraged to achieve the town's vision for the future.



Top: Horseshoe Park and Equestrian Centre is a facility of regional significance that reflects the equestrian heritage of the town.

Above: Banner Ironwood Medical Center is the heart of an emerging medical cluster in southeast Queen Creek.

Branding/Identity

The first step toward greatness is for a town to recognize that it needs to strengthen its identity—as it is understood by the outside world as well as by its residents. A strong identity is an essential component of any effort to market a town as a location for new businesses and services. The panel has observed that Queen Creek’s present identity is overwhelmingly that of a place of quality residences. There is an opportunity to highlight the presence of the farm/rural commercial elements (Olive Mill, Schnepf Farms, and Horseshoe Park and Equestrian Centre) and link them to the Equestrian Centre, as well as new activities and services in the Town Center, to produce a distinct identity for Queen Creek. This is critically important because the town needs to import entrepreneurs and consumers to increase Queen Creek’s economic vitality.

The panel believes that Queen Creek has the opportunity to be known as the place where the farmscape and townscape coexist in an authentic, sustainable way. The agrarian and rural character expressed through horses,

olive trees, and vegetable and fruit farms is interwoven with retail centers, small-lot neighborhoods, and institutional uses. This unique juxtaposition of land uses and building forms should be celebrated and promoted. The identity should be enhanced by the use of agrarian and equestrian symbolism in the design of gateway features, signage, and public art in the Town Center. To some extent, this identity is already accepted and reflected in the monthly special events that are held in Queen Creek. The Queen Creek Peach Festival and the Pumpkin and Chili Festival are good examples. But more could, and should, be done in terms of promoting the Queen Creek location and the themes of such events to strengthen this image of the town throughout the region.

Town Center

The Town Center area, bounded generally by Rittenhouse Road and the Queen Creek Wash, should be a prime focus for economic development. There is space next to the library in the Town Center for special events and activities that could focus on “bringing the farm to town.”

The Queen Creek Olive Mill is one of a number of farm/rural entrepreneurial businesses that can help refine and bring about a new image for the town.



These family-style gatherings could be both large and small; for example:

- Farm Life Festival (food, demonstrations, music, history, art, etc.);
- Queen Creek Olive Day (celebrate everything olive, but do it in the Town Center); and
- Gourmets on Parade (a celebration of local recipes, food products, cooking demonstrations, and competitions).

Attracting people to the Town Center to participate and enjoy these types of special events will begin to set the public's expectation that this is a logical place to find related shops and restaurants in the future.

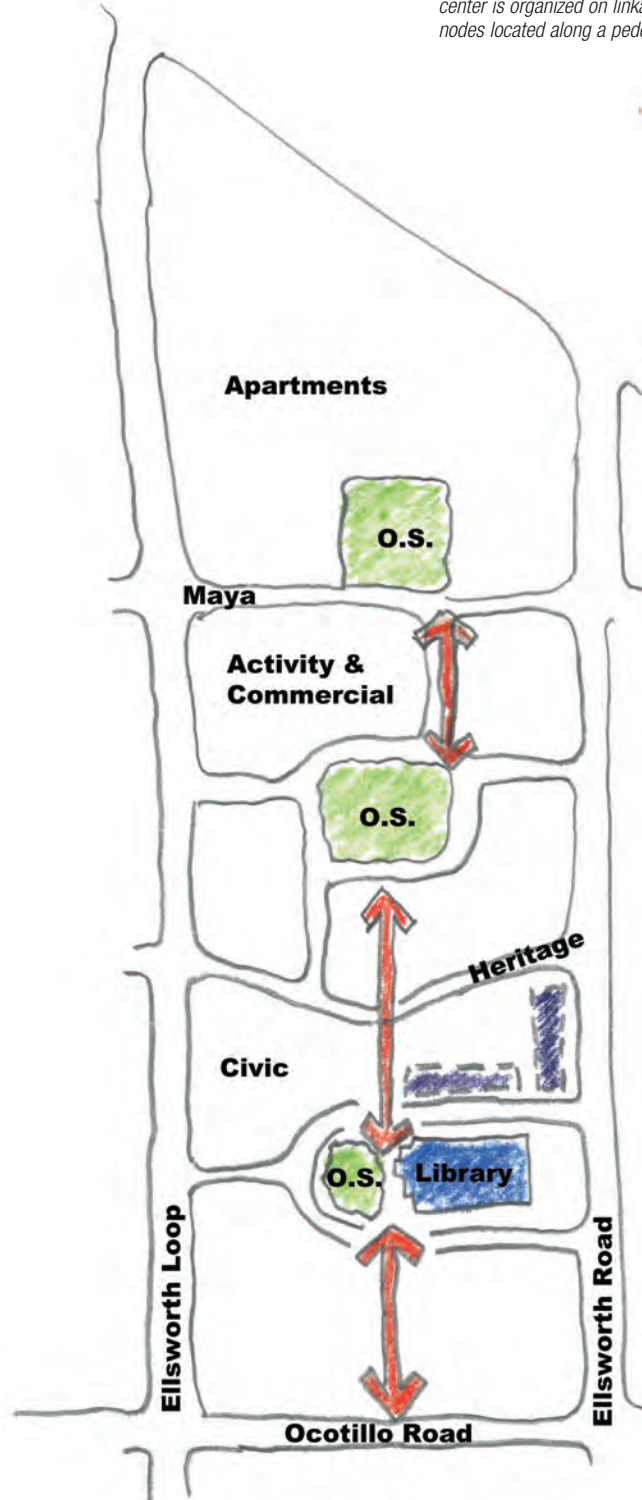
Restaurant Incubator and Community Kitchen

The panel recommends two conceptual uses that will help create momentum and activity: a restaurant incubator and a community kitchen. The incubator facility would provide space for entrepreneurial chefs without the need for them to make a substantial capital investment. It would be dedicated to early-stage catering, retail, and wholesale food businesses. By covering the capital cost of shared kitchen facilities, lent on a time-slot basis to incubatees, the incubator would enable a business to develop to the stage where it can invest in its own kitchen facilities. This will build local and regional following for a chef or restaurant.

The space could also be used as a community kitchen that provides opportunities for people to cook or learn to cook together. This approach builds community strength through the activity of preparing food as well as lasting individual skills for self-sufficiency. This concept could be combined with the formation of a community garden in support of the broader concept of Queen Creek's "farm to table" lifestyle.

In summary, the town should build on its unique assets to create a strong identity, market that brand to attract entrepreneurs and consumers to Queen Creek, and make the town the best place to live in the East Valley.

This conceptual framework plan for the town center is organized on linkages to open-space nodes located along a pedestrian spine.



Transportation System

The town has used design standards that ensure high-quality streetscapes.



QUEEN CREEK'S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

relies on an arterial street system. The arterials generally follow section lines, spaced one mile apart. Within those square-mile grids, only a few streets allow through traffic. As a result, virtually all traffic must use the arterial system to travel around and through town. That concentration of traffic volume requires arterial streets to have multiple lanes and large, signalized intersections to operate effectively. The town has made substantial investments in the arterial network to accommodate recent growth and in anticipation of significant additional growth in the future.

