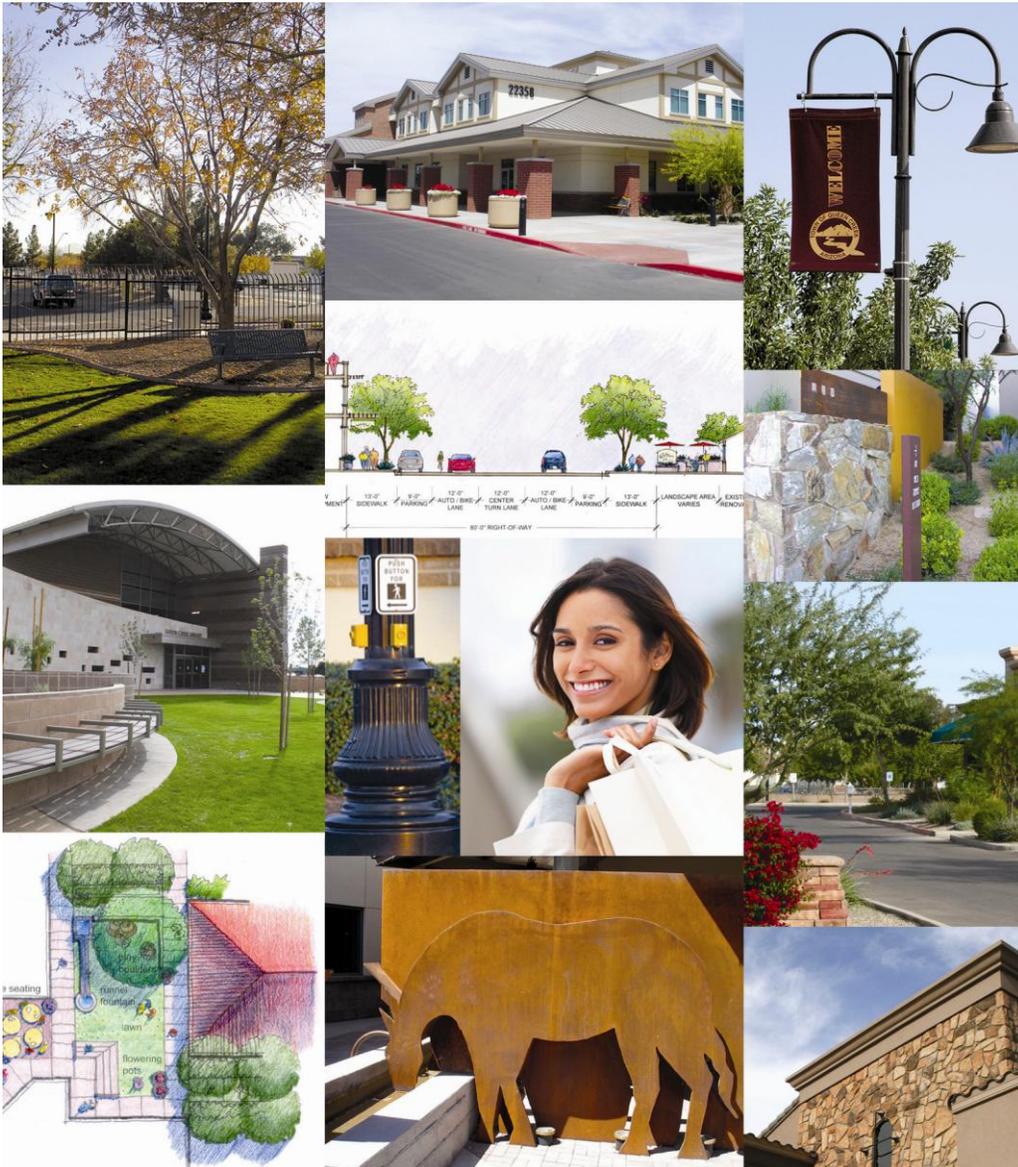




# Town of Queen Creek Town Center Plan



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## Acknowledgments

The Town of Queen Creek would like to acknowledge the following individuals that were instrumental in the update of the Town Center Plan:

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***A special “thank you” to the many other business owners, citizens and staff members who contributed time and ideas to the Town Center update.***

## I. Executive Summary

The first Town Center plan was completed and adopted in October 1994. The original vision for the Town Center – *a mixed area with appropriate housing densities, with large and small scale commercial development planned to serve not only Queen Creek residents but a community-wide and regional market* - has continued to be the foundation for the planning efforts and decision making that has occurred over the past several years.

Since 1994, a revised version of the Town Center Plan was adopted by the Town Council. Extensive public outreach including focus groups, design charrettes, public meetings and a youth forum were held to understand the public's vision of how the Town Center should develop. A Town Center Committee comprised of citizens and elected officials worked closely with a consultant team to develop the plan that was adopted by the Town Council in March 2005. Many of the goals and policies of the 2005 plan have been achieved and are visible in the Town Center we see today; however a rapidly changing and dynamic environment has necessitated the need to update the Plan to ensure the Town Center remains responsive to new opportunities. Therefore the Town Council initiated an update of the Plan and appointed members of the Town Center Committee in January 2009 to focus on this task.

The Town Center Committee has been meeting monthly since February 2009 and has evaluated each of the Town Center Plan Elements. The Committee has made appropriate updates to each of the Elements and has recommended key policy decisions that will maintain and enhance the Queen Creek Town Center as the commercial, cultural and civic core of the community. In addition to the update to each Element the Committee has recommended an expansion of the Town Center boundaries; a new mixed use land use definition as well as decorative elements that are included in the Character Element. An updated Implementation Strategy outlines new action items for the Town to accomplish including key issues:

- Researching and developing programs to assist small business.
- Implementing a directional and way-finding sign program to direct people to and within the Town Center.
- Creating an area of distinction – gateway monuments and decorative lighting within the Town Center.

The Town Center Plan incorporates the goals and policies consistent with the 2008 General Plan and the Town Center Redevelopment Area Plan. Since Redevelopment area boundary falls within the Town Center area, the Redevelopment Plan serves as an implementation tool to build upon the Town Center Plan.

The future of the Town Center will rely upon the continued collaboration and cooperation of private property owners, businesses, the residents of Queen Creek and the Town. Achieving the vision outlined in the Town Center Plan will take many years to complete just as it has taken many years to develop the vibrant area that exists today as was originally envisioned in 1994.

## II. Plan's Purpose

The purpose of the Town Center Plan is to provide clear direction and master planning guidance for this strategic area of Queen Creek. The Town Center Plan is intended to further refine the goals, objectives and policies of the adopted 2008 Queen Creek General Plan. The Town Center Element of the General Plan is included in the Appendix of this document.

The Town Center Plan provides clarification on how this area should develop over time including specific design features that will distinguish this geographic area from other parts of the community.

## Process and Timeline

The Town Center Committee was appointed by the Town Council in February 2009 with a task of updating the Town Center Plan adopted in March 2005. The Committee met monthly to discuss each Element of the plan. In addition to the monthly meetings, a status update was provided to the Town Council in October 2009 with the following public meetings held to solicit input from the community:

Feb. 8 – Open House (5-7 p.m. – Edward Abbey CR at the Queen Creek library)

Feb. 10 – Planning and Zoning – Work Study

Feb. 24 – Economic Development Commission

March 10 – Planning and Zoning – Public Hearing

March 24 – Economic Development Commission

April 7 – Town Council – Public Hearing

## Plan Overview

The Town Center Plan contains five Elements which address the economic, land use, circulation, character and amenities in the Town Center. Each element contains specific goals and policies to guide decision-making and includes pictures and graphics to serve as guidelines and to provide clarification to the items recommended in the Plan.

### III. Town Center Economics Element

#### A. Overview

The Town Center is intended to be a vital economic core for the community in addition to being the Town's heart and gathering place. Since the adoption of the plan in March 2005 the Town Center has experienced steady economic growth and development. A mixture of housing, small office space, regional commercial uses, neighborhood retail and municipal facilities have been developed creating a vibrant economic location.

The Economics Element of the plan establishes economic goals and policies that will encourage the continued investment in the Town Center and promote new development that is sustainable and will provide a balanced mix of uses for the community. Policies emphasize a mix of development including specialty retail, office, residential, tourism/hotel and art and cultural opportunities. Policies are consistent with the Economic Development Strategic Plan and the 2008 General Plan.

#### B. Economic Goals and Policies

**Goal 1: Ensure that the Town Center provides maximum return on both public and private sector investment.**

- Policy 1a Promote the development of offices and commercial uses compatible with the Town Center Vision to provide local employment opportunities and to encourage a vibrant activity center that will attract residents and visitors throughout the day and into the evening.
- Policy 1b Implement the Economic Development Strategic Plan and work to attract and retain a broad range of economic activities to strengthen the Town's tax base.
- Policy 1c Retain and enhance locally owned business through project specific planning and design, to provide opportunities that result in keeping revenues in the community.
- Policy 1d Support existing businesses with infrastructure improvements and ensure that the latest telecommunication infrastructure is installed and available in the Town Center as it continues to develop.
- Policy 1e Explore different options for funding to increase revenues for reinvestment in the Town Center.
- Policy 1f Support the formation of a merchant's or downtown association to ensure coordinated business development strategies (e.g., cooperative marketing) and continued reinvestment in the Town Center.
- Policy 1g Periodically perform a Town Center gap analysis to determine what goods and services are lacking. Work with the private sector to assist existing businesses or locate new businesses to fill the gaps.

Policy 1h Encourage private investment through flexible policies and incentives that respond to the economic changes in the Town Center.

Policy 1i As activities and amenities are developed, coordinate with ASU Polytechnic, Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport and the DMB project in the City of Mesa to promote the Town Center as a vibrant destination.

**Goal 2: Strengthen the economic vitality of the Town Center**

Policy 2a Promote private Town Center investment and the attraction of new private sector developments which reflect the land use and design goals for the Town Center.

Policy 2b Strengthen the existing Town Center residential areas and promote additional residential development incorporating a variety of densities and housing types consistent with the future pedestrian orientation of the Town Center.

Policy 2c Encourage private land assembly to create larger more developable parcels for reuse, consistent with the goals of the Town Center plan.

Policy 2d Market the enhanced image and property available for development within and surrounding the Town Center in order to promote conversion of existing properties to alternative uses.

Policy 2e Work with existing businesses in the Town Center to upgrade their facilities to reflect the proposed Town Center goals.

Policy 2f Work with the private sector to establish “one of a kind” uses such as a farmers market, arts district, and performing arts center in the Town Center, which reflects the Town’s historical character and cultural diversity.

Policy 2g Promote development of a “boutique” hotel in the Town Center.

## IV. Land Use Element

### A. Plan Overview

The Town Center area land use pattern is intended to be different than that of the majority of the community. Higher residential densities and a greater variety of commercial development will be encouraged in order to create a vibrant and active space. To accommodate a greater variety of commercial development, the Committee has recommended approval of a combined Town Center Mixed Use definition that includes a quantifiable standard for a mixture of uses. Each use (office, commercial or residential) can occupy up to 50 percent of the total project, but the combination of two of the three cannot exceed 75 percent. The Committee also recommended approval of a Town Center Mixed Use Purpose Statement with the inclusion of the statement “is pedestrian friendly and encourages non-motorized alternatives.” This land use definition is a combination of the Town mixed-use definitions Mixed Use – Commercial/Residential and Mixed Use – Commercial/Office included in the 2005 version.

