

TOWN OF  
**QUEEN CREEK**  
ARIZONA

# Economic Development Program of Work

Presentation to Town Council

2.2021



# Target Sectors



# Advanced Manufacturing

## Aerospace/Aviation

Provides products and services for military aircraft, missile, space, commercial airline, and general aviation markets.

## Electronic Equipment and Components

Produces electronic equipment and consumer electronics and manufactures electrical components for a variety of products.

## Autonomous/Electric Vehicles (EV)

Vehicles that sense its environment and operate without human involvement are autonomous. EVs use one or more electric motors for propulsion. Most autonomous vehicles will be EVs.

## STATISTICS

<b>4.47M</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>138,003</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>24,222</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>3%</b>
Phoenix-Mesa-Chandler MSA Population	Queen Creek Population Growth (2015 – 2020)	Manufacturing Sector Employment (Phoenix-Mesa-Chandler MSA)	Sector Growth 2015-2020 (Phoenix-Mesa-Chandler MSA)	Sector Employment (Queen Creek Labor Shed Area)	Sector Growth 2015-2020 (Labor Shed)	Projected Sector Growth 2020-2025 (Labor Shed)

## AVAILABLE PRODUCT

4,000 plus acres of state-owned land in Queen Creek, some of which will be available for industrial use

## REGIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION



Tempe

Aerospace Engineering (Aeronautics, Autonomous Vehicle Systems and Other), Industrial Engineering (MS and PhD)



Mesa

Graduate & Undergraduate Engineering and Manufacturing Engineering Programs



Aircraft Maintenance Technology  
Unmanned Aircraft Systems



Automated Industrial Technology, Electronics Engineering Technology, Industrial Robotics and Automation Technologies



## BUSINESS CLIMATE

**ARIZONA**

**#1** Most Competitive State in the Mountain Range

**#7** Best State for Business

**4.9%** Corporate Income Tax Rate

Competitive Incentives



**5.83¢ kWh** Competitive Starting Electric Rates

**Reliability** Among Most Reliable Electric Service in Southwest

## REGIONAL BUSINESS BASE



Mesa



Mesa



Chandler and Gilbert



Chandler



Mesa



Chandler



Chandler

## CONTACT US

For more information and assistance, please contact Doreen Cott, Town of Queen Creek Economic Development Director at [doreen.cott@queencreek.org](mailto:doreen.cott@queencreek.org) or at 480-358-3522.



# Agritainment/Destination Tourism

Agritainment = Agriculture + Entertainment

The agriculture component of the Agritainment sector stems from the “farm to table” movement and as that trend continues to gain momentum, it results in growth of local farm producers creating a tourism opportunity. This component is already well established in the Town of Queen Creek with the Queen Creek Olive Mill, Schnepf Farms, Sossaman Farms, Hayden Flour Mills and others, which all include an agribusiness and entertainment component. Other destination tourism assets in Queen Creek include Horseshoe Park & Equestrian Centre, Queen Creek Botanical Gardens, The Barney Family Sports Complex and the Queen Creek Performing Arts Center, as well as the parks and trails system in the Town.

## SECTOR EMPLOYMENT & GROWTH

**32,700**

Sector Employment  
(Queen Creek Labor  
Shed Area)

**14%**

Sector Growth  
2015-2020  
(Labor Shed)

**12%**

Projected Sector  
Growth  
2020-2025  
(Labor Shed)



<https://www.queencreekolivemill.com/>



<https://schnepffarms.com/>



<https://www.facebook.com/sossamanfarms/>



<https://www.haydenflourmills.com/>



<http://theporkshopaz.com/>



HORSESHOE PARK  
EQUESTRIAN CENTRE  
<https://www.facebook.com/horseshoepark/>



<https://qcgardens.org/>

## #FRESHFOODIETRAIL

[https://s3.us-west-1.amazonaws.com/mesa-2019/images/files/FreshFoodie\\_Agritourism\\_Brochure.pdf?mtime=20191106153837](https://s3.us-west-1.amazonaws.com/mesa-2019/images/files/FreshFoodie_Agritourism_Brochure.pdf?mtime=20191106153837)



<https://barneyindoorsports.com/>



<https://qcpac.com/>

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TOWN OF  
**QUEEN CREEK**  
ARIZONA



# Business Services

*Focused on providing support services to businesses and performing essential activities in-house  
May include corporate operations centers, customer and technical support centers and regional headquarters*

## STATISTICS

<b>4.47M</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>31.2</b>	<b>211,597</b>	<b>33,057</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>16%</b>
Phoenix-Mesa-Chandler MSA Population	Queen Creek Population Growth (2015 – 2020)	Associate's Degree or Higher (Town of Queen Creek)	Median Age (Town of Queen Creek)	Sector Employment (Phoenix-Mesa-Chandler MSA)	Sector Employment (Queen Creek Labor Shed Area)	Sector Growth 2015-2020 (Labor Shed)	Projected Sector Growth 2020-2025 (Labor Shed)