Transportation Strengths

Despite absorbing rapid growth in the past decade, Queen Creek's transportation system has many strengths:

- *Reserve traffic capacity:* Congestion has decreased on many town roads in part because of a temporary drop in traffic volume during the recession but more importantly because of recently completed widening and signalization projects. The panel learned that Rittenhouse Road and Ellsworth Loop have a traffic count of over 20,000 trips per day and are the only roads that carry more than 20,000 vehicles per day. By comparison, the town's four-lane arterials can carry up to 35,000 vehicles per day and its six-lane arterials can carry over 50,000 vehicles. As growth continues, some significant improvements will be necessary. Most of them are expensive regional improvements that will require regional partners to complete.
- *Trail system:* Few communities have the mix of equestrian, pedestrian, and bike trails that Queen Creek enjoys. Capitalizing on the washes provides a distinctive recreation experience for trail users.

- *Attractive streetscape:* High-quality landscaping and extensive curvilinear sidewalks make Queen Creek streets some of the most attractive in the metropolitan region, and even nationally. These streetscapes make Queen Creek a desirable place to live and work.
- *Rail presence:* The rail line offers Queen Creek long-term opportunities for new transportation services. MAG and the Arizona State Department of Transportation have identified this line as a potential commuter-rail corridor.
- *Through traffic:* Traffic passing through Queen Creek offers opportunities to capture sales and build awareness of community amenities.

Transportation Weaknesses

The town's section-line network of arterials creates some weaknesses:

- *Limited continuity:* Only two arterial streets cross the entire town from west to east, and only three from north to south. Other arterials are blocked by the railroad, washes, farms, or subdivisions, forcing traffic to use the few continuous arterials. To help address this issue, the town is working with Maricopa County, property owners, and others to complete Meridian, Signal Butte, and Riggs roads to provide additional traffic capacity, particularly for the eastern portions of the community and adjacent Pinal County.
- *Barriers to walkability:* Factors that discourage walking include wide streets (up to 125 feet), missing segments of sidewalks; few points of access to sidewalks from residential areas because of walls and fences; and widely dispersed buildings, especially in the Town Center.
- *At-grade railroad crossings:* Railroad crossings on Power, Sossaman, Ellsworth, Ocotillo, and Combs roads cause traffic delays and restrict access to Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport. The town recently completed an underpass on Ellsworth Loop, and other grade-separated crossings

should be planned to address access issue on both the eastern and western sides of the community.

- *Lack of freeways:* The town's location at the periphery of the metropolitan area means that it lacks a freeway. This constrains job creation through office, distribution, and industrial development, all of which rely on freeway access. Another result of this location is that traffic from adjacent peripheral areas in Pinal County must pass through Queen Creek to access the 202 freeway and the communities to the northwest of the town.

Transportation Opportunities

Transportation improvements can be implemented strategically to enhance Queen Creek's identity and further its development goals. Funding realities, of course, often change the priorities for implementing individual projects. Accordingly, the panel recommends that the town consider reprioritizing its Capital Improvement Project list to save money in the near term and to deliver those projects that best support Queen Creek's identity, job creation, and Town Center development. To reinforce Queen Creek's rural identity, the town should connect the trail system to San Tan Regional Park in order to offer users more trails and enhance recreation opportunities. Ideally, this connection would be accomplished by 2016.

The town should create distinctive intersections that can serve as gateways at locations that have not yet been built out. One consideration could be roundabouts, which can preserve rural character by avoiding the urban "hardware" of signal lights, do not require traffic to stop, and can reduce the need to widen roads. Using this approach at the intersection of Rittenhouse and Hawes roads might allow a modest investment in the intersection to forestall a much larger, multimillion-dollar investment over the next two fiscal years to widen Rittenhouse Road while still moving traffic.

To support regional access and job creation, the town should continue advocating for freeway extensions in the proposed SR-24 and North/South corridors. Advocacy is relatively inexpensive now and will pay dividends in

the long run. The town should also prepare for freeway access on SR-24 at Ellsworth Road, which could be in place in five to seven years. Now is the time to plan and coordinate improvements between the future interchange and Queen Creek Road. Such improvements should enhance the community's identity and accessibility and could include widening where necessary, wayfinding and welcome signage, landscaping, and a significantly improved approach to the Town Center.

Other considerations could include providing a grade-separated rail crossing at the intersection of Power and Pecos roads to eliminate conflicts and traffic delay, and improve access to Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport. Grade separation should also be considered at other arterials (such as Ocotillo and Sossaman roads) when additional financial resources become available.

Finally, the town should encourage vanpools or similar schemes for commutes to regional employers with more than 100 employees (in Chandler, Mesa, Tempe, and Phoenix). Vanpools offer flexible, inexpensive commutes compared with other forms of transit, and could also help reduce through traffic.

Transportation to Support the Town Center

Street and parking design can help create an atmosphere conducive to shopping, dining, and commercial activity. The town clearly embraces the importance of street design and is pursuing it for the Town Center. Supportive actions should include the following:

- Honoring the heritage of Ellsworth Road as the town's Main Street by replicating its features north of Ocotillo Road. The panel recommends that the street's right-of-way and cross-section north of Ocotillo Road should emulate that south of Ocotillo. The panel believes that an undivided, two-lane street with parallel parking would best support a pedestrian-scaled commercial and civic district. This recommendation differs somewhat from the currently proposed street design. The

panel recognizes that money has already been spent on the design, but a narrower, simpler street could potentially be constructed at less cost.

- Orienting new, pedestrian-scaled buildings to the street, especially Ellsworth Road. Buildings should be allowed to front the street without extensive setbacks.
- Using streets to create the smaller blocks more typical of a downtown and to distribute traffic.
- Considering on-street parking as one means of meeting parking needs.
- Reconsidering zoning requirements that govern building setbacks, parking, and other factors influencing the layout and proximity of buildings to create a more pedestrian-oriented downtown. Successful downtowns typically have no setback requirements. Buildings fronting the street work better for pedestrians and create a more inviting retail setting. Parking requirements could be revised to exempt a portion of retail floor area from calculations for off-street parking needs. Such exemptions recognize the fact that downtown shoppers frequently visit multiple stores while parking only once and that on-street parking can serve numerous shoppers.
- Planning for and encouraging the opportunities for commuter and intercity rail along the Union Pacific railroad corridor.

Land Use

OVERALL THE PANEL OBSERVED that the distribution of land use within the General Plan seems set to implement the citizens' vision for the community. Proposed residential densities in some areas are higher, so as to attract what is most likely a "move up" buyer (as opposed to a "starter" buyer), while other areas are set for large-lot development consistent with the historical rural character of the community. The perception of the panel is that this range of densities expresses the desire to embrace certain growth that will effectively pay for infrastructure and amenities while establishing low-density zones for families with horses and more expensive homes.

