

TOWN OF
QUEEN CREEK
ARIZONA

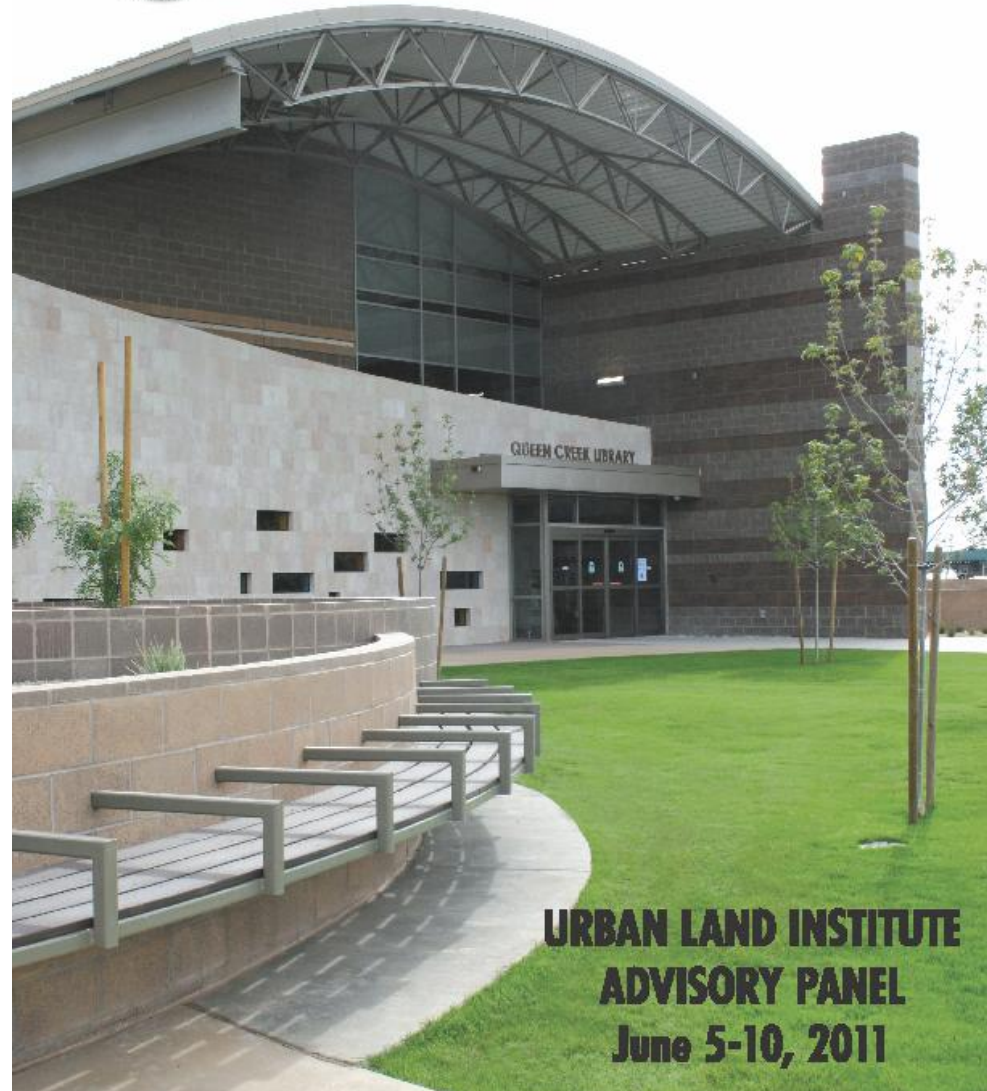
Discussion on ULI
Preliminary Findings and
Recommendations &
ASU Capstone Report
Recommendations

September 21, 2011





TOWN OF
QUEEN CREEK
ARIZONA



**URBAN LAND INSTITUTE
ADVISORY PANEL
June 5-10, 2011**



ULI Advisory Panel Key Points

- Presenting a **summary** of many of the major policy related issues identified in the ULI presentation on June 10 and in the first draft of the report
- First draft of the report has been reviewed and comments returned to ULI
- Town's comments have been reviewed with ULI staff
- Revised draft due the week of October 3
- The final ULI Advisory Services Panel Report will provide more detail and recommendations on many of these items.



