



SOUTH SPECIFIC AREA PLAN

Acknowledgements

The Town of Queen Creek would like to thank the Mayor and Town Council for their support of this project, and acknowledge their contribution to the effort of developing this specific area plan. It was with their direction, provided on February 19, 2014, that staff began the year-long process using a cross-departmental, collaborative approach to developing and executing this plan.

This inclusive, collaborative and interactive process has been successful due to the countless hours and effort provided by the property owners and their support teams. The public-private collaboration that brought individual property owners together with a common goal of strategically growing the community has made this project stand out above other similar efforts.

In addition to the efforts of the property owners, this project was supported by a strong and dynamic team of professional consultants who provided valuable experience in zoning law, planning practices, design character and visioning, economic development, financial forecasting and revenue generation, and project facilitation.

Town of Queen Creek's governance is comprised of several layers that advise and assist the Town Council in its capacity of guiding the community into the future. This includes the Planning Commission, Economic Development Committee, Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee and the Transportation Advisory Committee. Each advisory body provided guidance and support to this project by directing staff in their area of influence to ensure that the completed work maintains existing policies while also incorporating current and future goals for the healthy growth of the community.

In 2018, the Town of Queen Creek will complete the process of updating the Town's General Plan. The current General Plan, adopted in 2008, is required to be analyzed and updated every 10 years in compliance with

§ARS 9-461.06. That process involves a much more complex effort of public outreach, resident participation, committee and commission involvement, and Town Council direction. The 2018 General Plan update will look to the next 10 years to lay out a course for growth, while also looking further into the future to offer a vision of the Town using long range and corporate strategic planning goals that identify how we will evolve over time.

This specific area plan project acknowledges an immediate need to modify the General Plan to meet current needs and trends in development, and in the community. It provides an opportunity to use the framework established by previous councils and build an even stronger pattern of development. This project also paves the way for a successful General Plan update process by offering a more in depth and detailed analysis of this area of Town, to shape and direct it's future, separate from the entirety of the General Plan process.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this South Specific Area Plan (SSAP) is to comprehensively address today's challenges faced by both the Town and Property Owners within the study area. Current challenges have introduced uncertainty as well as disconnect between shared goals and our shared vision for prosperity and success. It is our hope that this plan provides a basis for managing responsible future investments in this area, proactively building a vibrant, sustainable community, with benefits for all.

Each element in this plan works to support the other, and does not stand alone. This is demonstrated by looking at how a road alignment (Transportation Element) can positively or negatively impact existing businesses (Economic Development Element) while also facilitating trails and land use near a commuter rail line (Open Space and Land Use Element). The plan's opportunities for new neighborhoods are supported by incorporating design requirements (Design Element) and the Town's ability to service those new residents (Financial Analysis Element).

As with the daily operations of the Town's municipal services, the quality of life for residents improves when the various goals outlined in this plan are working in harmony, and towards a unified purpose.

This SSAP should establish reasonable opportunities for investment in the short, medium, and longer term. These stages of growth should build a community with improved quality of life for all. It has been built on a foundation of experience with growth in our region and Town, incorporating lessons learned by both the public and private sectors. This plan considers reasonable adaptability within both residential and commercial sectors as the Town and our regional economy matures.

This SSAP covers undeveloped, unplanned land in the southeast region of town as well as existing agritainment uses with the potential for vibrant future growth, and attempts to provide a marriage of current potential and opportunities that exist to help Queen Creek approach "build-out" in a responsible and sustainable way.

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Council Member Robin Benning
Council Member Jeff Brown
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ESI Corporation

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Iplan Consulting
Landmark Companies
Westcor/Queen Creek, LLC (Macerich)

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Chapter 1 Background

BACKGROUND

Purpose of this Chapter

This chapter is intended to provide relevant context to help explain why this South Specific Area Plan (SSAP) has been proposed and what impact this plan can have for the Town as a policy document and reference for operational decision making.