New development will be sensitively located with existing development. Development north of Ocotillo Road is characterized by larger tenant anchor retailers while development south of Ocotillo Road will decrease in intensity as you move away from the Ocotillo and Ellsworth roads intersection toward the municipal and parks and recreation facilities and the Queen Creek Wash.

## **B. Land Use Definitions**

The land use definitions for the Town Center are specifically designed for the Town Center area and will need to be “translated” into those found in the 2008 General Plan.

### **Single Family Residential (SFR)**

These areas shown on the land use plan denote existing Town Center single family residential development. This includes single family attached and detached units including townhomes, condominiums and zero lot line units, with a density range between three and eight dwelling units per acre.

### **Multi-Family Residential (MFR)**

Town Center MFR will encourage multi-family residential development featuring attached housing development products such as apartments, condominiums, townhomes and loft units. Single family residential development is also allowed as long as it meets density requirements. Dwelling units per acre range from a minimum of eight units per acre to a maximum of 18 units per acre.

### **Open Space**

This designated area is intended to remain as public open areas including pocket parks, civic plazas, and lined equestrian multi-use path/trail systems. This designation includes the Queen Creek Wash and areas adjacent to the rail line.

### **Public/Quasi-Public (P)**

This category is used to designate public land uses, including schools, libraries, fire stations, governmental offices and facilities. Joint development projects that include public and private participation are allowed. This category designates lands, including utilities and such institutions as churches and private schools including the Canyon State Academy. The land use plan does not specify sites for all future public or quasi-public development; only existing uses are designated Public/Quasi-Public.

## **Commercial**

Business enterprises including retail shopping facilities, eating and drinking establishments, entertainment venues, lodging and other commercial uses are intended in this land use designation. A mix of commercial uses will be encouraged.

## **Town Center Mixed Use-Commercial/Office/Residential**

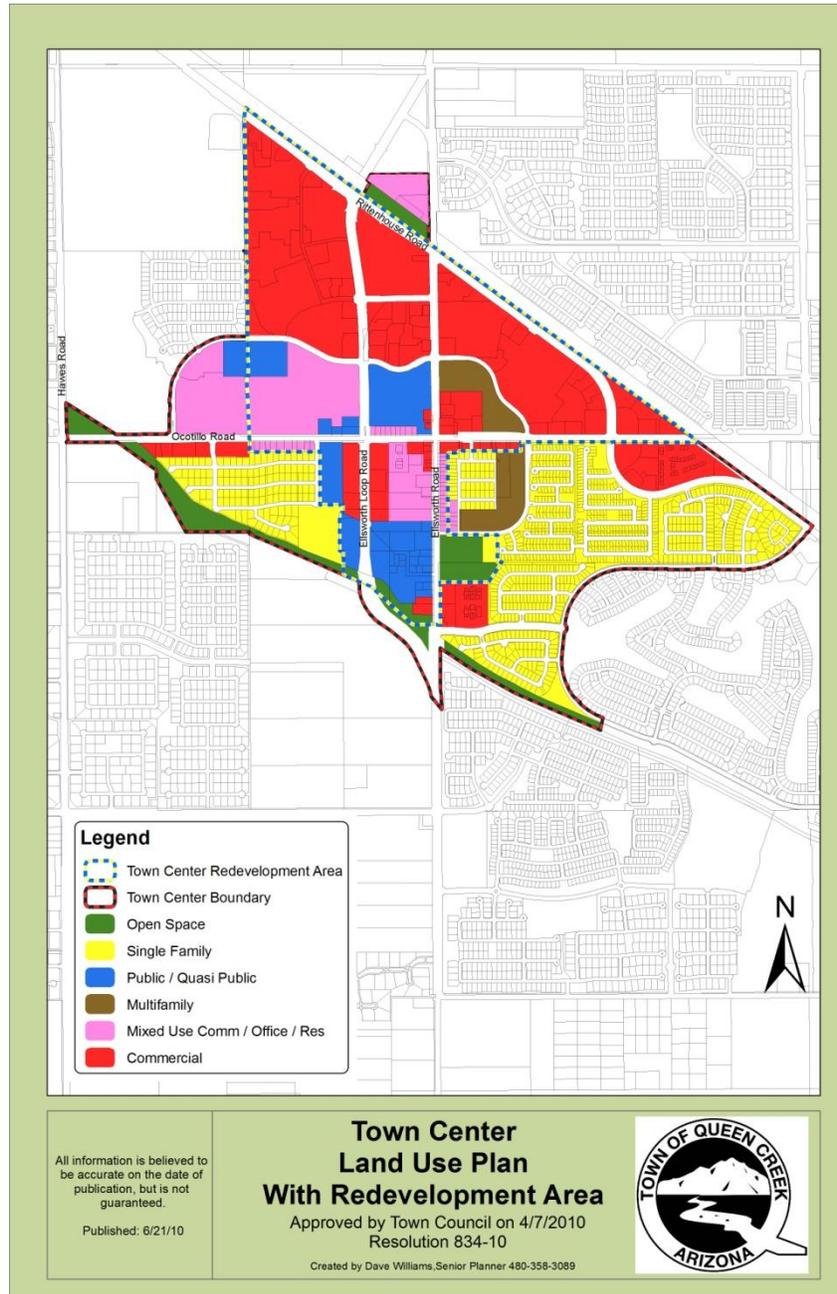
This category is specific to the Town Center area and encourages a mix of commercial, office and residential uses. This could include multi-story development with commercial and/or retail activities occurring at ground level with professional offices and housing above or entire buildings dedicated to office or residential uses adjacent to other commercial uses. This category is intended to contain smaller scale commercial activities (not large retail outlets) as well as smaller scale office activities. The Town Center Design Guidelines, when developed, should contain details about the size, design and configuration of the proposed uses and the desired mix of commercial, office and residential development.

Review of the development and design plan of each mixed use project will be done as part of the Town's Planned Area Development (PAD) zoning approval process.

### C. Land Use Plan

The following Land Use Plan will guide development in the Town Center area.

Figure 4.2



Key features of the Land Use Plan include:

### **Ring Concept**

The Land Use Plan features a “ring concept” to the development pattern. This pattern encourages smaller scale, slower paced activities at the very center of the planning area and scale and intensity of uses increase as you move north away from the core area.

### **Municipal Center**

The municipal center in the southern portion of the Town Center is critical to the dynamics of the area and anchoring the south end. This will create daytime activity and provide amenities for public uses. It will also continue to encourage the historical pattern by residents to come to the Town Center for governmental activities and day-to-day business.

### **Mixed-Use Development**

There are areas in the interior of the Town Center that feature small scale commercial, office and residential development – mixed-use developments. These areas promote small business development and employment opportunities to promote the development and expansion of Town Center activity and commerce.

### **Larger Scale Commercial Development**

Development in the northern portion of the Town Center planning area and on the periphery will include joint parking facilities and larger scale shopping and commercial opportunities. Larger chain and department stores are intended to be located in these areas.

### **Neighborhood Preservation**

The Town of Queen Creek is committed to neighborhood preservation. Blending of the old with the new is of utmost importance in the Town Center. Measures have been taken to buffer existing neighborhoods from increased intensities through landscaping, open space, building design and building scale.

### **Increased Residential Densities**

Opportunities for increased residential development densities compared with the rest of the community are provided. Increased densities can provide a critical mass of people and activity that is key to the non-residential investment and cultural success of the Town Center.

### **Community Gathering Place**

A site for a special gathering place for events and entertainment has been identified adjacent to the governmental complex. The “Community Gathering Place” is an important element for establishing a unique identity for Queen Creek. It will also serve as a regional attraction bringing activities and people to the area on a regular basis.

## D. Land Use Goals and Policies

### **Goal 1: Create/maintain a quality residential area in a downtown environment.**

- Policy 1a Encourage the preservation of existing housing where desired by the individual homeowners.
- Policy 1b Encourage adaptive reuse of current residential structures while exploring historic options.
- Policy 1c Promote programs for housing rehabilitation and beautification.
- Policy 1d Promote the development of new housing opportunities in the Town Center.
- Policy 1e Develop the Town Center area in a sensitive manner that blends residential land uses with higher intensity uses.
- Policy 1f Facilitate the location of commercial services catering to Town Center residents.

### **Goal 2: Create a community focal point and gathering place with a strong identity so people can live, work and recreate in the Town Center.**

- Policy 2a Develop the Town Center in keeping with the General Plan's focus of "Keeping Queen Creek Unique."
- Policy 2b Facilitate the location of activities, shopping opportunities, and services so Queen Creek residents will visit the Town Center on a regular basis.
- Policy 2c Continue to expand municipal offices and other governmental services/functions as needed in the southern portion of the Town Center area. Space needs should be based upon Town build-out projections so that sufficient space is available to maintain a majority of municipal government operations in the Town Center area.
- Policy 2d Develop a gathering place (e.g., gazebo, bandstand or amphitheater) in the southern portion of the Town Center area to be used for community events such as concerts, festivals, ceremonies and holiday celebrations.
- Policy 2e Develop an identity theme to be used throughout the Town Center area and at the Town Center gateways.
- Policy 2f: Encourage residential land use patterns that compliment and encourage quality non-residential development.
- Policy 2g: Implement the "ring concept" for land uses and traffic flows that promote a safe, pedestrian-friendly center area from Ocotillo Road to the Queen Creek Wash along Ellsworth Road and promote more intense, motorized vehicle-oriented commercial activities around the perimeter of the Town Center area.

- Policy 2h Ensure compatible land uses and intense buffering between existing residential uses and proposed non-residential land uses.
- Policy 2i Encourage businesses to open toward sidewalks and pedestrian plazas.
- Policy 2j Create places of interest and activity that encourage pedestrian activity.
- Policy 2k Permit outdoor dining, displays, and home businesses compatible with the Town Center theme.
- Policy 2l Promote a variety of housing opportunities including town homes and residences above commercial uses.
- Policy 2m Permit clustered, artisan/cottage industry uses through special zoning.
- Policy 2n Encourage uses along the Union Pacific Railroad to take advantage of the transportation opportunities provided.
- Policy 2o Allow higher residential densities near commercial and employment uses.
- Policy 2p Monitor development absorption for shopping, employment and housing; refrain from premature rezoning when there are adequately zoned sites available.
- Policy 2q Consider allowing density bonuses or provide public improvements for the development of infill parcels.

**Goal 3: Encourage Town Center land use development flexibility.**

- Policy 3a Provide flexibility in zoning, development standards and incentives to achieve the goals of the Plan.
- Policy 3b Consider modification to the Town Center boundary if modification results in the achievement of the goals and policies of the Plan.
- Policy 3c Provide flexibility in development standards to accommodate green building practices and enhanced architectural aesthetics.
- Policy 3d Provide directional signage to help identify the Town Center and to direct the public to specific uses or areas.
- Policy 3e Shared Parking/Public Parking – flexibility with parking standards.
- Policy 3f Off-site improvements to reflect the distinctive attributes of the Town Center.

## **V. Multi-Modal Circulation System Element**

### **A. Overview**

Efficient circulation is a key component to the success of a downtown. Creating a circulation system that allows for efficient access to, from and within the Town Center, while providing a safe, efficient and interesting pedestrian environment, is important for continued investment in the Town Center.

The evolution of Queen Creek's circulation system has enhanced the network of "connectivity" in the Town Center and had created an improved environment for moving vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists through and within the area. Connections to the Town's trail system, multi-use paths and a potential future transit stop at the rail line in the northern portion of the Town Center are also critical components to upholding the Town's multi-modal commitment.