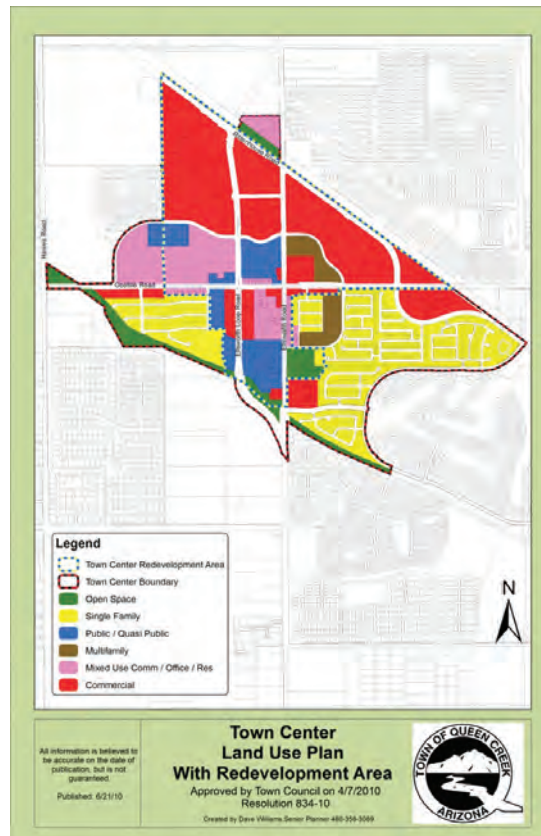
Our discussion of land use offers a few suggestions regarding details of the General Plan which, if addressed, can enhance the quality of the vision that Queen Creek wants to project within and beyond the community.

General Planning Topics

It is our understanding that the SR-24 highway will eventually extend into the Superstition Vistas area just north and east of the city. Once the Superstition Vistas Concept Plan is approved in Pinal County, the panel endorses the concept of Queen Creek pursuing the annexation of lands in this area and west of the Central Arizona Project canal. At that time, planning should be refined to consider a mix of land uses at interchanges on the highway that will become entry points to Queen Creek. This is the one area of the town that eventually could be ripe for industrial and employment uses similar to those now underway adjacent to the airport.

Open Space

The new community park and equestrian facility are first-class community assets. For now, no new major park construction should be needed. That said, as funds



The commercial, civic, and residential land uses in the Town Center redevelopment area should be the primary focus of higher residential densities. Introduction of such densities outside this area would be neither prudent nor successful in an attempt to define the town as a unique place among the East Valley communities.

become available, Queen Creek should make completion of the multiuse paths on Queen Creek Wash and Sonoqui Wash a first priority. When completed, these paths can be additional aids in enhancing the image of the community. A second priority should be the construction of a multiuse path connection to the San Tan Regional Park. Connecting this path through the washes would complete the spine of the path system. That can be another element of the Queen Creek vision that is promoted to potential homebuyers. Other than these features, the town should delay further park implementation until significant new home construction occurs.

Residential

Conservation planning should be a focus of all new residential development. This concept centers on developing a portion of a large site and allowing a larger area to remain undeveloped or be put to agricultural use. One might think of it as an agricultural planned-use development. ULI endorses this concept, and it is in fact the title of a recently published ULI book, *Conservation Communities: Creating Value with Nature, Open Space, and Agriculture*, by Edward T. McMahon, ULI senior resident fellow and ULI/Charles Fraser Chair for Sustainable Development. This concept would work especially well in a community like Queen Creek.

Density and Design Standards

The panel recommends that higher-density development should be located near the Town Center and that development should transition to lower densities as one moves to the edges of the town. Also, the top end of the multifamily zoning in the Town Center should be raised above the currently prescribed 18 units per acre to accommodate developments that will be adjacent to commuter rail in the future.

The focus of the smaller-lot, single-family detached homes should be in and around the Town Center. Lots in the range of 7,000 to 10,000 square feet should be within a half mile of the focal point of the Town Center at the library. Lots beyond that radius should be in the range of one acre or larger. The panel felt that there may also be some pent-up demand for attached units, perhaps in a rowhouse style, in the same area.

If the town is going to permit higher density, these dwellings should be of excellent design. All new development, but especially new higher-density developments, should meet the rigor of the high-quality standards expected in Queen Creek.

Dormant Large-Lot Subdivisions

The panel understands that there are a number of dormant large-lot subdivisions within the community. Recently, developers have shown interest in constructing market-rate homes on some of these lots that had been planned

for custom homes. The panel recommends that the city encourage the construction of these market-rate homes on such lots. The panel does not recommend changes to the densities of these subdivisions, simply flexibility in terms of unit types.

Industrial and Office

As noted earlier, the city of Mesa has a competitive advantage over Queen Creek when it comes to attracting new job-creating employment uses in the area near Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport. Mesa has the advantage in both location (closer to the airport, better access) and finished lots (infrastructure installed) just north of town's northern boundary. The panel recognizes that this situation may exist for some time and suggests that Queen Creek focus on other land use opportunities, such as research and development flex, showroom warehouse, and similar uses. When the freeway is extended to the area, there could even be consideration for rack-supported warehouse and refrigerated warehouse uses. The refrigerated warehouse option could complement with the agricultural and "farm to table" concepts.

The city should retain the current office/industrial development designation (employment) on the lands affected by aircraft overflight noise from the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport (between Queen Creek Road and Germann Road) and, as time and funds become available, construct infrastructure to serve these lands. For now, these lands should be held as an employment reserve, not an immediate priority for development.

Medical

It is common to find that the construction of seniors' housing relies on access to a hospital within a 20-minute travel time. A medical services node is emerging in the area south of Combs Road at Gantzel Road with the construction of the Banner Ironwood Medical Center. The panel also noted that Catholic Healthcare West has an interest in a location in the southeast area of the town.

This development should be recognized in the planning documents because it will likely facilitate the construction of seniors' housing both in southeast Queen Creek and elsewhere in the community (for example, the Town Center). Annexation of the Banner Ironwood Medical Center effort could be the first step in implementing a vision for this area.

Entries, Gateways, and Arrival Indicators

Queen Creek is unique in comparison with its neighboring communities, so both visitors and residents should be apprised when they are entering town. At each of the city's major arterial entry points, the town should provide identifying monuments and directional signage. These can be simple but visible elements and could possibly be paid for out of economic development funds as part of the effort to promote the unique entity that is Queen Creek. The town has taken some initial steps in this direction with the installation of some gateway and directional signage, but the effort should be expanded to make the entry statement more prominent.

Town Center

The panel reviewed the entire Town Center area but focused its recommendations on the area bounded by Rittenhouse, Ellsworth, and Ocotillo roads and Ellsworth Loop. The reason for this focus is the existence of the library on the land north of Ocotillo and the existence of the two dormant properties north of Rittenhouse. This area contains lands that can be the core of the new Town Center.

ASU Capstone Project Plan

The Arizona State University (ASU) Capstone project, in which graduate students in the ASU School of Geographical Sciences and Urban Design looked at alternative development concepts for the Town Center area, was presented to the panel. The project document is a well-done, comprehensive effort which contains many good ideas. For example, it is an excellent idea to plan for the



eventual arrival of commuter rail. The ideas presented in this section are put forward for consideration alongside, and in some cases in support of, the ASU work.

