



## **Transportation Advisory Committee Minutes**

Thursday, January 8, 2009

6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Town Hall – Council Chambers

### **Committee Members:**

Bill Fischbach	Present
Carlos Acuna	Present
Chris Clark	Present
Jeff Brown	Present
Kyle Robinson	Present
Milos Pavicevich	Present
Robin Benning	Present
Silvia Centoz	Present
Thomas McCarthy	Present

### **Town Staff Members:**

Dick Schaner, Transportation Director	Present
Mark Young, QC Government Liaison	Absent
Mike Pacelli, Asst. Public Works Director	Present
Norma Hernandez, Management Assistant	Present
Shane Dille, Deputy Town Manager/Acting PW Director	Present
Wayne Balmer, Planning Manager	Present
Lance Decker, LL Decker & Associates, Inc	Present

### **Public/Observers:**

Amanda Keim, non-resident  
Anne Reed, non-resident  
Bill Jallen, resident  
Daryn McClure, resident/business owner  
Erik Clausen, resident  
Gordon Brown, non-resident  
Irene Gonzales, non-resident  
James R. Soanlton, resident/business owner  
Jill Charette, resident  
Karen Stoesz, non-resident  
Lance Packer, non-resident  
Mary Camacho, resident  
Mary Ann Gamel, resident  
Mike Mccauley, resident

Pam Weisrock, non-resident  
Randy Green, business owner  
Rick, resident  
Robert Clausen, resident/business owner  
Roy Gamel, resident  
Sarah Cook, resident  
Steve Ingram, resident/business owner  
Toni Valenzuela, resident/business owner

**Call to Order:**

Robin Benning, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

**Introductions:**

**All**

All members and staff introduced themselves and guests were welcomed.

**Public Comment:**

None received at this time.

**Items for Discussion**

**Item A: Approval of December 4 minutes**

**All**

Motion to approve the December 4, 2008 minutes, deleting the access management summary matrix (Chris Clark/Carlos Acuna /Unanimous /Approved with one minor change requested).

**Item B: Presentation Future Land Uses in Town Center**

**Wayne B**

Wayne Balmer, Planning Manager, provided the members with a presentation on the General Plan (GP) and Town Center Plan Update – Town Center Projects. Focus on future land uses (members received a handout of the presentation). A brief summary of items presented are as follows:

- Wayne previously presented information to the TAC members in October 2008.
- Exhibit 1 – Provided information of the purple area on the Future Land Use Map, and informed members that the map needs to be updated.
- Development Concepts – Provided an overview of the mixture of higher density residential areas, and commercial, pedestrian friendly environment, amenities, and what can be done to accommodate traffic in the Town Center.
- Exhibit 2 - A review of the development projects in the Town Center areas. Some of these projects are under construction, are approved but have not started construction, or are still in design.
- Exhibit 3 - Broadstone Apartments, 264 units, these are on the west side of Exhibit 4, not all buildings are built yet.
- Exhibit 4 - Cornerstone at Queen Creek, 389,300 sf.
- Exhibit 5 - Rittenhouse/Ocotillo road Streetscape view – required to install a median.
- Exhibit 6 - Town Center Apartments, 176 units.
- Exhibit 7 – Town Center Apartment Elevations – a view of what they look like.
- Exhibit 8 – Queen Creek Village Center, 58,657 sf.

- Exhibit 9 – Proposed Heritage Square, 104,000 sf. This is the next project that goes to Council for approval (restaurants/retail).
- Exhibit 10 - Queen Creek Crossroads, 28,900 sf. (restaurants/retail/bank)
- Exhibit 11 – Queen Creek Marketplace, Phase One = 900,000 sf. Phase Two = 300,000 sf. Larger shops in this area, hooks on to Exhibit 12.
- Exhibit 12 – Queen Creek Fiesta, 74,400 sf. – Discount Tire, other shops
- Exhibit 13 – Library Area, 221,500 sf.
- Exhibit 14 - General Plan Amendments #117 & #118.
- Exhibit 15 –Amendment #118 - Currently 2-3 dwellings per acre,
- Exhibit 16 – Amendment #118 - Proposed 3-5 per acre, smaller lots focused on older adults but possible for families or adults that want smaller yards.
- Exhibit 17 - Amendment #117 – Marketplace, current 2-3 dwellings per acre
- Exhibit 18 – Amendment #117 - Proposed 8+ acres office; 23+ acres high density residential; 20+ acres commercial.

