



DRAFT
MINUTES

TOWN CENTER COMMITTEE MEETING

June 23, 2009 7:30 a.m.

San Tan Conference Room

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 a.m. At roll call the following people were in attendance:

Committee Members:

Cynthia Buffington
Chris Webb
Jason Gad
Steve Ingram
Monica Munoz
Ryan Desmond
Brian Frakes
Council Member Barnes
Council Member Mortensen
Nancy Diab arrived at 7:35 a.m.

Others Present:

Bill Lund
Tyler Wright, Pew and Lake, PLC

Town Staff:

Doreen Cott, Economic Development Director
Wayne Balmer, Planning Manager
Michael Pacelli, Assist. Public Works Director
Tom Narva, CIP Project Manager
Laura Moats, Community Development Assistant

Absent:

Marvin Smith, Jr.
Randy Green
Toni Valenzuela

2. Introductions

3. Public Comment: Members of the public may address the Committee on items not on the printed agenda. There were no public comments.

4. Items for Discussion and Possible Action

A. Consideration and possible approval of the May 26, 2009 Minutes:

Chairman Buffington noted staff had made one revision to page 12: the motion carried by a vote of 8-0, not 10-0.

Motion: Steve Ingram

2nd: Craig Barnes

To approve the May 26, 2009 Meeting Minutes, as presented, with the revision noted by Chairman Buffington.

Vote: All ayes. Motion carried unanimously (9-0)

Economic Development Director Cott thanked the Committee for their work thus far and its patience in reviewing the Town Center Plan. To date, sections of the Plan have been reviewed and discussed out of order to allow the Town Center Committee to provide timely input to other groups pertaining to various sections of the Plan. If the Multimodal Circulation Element update is completed today a final draft will be presented to the Committee in July. The next couple of meetings will also include a review of the Redevelopment Plan.

B. Discussion and Possible Action on Circulation Goals and Policies for the Multimodal Circulation System Element of the Town Center Plan

Ms. Cott noted this is a carry-over element from the last meeting and is listed on pages 27-28 of the current Town Center Plan. She asked the Committee to review, and recommend changes/updates to the goals and policies.

Assistant Public Works Director Michael Pacelli stated that **Policies 1f and 1i** pertain to portions of the roadway system that have been established, therefore, the verbiage can be changed on these items.

Chairman Buffington suggested the Committee simplify and compress some of the information found in Policies 1a through 3c, in order to incorporate text amendments that have been processed by staff since this Plan's inception. Mike Pacelli clarified that the Circulation Goals and Policies are much more conceptual than the design-based review undertaken by the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), which made specific recommendations to Town Council based on the DCR completed by Dibble Engineering. These recommendations were detailed to the point of driveway and curb cut locations. The Circulation Goals and Policies are broader in

scope. Mr. Pacelli stated the TCC most likely should not adopt the TAC's recommendation for this Plan, since the street network is pretty well laid out at this point. He recommended modifying or eliminating some of these goals **(1f and 1i)** which are now outdated due to the fact that the street network has been laid out.

Steve Ingram stated he's been receiving calls from people being confused about whether or not they're on Ellsworth Road or Ellsworth Loop Road. Doreen responded Mike and she are working on signage to address this issue. Mr. Ingram suggested a sign for "Old Ellsworth" be placed at the north and south ends of Ellsworth Road.

Mr. Pacelli responded staff has been holding off on doing this until recommendations come forward from the Committee to ensure everything is consistent, as far as street poles, signage, and design standards.

Ms. Cott pointed out this particular goal deals more with directional signage. When the Committee gets to the Town Center Character Element, further discussion can take place, such as a kiosk-type sign which has been previously discussed.

Council Member Barnes suggested the sign match or be similar to the signs in front of Town Hall (green directional Town Hall signs).

Planning Manager Wayne Balmer provided information pertaining to Council's direction to modify the Sign Ordinance. Proposed changes to the sign ordinance will be presented for Council action in August. In connection with the revisions to the Sign Ordinance, a questionnaire will be posted on the Town's Web site in the near future.

Mr. Balmer asked for Committee consensus on whether **Policy 2d** should be retained or revised, suggesting a possible revision to include a facility that would accommodate light rail. Brian Frakes stated he feels the current policy is too specific.

Chris Webb stated **Policy 2e: Explore federal funding for implementation of the multimodal transportation system** may no longer be needed.

Mr. Pacelli stated regional commercial is planned at Meridian and Riggs roads. He suggested this may be a good location for a transit stop along the rail line. He stated he does not recall if there has been a policy decision at the Council level yet.

Ms. Cott suggested it is best at this point to leave **Policy 2d** in the Plan. Council Member Mortensen agreed.

Ms. Cott asked for comments on **Policy 2f**: *When activity and traffic warrant, explore the development of a trolley system in the Town Center with connections to the rail transit stop and other destinations such as ASU East and Phoenix Mesa Gateway Airport.*

Policy 2h: *Identify and develop a potential location for horse tie-ups at the perimeter of the Town Center area on key equestrian trails outlined in the General Plan's Parks, Trails and Open Space Element.* Council Member Mortensen stated this policy should be left 'as-is' because it would define historic Queen Creek.