## BUSINESS CLIMATE

### ARIZONA

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- 5.83¢ kWh** Competitive Starting Electric Rates
- Reliability** Among Most Reliable Electric Service in Southwest
- 1,800** Miles of Dark Fiber

## REGIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION



*#10 Undergrad Management Program -  
U.S. News & World Report  
30+ Business degrees, MBA,  
Management (MS and PhD)*



*Mesa  
Business, Business Administration,  
Communications, Management,  
MS Organizational Leadership*



*Accounting, Management,  
Associate in Business*



*Accounting, MBA*



*Managerial Finance*



*Accounting, General Business,  
Management, Marketing*

## REGIONAL BUSINESS BASE



*Chandler*



*Chandler*



*Tempe*



*Chandler*



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# Healthcare

Focused on supporting future expansion of Banner Ironwood Medical Center and any new ancillary medical businesses, including but not limited to testing laboratories, diagnostic imaging centers, primary care physician's offices, wellness centers and others, as well as any other healthcare related businesses

## STATISTICS

<b>4.47M</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>31.2</b>	<b>35,727</b>	<b>5,390</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>12%</b>
Phoenix-Mesa-Chandler MSA Population	Queen Creek Population Growth (2015 – 2020)	Associate's Degree or Higher (Town of Queen Creek)	Median Age (Town of Queen Creek)	Sector Employment (Phoenix-Mesa-Chandler MSA)	Sector Employment (Queen Creek Labor Shed Area)	Sector Growth 2015-2020 (Labor Shed)	Projected Sector Growth 2020-2025 (Labor Shed)

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## REGIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION



**Tempe**

Applied Science (Medical Laboratory Science), Biological Science, Neuroscience, Nursing and DNP MIHC and MIHM



**Mesa**

Applied Biological Sciences, Exploratory Health and Life Sciences and other



Health Sciences Program: Pre-Physical Therapy, Nutritional Science, Nursing and other



**Mesa**

Health Education, Health Sciences, Nutrition, Psychology



Child and Adolescent Therapy, Educational and Psychological Measurement, Psychological Testing



Biological Sciences, Healthcare Technology, Nursing, Nutrition and Dietetics, Paramedicine, Psychology

## REGIONAL BUSINESS BASE



Queen Creek and other SE Valley locations



Gilbert



Chandler

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# Information Technology (IT)/Software

Focused on computing via hardware, software, services and infrastructure to create, store, exchange and leverage information

## STATISTICS

<b>4.47M</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>31.2</b>	<b>45,224</b>	<b>5,700</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>21%</b>
Phoenix-Mesa-Chandler MSA Population	Queen Creek Population Growth (2015 – 2020)	Associate's Degree or Higher (Town of Queen Creek)	Median Age (Town of Queen Creek)	Sector Employment (Phoenix-Mesa-Chandler MSA)	Sector Employment (Queen Creek Labor Shed Area)	Sector Growth 2015-2020 (Labor Shed)	Projected Sector Growth 2020-2025 (Labor Shed)

## BUSINESS CLIMATE

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**1,800** Miles of Dark Fiber

## REGIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION



**Tempe**  
Ranked #1 in Innovation  
Information Assurance Center  
MS, BS and PhD in Computer Science



**Mesa**  
IT (BS and MS), Business  
(Technology), Graphic IT, Software  
Engineering & Technology (BS and  
MS), MSTech



Computer Information &  
Technology



Computer Science



Information Technology

## REGIONAL BUSINESS BASE



Tempe and Gilbert



Chandler



Chandler



Mesa



Chandler

IT Innovation Center



Chandler



Gilbert






U.S. Delivery Center for Tech Solutions

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# Strategic Focuses

<b>STRATEGIC FOCUSES</b>				
<p>PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT</p> 	<p>TOWN CENTER DEVELOPMENT</p> 	<p>BUSINESS ATTRACTION/ RETENTION</p> 	<p>ENTREPRENEURSHIP/ INNOVATION</p> 	<p>MARKETING/ COMMUNICATIONS</p> 



# Product Development

## IDENTIFY REAL ESTATE AND MARKET TO ATTRACT HIGH-IMPACT PROJECTS/DEVELOPMENT

### Focus on state-owned land development

#### Action Item: Continue infrastructure planning for the state-owned land

In order to successfully attract projects to the state-owned land, infrastructure or a well-developed plan for infrastructure must be in place. As part of the Arizona State Land Department Queen Creek Specific Plan, the Town of Queen Creek has committed to providing water and wastewater service to the property. Natural gas should be available through Mesa's Magma Gas Service Area, and electrical service is provided by SRP with existing electrical substation and transmission lines already within the property. Broadband service can be provided by one of two providers, which is proposed to be determined during the Secondary Planning Phase of development.