Transportation challenges: Total existing and proposed development in the Town Center:

- 2.1 million square feet of retail and restaurants
- 24 screen theater
- 440 apartments.
- The challenge is 3 major arterial streets in this area; Rittenhouse, Ocotillo, and Ellsworth.
- Five plus mile service radius for new projects
- Increasing Pinal County traffic

The General Plan (GP) amendments will go to Council in March for final decision. The plan is to have people come to Queen Creek to shop and stay. Ellsworth/Ellsworth Loop and Rittenhouse Road have a lot of traffic and have been expanded; the main challenge is Ocotillo Road.

Robin Benning provided a map of the Town Center; he identified key areas and existing and approved development in the Town Center areas. Robin stated that there is not a lot of empty land left, it is very important to know there are a lot of projects already built.

Lance asked if there were any questions on the presentation and overview:

Bill: “Accommodate traffic in Town Center”. Where can I find this, and where are the traffic counts that were done? I asked the Town several times to supply the counts to me and I have not received, I have a huge issue with the numbers being estimated as the traffic counts. How, and when, was Ocotillo to be an urban collector road? The GP updates, on page 11, #C, state the Town Center was always designed to be high density. We don’t need to put a super highway down Town Center.

Wayne: There is an estimated 33,000 vehicles per day (VPD) on Ellsworth Loop/Ocotillo, the counts were done by the consultant, I believe in 2003. It was their projection for the upcoming 10 years. Traffic counts on Ocotillo were from Schnepf to Power Road, this number is going to be high; it is how people get to Gilbert. The new General Plan (GP)

that was adopted in September 2008 designated Ocotillo Road as a major arterial, as well as Power, Hunt Hwy, Sossaman, Riggs, Ellsworth, and Rittenhouse roads.

Mike P: There was a 4-lane road in the old GP; there is a 4-lane road in the new adopted GP.

Silvia: Thanked Robin for the map, very helpful in identifying the area. If there are two GP Amendments, we cannot project what the outcome will be; the assumption is that these are going to automatically be approved. Why was the public not involved in all the GP update process, why did they not see what the original plan was? Big difference if you have apartments and homes, we assume we have to widen the roads. We are shutting the door on the history of Queen Creek.

Wayne: The GP process began in March 2007; the Town held discussions with countless residents and held neighborhood meetings to inform the public. Discussions were provided on the different density levels; A. Low density; B. Medium density; C. High density; and D. Alternative – where should each density be. There are 2.1 million square feet of commercial already approved, we have to accommodate as we move forward. Some projects will be built in the future; the northern and western parts of QC are the only undeveloped areas that can be developed.

Kyle: Makes sense to size the roads according to projects; to accommodate the planned developments. It is better to have more capacity, currently; it is easier for me to shop at San Tan Village in Gilbert. I would like to have an easy route to shop in QC. The sales tax is needed so the residents do not go elsewhere. Robin's map helped me as well in identifying the area.

Lance: How many trips over the next 20 years will there be with 2.1 million square feet of retail space in the Town Center? How many annual trips will be taken?

Response by staff: If no one comes to shop, the stores will close, the sales tax for QC also goes away. There is competition in this area, in the retail market, if people can't shop here, they will easily go to the surrounding cities. We need to think of how to get people to come here.

Mike P: The developers have to submit a current traffic study with their project submittals. Latest includes most of what is approved. Ellsworth Road up to south of Rittenhouse Road, has 17,000 VPD, this is out of a current traffic study. In April 2008, Ellsworth Road between Cloud/Chandler Heights had 17,000 VPD.

Robin: Old Ellsworth Road, approaching Rittenhouse Road, is partly the reason why the Ellsworth Loop was done... the retail, movies, and restaurants. Development to the east and south of us grew fast. The GP review has changed due to the need. We have moved forward, we moved on the new GP, things have changed.

**Item C: Access Management**

**All**

Lance asked for questions from the members on the DCR - Exhibit A (Ocotillo/Ellsworth).

Wayne: Ocotillo Road by the railroad tracks causes some issues, this goes to Schnepf. The orange area in the GP (Exhibit 14) is mostly residential, 3 units per acre.

Carlos: I am trying to encompass how many people will come here. From the west side of town, I don't think too many will come, they will go to Gilbert, who is coming from this area, from Ellsworth east to Ironwood?

Robin: Ocotillo Road from Ironwood to Ellsworth already has significant traffic, there is going to be more traffic.