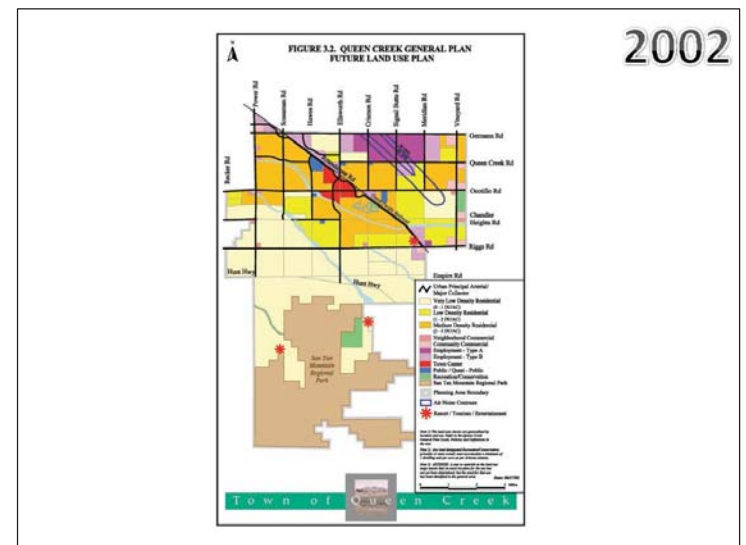
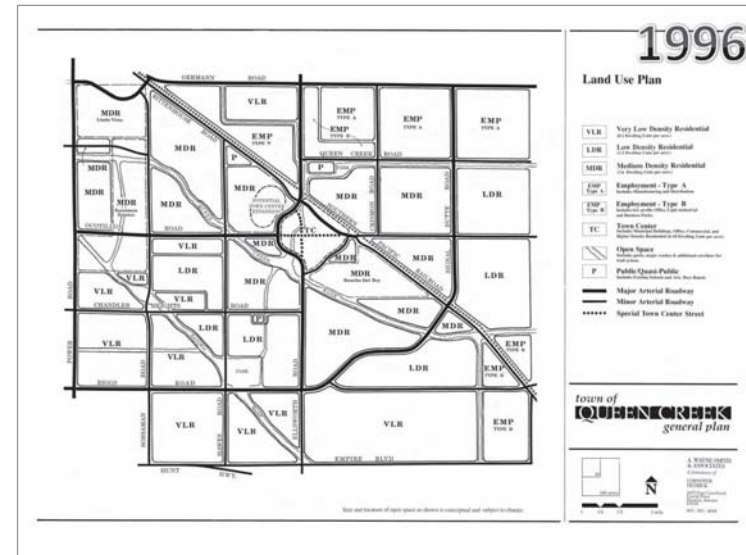
EVOLUTION OF THE GENERAL PLAN