Some location projects may be working on a more condensed timeline so it is important to ensure that all infrastructure needs of the state-owned land can be met as quickly as possible. Ensure that the Town of Queen Creek has very **detailed plan and timeline** for each component of needed infrastructure on identified sites on the property.

#### Action Item: Explore development of a Technology or Innovation Park

Based on attracting IT/Software, Business Services and potentially more high-tech Advanced Manufacturing, the idea of attracting a developer to create a Technology or Innovation Park on part of the state-owned land should be explored. This may need to be a public-private partnership between the Town of Queen Creek and the developer. A unique and creative name should be determined.

### Benchmark Best Practice

#### Oro Valley Innovation Park

- Oro Valley established an Innovation Park in 2019
- Comprises nearly 200 acres
- Will provide 2 million square feet available for corporate headquarters, professional offices, medical offices, research and development facilities, retail shops, hotels, restaurants and other assets
- Venture West was the developer and CBRE appears to be the broker for the property
- Involved a public private partnership



**Action Item: Identify and market specific state-owned land for industrial use**

Strategic areas within the state-owned land have been designated for industrial use. Specific parcels of land should be identified as industrial sites related to the Advanced Manufacturing targets identified.

**Action Item: Explore development of a destination open-air mixed-use retail center**

Along with residential, office and industrial development, retail development will be another area of focus for the state-owned land. The idea of **attracting a developer** for an open-air mixed-use retail center should be explored for feasibility for the Queen Creek area.

This type of development may work best near one of the proposed interchanges on the new State Route 24. Macerich developed the SanTan Village, as well as many other Arizona shopping areas including Arrowhead Towne Center in Glendale, Biltmore Fashion Park and Paradise Valley Mall in Phoenix, Chandler Fashion Center, Estrella Falls in Goodyear, Kierland Commons and Scottsdale Fashion Mall in Scottsdale, La Encantada in Tucson, and many others. The Phoenix Premium Outlets in Chandler may be another to explore for this type of development.

**Benchmark Best Practice****SanTan Village Gilbert**

- A 500-acre, open-air super regional lifestyle center development with 3 million square feet of upscale retail, restaurants, entertainment, office space, hotel and residential uses, as well as entertainment options like Top Golf and Main Event
- Specialty stores include Best Buy, Dick's Sporting Goods, Dillard's, and Macy's, as well as other leading brands such as Apple, Barnes & Noble, Coach, Forever 21, Gymboree, Sephora, and others
- Leon Capital Group, a Dallas-based investment company began construction on Soltra at SanTan Village, a new Class A 380-unit multifamily community in 2019
- Vedula Residential has built or is in the process of building two apartment buildings in the village
- Original developer was Macerich





**Action Item: Begin exploration of potential for future regional sports attraction/park**

The attraction of a regional sports attraction/park will create exceptional economic development opportunities for Queen Creek by drawing sports events and tourists to the Town. The feasibility of such an attraction/park should be explored further.

**Focus on identification and marketing of other product to meet needs of target sectors**

**Action Item: Identify sites for Class A office development**

There are several sites in the Downtown Core, some of which are owned by the Town, and in other areas of Queen Creek that may be suitable for future Class A office space development. Related to the Business Services and IT/Software targets, these sites should be **identified and marketed** on the Queen Creek economic development website, and through partners such as SRP and GPEC, as well as the Arizona Commerce Authority (ACA).

**Action Item: Target developers of Class A office space**

Working with partners, identify a **list of potential Class A developers** to target for office building or park development. The focus should be on developers that have completed similar developments in the Southeast Valley region.

**Action Item: Identify other sites for potential industrial use**

Other sites in Queen Creek should be identified and marketed for **industrial use** for potential Advanced Manufacturing targets.

**Action Item: Identify other sites for potential tourism use**

Other sites in Queen Creek should be identified and marketed for **tourism use** specifically related to the Agritainment/Destination Tourism target.



## Explore options for Town-owned Downtown Core property

### **Action Item: Further explore use of land lease for future property development**

Continue to explore the use of sale-leaseback transactions with developers for Town-owned property in the Downtown Core.

### **Action Item: Evaluate strategic real estate sites for Town acquisition**

Continue to identify and evaluate potential sites in the Downtown Core for future acquisition by the Town.





# Town Center Development

## FOCUS ON AWARENESS, THE ARTS, ACCESS AND POTENTIAL NEW ASSETS

### Create more awareness of the Downtown Core

#### Action Item: Revisit the idea of a branded name for the Downtown Core

The Town Center Plan Update recommended the exploration of a brand identity for the Downtown Core area. In a community survey, many indicated they liked the name “Old Ellsworth District” but the recommendation in the plan was to further explore the idea of a brand name in order to provide a special identity for the urban core. For example, the Town of Gilbert’s downtown area is locally known as the “Heritage District.”