Milos: The new Target in QC is very convenient, I think people like the stores at that location.

Jeff: Think of Hunt Hwy, every time we add another lane, we add hundreds of homes. The population is slated to go to 100,000 residents.

Bill: I studied all traffic counts on Ocotillo and in other cities; the idea is that Ocotillo is going to be a major road. We have Riggs and Hwy 87 that will be done one day. Are we going to have a Target/Wal-Mart shopping center all over town? I don't see any room for expansion on Ocotillo Road in front of 11 homes. By the bridge too, there is no room to expand to 4 – 6 lanes. There is no land available.

Dick: We need to plan for the traffic, the level of service needed, once Pinal County builds out, there will be even more traffic.

Chris: Look back five years ago; we have many more cars now. People are going to be funneled through QC regardless. As the highways and hospitals are built, we are going to see more traffic. If we build correctly, we won't have to go back to fix.

Kyle: Can we build to the max size now, move to 4 lanes since we know Ocotillo will be a heavy traveled road?

Mike P: Ocotillo Road, the intent is to build a major arterial from 2-lane to 5-lane width of pavement. That is what we have now, that is how it is striped. We do not need to widen, the curb and bridge have been put in to accommodate 5 lanes.

Silvia: Ocotillo Road, we already lost the parking for the residents, I am concerned on south side of road, and the homes are too close to the road.

Lance asked if there were any other questions. None were asked. Lance asked what should then happen on Ocotillo Road between Heritage and 208<sup>th</sup>.

Chris: Are we doing matrix again? We are going to waste time; we need to start on the policy. We can quickly review each segment again, but we need to move forward. We are only making a recommendation, it is up to Council to approve or deny.

Robin: Yes, a brief review due to concerns, and new information. Our thought process was to ask if we have done the matrix as it is or if any changes are needed.

Bill: We already did the matrix last time. Are we going to do what Dibble proposed? We have not done the 1<sup>st</sup> step in developing a policy. It looks like we are just going to have recommendations without doing an actual policy. I do not want to review matrix, let's get on with policy. I do not feel we have done so in any of these meetings. Business owners need to have a say in the changes.

Tom: I would like Robin to go through each segment; do the members agree or disagree?

Kyle: What is a definition of a policy? We need to take into consideration safety, pedestrians, bus entries, etc.

Lance: A policy for example can be: "There will always be a left hand turn at an intersection".

Silvia: I am concerned about doing condemnation in the policy. I have an issue with this. Town businesses have to have access. We need to be very careful of closing businesses that have been in QC for a long time.

Jeff motions to vote on whether to review matrix again or not.

Vote: 8/1 members agree to review matrix.

**Exhibit A:**

All members agreed on 2-lanes each way, low speed, no on-street parking, and driveway access.

Robin: I spoke at length with Bob Hildebrandt; there was an opportunity for Magma to get some access when the project was being done. We will review items that don't have a general consensus at the next meeting.

Lance: I heard the group say that we should not adversely affect the businesses already in place. We have two issues still pending agreement:

1. Median – flush, raised, or out?
2. Any adverse affects on current businesses – need to strongly review this.

**Exhibit B:**

We will devote the last hour to this area. (Raised medians in Section 4; Post Office Annex Building driveway and 205<sup>th</sup> Place)

**Exhibit C:**

Bill: We need to come up with an Access Management Policy, we have no guidelines. We are working backwards.

Silvia: Has anyone contacted MCSO? Several people have spoken with Mike Lucas; there are issues with the medians.

Robin: Exhibit B is specifically for median discussion, we have lost focus.

Kyle: Can we make a decision on Exhibit C?

Robin: I believe the January 22 meeting would be an appropriate time to work through matrix to only talk about medians. Are there issues with raised crosswalks?

Vote: 8/1 members agree - 2 lanes each way, low speed, no on street parking, from Rittenhouse to Bridge both directions.

Vote: Unanimous – members disagree on pedestrian raised crosswalk at Ocotillo/Ellsworth intersection.

Time is up, need to move to Item D.

**Item D: Discussion and possible action of median removal All**

Robin: At the previous meeting, it was suggested to have an action item on this agenda to recommend removal of the median from the Post Office Annex Building driveway to 205 Place on east end. We have received several letters from residents/non residents that are concerned about the median. Members, are there any specific questions involving this section only?

Tom: If taken out, what happens to the space? What happens when the Post Office is not there anymore?