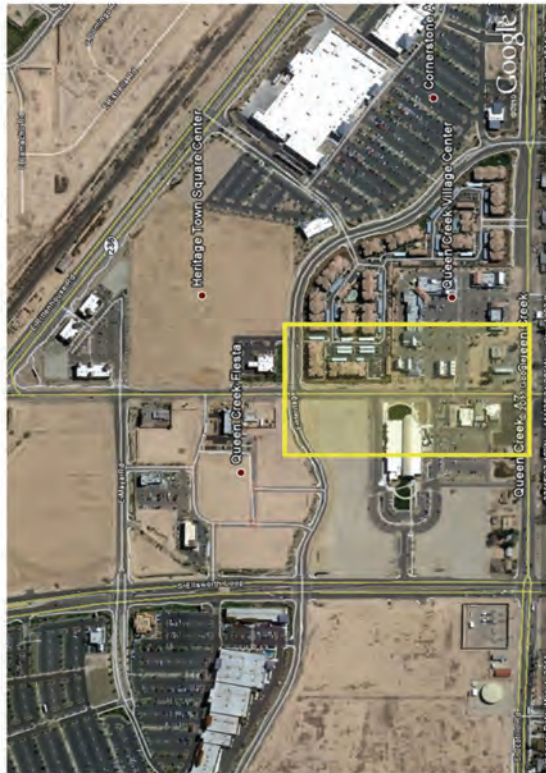
Block Sizes and Pedestrian Activity

The panel believes that the block sizes in the Town Center are too large. On Mill Avenue in Tempe—one of the country's great urban design schemes that encourages concentrated pedestrian activity and connectivity—a typical block is 300 to 400 feet long. The overall pedestrian district on Mill Avenue is about 1,200 feet long. By comparison, the distance from Ocotillo Road to Heritage Loop is about 1,100 feet. From Heritage Loop to Maya Way is about 800 feet east to west. Between Ellsworth Loop and Ellsworth Road is at least 900 feet.

To encourage pedestrian activity and create a finer grain size for activity in Queen Creek's Town Center, the panel recommends dividing the present large blocks into smaller blocks by using auto access routes and pedestrian walkways. The new pedestrian corridors could be organizing elements to break down the parcels into more reasonably sized blocks that will focus development toward central civic spaces.

The center of gravity for development has shifted north from the old center of town, depicted above; however, uses such as the Queen Creek Café still provide a nostalgic tableau of the past.

A comparison of scale between Mill Avenue in Tempe and the Queen Creek Town Center area.



Urban Design for the Town Center

A plethora of urban design standards can be emulated to bring about the desired feel and atmosphere of a vibrant, active town center. The panel recommends that the town review the existing development regulations and consider changes that will reinforce an urban feeling along Ellsworth Road. Examples might be to reduce the 25-foot setback requirement along the street and to consider reductions in the retail parking requirements.

North of Maya—Residential

It is the panel’s understanding that the city recently gained title to the parcel north of Maya Road. The panel recommends redesignating this property as suitable for a three-story, surface-parked, apartment development with a small civic square on the street edge. Here is a description of such a development in another community:

The 17.8-acre project consists of one mixed-use building with ground-floor retail and lofts on the second and third stories. The loft units overlook a swimming pool on one side and face a central plaza on the other. Other building types include 12 three-story garden walk-up buildings and two live/work buildings that contain small retail spaces that face the common retail corridor and private living quarters behind. Square footages range from 672 to 1,923 for all the unit types. The development is located along a plaza walkway that will host a farmers market, as well as cultural and civic events.

Such a development, at this location, could be created through a public/private partnership. It would deliver residents to the Town Center area, enlivening this zone. It would also be compatible with a long-term future transit center along the rail line across Rittenhouse Road and provide a terminus to the pedestrian spine from Maya to Heritage roads. Until such future development of this property is feasible, the town might consider an interim use, such as a community garden, on a portion of the parcel.

Maya to Heritage—Commercial

Although the area between Maya and Heritage roads can accommodate eight small retail tenants, only three parcels are occupied. The pads available constitute a “pad farm.” The panel suggests that the town encourage developers of a variety of active commercial uses here. Among such uses might be a two- to six-screen movie theatre complex, a bowling center, and miniature golf. Two- and three-story mixed-use development projects might also be appropriate. A small civic plaza could also be built near the center of the pad farm. A plaza would orient future development and be a node on a north-south pedestrian spine, with an apartment site at the northern node and the southern node near the library. The spine could constitute the central organizing feature for the Town Center.

South of Maya—Civic

Some planning for the Rio Salado Communiversality has been completed, and the new Queen Creek Library is on the same block. Recreation activities are operated in the rooms at the east end of the library along Old Ellsworth Road. The panel recommends increasing uses at and near the library, as it develops as the southern end of the north-south pedestrian spine. The plaza area in front of the library will serve as a terminal node of the proposed pedestrian spine and help orient activity in this block.

Development of the first phase of the Communiversality should have some orientation toward Ellsworth Loop to further encourage activities on the east side of the block. Other properties on the block that will be used for other construction can, for now, provide sites for community events that reinforce and celebrate the agricultural heritage of Queen Creek.

South of Ocotillo along Ellsworth

Over the medium term, the goal should be to retain the area’s old town atmosphere and extend the rural streetscape (street trees, rail fence) to Queen Creek Wash. For now, the town should encourage entrepreneurs, live/work, and small-scale development as well as development of government uses. Improvements would occur incrementally in this area as opportunities present them-



selves. Urbanization will occur over a longer period of time. In the very long term, the city might consider mixed-use development that combines small lots along the street.

The Town Center area already has some higher-density residential space. The parcel north of Maya Road should be considered as a location for multifamily housing.

Land Use Summary

In summary, the panel recommends only minor revisions to the overall land planning effort for the Town Center. Community identity should be reinforced at reasonable cost, perhaps by using economic development funds. In the Town Center, a relatively active effort should be put into establishing a Town Center identity on the lands north of Ocotillo Road between Ellsworth Loop and Ellsworth Road, especially for the parcel north of Maya that the town has acquired. Apartments would be appropriate on this site, as well as on other undeveloped properties in the area, in that apartments are one of the few sectors that developers currently show interest in pursuing. A public/private partnership might also accrue amenities to the city beyond simply the construction of an apartment building. The pedestrian spine, with strategically placed open-space nodes, will act as the central organizing feature for the entire area. The suggested market, festival, and food-oriented uses on the other portions of the Town Center will bring about the ultimate goal of establishing this area as both a local and a regional draw.

Governance and Finance

IN 2010 AND 2011, THE TOWN MADE some very tough choices regarding spending and revenues, including significant reductions in force. Queen Creek is facing the same financial issues as many other communities all over the country, and it appears that the town has made these hard decisions in a thoughtful, respectful, and transparent manner. It appears unlikely that further staff reductions will relieve the town of its fiscal problems. However, the panel believes that internal procedures and processes that the town has full control over could be modified to help the town. The panel believes that better articulating the town's character will be a very positive step on the road to reducing the actual and perceived barriers to development. Finally, the overreliance on retail sales as a source of operating revenue for the town government is particularly evident during the current economic times.

Reputation

The panel heard from many interviewees that the development process in Queen Creek is sometimes difficult, cumbersome, and unpredictable. To be fair, this should be tempered by the fact that the very high expectations of the town (its citizens and officials), particularly on design, tend to make review of projects more complicated and time consuming.

Town leadership in the development process has improved significantly in the past few years. Nonetheless, the panel believes the town must change any negative perception of the development process while maintaining a commitment to good urban design. The town should periodically review its development-related processes to identify areas where time can be saved, new technology can be used, and best practices from other communities can be considered. Near-term areas for consideration might include electronic filings and submission of materials on CDs, as well as more hyperlinks

on website documents. The panel recommends that the town adopt a more proactive "green-tape" process to move plans through the process in a predictable time frame. The town recently developed an Ombudsman Program to fill this role; this program should be considered for broader application, if possible.