The idea of exploring a **brand identity** for the Downtown Core should be considered but even if Queen Creek determines not to have a specific brand identity, it should ensure that the terminology it uses to describe the downtown or town center area is consistent moving forward. Whether it is referred to as the Queen Creek Downtown Core or QC Downtown Core or another name should be determined and actively marketed with consistent use of the identified name.

#### Action Item: Work to educate and market difference between Town Center and Downtown Core

There currently appears to be some confusion of the difference between the Town Center and Downtown Core. Develop a **marketing campaign** focused on educating residents and others on the difference to eliminate this confusion.



*From 2017 Town Center Plan Update*



## Embrace the focus on the arts in the Downtown Core

**Action Item: Continue with Downtown Core Arts & Placemaking Advisory Subcommittee and look at opportunities to expand in future**

Queen Creek recently formed a **Downtown Core Arts & Placemaking Advisory Subcommittee** focused on the Downtown Core. The activities of this subcommittee should be **supported and expanded**.

**Action Item: Consider a more robust public arts program**

The Town Center Plan Update and the 2016 Economic Development Strategic Plan both recommended the exploration of a **Public Arts Program**. This should be further explored by the Downtown Core Arts & Placemaking Advisory Subcommittee.

### Benchmark Best Practice

#### Public Art in Oro Valley

- Established in 1997, **1% for Public Art Program** requires commercial developers to set aside 1% of project’s total budget for creation and installation of public art
- Public art is required element for all new non-residential and public development projects
- Public art is promoted in entryways, trails and buildings throughout the community
- Town provides virtual and public tours of art throughout community
- On monthly basis, new local artists are provided with the opportunity to present their work to be featured in Oro Valley Council Chambers

### Benchmark Best Practice

#### City of Walnut Creek

- One of over 350 towns and civic organizations that sponsor public art programs in U.S.
- Adopted Public Art Program in 2000 when City Council approved two ordinances mandating funding and inclusion of public art in new development and renovation projects
- Program administered by Arts + Recreation Department and overseen by Bedford Gallery Advisory Council and Arts Commission
- Arts Commission established to advise City Council on facilities, programs and policies that enhance artistic, aesthetic and cultural quality of life





**Action Item: Consider creation of community arts educational programs**

The City of Walnut Creek has a Center for Community Arts, which is an arts and educational center that provides classes and resources for all ages. The Queen Creek Downtown Core Arts & Placemaking Advisory Subcommittee should explore the creation of an **arts and educational center** in the Town. The possibility of holding classes at the Queen Creek Performing Arts Center or at the Communiversity should be considered, if viable.

**Action Item: Explore idea of establishing a pop-up gallery art walk**

The Queen Creek Downtown Core Arts & Placemaking Advisory Subcommittee should consider the establishment of a **monthly pop-up gallery art walk** that features local and regional artists.

**Action Item: Continue to expand Queen Creek Festival and work to attract other events to include more of an arts focus**

The Queen Creek Festival is held every Friday night year-round in front of the Queen Creek Library. This family-friendly event includes 15 to 25 food trucks, live music and a boutique market full of local artists and crafters. The Queen Creek Downtown Core Arts & Placemaking Advisory Subcommittee should consider ways to incorporate more **local artwork** into this event and work to attract other events focused on the arts.

**Continue to plan for and improve parking and pedestrian access****Action Item: Conduct a parking analysis to determine a need for a plan in the Downtown Core**

In order for the Downtown Core to successfully attract residents, tourists and businesses, there must be adequate public parking available in the area. As recommended in the 2017 Town Center Plan Update, a **parking analysis** for the Downtown Core should be developed.



**Action Item: Conduct a pedestrian and bicycle connectivity study**

As recommended in the 2017 Town Center Plan Update, a **pedestrian and bicycle connectivity study** for the Town Center district and Downtown Core should be developed. Planning for the future of autonomous vehicles should also be included in this plan.

**Support other events and assets to attract people to Downtown Core**

**Action Item: Consider partnership with event producers to bring new events to the Downtown Core**

Identify new events to bring to the Downtown Core to attract residents and tourists, as well as to explore potential partnerships with producers of those events.



**Action Item: Evaluate feasibility for multi-purpose food hall in Downtown Core**

The development of multi-purpose food halls with an assortment of casual food stalls, retail and even live entertainment is on the rise in Tucson and other markets. One of the original food hall markets, which is still around today is Pike Place Market in Seattle. This concept would be a good extension for the Agritainment sector in Queen Creek.

Queen Creek should explore the feasibility of this type of development, and, if feasible, identify **potential Downtown Core property** and **connect with possible developers** who have done similar projects in the past.