Chris: Was this paid for by developer funds? There is a need for median removal without Victoria Project being built.

Kyle: Is there any legal liability?

Robin: There will be a flush median placed. This may not be a liability; we already removed the other median. We assume some sort of commercial will be in place of the Post Office.

Mike P: Answers to the questions - if the median is removed, the area will be flush, with a 2-way left turn striped. Yes, this was paid for by the developer with the Victoria Project. This median was planned 8 years ago to improve Ocotillo Road. It was not specific to homes or project. The Town always has liability, some people will argue either way. Median does not block driveway access to the Post Office. The Transportation Section of the Town Center Plan describes each Town Center road, one piece at a time. It does not

describe Ocotillo Road because this is an arterial road. It shows a raised median with decorative pavement at Ellsworth.

Bill: The median was planned 8 years ago? Everything I have read does not describe that. No raised medians in Town Center.

Robin: The Town did not have responsibility at the time. There have been allegations that the median was required. In July, in order to make a sale for a project to Victoria, they had to do a "contingency," permits were pulled and the project was done. Is it appropriate to remove? The public feels it is an issue.

**Public Comment:**

*Steve Ingram:* resident - 19053 E. Cloud Road, QC 85242 - I am in favor of having raised medians where they provide safety.

*Dr. Pamela Weisrock:* non resident - 8763 E. Posada Ave, Mesa 85212 – I am a previous resident, I have family and friends here. We should have a balance; want to have the Town exist. We have to look at history, have flush medians to accommodate travelers. I have worked with Engineers/SRP/Dick Schaner, this committee needs to listen to the public. We don't want a "Gilbert." We want to get along. I recommend removing the median at this location.

*Karen Stoesz:* non resident - I live in Scottsdale - I recommend removal of the median and having a flush median. I want to point out and for this committee to consider stepping back. I agree with Bill; you need to develop a policy. I have seen the ups/downs at Scottsdale, in the late 80's, the Galleria was done, what happened at Scottsdale Road. You do not want QC to be like other communities. Small town businesses are good. The Waterfront at Scottsdale, they are bringing small businesses, community shops in that area, no big stores. Magma Engineering should be considered. I am here because I want to purchase out here, I want unique.

*Pat Crewse:* resident - 22213 E. Vallejo Street – I am a pioneer from 1960, I had 10 acres taken away from me to build Ellsworth Loop. Taken my life savings to build Ellsworth/Ocotillo, none of the residents agree with raised median, 4-5 of them didn't know of the raised median before it was put in. How do you expect them to survive? I am tired of this.

*Bob Clausen:* resident/QC business owner – I came here in 1943, in 1962, I started Magma Engineering. I am very disturbed about raised medians, I don't see a purpose. City of Phoenix has painted lanes, not medians. I gave Silvia Centoz a photo of a car that got stuck on the median. I am very concerned about losing business. UPS drops packages off daily. I am considering if QC puts in median, I will take legal action.

*Dr. Daryn McClure,* non-resident/QC business owner: 1852 E. Walnut Drive; I have a medical practice at 20715 E. Ocotillo Road. There is a safety concern with the raised median on Ocotillo Road. On a daily basis, I have a serious problem; the ambulance cannot get in/out quickly to take patients to a hospital. I see 120-150 patients a day, this can easily double, and the concern is safety. They have to make a U-turn to come to my



office, this can mean 300 U-turns a day just to enter to my office. Are the U-turns safer than a left hand turn? I have had loss of business; this median may mean loss of businesses that have been established for years when Ellsworth had a hanging light. Wal-Mart/Target have nice entrances.

*Anne Reed:* non-resident - 1955 W. Bonnie Lane, QC – I have been in QC since 1982, I have been involved with every GP, except this last one. I am concerned that QC is not taking the economy into consideration. That QC does not care about the businesses that have been here a long time. People have to be considered. Ocotillo Road raised median should be for a major collector, the required ROW is 110', which we do not have. There are property rights under the constitution. You as a committee do not have the right to make those kinds of decisions.

*Gordon Brown:* non-resident - 1894 W. Judd road, San Tan foothills, QC – You have done a good job pointing out certain items; the public has done a good job pointing out items too. Importance of the policy, good planning has a longer lifespan. If you disrupt the plan in 5-10 years, that is a poor plan. Start with a policy first, this should be common sense. You don't injure citizens. If there is a reason, then compensate them.