Financial

- Overall the Town is well managed
- The Town is in relatively sound financial condition
- The Town's current reliance on sales taxes as a primary funding source is a weakness
- The Town should review its development fees to help ensure they remain competitive
- The Town should look for additional sources of revenue in areas such as:
 - Naming rights, enterprise funds, non-profits, grants, user fees, special districts, tax increase, special assessment, property tax, rental (or sale) of Town owned properties, incubator businesses, executive suites, etc.



Financial

- Sale/lease of the Town's 17 acres in the Town Center could generate revenues and attract new development to the area
- Consider re-prioritization of the CIP to focus on projects that enhance the Town's identity, support job creation and promote the Town Center
- Strategic annexations should be considered as a means of expanding the town's revenue base
- Continue to promote retail diversification, and customer attraction through marketing and economic development



Land Use

- Distribution of land use within the General Plan seems to implement the vision for the community
- Range of densities shown expresses the desire to have growth pay for itself
- It would be a mistake to rezone eastern, southern and western areas of Town for employment - focus on the area adjacent to the airport
- Retain the office/industrial development areas in the Gateway over flight noise contours
- Promote emerging medical service node at Combs/Gantzel



Land Use

■ Commercial

- Greater diversity in retail uses should be encouraged and promoted – particularly smaller facilities that provide local resident services
- Given the Town's reliance on sales taxes from Community and Regional Centers
 - The Town stands to benefit greatly from the regional population and should promote itself as regional destination
 - Larger centers require continued housing and population growth in their market area to be successful



Land Use

■ Employment

- The Town’s ability to draw office/warehouse and industrial uses is likely unrealistic in the near term, and effort should be limited in this area
- Lack of freeway access and infrastructure, and Mesa’s “shovel ready” properties all reduce the Town’s near-term potential to attract office/industrial job generating land uses to the “northern tier” properties near the airport
- Annexation and growth in Superstition Vistas is a long-term opportunity
- The best near-term opportunity is to promote additional retail and professional office employment and diversity in the Town Center
- Reinforce the medical concentration emerging in the southeast



Land Use

■ Residential

- Our large lots, family orientation and rural quality of life are strengths
- Our residential design standards are a strength
- Our open spaces, open fencing and mountain views, trails, etc. are strengths
- Encourage construction of production homes on dormant large lot subdivisions
- Consider “conservation planning” concepts



Transportation

- Continue to advocate for completion of SR24 and the north/south freeway
- Prepare for freeway access to SR24 on Ellsworth Road, as well as roads further east
- Consider another grade separated rail crossing
- Create distinctive intersections to serve as gateways to the Town and the Town Center
- The Town's present and planned trail system is a strength
 - Completion of the Queen Creek and Sonoqui trails should be a first priority
 - Connection of the trail system to San Tan Mountain Regional Park should be a second priority



Town Brand and Identity

- The General Plan Vision Statement is a positive
- Focus on developing a “Queen Creek sense of place”
- Enhance gateway sense of arrival to the Town
- Use agrarian and equestrian symbolism in public areas – gateways, art, signage, etc.
- Build on the identity created by the Horseshoe Park and Equestrian Center and the Town’s trail system as a regional attraction
- Promote existing cultural amenities like the Queen Creek Performing Arts Center to become a regional attraction



Town Brand and Identity

- Amplify the brand – promote “farm to table” food production, equestrian events, harvest festivals, farmer’s markets, etc.
- Agritourism/Agritainment focus an opportunity with Schnepf, Olive Mill, other farmers
- Promote temporary uses and activities to attract additional retail uses and restaurants
- Use special events and attractions and festivals to reinforce the brand and promote existing businesses
- A kitchen/restaurant incubator or a community kitchen/community garden might be options to promote the brand



Town Center

- The Panelists thought the ASU Capstone project was well done
- The Town Center should be promoted as a distinctive regional destination and economic development focus
- Diversification of the retail base to include unique restaurants, specialty stores, entertainment, etc. should be encouraged
- New retail and services anchors for the Town Center could include theaters, bowling, education, farmers markets, a hotel, community gardens