**Best Practice**

**MSA Annex - Tucson**

- Mercado San Agustin was Tucson's first food hall
- MSA Annex is an expansion of Mercado San Agustin, bringing 13 new locally owned small businesses, many women and minority-owned, for a total of 26 to the Mercado District
- Will feature a mixture of retail and restaurant vendors, a coffee shop and a beer and wine garden
- Retail businesses will sell everything from bikes to clothing and furniture
- Gadsden Company is developer

**City Park - Tucson**

- In downtown, City Park megaplex, a five-story 100,000 sq. ft. building, will serve as an office for Hexagon Mining but bottom floor will consist of a 14-vendor food hall open to the public
- Features two adjacent courtyards
- Second floor will feature a bowling alley as well as a bar and rooftop deck on fifth floor will also be open for events
- Developer is the Bourn Companies





**Business  
Attraction/  
Retention**

## CONCENTRATE ON PROGRAMS TO ATTRACT NEW BUSINESS AND A PLAN FOR RETENTION

### Continue with Town's Economic Development Investment Program

#### Action Item: Consider creation of an Economic Development Fund

Queen Creek can enter into development agreements with companies for public infrastructure assistance, but this process takes time and effort. The Town can also waive planning and other fees. Expedited plan review and permitting are other incentives that can be offered.

Although, these potential incentives are available, Queen Creek does not have an economic development fund, as some of its competitors, such as the Reserve Fund in Gilbert, which is a discretionary project closing fund. This fund has been used for real estate/development projects, retail development projects and technology projects such as Deloitte's U.S. Delivery Center and the GoDaddy, Inc. operations or customer service center project. Gilbert has a history of providing incentives to land big deals. Between 2013 and 2017, the Town invested \$41.5 million in incentives, with the majority, estimated at \$35 million, going to the Rivulon development. Although not a competitor, Oro Valley also has a competitive incentive program described to the right.

The Town of Queen Creek should explore establishment of a **branded economic development fund** that could be called the **Queen Creek Quality Jobs Program**. This program could be structured similar to the Oro Valley incentive program with outlined requirements that allow the Town to focus the incentive on the types of projects it wants to attract. It could also involve reimbursement of existing sales taxes rather than a set aside fund like in Gilbert.

### Benchmark Best Practice

#### Oro Valley Primary Employer Incentive Program

- Program aims to encourage expansion of existing companies and attracting new employers
- To qualify companies must:
  - Invest \$1 million in direct capital investment; or
  - Create at least 10 net new full-time jobs that pay at least \$40,000 and meet median wage for that sector; and
  - Be a primary employer
- Primary employers are those that produce more goods and services than can be consumed by local economy, and therefore export a significant portion
- Benefit is 100% reimbursement of project's construction sales tax collections that may be utilized to offset business operating expenses
- May also offer reductions of any permit or plan review fees, as well as an expedited permitting process





**Action Item: Continue to improve permitting processes**

Queen Creek's Development Nexus Portal makes submission of building permit applications or planning and engineering projects much more efficient with electronic plan review. Consider a **branded name and other improvements for this portal** to make it even more business friendly.

Queen Creek could change the name to the **QC Fast Track Permitting Portal** or something similar and make any other needed improvements identified with the goal of making the permitting process in the Town as fast and easy as possible.

Also, consider offering an even **more expedited permitting process** for certain high-impact projects. For example, the City of Gilbert offers a 60-day permitting process. An even more aggressive program is the 5-Day Building Permit Program in Surprise, which is a self-certification permit program that eliminates the plan review fee for licensed design professionals certified with the City of Phoenix and provides a faster permit process for eligible projects, allowing a permit to be issued within five business days.



**Action Item: Conduct an economic impact analysis for projects that qualify for the Investment Program**

In order to support the offering of incentives to projects, an **economic impact analysis** should be conducted for each project that qualifies for the Investment Program. This will provide documentation that the long-term benefit of the project will more than offset the incentive offered. The Town should determine whether GPEC or another partner can assist with conducting these impact analyses.

From 2013 to 2017, Gilbert entered into seven development agreements in support of significant economic development projects using its discretionary fund. In total, Gilbert has committed \$41.5 million with an estimated economic impact of \$4.8 billion in return. To the right is one example of an incentive and impact analysis in Gilbert.

**Assess local and regional education programs****Action Item: Evaluate higher education programs in relation to target sectors**

The higher education programs and degrees in Queen Creek and the region must be evaluated to determine whether the workforce talent needs for companies in the target sectors can be met long-term.

**Action Item: Seek additional higher education programs to serve target sectors**

Once that assessment is complete, the Town of Queen Creek should seek to attract degree programs to address any gaps identified through the Communiversities at Queen Creek or through establishment of other college campus locations in the Town.