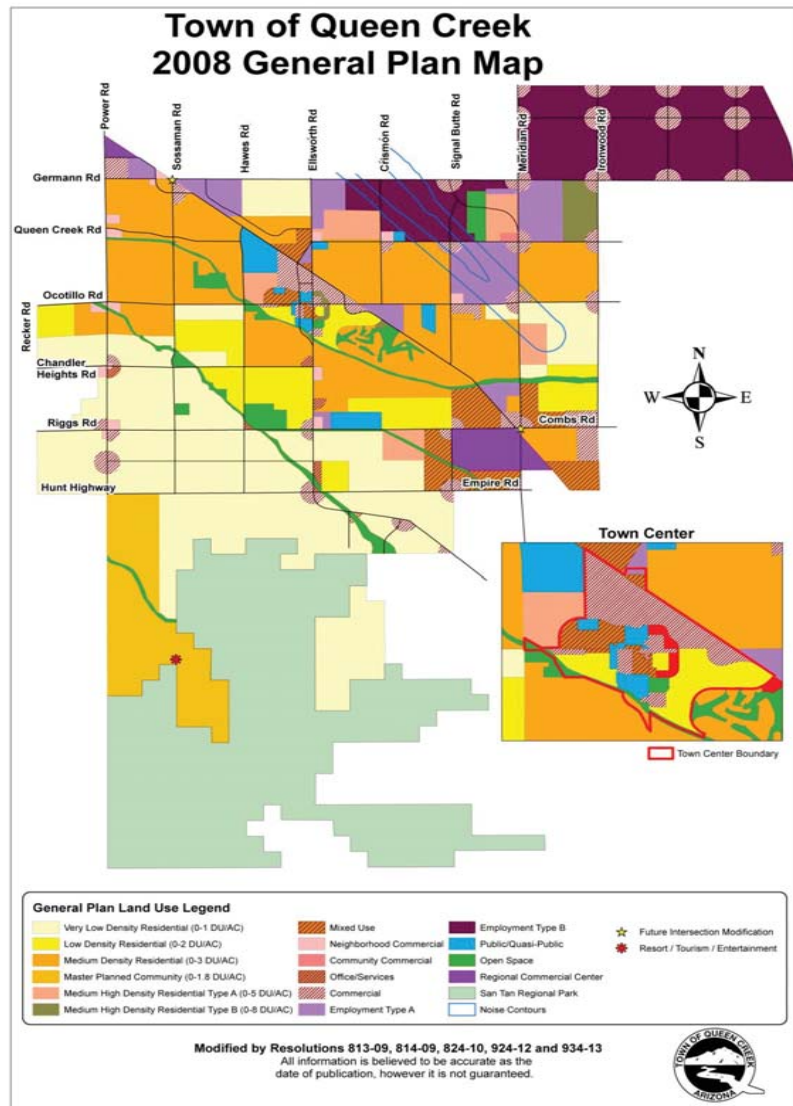
Located in the southeastern corner of Maricopa County, the Town of Queen Creek enjoys a unique agricultural and rural character in the State's most populous county. While only incorporating in 1989, the Town's character began developing before Arizona statehood.

Today, the Town prioritizes preserving this uniqueness and enhancing the character while planning for the use of remaining agricultural lands and managing continued growth.

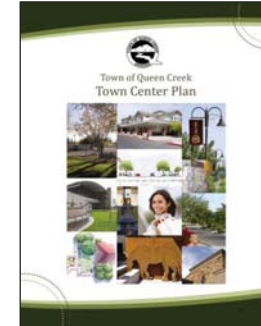
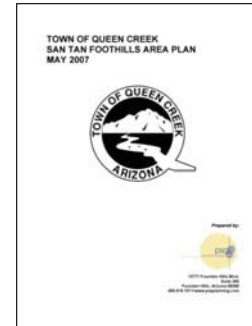
Since its incorporation, the Town of Queen Creek has taken steps to meet development pressures, manage growth, and fulfill its community vision.

The Town has adopted several plans and strategies designed to guide future growth. The Queen Creek General Plan, adopted in 1996, updated in 2002 and later updated in 2008, serves as the long-range policy framework and Town's road map guiding development, appropriately managing the growth, and effectively conserving the Town's natural resources.





The last update in 2008 included the policy framework provided in the Town Center Area Plan; the Town Center Redevelopment Plan; the San Tan Foothills Specific Area Plan, and development direction for the Town Center and San Tan Foothills. The Town's Parks, Trails and Open Space Master Plan was also included as a component of the 2008 General Plan.



With the origin of the Queen Creek General Plan, and in subsequent updates, deliberate thought was given toward defining the character of the Town. Twenty-five years later, Queen Creek is known as a community with a high regard for quality and character in the built environment.

As with other outer-ring suburbs of Phoenix, Queen Creek has seen residential neighborhoods lead the establishment of retail and job centers in the community. Road and public open spaces are continuing to grow to keep up with the needs for current and new residents from both the public and private sectors.

Following the "great recession" that slowed growth in Queen Creek from 2007-2011, building activity has returned. The Town is well positioned to advantage itself of the opportunity to return to planning and managing growth as the last remaining large tracts of underdeveloped lands in the community transition to neighborhoods, retail and job centers.

Focusing planning efforts on local as well as larger regional needs as Queen Creek approaches "planning-out" the Town helps to ensure the best use of available Town resources to improve the quality of life for all.

WHY THIS SOUTH SPECIFIC AREA PLAN?