Permitting and Fees

Development fees are a significant source of revenue for the town. As the economy began to sour in 2006, there was a corresponding decrease in revenues from development fees. This in turn significantly affected the town's capital accounts for water, sewer, transportation, parks, and other public facilities. The panel's initial impression was that Queen Creek's impact fees for a single-family home were substantially higher than surrounding communities. Data from the Homebuilders Association of Central Arizona (as of November 2010) seems to support that impression (figure 1).

The Queen Creek impact fees are somewhat high but not so high that the impact fee alone becomes a barrier to development. It is the combination of that impact fee with the construction sales tax (which is lower in other jurisdictions), the design requirements, and the time associated with the review process that make projects more costly and create the perception of the town as an expensive place to do business. The town has the ability to reduce some of these costs (for example, by reducing review time) to ease this upfront burden without negatively disturbing the revenue stream from the impact fees. Again, using the town's Ombudsman Program to allow desired projects to move through the review process more quickly could eliminate at least one of the negative factors associated with the cost of doing business. If the new focus in Queen Creek is going to

be on community character, this approach could be the first step in creating the town's new regional image as a good place to do business.

FIGURE 1
Regional Impact Fees, High-End Single-Family Homes

Jurisdiction	Impact Fee (\$)
City of Apache Junction	9,508
City of Chandler	22,079
City of Gilbert	23,887
City of Mesa	8,321
Town of Queen Creek ^a	19,436
Maricopa County	5,346
Pinal County	8,725

Source: Town of Queen Creek Department of Community Development.

a. Figures represent a 1-inch water meter. The more common ¾-inch water meter results in an impact fee of \$15,981.

Finance

ULI found that Queen Creek relies significantly on sales tax as a source of revenue for town finances. The deficit in the FY 2012 budget was approximately \$4.7 million. The town closed this deficit by making significant cuts in operating expenses including reducing staff size, using town reserves, and restructuring some town debt. The town also proposed an increase in fees for sewer service. Although the town is well run and has had the foresight to plan for future growth, the cost of servicing annual debt payments to fund improvements may cause the town to approach its debt ceiling limits sooner than expected. If this scenario occurs and the town's two primary sources of operating revenues (sales taxes and real estate taxes) do not increase at a rate sufficient to

meet the cost to provide public services, then the town will face a potential fiscal dilemma.

Revenue and Expenditures

Retail sales taxes are the top source of revenue for the town but property and construction sales taxes are also important sources (figure 2). The panel's observations about the strengths and opportunities, and weaknesses and threats of these sources appear in the figure.

The town's top five expenditures for public services go to administration, public safety, and debt service, as well as cultural and recreational amenities, and road infrastructure (figure 3). The panel's observations on their strengths and opportunities, and weaknesses and threats appear in figure 2.

Although the categorical outlays shown in figure 3 may change each year, they nevertheless demonstrate the expenditure issues facing the town. Notably, the proportion of the town's outlays for general government administration for fiscal year 2010 are reduced to 23.7 percent when the Highway User Revenue Fund and other funding sources are considered.

A large portion of the town's revenues come from taxable sales from five sources: retail trade, real estate rental and lease, construction, communications and utilities, and restaurants and bars. The panel believes that these taxable sales are vulnerable to recessionary cycles.



Town of Queen Creek Town Council.

Retail Center Size

In most new shopping centers in and around Queen Creek over the past few years, the focus has been on larger centers that need to draw on significantly larger numbers of households than currently exist or are projected in the town. Figure 4 outlines the typical retail trading areas for various types of retail shopping centers.

Figure 4 shows that the retail offerings in Queen Creek are concentrated almost exclusively in community and regional centers, which cater to much larger capture areas than the town alone. There is a lack of corner store, convenience, and neighborhood centers, which target residents and offer greater convenience and accessibility.

The predominance of community and regional centers gives the town the benefit of collecting greater amounts through retail sales taxes, especially from visitors and commuters who live outside the incorporated areas. However, reliance on retail sales taxes from large regional

and community centers requires continued housing and population growth both within and outside the town.

Revenue Strategies

Based on the panel's observations and analysis, it is clear that the town needs to identify additional sources of revenue, as well as policies and procedures that will increase sales volumes within the town limits. The following strategies should be considered to improve and increase revenues for the town.

Increase and Expand Sales Tax Revenues

Increased sales tax revenues should be achieved through increased sales volume. Because sales taxes are the major revenue source, efforts to attract retail facilities should continue. However, sales volume could also be increased by attracting additional customers through better marketing or through economic development efforts.

FIGURE 2

Top Five Taxable Sales, FY 2010: Strengths and Opportunities, and Weaknesses and Challenges

Rank	Share of Total Revenues (%)	Sources of Funds	Strengths/Opportunities	Weaknesses/Challenges
1	23.7	Retail sales taxes	Primarily generated by non-residents. Decline from FY 2009 to FY 2010 was slight.	Direct correlation between national recession and consumer spending. Disposable household income available for future consumption may continue to decline in the near future.
2	4.8	Real property taxes	High-value housing stock. As the real estate market improves, so will real estate tax revenues.	Taxable sales down 14.2% from FY 2009 to FY 2010. Current real estate market recovery has been slower than expected. Depressed housing values may continue for a few more years.
3	4.7	Construction sales taxes	As new home sales rise, revenues will increase.	Taxable sales down 63.5% from FY 2009 to FY 2010. Current real estate market recovery has been slower than expected. Depressed housing values may continue for a few more years.
4	4.6	Communications and utilities	Taxable sales up 23.1% from FY 2009 to FY 2010.	Taxable sales trend will stabilize as new home sales stabilize.
5	4.1	Restaurants and bars	Can offset the town's reliance on taxes from retail sales, real property, and construction.	Taxable sales have declined for two straight fiscal years (FY 2009 and FY 2010). Loss of revenue will occur because the town's economic base is overly reliant on retail sales and new home building.

Source: ULI analysis of data from *Queen Creek Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for FYE 10*, pg. 121.

Similarly, sales volume could be increased by expanding the market area. This could be accomplished by providing activities such as festivals and other events such as farmers markets and art shows, similar to what is already being done successfully at Schnepf Farms and the Olive Mill. These functions can attract new customers who will spend money locally.

New “magnet” uses such as unique restaurants and a movie theater in or adjacent to the Town Center would generate sales taxes and also encourage patronage of

nearby stores. Specialty stores unique to Queen Creek, similar to the Olive Mill and the Pork Shop, and specialty grocery stores that generate high sales volumes are also considered excellent magnets. In addition, the dual concept of a restaurant incubator and community kitchen could enhance the critical mass of people in the Town Center area, creating and increasing collateral retail spending.