### **B. Roadway Network**

The 2008 General Plan, Transportation and Circulation Element, (pages 60-63 of the General Plan), outlines a comprehensive multi-use transportation network that provides opportunities for alternate vehicular and non-vehicular travel modes. The transportation network provides a hierarchy of roadways designed to support land uses in the community.

Major regional connections to enter and depart the Town Center are Ellsworth Road, Ellsworth Loop Road, Ocotillo Road, Rittenhouse Road and Hunt Highway.

The Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) recommendations, approved by the Town Council, detail more specifically the street design guidelines and access management plan for the road network within the Town Center. Included as Appendix G of the Town Center Plan.

### **C. System Connectivity**

It is critical that the Town Center circulation network logically ties into the Town's overall circulation system. The Town Center multi-modal circulation system provides for those who intend to travel through the area to another destination as well as providing convenient access for those who have the Town Center as their destination.

### **D. Design and Character**

The character and design of the Town Center circulation system sets the tone for the entire area. Some of the facilities are intended to move significant volumes of traffic but must still maintain a compatible character to coexist with the Town Center development.

Traffic calming and maintaining a slow speed in specific areas of the Town Center are keys to ensuring that motorized vehicles and other modes successfully operate seamlessly in the Town Center.

There must also be provisions made in the design to allow for limited access on certain roadways for special events (e.g., block parties, special events).

The following text and exhibits further define the design and character of key Town Center roadways and intersections.

### **Ellsworth Road**

Ellsworth Road is the spine that holds the entire Town Center circulation system together. It must accommodate a variety of uses safely and conveniently. Once entering the Town Center, speeds are intended to be slow and leisurely so that vehicular traffic integrates with pedestrians and bicyclists.

Figure 5.3 shows the desired characteristics for Ellsworth Road through the Town Center Area. The road will consist of one lane in each direction with a center turn lane and a median in certain locations. On-street parallel parking will be accommodated in some areas with raised crosswalks, decorative pavers, and bulb-outs potentially included at key pedestrian access points to promote safety.

**Figure 5.3 - Ellsworth Road Design**

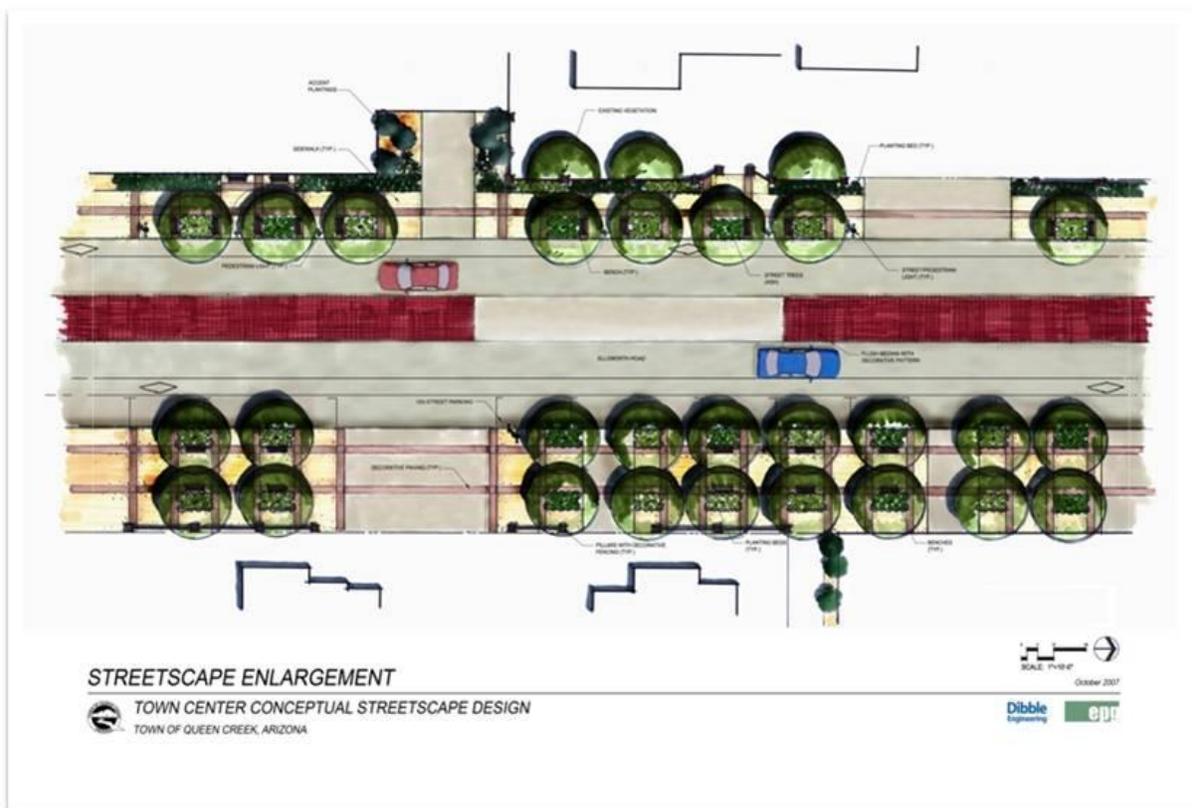
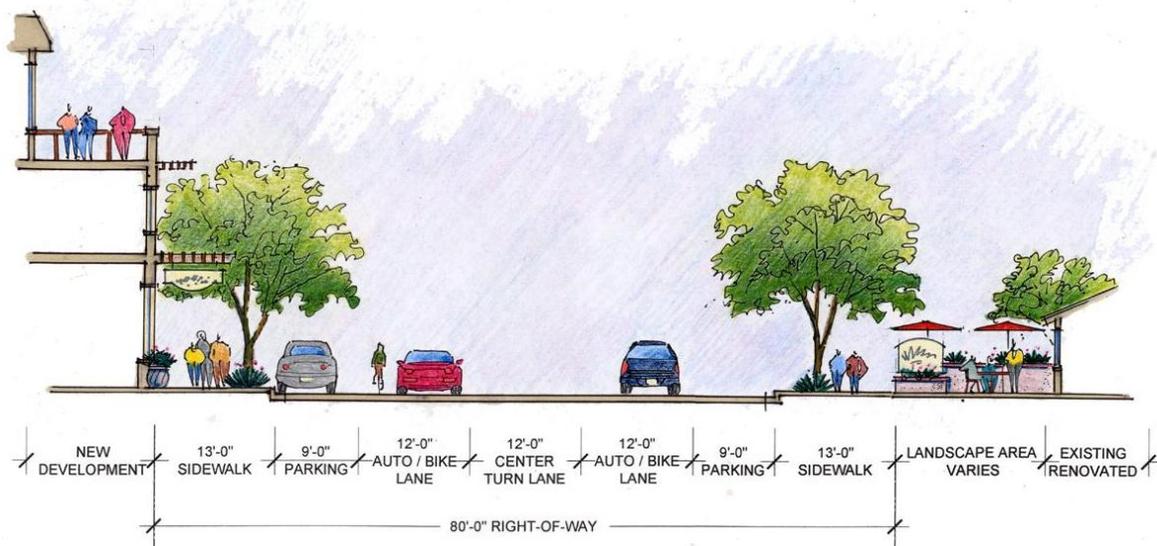


Figure 5.4 shows the relationship of the potential built environment to the roadway over a 20-30 year planning horizon and the roadway specifications. This view is from the south and shows the relationship of the preserved existing neighborhood to the east and new development on the west side of the road.

Buildings may be located immediately adjacent to sidewalks to create a contained pedestrian area with easy access to business establishments. Multi-story structures are anticipated in some areas along the route, creating interest and activity. However, buildings will be stepped back away from the street as they elevate to mitigate issues of scale. Appropriate street-level outdoor activities will be encouraged and may vary in width. A landscaped buffer between the sidewalk and roadway will be developed and bicycles will be accommodated throughout, with bike lanes provided wherever possible.

**Figure 5.4 - Built Environment and Specifications of Ellsworth Road**



**Collector Loop**

A collector loop comprised of Victoria Lane, Heritage Loop Road, 209<sup>th</sup> Way and Aldecoa Road serves an area that is primarily residential development in character. The residential development in this area will be the highest density in the community and the road system and multimodal aspects of the corridor are designed to accommodate this increased activity level.

On-street parking will not be permitted and proposed residential development will be required to provide adequate parking to accommodate residents and visitors based on Town standards.

**Ellsworth Loop Road**

The development of the Ellsworth Loop Road is a key feature in maintaining the integrity of the internal and regional transportation system for the Town. The Ellsworth Loop Road has taken pressure off of Ellsworth Road and provides motorists a choice between making the Town Center their destination or

providing an opportunity to move easily through the area. Bicyclists and equestrians are not accommodated on this roadway; however, pedestrian access via sidewalks separated by landscaped buffering from the road is provided.

### **Parking**

Parking is a critical issue that must be addressed in the entire downtown area. The Town Center Plan envisions a mix of parking throughout the area from on-street parking on Ellsworth Road, to small lots serving individual developments and existing businesses and future parking structures east of the Ellsworth Loop Road within the library master planned area.

### **Intersection Design**

Most key intersections in the Town Center, including the moderate-sized intersections along Ellsworth Road and Ocotillo Road, will ultimately be signalized as traffic volumes warrant. The traffic signals will provide for a regulated flow of vehicular traffic through the area, and provide controlled crossings for pedestrians as traffic volumes increase with the in-fill of development.

The following graphic represents a conceptual intersection design proposed in the Design Concept Report (DCR) performed by Dibble Engineering. The DCR was finalized and presented to the Town Council in February 2008.



## VI. Town Center Character Element

### A. Overview

Creating a unique Town Center character is very important to Queen Creek residents. The area should look, feel and function differently than any other part of the community or, for that matter, any other part of the region.

From the entry monuments to the enhanced landscaping to the special pavement treatments, the Town Center will have its own distinctive character. Blending the existing Town Center residential and commercial development with new development must be carefully orchestrated. Meandering sidewalks with desert type landscape and decorative street lights and traffic signals are all part of making this area of the community distinctive.

There are several areas within the Town Center that have unique aspects that will be promoted. These are called "Character Areas." The intention of the Character Area designation is that each area has something special to offer and should be enhanced as the Town Center develops.

#### **Family Neighborhood Character Area**

The existing single-family neighborhood (Queen Creek Plaza) located in the southeast portion of the Town Center area is very important to Queen Creek and the Town Center. This area is to be maintained as single family residential. Housing along the roads where property owners may desire to convert housing to non-residential uses is addressed and will be consistent with direction from the adopted land use plan. The housing stock will continue to age and home improvements and neighborhood revitalization efforts will be encouraged to maintain the quality of the neighborhood.

The Family Neighborhood Character Area will be well buffered from other development on the periphery. Higher-density residential development has developed to the east of this neighborhood and has provided landscaping and a pedestrian pathway. There is also the potential for changes occurring on Ellsworth Road (e.g., changing uses from residential to commercial uses). Any change in land uses must take into consideration adequate and appropriate buffering from the single-family development. The Town of Queen Creek is committed to maintaining the residential character of this area.

**Figure 6.1 - East Side View of Ellsworth Road from West Side of Ellsworth Road**



### **Community Activities Character Area**

This area in the southern portion of the Town Center area will be the Town's governmental hub with administrative, parks and recreation, convention and public safety facilities. It will include gathering places for public meetings, festivals, community celebrations and concerts.

Multi-modal access must be maintained so people can walk from home or parking areas, bike or ride public transportation (e.g., events trolley) to the area from other parts of the community. Parking facilities will be heavily landscaped with areas of shade provided by landscaping or structures. It is important that parking facilities are well connected to the Queen Creek Wash as well as the comprehensive community trail system.