Town Center

- The Town should consider promoting festivals and civic events as a draw for the area, particularly in the area surrounding the library
- The synergy between the community and the library is a good first step, but additional public “attractions” are needed
- Additional multi-family housing and increased residential densities should be considered, both as stand-alone and mixed use projects
- The sale/lease of the Town’s 17 acres on Ellsworth Loop Road (as well as other Town properties) could help generate more interest in development in the Town Center. Public/private partnerships could also be considered



Town Center

- New developments should be at more of a “pedestrian scale” including smaller blocks, reduced parking, have buildings adjacent to the streets, more landscaping, shade and plaza areas, attractive pedestrian ways and a continuous axis connecting the various parcels
- Zoning requirements for setbacks, parking, etc. should be reconsidered
- Active commercial development should be focused north of Ocotillo, with the area south of Ocotillo to be focused on encouraging smaller scale projects and property conversions that will occur over time – an “old town” atmosphere



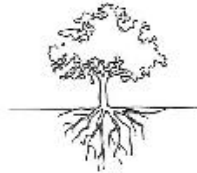
Queen Creek

“A Great Hometown”

- Differentiate the Town from other east valley cities
- Capitalize on residential opportunities from major new employers in Mesa and the airport, become the “community of choice”
- Develop a true Town Center
- Broaden our retail and entertainment options
- Enhance our gateways and the “sense of arrival”
- Promote festivals and seasonal events
- Promote our identity and brand



ASU Capstone Report



Town of Queen Creek
Town Center Development Plan
Spring 2011



ASU
SCHOOL OF
GEOGRAPHICAL SCIENCES
ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

Actions To Date

- May 4 - Council presentation
- June 8 – Presentation at joint Town Center Committee/Planning Commission meeting.
- Joint recommendation:
 - Town Council accept report and thank students
 - Direct staff to evaluate the report
 - Work with the Town Center committee to consider differences between the report and the Town Center Plan
 - Town Center Committee will consider individual amendments over the next 12 months
- June 15 - Council adopted recommendation



Development of an Entertainment District

- Provide entertainment related uses currently lacking in the Queen Creek/San Tan area
 - Specialty retail
 - Additional dining
 - Movie theater as an activity center anchor
 - Farmer's market
 - Bowling alley
 - Multi-use stage
- Promote a strong community identity for Queen Creek



Entertainment District

- Promote connection to Horseshoe Park and Equestrian Centre
- Promote special events at the library
- Design focus on pedestrian amenities and comfort by providing:
 - shade, attractive walkways, seating, plazas, lighting, landscaping, fountains, friendly corners, multiple points of access, clear linkages between buildings and uses, convenient (but de-emphasized) parking and careful building orientation



Development of a Multi-use and Office project

- Incorporate retail, offices and multifamily uses in a unified project
 - Increased daytime activity with office uses to support retail and provide business employment area
 - Focus on small scale retail uses with a local flavor, such as coffee shops, delis, art galleries and locally owned restaurants
 - Additional retail, restaurants and offices would attract a wider range of consumer options
 - Additional multi-family to complement what already exists to provide more housing options in town and provide a stronger resident base for the Town Center to support other uses within walking distance



Encouragement of Hospitality Uses

- Combination hotel and convention center
 - Provide an additional distinctive use
 - Boutique style 60 room hotel
 - Accommodate visitors to Horseshoe Park and Equestrian Centre
 - Best located near the library and Rio Salado communiversitry
 - Convention center would provide flex space for public and private events
 - Could be an element in a multi-use project with supporting offices, retail and multi-family uses
 - Include innovative features such as a sky walk to connect with adjacent uses



Heritage District Preservation

- Preserve and enhance the small town spirit of the area
 - Renovation of existing structures where possible
 - Adaptive reuses and expansions for renovated buildings
 - Emphasize the linkage to the Town's past
 - Pedestrian friendly, low traffic area
 - Focus on enhancing the uniqueness, character and spirit of the area



Heritage District Preservation

- Heritage Preservation design concepts:
 - Town Hall could provide design guidelines for the area
 - Use of period appropriate architecture such as southwestern or craftsman for new projects using appropriate materials, building design and design detailing to highlight design elements from the time
 - Development of multi-story, multi-use projects on vacant and underutilized properties where appropriate maintaining a historic theme
 - Widening the sidewalks for safety and comfort
 - Green streetscape