New multifamily units being considered in the Town Center also could be highly beneficial by creating new

FIGURE 3
Top Five Public Service Expenditures, FY 2010: Strengths and Opportunities, and Weaknesses and Challenges

Rank	Share of Total Revenues ^a (%)	Uses of Funds	Strengths/Opportunities	Weaknesses/Challenges
1	28.8	General government administration	Residents, employers, visitors, and tourists benefit from a well-run municipal government.	This is typically a lower percentage of expenditures after public safety and public works. This ratio suggests that the costs associated with general government administration is disproportionately high for the size of the town.
2	22.2	Public safety	Services are subcontracted to a well-established public safety provider.	As the town expands, it may be more beneficial from a cost-benefit perspective for the town to operate its own police department. However, town revenues need to be sufficient to take advantage of economies of scale.
3	20.5	Annual debt service	The town had the foresight to build infrastructure capacity to meet the needs of its residents, employers, visitors, and tourists.	This ratio also equates to 23.6% of total revenues which is two to three times higher than the debt service-to-revenue for most towns. This could potentially be a dangerous situation and is equivalent to a household being overmortgaged. This is offset by the town’s high capital reserves. One use of this excess capital reserves could be to reduce the level of the town’s current debt.
4	7.3	Culture and recreation	Parks, the Equestrian Centre, and the library are new and provide a needed service to residents and visitors.	Without a future dedicated revenue stream, the increased cost to provide these services might result in a cutback in these services as the town grows.
5	5.6	Highways and streets	Road infrastructure is relatively new and underutilized. Excess capacity currently exists.	The cost to maintain the transportation network will increase as the infrastructure ages.

Source: ULI analysis of data from *Queen Creek Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for FYE 10*, pg. 118.

customers for local restaurants and stores. Allowing and promoting increased densities (smaller lots) at appropriate locations would also be beneficial in creating additional households who would frequent local stores. Because the Town Center will have a mix of uses and activities, it will act as a magnet to attract visitors and customers who normally would not come to Queen Creek to shop. In addition to increasing the sales volume, the greater number of people in apartments in the Town Center area will help give that area a sense activity and vibrancy that will also help stimulate more activity.

Sell Naming Rights

Many jurisdictions have created revenues by assigning naming rights to parks and other facilities. Horseshoe Park and Equestrian Centre and other parks, trails, and even benches could be considered for such a possibility. The town should explore this approach throughout the Town Center area and for other highly visible town facilities.

Enterprise Fund

An enterprise fund establishes a separate accounting and financial reporting mechanism for municipal goods and services for which a fee is charged. Under enterprise accounting, the revenues and expenditures of services are separated into funds with their own financial statements rather than commingled with the revenues and expenses of all other government activities. Enterprise funds may be established for a utility, health care, or recreational facility, for example. Revenues and expenditures for Horseshoe Park and Equestrian Centre were recently converted to an enterprise fund to track financial performance and identify efforts that can be undertaken to turn it into a profit center. The changes will also encourage additional promotions of equestrian and other activities at the facility to increase annual revenue.

Nonprofit Foundations

Creating nonprofit foundations is another creative way to raise revenues for facilities and services. Nonprofit donations could successfully be used for parks and educational purposes. There are numerous examples of nonprofits around the country that have undertaken to

provide services and facilities that are normally associated with local governments. An added benefit of this approach is that it shows outside business and investors that the community is committed to these facilities and services and that it is not completely dependent on the local government for funding these items.

Business Incubator

The town should continue to encourage and support economic development efforts to promote incubator businesses. Incubation combines facility resources, support services, strategic consulting, and coaching to achieve ambitious results in an accelerated time frame. Eliminating high upfront costs for space and support services allows entrepreneurs to concentrate on building their businesses. The ultimate goal of incubation is to launch profitable, sustainable, entrepreneurial companies and to build a cluster of like businesses that can attract new startup businesses.

The town, in partnership with other civic entities, has already undertaken an incubator program. QC Inc. is a business development program that aims to assist small-business owners, home-based businesses, and those contemplating a start-up to grow their companies in Queen Creek. The incubator provides affordable space, business counseling, and business services, as well as opportunities to network with other emerging companies. QC Inc. is managed by the town in partnership with the Queen Creek Chamber of Commerce and My Brothers' Office.

Similarly, the "executive suites" concept should be encouraged as a version of an incubator, allowing business to rent space without substantial upfront costs. This approach may be particularly valuable in Queen Creek because of the large number of higher-income, self-employed residents. They may find this arrangement periodically preferable to the long commute to central Phoenix.

Grants

A wide variety of federal and state grants are available to communities with the ability (and patience) to pursue them. Although they have been more difficult to come

by in recent years, grants are still available; those with a focus on energy efficiencies and alternative fuels are particularly abundant. Often, the difficulty in obtaining government grants stems from a lack of knowledge about the federal applications process or more often, the dedication of time and resources necessary to pursue such grants. The recent announcement regarding the new First Solar facility in Mesa suggests that Queen Creek may be better positioned than other locations to explore these energy-related grants.

Special Fire Districts

During the interviews, the panel heard about one new option to raise revenue for the Fire Department through the creation of a special Fire District to serve the unincorporated county “islands” within and adjacent to the town. Although the panel cannot speak to the particulars of this option, it does encourage the town to explore new and innovative approaches of this type that can offset costs.

Current User Fees and Special Assessments Categories

User fees have been successfully used by many jurisdictions to help fund recreation facilities, and Queen Creek should explore them also. They are preferable to increases in taxes or cuts in services. User fees should include renting town facilities to private and public sector entities.

Review Expenditure Strategies

While many such opportunities have already been explored, there may be additional areas and services that the town could outsource to save on costs. An appropriate starting point for this exercise is to assume that all town services can be contracted out to appropriate companies and organizations. The town should then conduct a rigorous cost-benefit analysis that determines feasibility. The cost-benefit analyses need to assign measurable indicators to each function if and where possible. In some instances, this will require replacing qualitative values with quantitative values. The panel does not suggest eliminating qualitative analysis, simply at least considering each function from a quantitative perspective.

Potential Land Strategies

The town may own a significant amount of land, some of it very strategic and valuable. The 17-acre site in the Town Center could be considered for either outright sale or a long-term ground lease. Other potential land strategies include public/private partnerships and joint ventures. At a minimum, the town should scour its real property holdings for sales and lease candidates and joint venture opportunities.

Deferring Capital Improvements

Deferring capital improvement projects is often easier said than done. During these difficult economic times, however, it may be necessary for the town to defer, delay, or even eliminate projects from the Capital Improvement Plan.

Use of Reserve Fund

The Queen Creek reserve account, compared to other jurisdictions is well funded. This may be a resource the town can tap until economic conditions improve. At least an analysis should be done to see if it is possible to accomplish this without hurting the town’s bond rating.

Conclusion

PHOENIX IS NOT THE ONLY METROPOLITAN area to face the Great Recession, but it is among the worst-hit areas in the country. Employment growth is likely to be limited for the next few years, and development of most property types will be negligible, owing to the significant quantity of existing built space throughout the Phoenix region and particularly in the East Valley. Homes will continue to be built, but in fewer numbers and at lower price points. The apartment market is the lone bright spot and could serve Queen Creek well.

Queen Creek has done an outstanding job in providing good-quality infrastructure for roads, water, sewer, and parks, not only for its current needs but also looking to the future. This success has come at a cost, the price being the necessity to pay now for the bonds that funded those improvements, because the explosive growth that was anticipated has not yet occurred.

The panel was impressed with the improvements to the community brought about over the past few years by the stringent design controls, open-space and landscape requirements, and ever-denser mix of lot and home sizes. More diversity of product type and density will be seen in the future to have been a plus, financially and aesthetically.