Policy 2g: *Provide rest stops every 500 feet along Ellsworth Road through the Town Center with seating, water, trash receptacles, and shade.* Mr. Balmer suggested deleting the words, "every 500 feet" , as these are very close intervals in space. The Committee agreed.

Goal 3 – provide a convenient system to minimize vehicular traffic in the core of the Town Center and encourage people to “get out of their cars”. Mr. Frakes asked for clarification on **Policy 3a** regarding shared parking. Ms. Cott provided the library site as an example. The library has a primary and a secondary parking lot. The secondary lot is shared for businesses that front Ellsworth Road. The entire 19-acre site shows shared parking structures in the future, which would be attained by a parking structure.

Mr. Pacelli recommended that in **Policy 3a**, the words “on the perimeter of the Town Center” be deleted, and the phrase “will be required” should be changed to “may be required”. The Committee agreed.

Discussion took place on **Policy 1b** regarding the “plaza” or “traffic island” at the south end of Ellsworth Road. Mr. Gad asked if this was still part of the Plan. The Committee discussed the possibility of also adding a north cap to the Town Center. Mr. Balmer stated there will potentially be a traffic circle or round-about at the north end of Ellsworth Road. Review of this policy item included group discussion on entry monuments or something that would not only welcome people to the Town Center area, but also direct them to “historic” or “Old Ellsworth Road” as well as draw their attention to the new commercial areas located along Ellsworth Loop Road.

There was discussion about adding verbiage to include both “north” and “south” ends of Ellsworth Road under **Policy 1b**; however, Council Member Mortensen stated he feels this policy should be broader, simply stating to “encourage traffic calming and character elements in Town Center”.

Mr. Pacelli stated Town staff is currently in the design stage of the road project, and would like specific direction on what types of features may be included in the entry ways, and whether or not they’ll require water or electric connections. He noted this portion of the roadway is planned to be two lanes in each direction. He clarified the area being referenced is Ellsworth Road, between Rittenhouse and Ocotillo roads.

Further discussion took place on the delineation of the entry ways into Town Center, such as monument signs or archways. Council Member Mortensen stated he feels there should be a defining entry of some sort, but not necessarily an arch. Mr. Pacelli responded that both an arch and a football-shaped median were considered in the north and south end during the Dibble DCR development process, but eventually the football shape was decided on only at the south end. Mr. Desmond stated an entry point can be linear or vertical, while not taking up much space and still delineating the entry point to Town Center.

Council Member Barnes stated Town Center is very broad; however, this particular area is on Ellsworth Road and possibly should be labeled on signage as “historic town center” or “downtown”, or “Welcome to historic Queen Creek,” so that people do not get confused as to what the true Town Center area is. He cautioned against driving people away from businesses on

Ellsworth Road, which is area the Town is preparing to highlight, but at the same time directing people to Ellsworth Loop Road as well.

Additional discussion took place on the overall goal of signage, and the focus being a comprehensive sign program that gets people into Town Center and points them in the right direction. For purposes of informing Town staff what types of services would be needed for the entry piece(s), the Committee agreed the most that would be needed would be electric for up lighting, but no water stubs/connections.

Chairman Buffington reviewed **Policy 1b**, stating the words “traffic island” should be changed to “design features”; and the reference to “north” and “south” should be changed to simply state “in the Town Center”.

Chairman Buffington referred to **Policy 1a**, which uses the terminology “low speed”. She questioned what is considered “low speed”. Mr. Pacelli responded this is a guideline and does not specify exact speeds. He added the current practice, which is subject to change at the direction of Council, is that speeds are higher on the outside portions of Ocotillo road and gradually decrease near the Town Center core/pedestrian areas. The speed near Rittenhouse Road is 45 mph since it is a major arterial. To enforce a speed limit of 25-30 at this location would be fruitless, especially since there is not a lot of pedestrian activity.

In closing discussion on this agenda item, Ms. Cott stated all Committee comments will be put in a revised draft format and brought back to the Committee. Ms. Cott noted some of the comments received by the Committee today may be better addressed within the character element of the Town Center Plan.

- C. Discussion and Possible Action on Expansion of Town Center boundaries
- D. Discussion and Possible Action on the Land Use Element of the Town Center Plan.

Agenda items C. and D. were presented by Planning Manager Balmer and discussed by the Committee in conjunction with each other.

Mr. Balmer distributed a Conceptual Land Use Plan map along with a Town Center Zoning Map. His Power Point illustrated the current General Plan Land Use Map (which outlines the Town Center area in red); the Town Center Development Map; maps of the Victoria Parcels, which were part of the 2008 Major General Plan Amendment applications; and the Town Center aerial map.

Mr. Balmer pointed out where expansion of the Town Center is possible, west of the western Town Center boundary.