### **Town Center Crossroads Area**

This area where Ellsworth and Ocotillo Roads transect is near the Town Center's geographic core. This area will contain shops and informational kiosks/directories for the area. Several small parks will be located among the shops. Mixed-use activities will be promoted in this area with residential uses located above shops and restaurants. The idea is to promote a mix of uses that create a variety of activities.

Landscaping will be low to provide an unimpeded visual corridor for the length of both roadways. Trails will connect the Town Center Crossroads Area to potential transit stops and the school and neighborhoods to the west.

### **B. Building Design**

A key component to the Town Center will be the complementary architectural theme of the built environment. It is intended to be pleasing to the eye, high quality, functional and respectful of Queen Creek's physical location and surrounding mountain vistas. It is not intended to be a forced "theme park" type motif that limits design creativity and uniqueness.

The Town Center Committee agreed that a strict homogeneous building theme was not necessary and that there could be differing, compatible styles in the Town Center planning area. Different design concepts are included in the following pages.

Figure 6.2 shows an example of development expected to occur along the west side of Ellsworth Road. Smaller, more intimate development will be encouraged along the roadway with larger scale commercial development expected to occur behind this type of development. Therefore, it is critical that building design features are incorporated on all four sides of buildings.

**Figure 6.2 - Conceptual West Side View of Ellsworth Road from East Side of Ellsworth Road**



However, there was consensus on some building components that were desired regarding colors, materials and features, particularly related to rooflines. Examples of these building components are included in the plan. It was decided that varied architectural styles could be tied together through these desired characteristics

### **Materials**

A mixture of natural and man-made materials is desired to create a mature but modern look to the area's buildings. Treatments should be on four-sides of the building, not just on the street-facing façade.

#### ***Natural Materials***



#### ***Mixture of Man-Made and Natural Materials***



***Brick and Creative Stucco Design***



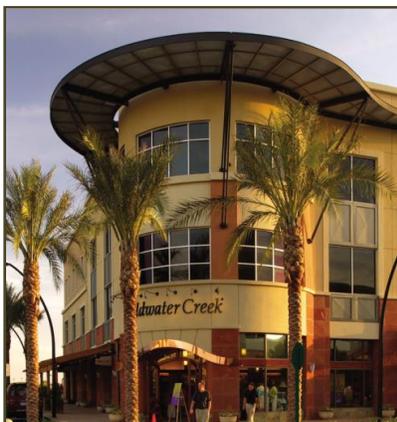
**Rooflines**

A mix of varied rooflines was desired to include flat and pitched features. Elevation changes and creative features will also be encouraged to create an interesting and appealing streetscape appearance.

***Roofline Elevation Changes***



***Creative Roofline Concepts***



### C. Enhancements

Landscaping and streetscape design will provide a unique feel for the Town Center area. Landscaping that complements the built environment, provides shade, and creates a relaxing and enjoyable environment is critical to the overall appeal of the Town Center. It is recommended that groundcover and shrubs provide a variety of color and avoid thorny shrubs and/or high maintenance plants that are high-water users and would pose issues for pedestrian areas.

Additionally, shade structures and amenities such as water features will add to the comfort and ambiance of the area.

#### Landscaping

A mix of landscaping is desired including indigenous plants to include “lush desert” characteristics and some elements of more traditional types of landscaping to include tree-lined streets and turf. Landscaping may vary but must be consistent in the same manner as the architectural style of the Town Center. The *Fantex Ash* is the primary theme tree of the Town Center with the *Texas Mountain Laurel* as the accent tree.

Landscaping will be used to provide shade in warm weather and allow sunlight to filter through during the cooler months. Landscaping will also be used to set the theme for the different architectural styles found in the Town Center. Use of deciduous trees should be carefully monitored to account for maintenance and water usage.

#### ***Lush Desert Landscaping***



### *Traditional Type Landscaping*



#### **Primary Theme Tree – Fantex Ash**

Flowering Period: Summer

Size: 20' - 50' high x 20' - 30' wide at maturity

Water Use: Low - Moderate



#### **Accent Theme Tree – Texas Mountain Laurel**

Flowering Period: Spring

Size: 15' - 20' high x 8' - 10' wide at maturity

Water Use: Low - Moderate

## Streetscapes

Creative use of structures, plantings and materials provide a mix of sunny and shady areas for people throughout the year. A combination of covered and partially covered overhangs, ramadas and canopies is desired, including the use of different building materials and plants.

### *Covered and Partially Covered Walkways*

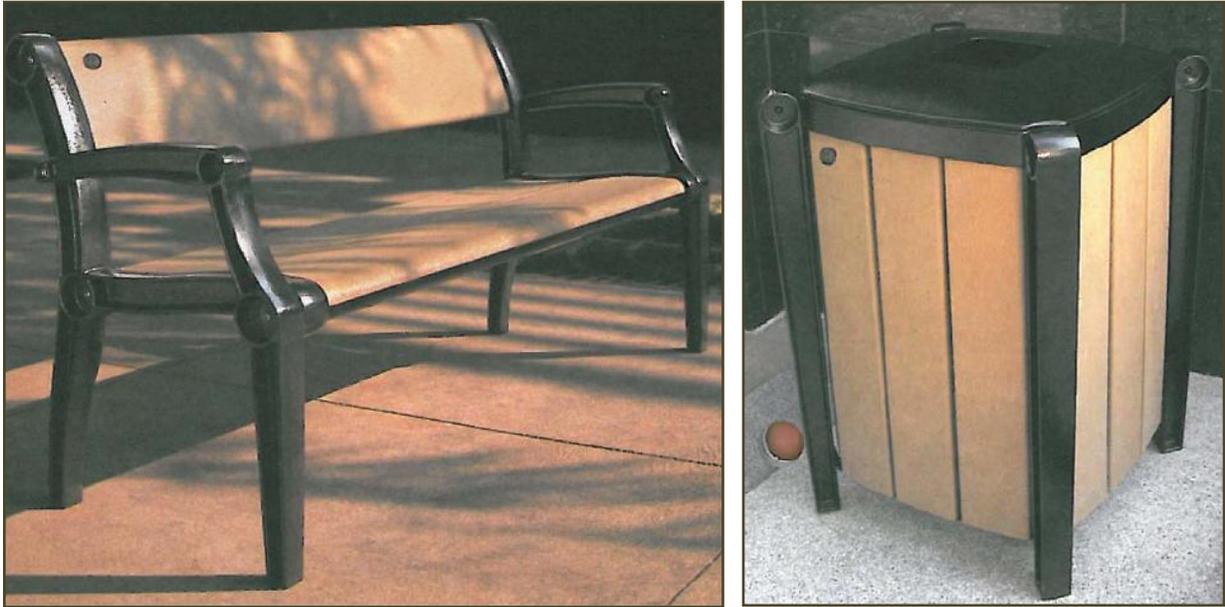


*Shade Structures*



### *Site Furnishings for Public Right-of-Way*

Bench and trash receptacle are made with recycled materials and can include the Town's logo.



### *Pedestrian and Street Lights*

An opportunity to distinguish the Town Center from other areas of the community is through the use of decorative pedestrian, street and traffic signal lighting in the Town Center. The Committee has recommended that decorative pedestrian lighting be used in the public right-of-way consistent to what is currently in place today.

The Committee has also recommended that decorative streetlights be installed on all roads in the Town Center, **excluding** Ellsworth Loop Road, Rittenhouse Road, residential subdivisions and the section of Ellsworth Road north of Rittenhouse.

Private developments should include lighting that is consistent with the bell-shaped pedestrian light fixture but should be complementary to the color scheme of the buildings in the commercial center or a particular project.

## ***Traffic Signals***

As the community has grown during the past several years, so has the number of traffic signals installed throughout the Town. Several new traffic signals have also been installed in the Town Center, with additional signals planned for installation when traffic volumes warrant the need.

The Committee has recommended that all existing traffic signals in the Town Center be painted to match the existing pedestrian lights with decorative bases installed. The Washington-style clamshell base was selected.



The Committee has also recommended that all new traffic signals be painted and installed with decorative bases.

Per recommendation of the Committee, traffic signals installed at the five core intersections will be painted and will include fluted poles, decorative bases and decorative light fixtures. The five core intersections include:

- Ellsworth/Maya roads
- Ellsworth Road/Victoria Lane/Heritage Loop Road
- Ellsworth/Ocotillo roads
- Ellsworth Road/Sierra Park Blvd.
- Ocotillo Road/Heritage Loop Road/209<sup>th</sup> Way

***Appendix C details the location of the five core intersections.***

## D. Character Goals and Policies

### **Goal 1 Design and maintain a unique and attractive Town Center for Queen Creek residents and visitors to enjoy.**

- Policy 1a Update, adopt and implement the Town Center zoning districts.
- Policy 2b Develop, adopt and implement Town Center architectural design standards and guidelines that include varied materials, adopted themes and unique building designs.
- Policy 1c Develop, adopt and implement a Town Center sign ordinance that encourages consistency and limits proliferation.
- Policy 1d Establish and implement standards for Town Center streetscape improvements that provide shade, street furniture and shopper conveniences (e.g., lighting, directional signage, benches, landscaping features). The standards should include landscape palettes and approved plan materials.
- Policy 1e Support a merchants' or downtown association that will encourage physical improvements, beautification and maintenance as well as area promotion.
- Policy 1f Encourage second- and third-story activities (balcony/patio dining, view decks and residential patios) in appropriate areas.
- Policy 1g Promote and encourage rehabilitation of substandard residential and commercial properties.
- Policy 1h Emphasize quality Town Center residential development in accordance with specific Town standards.
- Policy 1i Create special entry monuments celebrating the entrance to Town Center.
- Policy 1j Encourage the development of heritage-oriented museums, public art and related activities/facilities that celebrate Queen Creek's heritage.
- Policy 1k Develop codes and policies to monitor street vending and concessions.
- Policy 1l Encourage and support Town Center small businesses that are locally owned and operated.
- Policy 1m Establish plazas, shaded walkways, and public assembly areas that encourage community interaction and an opportunity for civic celebrations and events

## VII. Town Center Amenities Element

### A. Overview

Town Center amenities are key elements that entice people to come to the area and, more importantly, motivate them to return. Quality public amenities promote quality private investment activity as well. The Town Center is envisioned to be more than just a place to shop, dine and work.

### B. Parks and Other Amenities

As discussed previously, the Town Center area is intended to be comprised of higher intensity developments. However, these developments offer a mix of open common areas and activity centers designed to create a pleasing place to visit and recreate. This mix of activity will be consistent with the community's desire to maintain a more rural character in the midst of an urbanized region.