The town's desire to draw office and industrial users in the near term is unrealistic, the panel believes. Queen Creek can be the beneficiary of major plant and office installations in the Phoenix area and particularly in the cities surrounding the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport, by being the residential community of choice for the employees of these neighboring facilities. This is a significant opportunity. The vision and strategic recommendations outlined in this report are an attempt to capitalize on this opportunity.



Queen Creek can become a great hometown for people at all stages of their lives by improving access from the planned freeways interchanges and expansions; creating a true Town Center at an appropriate scale with a unique sense of place; fostering a “sense of arrival” and building iconic gateways at appropriate locations; broadening retail and entertainment options; and embracing the town’s identity and branding as a balanced integration of the historical agricultural way of life with modern modes of living. The synergy of the agrarian and residential elements can be an expressive identity for the town, visible in its signage and gateways, its marketing, its festivals, its conservation design communities, its focus on agritourism and “farm-to-table” efforts, and its targets for economic development.

The financial realities facing the town are real, though not dire. There are strategies the town can use to begin to overcome the imbalance between revenues and expenses, beyond the serious cost-cutting that has occurred recently. The overreliance on retail sales tax revenues will be ameliorated both by improving retail sales and by shoring up the other elements of the community’s income stream.

Creating public/private partnerships with responsible developers may be the means to jump-start desired developments that neither side could accomplish on its own. The panel feels that the site south of Rittenhouse Road between Ellsworth Road and the Ellsworth Loop is an ideal candidate to serve many purposes: diversify and enliven the Town Center, produce significant revenue for the town and nearby retailers, and become a model of the desired sense of place at a significant gateway.

The other suggestions made with respect to the Town Center, both here and in the ASU Capstone plan, will only add to the public pride and economic vitality of Queen Creek. Revisions to the development process such as better customer service and reduced processing time will be important steps in moving the town forward. In the meantime, as the economic recovery gains momentum, the town should focus on being the absolute best place to live in the East Valley.

The town of Queen Creek has a genuine mix of residential and rural uses. The town should use this combination to its advantage, striving to be the absolute best place to live in the East Valley.



About the Panel

Zane Segal

*Panel Chair
Houston, Texas*

Zane Segal is a developer, development and marketing consultant, and licensed real estate broker. He is knowledgeable about commercial, residential, historic, hospitality, transit-oriented, and mixed-use projects in urban, suburban, and resort areas. He has over 33 years of experience in realty venture management, project development, construction, brokerage, and marketing on a range of property types including development sites, lofts, townhomes, low- and mid-rise condominiums, custom homes, apartments, hotels, retail centers, office buildings, subdivisions, and sports facilities, as well as master-planned projects incorporating several uses.

At ULI's 2008 Fall Meeting, the Institute conferred upon Segal the Robert M. O'Donnell Award for outstanding contribution to the success of its Advisory Services program. He has chaired four ULI Advisory Services panels and served on ten more. He also chaired ULI Houston's first two Technical Assistance panels and participated on others. Segal has served on the ULI Houston District Council Board for eight years, as vice chairman of Membership and of Advisory Services. Having participated on the committees of all four Urban Marketplaces held by ULI Houston, he also instigated and guided Houston's initial Suburban Marketplace, the first such conference held by any District Council.

Segal received a BS in humanities with a minor in visual design from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and an MFA in cinema from the University of Southern California. He has studied graduate-level architecture and planning at the University of Houston. Segal was licensed as a real estate agent in 1982 and as a broker in 1998.

Engin Artemel

Alexandria, Virginia

Engin Artemel, an architect, civil engineer, and city planner, has more than 30 years of professional experience in both the public and the private sectors, as well as in academic circles. His career encompasses public service, national and international consulting, teaching, and community activities.

Artemel served as the director of Planning and Community Development for the city of Alexandria, Virginia and was chairman of the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments Planning Board. He is now the president of Artemel Group, which includes Artemel and Associates, a planning and economic development firm, and Artemel International, its international counterpart.

As a consultant, Artemel and his firm provided planning assistance to local, regional, and state governments as well as Indian nations and tribes in the Mid-Atlantic and Midwest, as well as in California and other western states. He also consulted extensively for federal agencies such as the Department of Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Farmers Home Administration, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of Transportation, and Federal Highway Administration.

Domestically, the firm also contributed to the planning and development of housing projects, retail centers, and mixed-use projects. The firm conducts feasibility studies and prepares master plans for both rural and urban communities and often assists with the implementation of projects.

Internationally, Artemel consults to international agencies such as the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme, and the Organization for Economic

Co-operation and Development; and to U.S. government agencies that have an international focus—the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, the U.S. Export-Import Bank, and the U.S. Trade and Development Agency.

Artemel directs the Artemel Group's international activities in the planning, development, and financing of projects in developing countries and the Newly Independent States. He has conducted feasibility studies in a multitude of fields. He played a key role in the development of industrial parks and incubators as a catalyst to regional development such as the 10th of Ramadan City in Egypt, the ESBAS Free Trade Zone in Turkey, and the Plovdiv Industrial Park in Bulgaria. Artemel has recently conducted studies and assisted in the construction of housing projects in Russia, the Central Asian Republics (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan, as well as Afghanistan) and Turkey. In the Black Sea region (Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria, and Turkey), he has been active in energy and environment projects. In the Middle East (Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Kuwait) and North Africa (Morocco), he took part in major waterfront planning and development activities. He is currently involved in tourism projects in Azerbaijan, Poland, and Turkey.

On the academic scene, Artemel lectured on conflict resolution at the Federal Executive Institute in Charlottesville, Virginia, and for the U.S. Department of Commerce. He has also been lecturing on architecture, planning, and environmental topics at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, at the University of Virginia, and at other area universities. He was recently appointed to George Mason University's International Advisory Board.

Artemel has assisted Virginia Commonwealth University with workshops on campus master planning, on housing, and on campus/neighborhood relations. He also assisted the George Washington University with its employee relocation efforts.

Artemel has been a panelist for ULI Advisory Services panels in Richmond and Virginia Beach, and in Fort Wayne, Indiana. He played a key role in advising Chat-

tanooga, Tennessee, on the Moccasin Bend waterfront project, and Houston, Texas, on the Buffalo Bayou reclamation and improvement project.

Artemel has an MA in urban and regional planning from the University of Kansas, a BS in civil engineering from the University of Kansas, a BS in architecture from the California Polytechnic College, and an AA in environmental studies from Santa Ana College in California.

Dean D. Bellas

Alexandria, Virginia

Dean Bellas is president of Urban Analytics, Inc., a real estate and urban planning consulting firm based in Alexandria, Virginia, that provides urban development analytical services to public and private sector clients. Consulting services include fiscal and economic impact studies, market research analysis, real estate asset management, real estate development economics, and project feasibility studies.

Since 1996, Bellas has analyzed the fiscal and economic impact of real estate development on towns, cities, and counties in Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Kansas, and the District of Columbia. During this period, he analyzed the fiscal impact of over 16,000 residential units and over 38.7 million square feet of nonresidential space. The total estimated assessed real estate value of all land use types analyzed is over \$5 billion. Bellas has authored or co-authored over 50 research reports on the fiscal and economic impact of real estate development.

Bellas is affiliated with the Catholic University of America, where he holds the position of professor of practice in real estate development in the School of Architecture and Planning. He has been a lecturer in the School of Professional Studies in Business and Education at the Johns Hopkins University, and in the School of Management at George Mason University. Bellas has also taught candidates for the CFA (certified financial analyst) designation on behalf of the Washington Society of Investment Analysts.