Mr. Balmer explained that the area known as Queen Creek Station, located north of Rittenhouse Road off of Ellsworth Road, is not considered part of the Town Center because at the time of its approval during the Major General Plan Amendment (GPA) process two years ago, Town Council directed that this area be oriented towards uses north of the north entrance to Queen Creek, while the Town Center designation would be geared toward Queen Creek locally.

Mr. Balmer illustrated the Victoria parcels, which are included in a new Major General Plan Amendment application this year; however, this year's application differs from the 2008 application in that the applicant is proposing an age-specific development geared towards the retired age community. Mr. Balmer stated the applicant for this proposed amendment will illustrate how the project will complement the Town Center. This application will proceed through the Major GPA schedule between now and December. Review and discussion of the application will be on an upcoming Town Center Committee agenda for formal recommendation to the Planning and Zoning Commission and Town Council in November and December respectfully.

Referring to the Town Center aerial map, Mr. Balmer pointed out the development which has occurred in Town Center and illustrated how there is relatively little vacant land for which to expand the Town Center area.

Council Member Mortensen requested discussion on the merits of including or not including residential areas within the Town Center, specifically Will Rogers Equestrian subdivision. Mr. Balmer responded this is, in part, due to how Town Center was defined at the time of its original inception in 2004-05. If the Committee wishes to modify the boundaries of Town Center, it can recommend removing the residential areas.

Ms. Cott spoke about the redevelopment areas that are included in Town Center and how the mixed uses (residential, redevelopment areas, businesses) work together to support a vibrant Town Center.

Mr. Balmer added that projects in northern Town Center will generate sales tax revenue to be spent in the other areas of Town Center (i.e., landscaping, furnishings, pedestrian amenities).

Mr. Balmer pointed out the School District site, which is another area to consider retaining in, or removing from, Town Center. He asked the Committee to consider if they want to keep this area in Town Center, due to the character between it and the uses located south of Rittenhouse on Ellsworth Loop Road.

Discussion followed on the Land Use Designations within Town Center. Mr. Balmer attached a copy of the Conceptual Land Use Map to a Town Center Zoning Map and asked the Committee to consider placement of land uses within Town Center. He specified the Committee should use the Land Use terms and definitions found in the current Town Center Plan, which he will then translate into the new terms implemented since amendments have been made to the General Plan.

Nancy Diab left the meeting at 8:55 a.m.

Secondly, Mr. Balmer requested the Committee review the current Town Center boundaries and decide if the Town Center should be enlarged, and if so, where and by how much. The Committee should use the following notes to formulate their responses:

- Can't expand easily to east, west, or south – only northwest;
- Would an expansion enhance the character of the Town Center?
- Would an expansion allow uses that would benefit the Town Center?

- Would the uses developed in the expanded area meet the Town Center goals regarding land use, pedestrian amenities, urban design, etc.?

If the Town Center is enlarged:

- New development would be asked to comply with the design and development standards and goals of the Town Center Plan as part of their PAD approval;
- The area would be included in the Town Center Plan

If the Town Center is not enlarged:

- New development would be evaluated as near the Town Center as part of their PAD approval;
- The existing General Plan would continue to apply;
- Owners could still apply for General Plan amendments and rezoning

Mr. Balmer clarified that the boundary issue does not impact land uses. A Medium-High Density land use designation in Town Center has the *potential* to generate higher density than if it were not in Town Center, but is dependent upon Council action, and is does not automatically represent a specific number.

Mr. Desmond questioned if there is a list of improvements for which money generated by sales tax revenue is earmarked. Ms. Cott replied this list has not been developed yet; however staff is looking at different ways the monies can be used, i.e. RLF monies, landscaping, monument signs, etc. In addition, the Town Center Plan includes an Implementation Matrix which will be used to give staff direction on where to use the monies.

There was additional discussion on the pros and cons of including Victoria land parcels in the Town Center area. The current Town Center boundaries cut the parcel in half. Including Victoria in the Town Center lends itself to a cohesive theme.

There was discussion pertaining to existing residential areas within Town Center that do not currently follow Town Center standards. Ms. Cott stated that the issue of consistency with several areas inside Town Center has fallen

through the cracks in the past, leaving some commercial areas with their own individual designs; however, with the update of the Town Center and Redevelopment Plans, it is hoped that issue will be resolved from this point forward.

Chairman Buffington requested the Committee review the land use designations and Town Center boundaries, and be prepared to make a recommendation at the next meeting.

- E. Plus/Delta Review of Meeting
There was no plus/delta review.

Announcements

The next meeting is Tuesday, July 28th at 7:30 a.m. in the San Tan Conference Room of the Development Services Building.

6. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn: Chris Webb 2nd: Ryan Desmond
All ayes. Motion carried 8-0.

The meeting adjourned at 9:04 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Laura Moats, Community Development Assistant

Cynthia Buffington, Chairperson

Passed and Approved this 28th day of July, 2009.