*Toni Valenzuela:* resident/QC business owner - 19530 E. Via De Olivos QC – My family came to QC in 1927, hope you recommend to remove the raised median. I was on Council 9 years ago, I never voted on this. Remove it.

*Sarah Cook:* resident - 19430 E. Calle De Flores, QC – How are we keeping QC unique and historic? How are we doing this by putting in medians? They are not easy because they delay traffic and they are a waste of money. What happened to days when a resident could ride their horse to Circle K, or down the street? This is not a farming town anymore. Medians need to be removed and not put in.

*Erik Clausen:* resident - 19430 E. Calle De Flores, QC – I was born and raised here. Who are you to tell us what to do? What happened to low density? Now we have apartments and no parking on Ocotillo. We are not a farming town. We voted on low density housing. What happened to the dirt roads, what used to be people coming to the country? Medians do not belong in QC.

*Irene Gonzales:* non-resident, mom resident, lives at 20430 E. Ocotillo, QC – There are a lot of U-turns, especially on Ocotillo. Is Ocotillo as important as Ellsworth? Ellsworth has on street parking, Ocotillo does not. Some people did not know the medians were being put in.

Robin asked if there were any further comments or questions. None received. Therefore, public comments came to a close.

Jeff: We are past the meeting commitment time of 8:30 p.m.; there is an obvious lack of consensus in regards to Council. We should continue this item.

Kyle: I think it will be worthwhile to vote.

Silvia: We have had a lot of input from the public on Ocotillo. I believe there are safety concerns with a median in that area with the church and residents on Ocotillo.

Tom: I agree to move vote to next meeting.

Jeff: Motion to move voting on median to next meeting.

Tom: 2<sup>nd</sup> that motion.

Bill: Residents have been put on hold since July 2008, we need to vote.

Jeff: Motion to continue to the next meeting on January 22 the recommendation on removing Section 4 median on Ocotillo between the Post Office Annex Building driveway and 205<sup>th</sup> Place.

Vote: 7/2 members opposed, need to vote today.

Kyle: Motion on a recommendation of removing or keeping the median on Ocotillo Road from the Post Office Annex driveway to 205<sup>th</sup> Place. I propose to remove the median and recommend to Council for approval.

Milos: 2<sup>nd</sup> that motion.

Tom: I have a concern for safety. If we take out, is it more of a safety issue? I have heart for the 11 homes; I have a concern of traffic going in/out. What about 20 years from now?

Silvia: I can think of many places in Phoenix where they have a yellow painted line.

Bill: Ocotillo has historically been 1-lane in each direction. Staff quoted VPD counts that are estimates. At Arizona Ave/Ray, they have 30,000 VPD; there is no raised median at this location. 802 is coming, it will be 6-lanes, and Riggs will be 6-lanes, traffic on Ocotillo will ease up. I vote to remove the raised median. We could have a really nice Town Center, we don't have power to tell residents/businesses what is right for their area, they have to drive in and out every day, and they know what they deal with.

Robin: My opinion ultimately is the safety, what makes sense. At this time, it may be appropriate to say the raised median is not good.

Chris: We are speaking about 11 homes, I disagree with comments. I am comfortable to vote, no further discussion needed.

All in favor to recommend to the Council that this portion of median be removed; on Ocotillo Road from the Post Office Annex Building driveway to 205<sup>th</sup> Place.

Vote: 8/2 members agree to remove the median at the above location and recommend to Council for approval.

Jeff: Now that we voted on removal, we should be able to move forward faster. Do we need a longer meeting on a Saturday?

Kyle: I think if we can go through matrix without arguing, we can get done at the next meeting.

Bill: I cannot commit to a Saturday.

Shane: If this group determines a meeting on a Saturday is needed, we can do that. We will make sure we address the task as needed. We have a job to do; we will do what it takes to get it done.

Robin: We need to move forward, we need to address the “sticky points” and not get side tracked.

Vote: unanimous to have a meeting on January 22 @ 6:30 p.m.

**Item E: Scheduled future meeting** **All**

January 22, 2009 @ 6:30 p.m. Council Chambers: Final review of matrix, work towards a policy

February 5, 2009, @ 6:30 p.m. Council Chambers: Develop a policy for Council recommendation

**Announcements**

**Adjourn** **All**

Motion to adjourn (Silvia Centoz/Milos Pavicevich/Unanimous) meeting adjourned: 9:03 p.m.