**Benchmark Best Practice****Incentives and Impact Analysis  
GoDaddy, inc. Customer Care  
Center Project**

- Gilbert Town Council approved development agreement with GoDaddy to retain 1,364 existing jobs, invest \$15 million and execute a new 10-year lease
- GoDaddy to be reimbursed \$836,000 over 10 years in support of job training costs
- Economic impact analysis showed potential impact of \$1.53 billion over ten years with continued operations directly and indirectly supporting an estimated 1,788 jobs, including 1,364 in direct jobs, and generating \$80.5 million in annual personal income in the Town



**Action Item: Work with public and charter school districts to evaluate existing program offerings**

Programs available at the public and charter school districts in Queen Creek, as well as through Career & Technical Education (CTE), should also be reviewed and evaluated related to the target sectors.

**Support healthcare sector development**

**Action Item: Support future expansion of Banner Ironwood Medical Center**

Banner Ironwood Medical Center is a critical existing business in Queen Creek that must be supported. It currently has 47 private rooms in a building that can accommodate up to 86 beds, and It was built to expand quickly with community growth. In total, more than 500 beds and supporting health services could be built on the existing site. The Queen Creek economic development department should **meet regularly** with the medical center leadership to ensure that its needs are being met and future growth supported.

**Action Item: Support growth of other ancillary medical services**

**Ancillary medical services** such as labs and other medical offices that support the hospital should also continue to receive assistance from the Queen Creek economic development department.



## Support existing and potential new Agritainment and Destination Tourism attractions

### **Action Item: Continue to position Queen Creek as a place for health and wellness by attracting a destination resort and spa**

The 2016 Economic Development Strategic Plan includes recommendations to position Queen Creek as a place for health and wellness. One of the ideas was to promote Box Canyon as a location for a destination resort and spa, similar to Canyon Ranch or maybe Miraval. This concept is still under consideration and as the economy stabilizes once the pandemic is under control, should be pursued by **identifying and contacting potential developers** of such resorts. Note that Canyon Ranch is family-owned but Miraval is now owned by Hyatt. The Hilton Tucson Conquistador Golf & Tennis Resort is a major employer in Oro Valley, and one of the benchmark locations reviewed. This could be another concept to consider.

In addition, the Queen Creek economic development department should work with the Town Council to understand the **potential investment** the Town would be willing to make for the right concept. Conducting a **feasibility analysis** that includes the potential economic impact of such a resort on the Town may be another next step to move this idea forward.

### **Action Item: Complete and market the 11-mile loop trail**

The 2016 Economic Development Strategic Plan includes recommendations to work towards completion of the 11-mile loop trail so it can be promoted to attract a wide variety of tourism activities including hiking, cycling, and running. This 11-mile loop trail and any other trail systems in progress should be **completed and marketed extensively** further positioning Queen Creek as a health and wellness destination.



**Action Item: Continue to support and market events at Horseshoe Park & Equestrian Centre**

The Horseshoe Park & Equestrian Centre is a unique asset for Queen Creek that should continue to be supported. The 2016 Economic Development Strategic Plan includes recommendations to expand the schedule of activities at the center to include non-equestrian events, and work to attract complementary economic uses, such as a western theme park or restaurant, in order to attract more events and people. The Queen Creek economic development team should continue to work with Horseshoe Park to identify and determine the **feasibility** of these other complementary uses and establish a plan to move any viable ideas forward. **Marketing assistance** should also continue to be provided.

**Participate in programs to retain existing business**

**Action Item: Expand Business Retention & Expansion (BR&E) program**

Visiting existing businesses face-to-face is critical to building and maintaining relationships that will result in a two-way flow of information and enhance the timeliness and quality of information. Currently the Queen Creek Chamber of Commerce is contracted with by the Town to conduct business retention interviews. Visits with the Town's larger employers and businesses within the approved target sectors should be conducted by the Economic Development Department. The Chamber should continue to conduct visits with identified other businesses. The Queen Creek economic development team should conduct **annual face-to-face meetings** with **larger existing employers**, as well as any that are target sectors, regardless of size. This may eventually require a new full-time position in the economic development department.







# Entrepreneurship/ Innovation

## EMBRACE ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION FOCUSED ON IT/SOFTWARE STARTUPS

### Enhance entrepreneurial support infrastructure and programs

#### Action Item: Seek partnership to provide entrepreneurial support

The success of entrepreneurs is heavily dependent on the ecosystem that supports them. As an existing coworking space in Queen Creek, Gangplank should continue to be supported even/especially as current space needs transform, but a partnership should be explored with an existing organization in the region that can assist with the **establishment of additional entrepreneurial support programs** in the Town. One such organization, which now has a presence in Mesa, is CO+HOOTS. CO+HOOTS has become a globally recognized co-working space first launched in downtown Phoenix in 2010, that has spent the last 10 years supporting entrepreneurs through coworking, incubation and ecosystem development. CO+HOOTS should be contacted, and a **future partnership explored**.