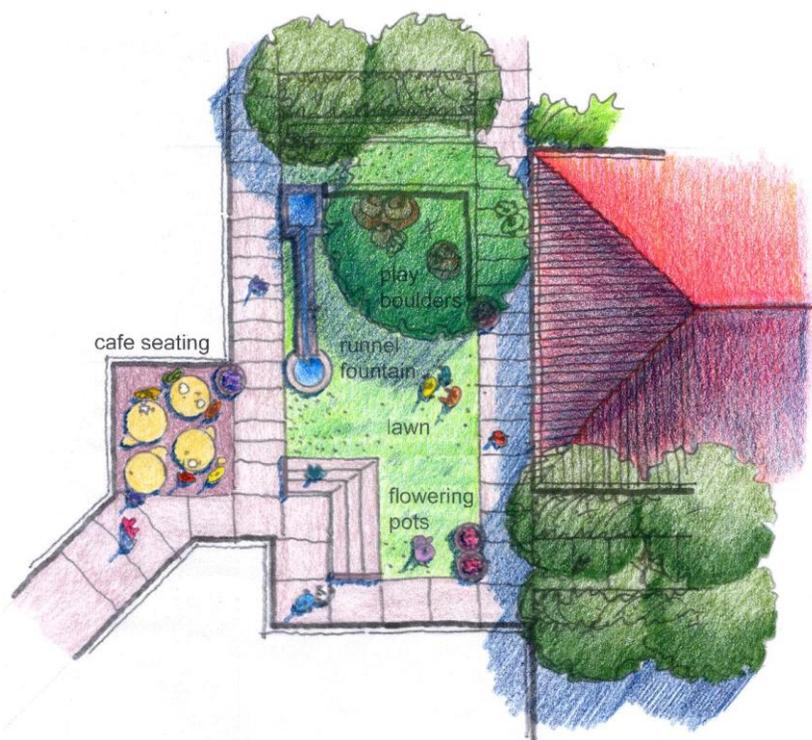
In addition to entertainment uses such as theaters, restaurants and coffee houses, several passive recreational uses are proposed for the Town Center.

#### Pocket Parks

Small parks are desired to serve as buffers between buildings and as respites for shoppers and those working in the Town Center. They are intended to create a pleasing urban setting in line with the relaxed feel of the rest of the community. These areas will contain shade, street furniture and other amenities (water features, fountains, etc.).

Figure 7.1 shows a concept for a pocket park design that could be integrated in several areas in the Town Center. Seating, shade, elevation changes and ease of access to adjacent businesses are important components of the pocket parks design.

Figure 7.1 - Pocket Park Design Concept



### Pocket Park Amenities



### Town Hall Gathering Place

A community gathering place adjacent to the Town Hall is proposed for the Town Center area. Figure 7.2 illustrates the Town Hall Gathering Place where community events can be held. These activities could include seasonal celebrations, concerts and theater presentations. The facility could be configured to accommodate several hundred people.

Figure 7.2 - Town Hall Gathering Place





The Gateway Plaza concept was initiated to serve several purposes.

**Southern Entry Point.** It is important that those entering the Town Center area get a feel they are entering somewhere special. The plaza will slow down traffic and set a relaxed tone as one enters the area.

**Character and Open Space.** The plaza provides an opportunity for the community to express some of the key character elements of the community through landscaping and other creative structures. Recognition of the San Tan Mountains, Queen Creek Wash and the community's agrarian heritage could be expressed in the plaza.

**Visual Focal Point.** It was expressed that some type of visual focal point on Ellsworth Road should be created for both north and south views along Ellsworth Road. The plaza should consist of enough elevation to be easily seen from the northern portion of the Town Center area to create interest and a pleasing look that breaks up the view of a long straight road. A community monument and/or signage could be located on the plaza.

**Pedestrian Refuge.** Since it is anticipated that significant pedestrian traffic visiting the Town Hall complex and related facilities will be crossing Ellsworth Road in this area, the plaza will serve as a refuge where pedestrians will only have to traverse one lane of traffic at a time coming from one direction.

### **C. Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Equestrian Facilities**

Accommodating non-motorized vehicles in and around the Town Center area is a key component. Facilities for equestrians such as horse tie-up areas, hitching posts and watering troughs should be installed at key locations such as the Town Hall Gathering Place.

Bike racks must also be available throughout the Town Center to encourage cyclists to not only use the Town Center area but to stay and enjoy the amenities and activities offered.

## D. Amenities Goals and Policies

### Goal 1 Develop the Town Center area as comfortable place to enjoy the outdoors year-round.

- Policy 1a Develop pocket parks among commercial activities to provide shady areas to relax, picnic and enjoy.
- Policy 1b Plant a mix of vegetation (evergreen and deciduous trees) to provide summer shade and allow winter sunshine to filter through.
- Policy 1c Encourage misters and other cooling devices in the Town Center.
- Policy 1d Develop Town Center public restroom facilities especially near public gathering areas.
- Policy 1e As part of the Town Center planning and implementation of design standards, maintain view corridors to public open areas.
  
- Policy 1f Include low-maintenance areas for shade in parks and trail areas as well as along streets.
- Policy 1g Provide parking areas adjacent to the parks for cars and bicycles.
- Policy 1h Establish a distinct character for Town Center area parks and trails.
- Policy 1i Where feasible, orient recreational linkages around the Town Center perimeter.
- Policy 1j Design parks to accommodate Town-wide events (e.g., electricity, lighting and open space).
- Policy 1k Consider outdoor public assembly and recreational/athletic facilities to accommodate tournaments where feasible.

## VIII. Implementation Strategy

Implementation of the Town Center Plan will be challenging and take time, but significant progress has already been made, and a strong foundation for future development has been established.

Success will hinge on public/private investments and public/private partnerships. The Town can only prepare the area or create an environment for quality investment to occur, not build the Town Center. Therefore, the majority of tasks the Town must address will occur over the next decade and be focused on infrastructure development, creation and implementation of guidelines and policies, and the establishment of a Town Center environment that will stimulate investment by the private sector.

It is critical that specific projects from this plan be included in the Town's Capital Improvements Plan. Policies that contain ordinances or guidelines to be developed are a priority for creation and adoption.

### A. Structure of the Implementation Matrix

The Implementation Matrix is organized by element, emphasizing which action items are associated with each element of the plan. Action items are identified as having a low, medium or high budget impact. Key partners and stakeholders that need to be involved to accomplish each action item are identified. As implementation moves forward, it is anticipated that partners may change, new stakeholders will emerge and the matrix will need to be updated periodically.

**Action:** A specific task that needs to be accomplished.

**Budget Impact:** While it is intended that any investment in the Town Center will eventually provide a significant return on that investment, there will be significant up-front budgetary commitments on part of the Town. In order to prioritize and program these expenditures, it is important to identify the impacts of various actions.

**Low impact** is an action considered to not require a considerable one-time or ongoing contribution from the Town's budget. These tasks can usually be accomplished by staff or with some outside assistance. While it is understood that staffing is a significant cost, it is a fairly fixed cost.

**Medium impact** is an action considered to require some additional funding on a one-time or continuous basis in addition to staff participation and management.

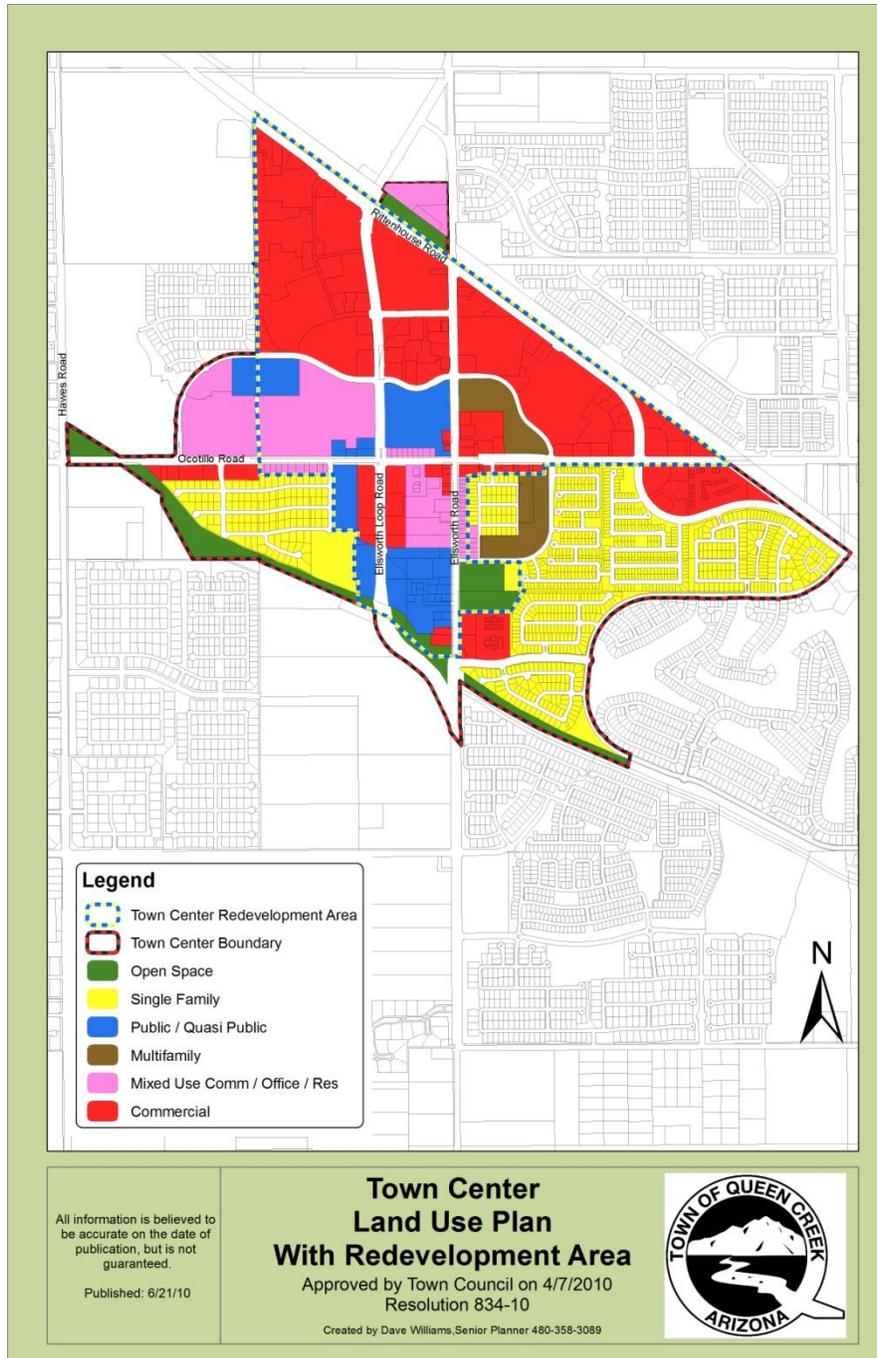
**High impact** is a project or initiative that will require significant funding such as a major expenditure from the budget or reserves and/or some type of financing mechanism such as bonding.