Heritage District Preservation

- Founders Park and public open space
 - Position Founder's park as a community gathering place for special events
 - Undertake the planned Ellsworth Road improvements
 - Completion of the Queen Creek Wash improvements to Ellsworth Road
 - Enhance pedestrian connectivity with surrounding residential and commercial uses to the north



Transit and Circulation

- Transit Center
 - Attract commuter rail service for the community to provide both transportation and economic benefits
 - Construct a transit center at Rittenhouse and Ellsworth roads to accommodate commuter rail service in the Town Center
 - Development of Transit Oriented Developments (TOD's) within walking distance of the transit center incorporating housing, retail services and restaurants and offices
 - Transit center could be linked to adjacent TOD's south of Rittenhouse Road through use of a sky bridge



Transit and Circulation

- Circulation
 - Development of a multi-modal transportation system including transit and bicycles
 - Interconnection of all activity areas, and adjacent residential areas with attractive multi-use paths (13'), bike lanes (6') and sidewalks.
 - Incorporate bicycle rental kiosks and storage facilities to promote non-motorized vehicle use
 - Development of a circulator bus system to connect the activity areas and adjacent residential areas to increase the attractiveness of the area as a destination, improve comfort for pedestrians and riders and reduce single-trip vehicle use.



Open Space

- Founders Park
 - Provide additional barbeque grills, trees and benches to complement the existing ramadas
 - Expand the existing playground area and provide shading
 - Include restrooms and a water fountain
 - Develop the proposed Multi-Generational Center
 - Provide a splash pad as a new amenity



Open Space

- Heritage District Pocket Parks
 - Develop small “pocket parks” at key locations along Ellsworth Road
 - Small scale pedestrian spaces with amenities for seating and passive activities
- Victoria Open Space
 - Gateway location to the Town Center from residential neighborhoods to west
 - Quarter mile loop for pedestrians and bikes
 - Dog park area
 - Sonoran desert plant demonstration garden



Open Space

- Community Garden
 - Establish a volunteer commission to operate a community garden
 - Locate the community garden on the east side of Founders Park
 - Tie to Town's agricultural heritage and Horseshoe Park and Equestrian Centre



Implementation

■ Priority I Uses

- Entertainment: Family Uses (movie theater/restaurants)
- Entertainment: Activity Uses (bowling center and restaurants)
- Entertainment: Multi-use (multifamily/commercial)
- Ellsworth Road improvements

■ Priority II Uses

- Entertainment: Hospitality and convention center
- Circulation: Neighborhood buses

■ Priority III Uses

- Heritage District (mixed-use)
- Multi-use path
- Open space/gateways



Overall Thoughts

- Overall we are moving in the right direction
 - No big surprises
- Many of the ideas suggested are things we are already considering
 - Public/private partnership on the 17 acres
 - Cooperative marketing with Horseshoe, Schnepf, Olive Mill and Barney Family Sports Complex
 - Green tape and incubators
- The weaknesses identified are not new
 - Lack of freeway access and transportation
 - Need for more and varied activities
 - Reliance on sales tax



Overall Thoughts

- Recommendations are consistent with the Town's current direction
 - Town Center emphasis
 - Branding/image
 - Agritourism
- Higher priority on developing the Town Center as a diverse, lively, "full service" regional draw
- No near term "silver bullet" to sales tax dilemma
- Impressed by the Town's assets and growth potential
- Agree Town has the potential to use its assets to differentiate ourselves from other communities in the East Valley



Questions?

- Is there interest in development of additional higher density apartments and condos in the Town Center?
- Should the Town actively pursue commuter rail/inter-city rail projects, which would include “transit oriented development” in the Town Center?
- How can we use the ULI and ASU studies to “Keep Queen Creek Unique” and make it a “Great Hometown”?



Next Steps

- Receive the final ULI Advisory Panel Report
 - Town's comments returned and discussed with ULI staff
 - Revised draft due week of October 3
- Council discussion on how best to proceed with the ULI recommendations
- Receive input from the Town Center Committee and Economic Development and Planning Commissions for both ULI and ASU reports
- Develop action steps to include in the Town's Corporate Strategic Plan, Administrative Work Plan and Capital Improvement Program



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Thank You

Questions?