Queen Creek needs to develop programming designed to nurture development of entrepreneurial companies through the startup phase and onward by providing access to business resources, mentorship and networking support.

#### Action Item: Organize networking events for entrepreneurs/startups

Organize and coordinate **networking events** at least twice annually where entrepreneurs/startups are invited to network and share ideas, be presented with information on local and state support programs and to discuss potential solutions to any challenges.

### Benchmark Best Practice

#### AZ TechCelerator Surprise, AZ

Four-building campus that provides affordable space, tools and resources for innovative and technology-focused entrepreneurs in following categories:

- Startup Space – Free app that provides startups with quick access to local community resources
- Small Business Assistance – Offers local network connections, free business education, location support and market research
- Business Incubator – Focused on growing a business through affordable space, mentorship, and other resources
- Affiliate Membership – Provides a business address, conference rooms, meeting space and workshops
- Beehive Coworking Space – Provides designated desk, flexible lease terms, 24/7 building access, free WiFi and parking, kitchen access, four conference rooms and other services
- Global Concierge Services – Provides assistance with navigating international patents, work visas, local business licenses, incorporating in U.S. and other foreign related business matters



**Action Item: Include an entrepreneurship/innovation or startup section on economic development website**

There is an existing section on the economic development section of the Town of Queen Creek website on how to “Start a Business in Queen Creek.” The new economic development website for the Town should include a **section** called “Entrepreneurship/Innovation” or “Startup Resources” and revamped to include other potential support groups at the state, regional and local level available to startups. The Gilbert Office of Economic Development has a good section of their website that could be used as a model as follows: <https://www.gilbertedi.com/startups/>

**Action Item: Continue to evaluate need for more coworking space or an incubator facility**

Gangplank is the only current organization offering coworking space in Queen Creek. The need for additional coworking space should **continue to be evaluated** whether that involves an expansion of Gangplank or the attraction of another **coworking space** or an **incubator facility**.

There are currently five coworking spaces in Gilbert including Co-manity, EX Spaces, The Works-Gilbert, Thrive CoWorking For Women and HQ Workforces. Chandler Innovations, described to the right, is an example of a successful incubator program that could be a future model.

**Best Practice**

**Chandler Innovations**

- An incubator program created by City of Chandler to provide resources for founders in technology sector
- Entrepreneurs must live, work, or own property in the city in order to be eligible
- Ventures accepted into program can be at various stages of business cycle although startups are largest segment
- Program designed to provide resources to mid-stage companies, as well as organizations already in revenue or past first round of funding
- Goal of program is to provide founders with tools and skillsets required to build stable, sustainable companies



## Enrich entrepreneurial education programs

**Action Item: Work with public and charter school districts to develop entrepreneurial education programs at middle/high school level**

A culture of entrepreneurship in Queen Creek should be developed starting at a young age. Work with **public and charter school districts** to establish a program at the middle and high school level that provides students with an understanding of entrepreneurship.

**Action Item: Assess existing entrepreneurial education programs at local and regional colleges/universities**

Develop an understanding of **existing entrepreneurial education programs** in the region and market such programs on the new entrepreneurship/innovation or startup section of the website.

**Action Item: Explore addition of entrepreneurial courses at the Communiversity at Queen Creek**

The Communiversity at Queen Creek is a partnership of higher education institutions focused on providing students with opportunities to continue their education and earn degrees. The possibility of adding **entrepreneurial courses** to the current curriculum should be explored.





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**Marketing/  
Communications**

## ENGAGE IN MORE TARGETED MARKETING/COMMUNICATIONS EFFORTS TO ENSURE PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT QUEEN CREEK

### Develop new and enhance existing marketing tools

#### Action Item: Continue to build upon the Invest the QC website

A website is one of the most critical marketing tools for an economic development organization. Previously, the economic development function of Queen Creek's website was part of the Town of Queen Creek website but there is now the <https://investtheqc.com/> website, which is a standalone, branded site. The recommendations below are suggestions focused on future site build-out and effectiveness. The goal of this website should be to create a **compelling platform** to tell the story of the Town's competitive economic development strengths.

Per the recommendations in this Strategic Program of Work, entrepreneurship/innovation and possibly tourism pages should be added to this website, along with the new target sectors outlined. Also, to generate more traffic and increase search rankings, continue to collect and share positive stories related to economic development on the website through a blog or other news section to be added. The incorporation of interactive mapping components to visually identify assets and their respective contribution to the local economy, as well as economic development partners, should also be considered.

Of the benchmarks reviewed, the Town of Gilbert has a very good stand-alone economic development website (<https://www.gilbertedi.com>), as does the City of Maricopa (<https://www.maricopaeda.com/>).