**Figure 8.1 – Implementation Matrix**

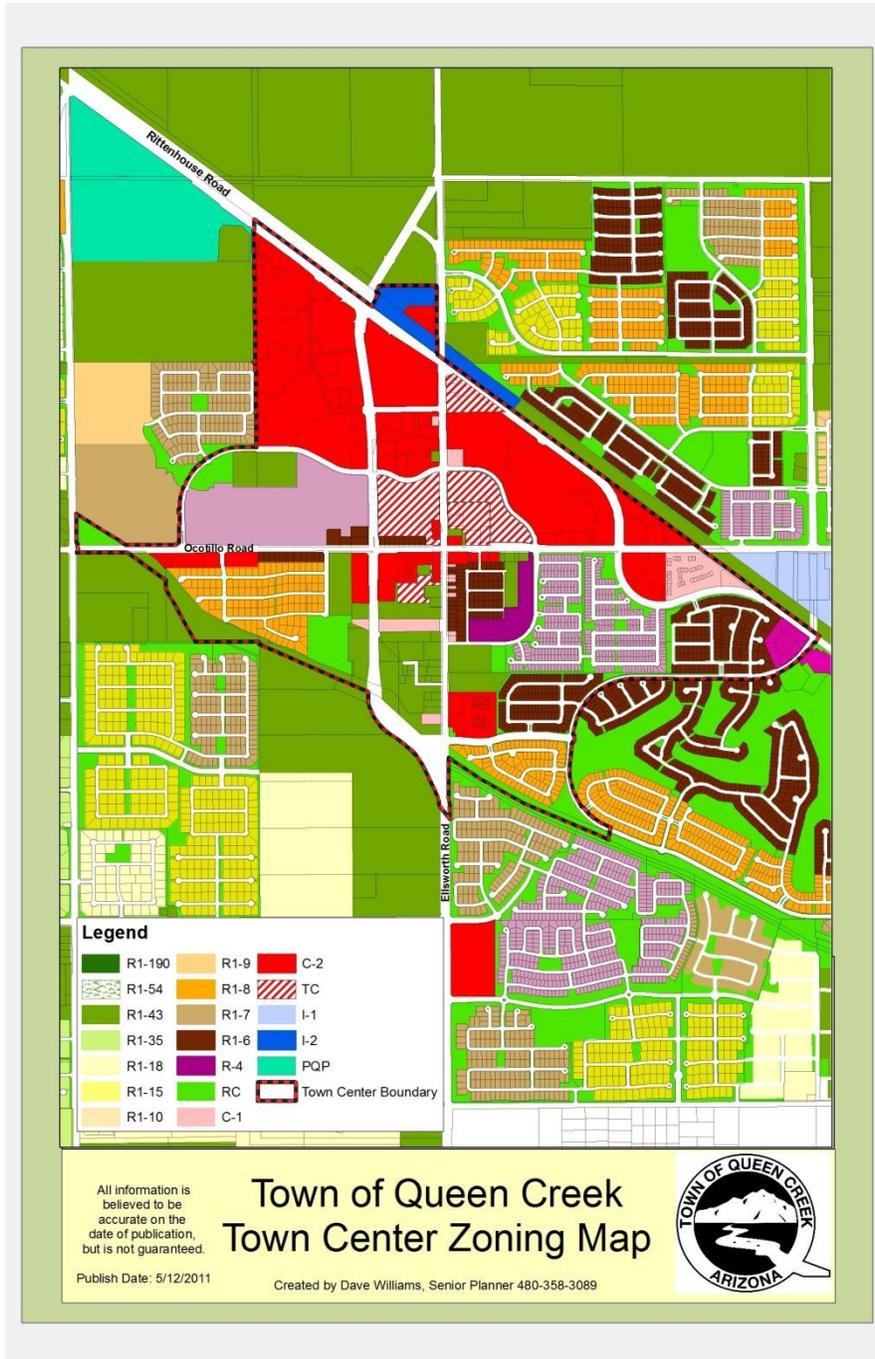
<b>Action</b>	<b>Budget Impact</b>	<b>Partners/Stakeholders</b>
<b>Economics Element</b>		
Research best practices for the development of a Town Center Merchants' Association.	Low	Town, Citizens, Town Center Residents / Businesses / Property Owners
Research options and make recommendations on how the .25% sales tax surcharge can be best utilized (e.g., revolving loan fund program; business investment grants).	Low	Town, Task Force
<b>Land Use Element</b>		
Develop Town Center design guidelines including gateway monument / signage theme and design, and parking requirements and design standards.	Low	Town, Citizens, Town Center Residents / Businesses / Property Owners
Research historic options to encourage adaptive reuse of current residential structures.	Low	Town
Develop density bonus policies to include exchanges of land for open space / pocket parks and pedestrian walkways between development.	Low	Town
Develop a right-of-way analysis to determine acquisition needs and costs for the development of the circulation system. Include the results in the CIP.	Low	Town
Maintain the Town Center Housing Rehabilitation Program (HOME program).	Low	Town, Residents
Research parking options for Town Center businesses.	Low	Town, Town Center Residents / Businesses / Property Owners
Explore development of mobility options in the Town	Low	Town

Center with connections to ASU Polytechnic, PMGA.		
Install Town Center gateway monuments/signage.	Medium	Town, Town Center Residents / Businesses / Property Owners / Developers
Provide directional signage to help identify the Town Center; provide a unified way-finding system throughout the Town Center.	Medium	Town
Begin a tree-planting program based on the landscaping plan so that mature trees will greet new development.	Medium	Town, Town Center Residents / Businesses / Property Owners
Implement Ellsworth Road designs and continue installation of streetscape improvements.	High	Town, Contractors
Make Ocotillo Road improvements and Ocotillo / Ellsworth crossroads improvements (paving treatments, signage, etc.)	High	Town, Contractors, Landowners, Businesses
<b>Character Element</b>		
Update, adopt and implement Town Center zoning districts.	Low	Town
Develop, adopt and implement a Town Center sign ordinance that encourages consistency and limits proliferation.	Low	Town, Town Center Businesses
Develop, adopt and implement Town Center architectural design standards and guidelines that include varied materials, adopted themes and unique building designs.	Low	Town
<b>Amenities Element</b>		
Develop public plazas – Town Hall Gathering Place and the Southern Gateway Plaza.	High	Town

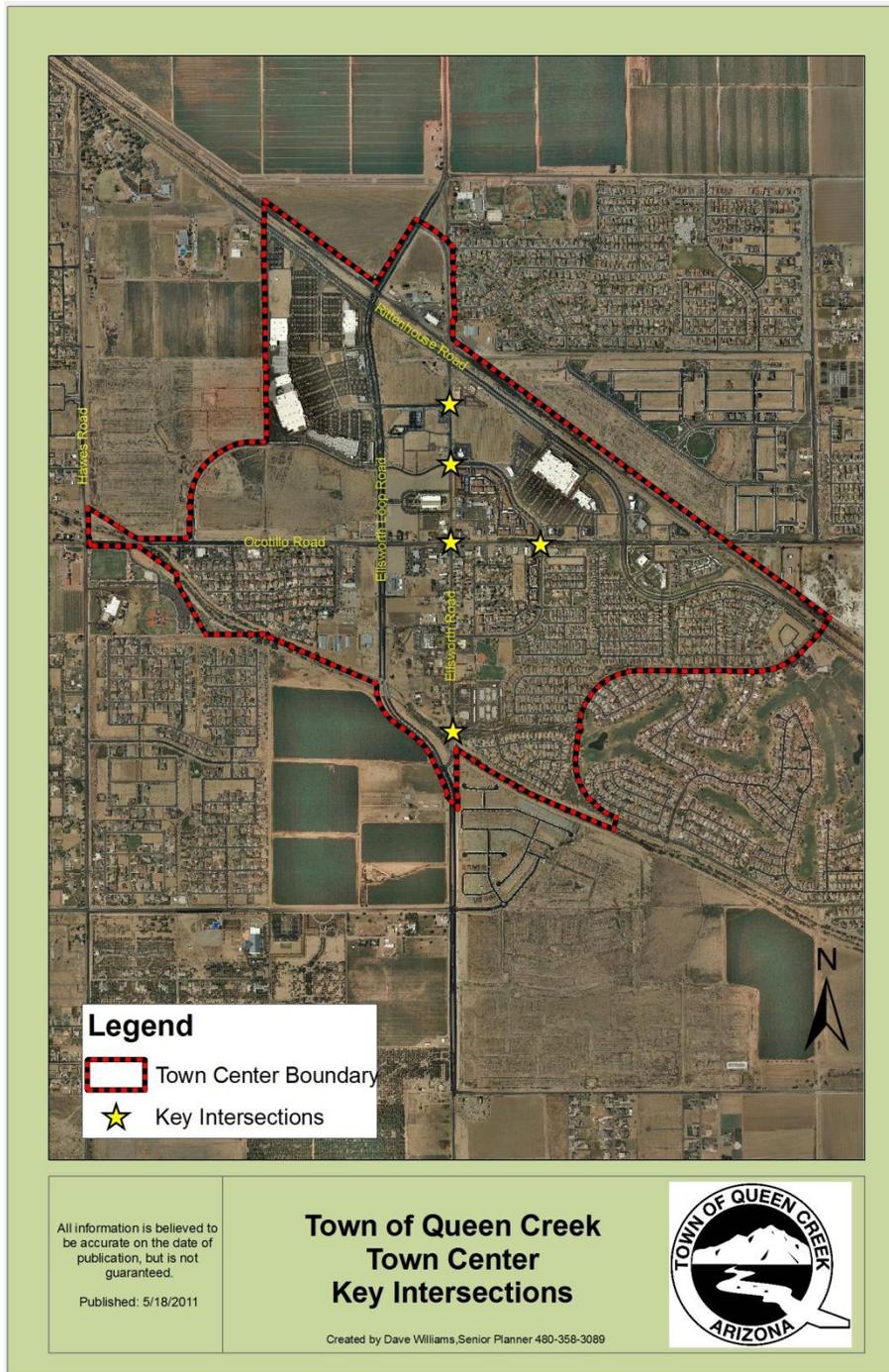
# Appendix A



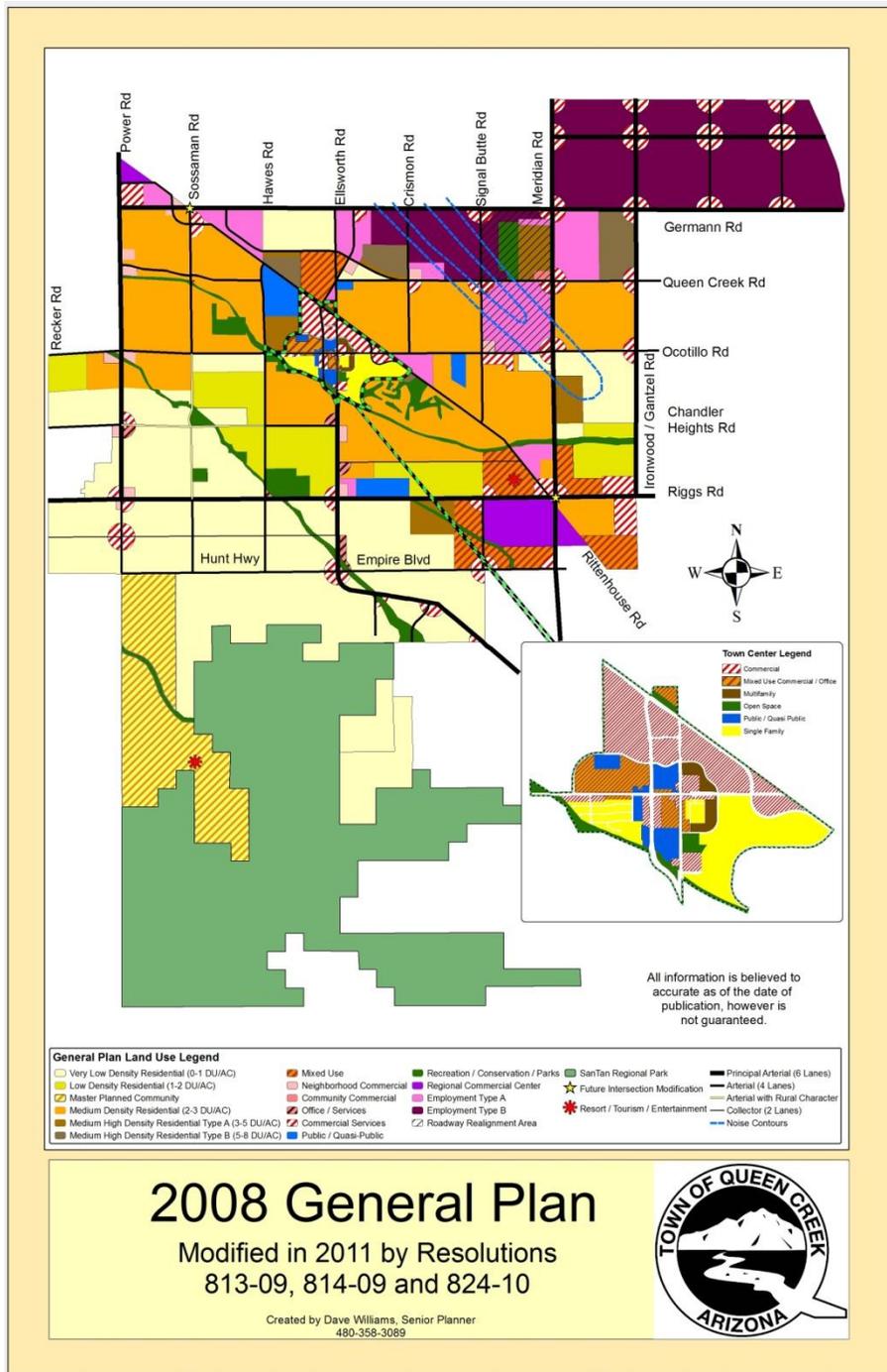
# Appendix B



# Appendix C



# Appendix D



# Appendix E



## **Town Center Street Design And Access Management Plan**

As recommended by the

**Transportation Advisory Committee**

February 5, 2009



# Town Center Street Design And Access Management Plan

## Background

The Town Center is a unique area of the town, in that it was the town for much of its history. Buildings have been developed on smaller parcels to meet the needs of individual property owners as typically found small rural community. Both Ellsworth and Ocotillo roads were two lanes, the road right-of-way was typical for a rural community, traffic volume was low and parking was generally located in front of the buildings.