In 2011, Bellas was appointed by the Board of Directors of the Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation to the Board's Advisory Group. In this capacity, he is an economic advisor on matters relating to the economy, real estate and economic development, and urban planning issues. He has consulted to the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Community Development Financial Institutions Fund. Bellas is a member of the Urban Land Institute and has participated in a variety of ULI activities including the Advisory Services panel at Oak Creek, Wisconsin.

Bellas received a BS degree in business administration with a concentration in finance from Western New England College, a master's degree in urban and regional planning from George Washington University, and a PhD degree in public policy with a concentration in regional economic development policy from George Mason University. He is a member of Lambda Alpha International, the honorary society for the advancement of land economics.

Bill Clarke

Ross, California

Bill Clarke, a licensed civil engineer and landscape architect, has over 30 years of experience in planning, design, and construction projects. He consults to developers and other planning and design firms and public agencies on issues ranging from new community plans to site planning and engineering.

For over 20 years, Clarke was with two of the largest landscape architecture firms in the country. As a principal at The SWA Group in Sausalito, California, he worked on projects including the Weyerhaeuser Corporate campus outside Tacoma, Washington; the engineering planning for the Woodbridge new community in Irvine, California; and ARAMCO compounds in Saudi Arabia. As a principal at EDAW, Inc., Clarke led a team that won a design competition for a government complex in Doha, Qatar; prepared two specific plans for over 6,000 homes and 800 square feet of office industrial land in Tracy, California; and prepared construction documents for Washington Harbour in Washington, D.C.

In recent years, Clarke's work has centered on the planning and implementation of a variety of projects. In California, these projects have included an 11,000-acre residential development near Livermore, an 800-acre commercial/industrial plan in Tracy, and a 300-acre business park in Livermore. He was also part of a team preparing a resource management plan for the U.S. territory of Palau. Currently he is working on the implementation of a town center for the new community of Mountain House, California.

David Gazek

San Francisco, California

David Gazek has over 20 years of experience in the real estate industry, including land development, redevelopment, corporate real estate, and the management and turnaround of distressed assets for residential, office, retail, hotels, and mixed-use product types involving a wide range of building types. He is an accomplished team leader, negotiator, creative problem solver, and consensus builder, especially in the areas of strategic planning, public/private partnerships, and development management. He has strong strategic, analytical, financial, management, and communication skills.

Gazek is a principal with AECOM, where he leads the real estate and community development market sector and the strategic planning and real estate advisory services in the western United States. Previously he was a senior vice president with Federal Development, where he managed the master planning, design, market analysis, financial feasibility, and entitlements for a 340-acre, mixed-use resort on the Monterey Peninsula as part of the conversion of the former Fort Ord Army Base and a public/private partnership with the city of Del Rey Oaks. Gazek was also a senior vice president with AIMCO, where he led the development and redevelopment of apartments in the western United States (both conventional and affordable housing types) consisting of more than 10,000 units with a construction value of nearly \$700 million.

As a corporate real estate and workplace consultant with Sun Microsystems, Gazek engaged in portfolio planning and change management for over 6 million square feet of space. He was also a housing development consultant with the University of California, Santa Cruz, where he helped facilitate the successful implementation of a public/private partnership to develop on-campus faculty housing.

From 1996 to 2000, Gazek was director of Downtown Development for the Redevelopment Agency of the city of San Jose, where he managed a division of 25 professionals responsible for development agreement negotiations, government approvals, construction oversight, asset management, and the oversight of several downtown programs for parking, seismic retrofits, storefront renovation, and grants for housing and commercial improvements. His team delivered over \$400 million of office, residential, retail, and hotel projects through the successful negotiation and implementation of public/private partnerships with developers and corporations.

Before that, Gazek served as an independent real estate consultant for landowners, developers, investment bankers, nonprofit agencies, and public housing agencies. He was also a partner with The Ratkovich Company and a development manager with Transpacific Development Company, managing the redevelopment of Cerritos Town Center in Cerritos, California; the redevelopment of the historic Chapman Market in Los Angeles; and the development of the headquarters for the Fashion Institute of Technology in Los Angeles. He was also an urban planner and urban designer with Archisystems, William Pereira, and Gruen Associates.

Gazek has regularly presented at ULI and International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) meetings and conferences. He has also been an instructor of urban design and planning at USC and the Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc).

Gazek has an MBA from the UCLA Graduate School of Management, an MA in architecture and planning from UCLA and a BA in urban studies from Vassar College.

Ross Tilghman

Seattle, Washington

Ross Tilghman heads up the Tilghman Group, which provides transportation planning services. He has over 25 years of urban planning experience, including serving as executive director of a downtown business improvement district. Tilghman provides transportation-related revenue projections, market studies, and planning and development strategies to government, not-for-profit, and private sector clients facing real estate development challenges.

Frequently working with nationally recognized planning teams, Tilghman's recent work includes master plans detailing transportation requirements for Al Ain Wildlife Park and Resort in the United Arab Emirates, Iowa's State Capitol Complex, the Evergreen State College, and Gallisteo Basin Preserve, New Mexico, as well as for downtowns throughout the United States. Central to these efforts are parking studies that identify future demands and space needs, from which he develops parking management plans to support planned development. Tilghman has provided transportation planning for state capitol campuses in Washington, Iowa, and Minnesota, working with state governments to improve their access and parking programs. Additionally, he has undertaken transit market studies to identify ridership potential for new services in Denver and Los Angeles. Tilghman has also completed numerous special event and recreation area transportation plans, including those for San Diego's Balboa Park; Joe Robbie Stadium in Miami, Florida; the Iowa Events Center in Des Moines, Iowa; and Stones River National Battlefield in Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

Since 2000, Tilghman has been working with the city of Tacoma to address its downtown parking needs, including the parking plan for the city's new convention center. He provided the revenue forecasts used to issue parking revenue debt.

Tilghman also served three years as director of a downtown business improvement district in Illinois. He oversaw maintenance, facade improvements, parking, and upper-

story redevelopment efforts in concert with Main Street redevelopment principles. He successfully wrote a \$1.9 million grant to fund a streetscape construction project completed in 2002.

Tilghman frequently participates in national resource panels, assisting communities with development questions, including ULI Advisory Service panels and Mayors' Institute on City Design teams. He received an undergraduate degree in history from Washington University in St. Louis and a master's degree in geography from the University of Washington, Seattle.

Douglas M. Wrenn

Germantown, Maryland

Douglas M. Wrenn is a principal with Rodgers Consulting, Inc., where he directs the firm's work on a broad range of urban planning and site development projects. Before joining Rodgers Consulting, he was the director of redevelopment programs for Montgomery County, Maryland. He was responsible for the management of all aspects of the county government's participation in a \$400 million public/private partnership to revitalize downtown Silver Spring and the county's Redevelopment Office in Wheaton, Maryland.

Wrenn has many years of consulting experience as a land planner and urban development specialist. He has directed multidisciplinary teams on large-scale community planning and urban redevelopment projects, for both public and private real estate interests. He established a national reputation for his work in urban waterfronts, initially as author of ULI's first book on the subject and later as a planning consultant on numerous projects. He holds a BS degree in environmental management and a master's degree in landscape architecture, both from North Carolina State University.

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