#### Action Item: Create an annual online economic development update for Queen Creek

The Town of Gilbert has an **annual online economic development update** that is used to report the Town's successes in economic development projects, tourism, promotion and other areas. This is an effective marketing tool that allows the Town to keep its leadership and other community stakeholders informed of its successes and goals. A link to the 2019 Annual Update is below:

<https://www.flipsnack.com/GilbertAZEcoDev/fiscal-year-2019-gilbert-arizona-annual-update.html>



**Action Item: Expand social media strategy**

The Queen Creek Economic Development Department currently has its own Twitter feed and Downtown Facebook Page. In order to ensure this social media outlet is maximized, utilize a monthly content schedule in order to organize messages and strengthen the department's position as an opinion leader among various economic development topics. Content should include both recent events and activities, such as a new project announcement, as well as more timeless messaging about economic development activities, new programs, local businesses, and the refined target sectors.

**Action Item: Continue to utilize the QC tagline**

Continue to utilize the QC tagline in different marketing aspects.

**Expand marketing focuses and activities****Action Item: Identify and seek community accolades or rankings**

Many of the benchmarks reviewed have various accolades they receive from publications on an annual basis. Some of these recent examples in Maricopa are shown to the right. Many of the leading publications and rankings utilize different methodologies and empirical data to determine the rankings of communities on their respective lists. The data sets and methodologies for these rankings can be discovered through research. The Queen Creek economic development team should determine which **accolades** it would like to see the Town appear and then **research the methodology and data** each respective publication utilizes with a concentrated effort in positively impacting at least three of these lists. Any accolades received should be marketed through press releases, the website and other outlets.

**Benchmark Best Practice****Community Accolades****Maricopa (all 2020):**

- #1 Most Diverse School District in Phoenix Area, Niche.com
- #2 Best Place to Raise a Family in Arizona, HomeSnacks.net
- #3 Fastest Growing Cities in Arizona, HomeSnacks.net
- #4 Most Diverse Suburbs in Arizona, Niche.com
- #4 Safest Cities in Arizona, Alarms.org
- #7 Best Place to Live in Arizona, Areavibes.com
- #10 Most Diverse Place to Live in the Phoenix Area, Niche.com





**Action Item: Engage in extensive marketing campaign related to state-owned land and other identified viable office or industrial sites**

Work with SRP, and potentially GPEC and the Arizona Commerce Authority (ACA), to develop an extensive marketing campaign to promote any identified sites on the state-owned land, as well as any viable office or industrial property, to local, regional and state developers.

**Action Item: Host *QC for Lunch* events with key partners**

At least once a year, invite representatives of the ACA, GPEC and SRP to Queen Creek for lunch hosted at one of the Agritainment venues to update them on the latest in the QC and to spend one hour showing them other community assets such as new product and other. This program could also be expanded to include brokers and developers.

**Enhance current tourism structure and increase visibility**

**Action Item: Explore more formalized tourism and promotion effort**

Queen Creek contracts with Visit Mesa for promotion assistance. This partnership should continue but the idea of eventually establishing a **more formal tourism and promotion effort** in the Town should be explored.

This effort could be called **Visit QC or Explore QC** and would need at least one full-time or part-time staff member. The Queen Creek Chamber of Commerce may already have plans to launch Explore the QC but ideally this program would be launched and administered under the Queen Creek economic development team in partnership with the Chamber since Agritainment/Destination Tourism is a target sector.



**Action Item: Create a tourism website for Queen Creek**

Consider the creation of a **Visit QC or Explore QC website** that outlines the Agritainment/Destination Tourism assets in more detail. The Discover Gilbert website or Explore Surprise website (<https://www.exploresurprise.com>) are two that could be used as models.

Note that this website can be part of or separate from the economic development website.

**Action Item: Track and market tourism statistics**

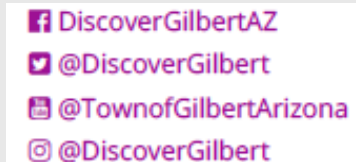
The Town should **track and market tourism statistics** on an annual basis. Statistics should include: total number of visitors annually; visitor spending; number of overnight visitors; direct job creation; taxes generated; and other to be determined.

**Action Item: Establish social media accounts related to Agritainment/Destination Tourism**

Create social media accounts with the **Visit QC or Explore QC tagline**. The Town of Gilbert has social media accounts for Discover Gilbert on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram.

**Benchmark Best Practice****Discover Gilbert**

- Discover Gilbert, a visitors and tourism program, is under the Gilbert Office of Economic Development
- Managed by a Tourism Administrator, who is responsible for creation and execution of all tourism marketing and communication efforts
- Separate standalone website: <https://www.discovergilbert.com/>
- Social media presence:



Facebook: DiscoverGilbertAZ  
 Twitter: @DiscoverGilbert  
 YouTube: @TownofGilbertArizona  
 Instagram: @DiscoverGilbert

TOWN OF  
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ARIZONA