With the growth of the town in recent years, however, many of the farm fields surrounding the Town Center have begun to develop, and with development has come additional traffic. Development of the Ellsworth Loop Road has helped reduce the ever increasing traffic on “old” Ellsworth Road, but traffic volume remains an issue on Ocotillo. Part of the additional traffic is generated within the community, but much of it also comes from Pinal County, since Ocotillo is the only east/west road that crosses the entire town.

One of the goals of the Town is to retain, and enhance where possible, the small town rural character of “old Queen Creek” and develop a vibrant Town Center. To this end the Town Council adopted the Queen Creek Town Center Plan in 2005, and has asked staff to update the plan during 2009. Since much of the character of the Town Center will be tied to the development of the streets, the Town Council seeks to establish a balance between developing a unique streetscape for the area – while still maintaining the capacity of the streets to serve both the local and through traffic. As part of that effort in 2007 the Town Council approved preparation of a Design Concept Report to evaluate and make recommendations on the future improvements to Ellsworth and Ocotillo roads in the Town Center. In 2008 the Town Council tasked the Transportation Advisory Committee with reviewing that report and providing them with a recommendation on where the changes proposed in that report may need to be adjusted to achieve the Council’s dual goals of facilitating local development while moving traffic safely through the area.

## Town Center Street Design and Character Policy Statements

- These design standard revisions are to be used by Town staff and the Town Council for evaluation and approval of all future projects which are proposed for construction in the Town Center.
- New street improvements in both Ocotillo and Ellsworth roads should incorporate landscaping, street furniture, distinctive design, lighting, decorative pavement and other amenities to reflect the unique character envisioned in the Town Center Plan.
- Ellsworth Road south of Ocotillo Road with its lower traffic volume, two lane character and lower speeds should be developed as a more “traditional” old town Main Street designed to reflect this character by allowing on street parking, a flush median and access to as many of the individual parcels as possible.
- Ocotillo Road with its greater traffic volume and width will need to be designed to accommodate greater through traffic, in addition to providing access to the adjacent properties.

- Development of the Town Center streetscape will be a long term project and will evolve over time as new properties are developed and existing properties are redeveloped. Portions of these planned improvements will also need to be constructed by the Town, and will need to be incorporated into the Town's capital improvement program to provide the needed funding.
- Additional right-of-way and/or roadway easements will be required over time to install the street improvements envisioned in the Town Center Plan. This additional right-of-way and/or roadway easements will be acquired over time in conjunction with new development in the area, or acquired by the Town from the existing owners at fair market value.
- Medians in developed areas with multiple owners on small parcels should be decorative flush pavement in areas of lesser traffic movement to accommodate property access.
- In areas with projected high volume traffic movements, particularly at left turn bays at busy intersections such as Ellsworth and Ocotillo roads, a raised left turn protection curb should be provided where needed to accommodate left turning traffic and reduce the potential safety hazard created by vehicles proposing to make a left turn through oncoming traffic in the opposite direction.
- Medians in newly developed areas with larger parcel sizes, longer street frontages and on-site traffic management should be raised and geared to focusing efficient use of the driveways approved by the Town Council as part of their development plan.
- All future raised medians should be landscaped to enhance the streetscape and incorporate the Town's street tree policy.
- The use of cross-access and joint access easements should be required where appropriate.
- Future design projects should consider accommodations for public transportation, including securing possible locations for future bus bays.
- As a result of changing circumstances and future land use considerations, these recommendations may need to be revisited to accommodate potential changes where appropriate to do so, while maintaining the intent and direction of this plan.

**CHANGES RECOMMENDED BY THE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
TO THE TOWN CENTER STREETS DESIGN CONCEPT REPORT  
(PREPARED BY DIBBLE ENGINEERING DATED FEBRUARY 2008)**

**Ellsworth Road Design**

**South of Ocotillo Road to the Ellsworth Loop Road (South Connector) – See Maps 1 & 2**

- The left turn bay at Ellsworth and Ocotillo roads to be shortened, and the left turn median to be flush.
- The median south of Ocotillo to be flush, except for the existing raised median between Sierra Park Boulevard and the Ellsworth Loop Road to remain.
- The entire flush median between Ocotillo Road and the Ellsworth Loop Road to have a decorative, but functional finish – i.e. textured pavement, pavers, bomanite, stamped concrete, etc. in keeping with the character of the area.
- The cost and feasibility of the Gateway Plaza (the "football") to be evaluated further prior to construction.

#### **North of Ocotillo Road to the Library – See Maps 1 & 2**

- The raised left turn bay curb at the intersection of Ocotillo and Ellsworth roads to remain, but with the median north of the left turn bay transition to be shortened sufficiently to allow left turn traffic from the library to stage in the median area.
- The median north of the left turn bay at Ocotillo Road to be flush all the way to Heritage Loop Road.
- The library driveway to Ellsworth Road to be redesigned to allow both right and left turn traffic movement.
- Parallel parking to be provided on the west side of Ellsworth Road in front of the existing businesses. In the space available it may be possible to provide 6 spaces, which could be increased to possibly 8 spaces, if access to the property to the north is provided from the library driveway rather than having an additional driveway on Ellsworth Road.
- The private property south of the library on Ellsworth Road to be given access to the library driveway, rather than requiring the construction of an additional driveway on Ellsworth, in order to both reduce the number of driveways on Ellsworth Road and provide space for additional parallel parking.

#### **Between the Library and Rittenhouse Road**

- No changes are proposed between the library and Rittenhouse Road.

#### **North of Rittenhouse Road to Ellsworth Loop Road (North Connector) – See Map 3**

- Ellsworth to transition to two lanes from Rittenhouse Road to Barnes Parkway and be designed to function primarily as a local access road.
- The proposed median will be flush, except for the raised left turn bay curb at the Ellsworth and Rittenhouse road intersection.
- Between Barnes Parkway and the Ellsworth Loop Road the proposed design would be modified to accommodate the transition from the two lane design south of Barnes to the proposed design north of Barnes.
- The required future right-of-way on the west side of Ellsworth Road to be reduced as a result of the revised street cross section.
- Stop signs to be added for both northbound and southbound traffic at Barnes Parkway, to make it an “all way stop” intersection.
- Future consideration should be given to construction of a roundabout at Barnes Parkway to further discourage through traffic, especially as the remaining vacant property in the area begins to develop, and to improve the appearance of the area as an entrance to the Town Center.
- The Barnes Parkway and Ellsworth Road intersection to be designed to accommodate future access to the vacant property on the west side of Ellsworth Road.
- The access to Ellsworth Road from the adjacent vacant properties to the west is to be coordinated to minimize the number of future driveways and to locate these driveways where the additional traffic will be least disruptive to the area.
- The property north of the curve on Ellsworth Road to have future access to the “Old Ellsworth Road cul-de-sac” due to limited access from this property to Ellsworth Loop Road.
- The signalized intersection at Ellsworth Road and Ellsworth Loop Road be designed to provide access to property on the west side of the Loop Road – i.e. Queen Creek Station.

## Ocotillo Road Design

### East of Ellsworth Road to Heritage Loop Road – See Maps 1 & 2

- The left turn bay raised curb and transition area at the Ellsworth Road intersection to be retained, but shortened to allow access to the property to the east of the intersection
- The median east of the left turn bay at Ellsworth Road to be flush as far as the left turn bay curb transition area at Heritage Loop Road.
- The left turn bay raised curb and transition area to be retained at Heritage Loop Road, but designed to allow full access to the eastern driveway of the First Baptist Church.

### West of Ellsworth Road to Ellsworth Loop Road – See Maps 1 & 2

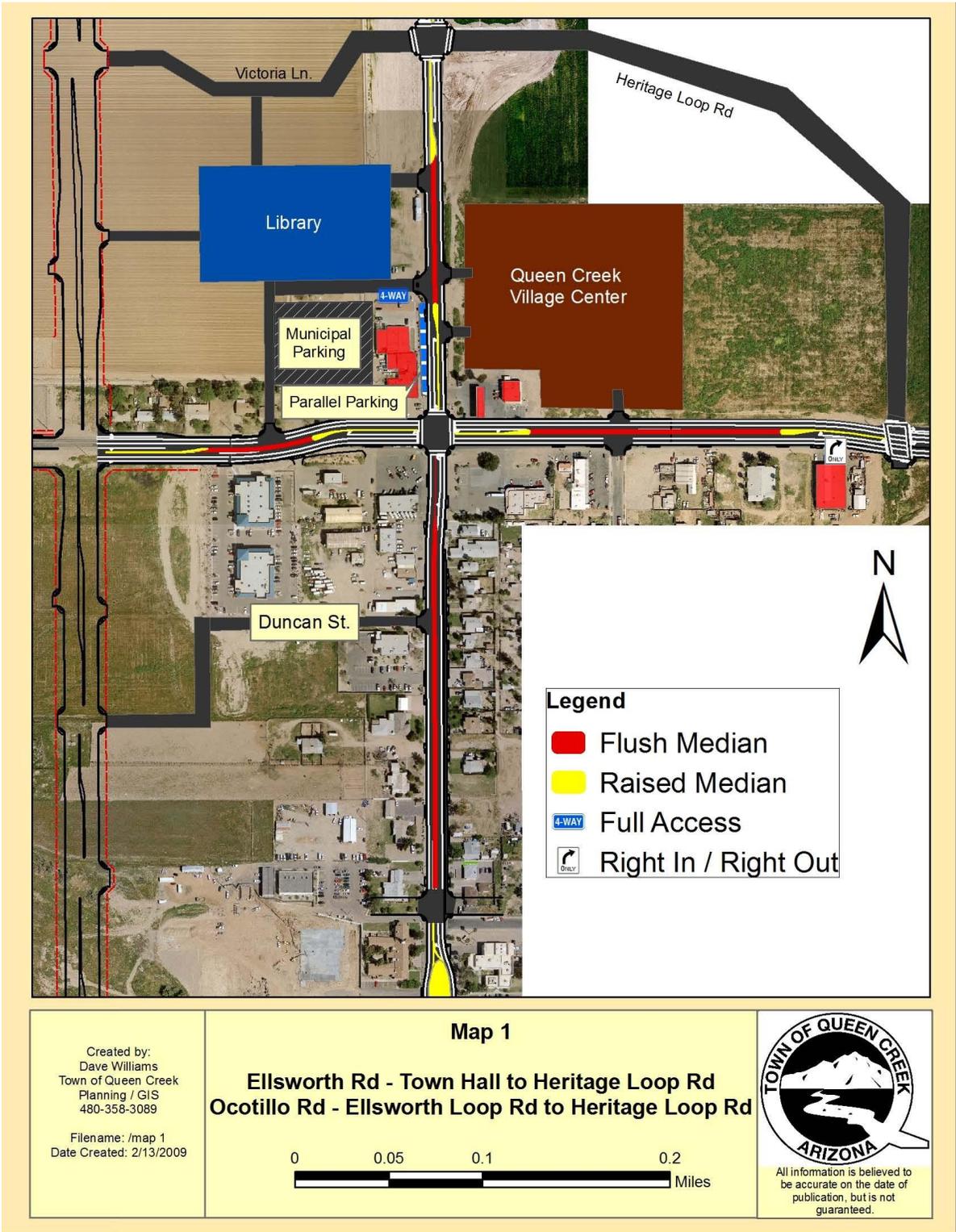
- Raised left turn bay curb and transition area at Ellsworth Road to be retained, but designed to allow full access to the western driveway of Canyon State Transmissions.
- Raised left turn bay curb and transition area at Ellsworth Loop Road to be retained, but the transition area redesigned to match the transition area at the Ellsworth Road intersection.
- The median area between the two turn bays at Ellsworth and Ellsworth Loop roads to be flush.

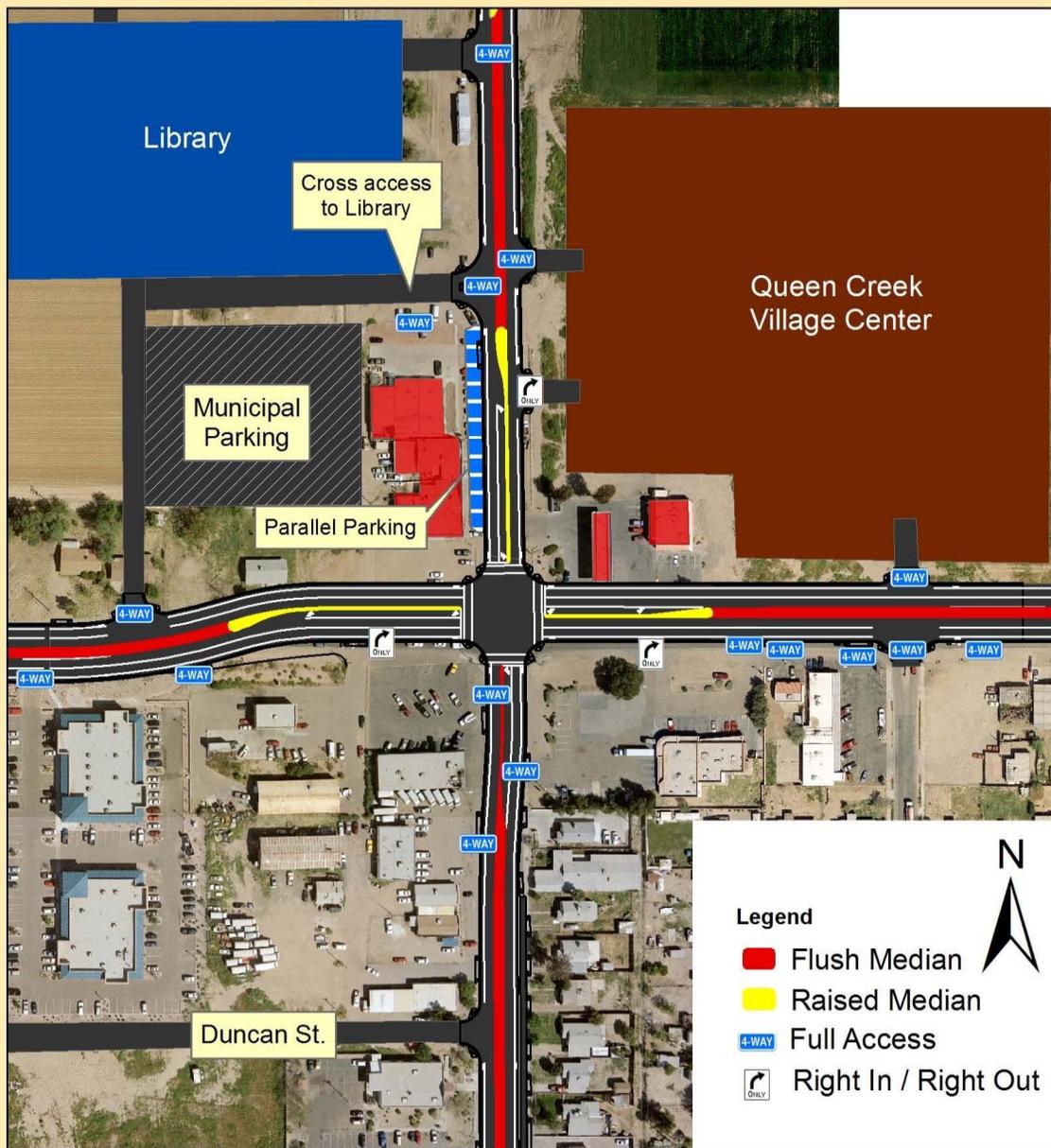
### West of the Ellsworth Loop Road to the Queen Creek Wash

- The raised median between the post office annex and 205<sup>th</sup> Place (referred to as “Segment #4”) to be removed and replaced with a flush median.
- All other existing raised medians to remain, but all other medians are to be flush.

## Revised Design Standard Implementation

- The raised median between the post office annex and 205<sup>th</sup> Place (referred to as “Segment #4”) should be removed and replaced with a flush median as soon as possible.
- These design standard revisions are to be used by Town staff and the Town Council for evaluation and approval of all future projects which are proposed for construction in the Town Center.
- The street improvements for projects previously approved by the Town Council in the area, including the library, the Queen Creek Village Shopping Center, the Town Center Apartments, the Broadstone/Cornerstone projects and others should proceed, provided they are modified, if needed, to be consistent with these revised design guidelines.
- As new projects come forward the appropriate roadway right of way or roadway easements will be required as needed to implement the plan.
- Roadway improvements may be undertaken as part of individual projects, or deferred at the discretion of the Town, until sufficient right of way has been acquired and adequate funding is available to improve an entire segment.
- These design guidelines should be reviewed periodically to reflect changes that have occurred since they were prepared which may affect their continued usefulness.





Created by:  
 Dave Williams  
 Town of Queen Creek  
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 480-358-3089

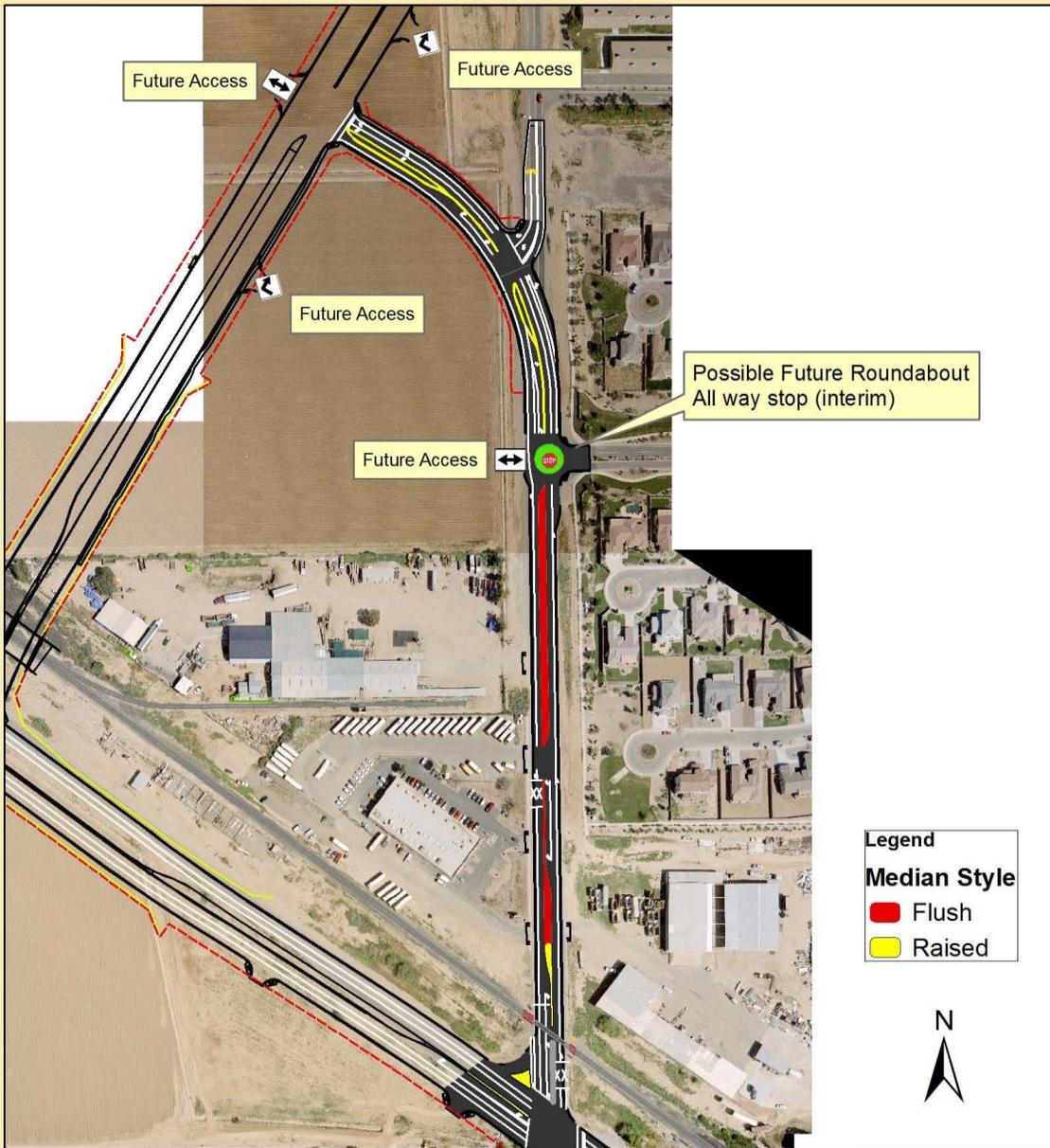
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**Map 2**  
**Ellsworth Rd / Ocotillo Road**  
**Detail**

0 125 250 500  
 Feet

TOWN OF QUEEN CREEK  
 ARIZONA

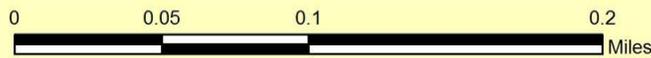
All information is believed to be accurate on the date of publication, but is not guaranteed.



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 Town of Queen Creek  
 Planning / GIS  
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Filename: /Map 3  
 Date Created: 2/13/2009

### Map 3 Ellsworth Rd Rittenhouse Road to Ellsworth Loop Rd North Connector



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