This SSAP was conceived as a result of the Town receiving multiple requests for Major General Plan Amendments in 2013, falling into two general categories:

1. Increased density for lands with Residential zoning entitlements
2. Conversion of lands from Commercial and Industrial use to Residential use

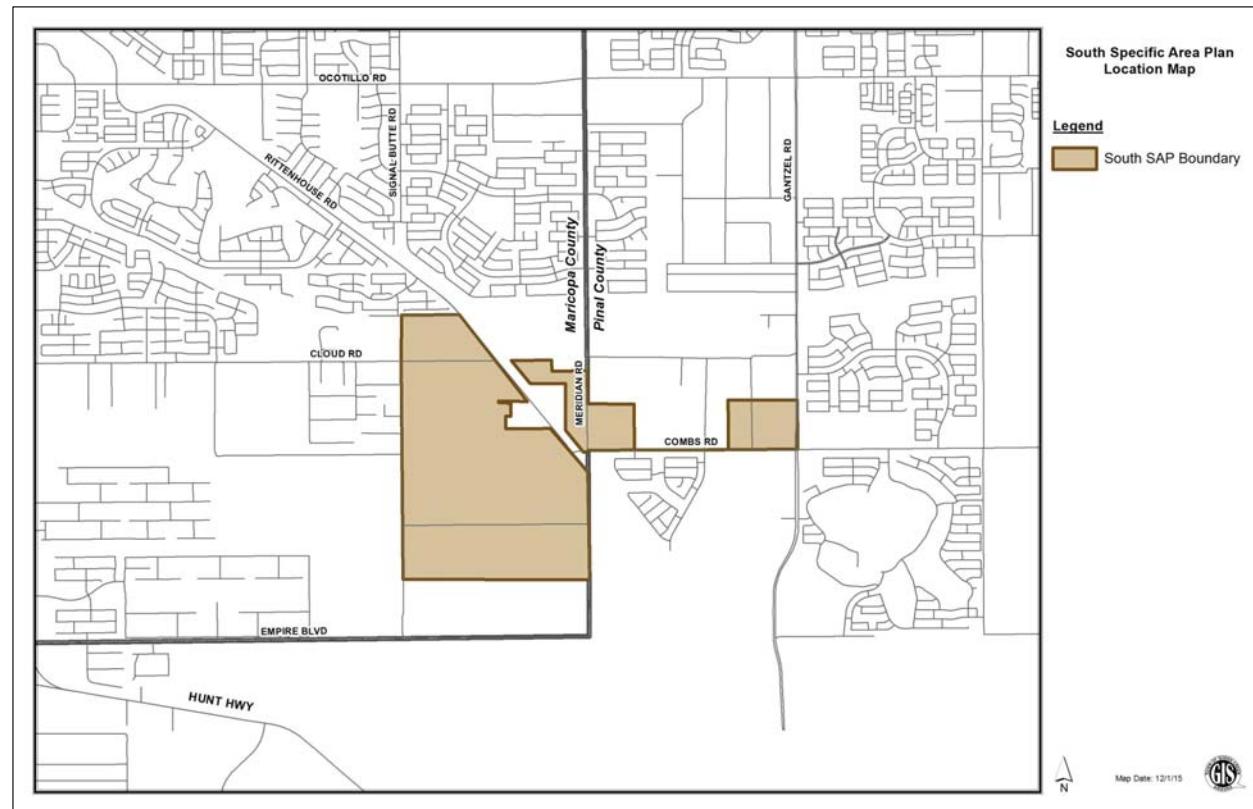
The diversity of requests in size and geographic location across the Town raised some key questions when viewed together:

- Why is there a consistent push to entitle more homes outside what the current general plan allows?
- Why are there no applications to develop industrial properties in the Town at this point in time?

Economic analysis done by the Town on those applications pointed to another important question for the Town's future:

- Are the amounts and types of land uses in appropriate balance for the Town's future growth towards build-out?

This table shows the Town was petitioned for 7.7 square miles of General Plan changes, or about 27% of the Town's land area indicating that during and after the recessionary period, there is a desire for continued investment that does not mirror the expectations as expressed in the 2008 plan.

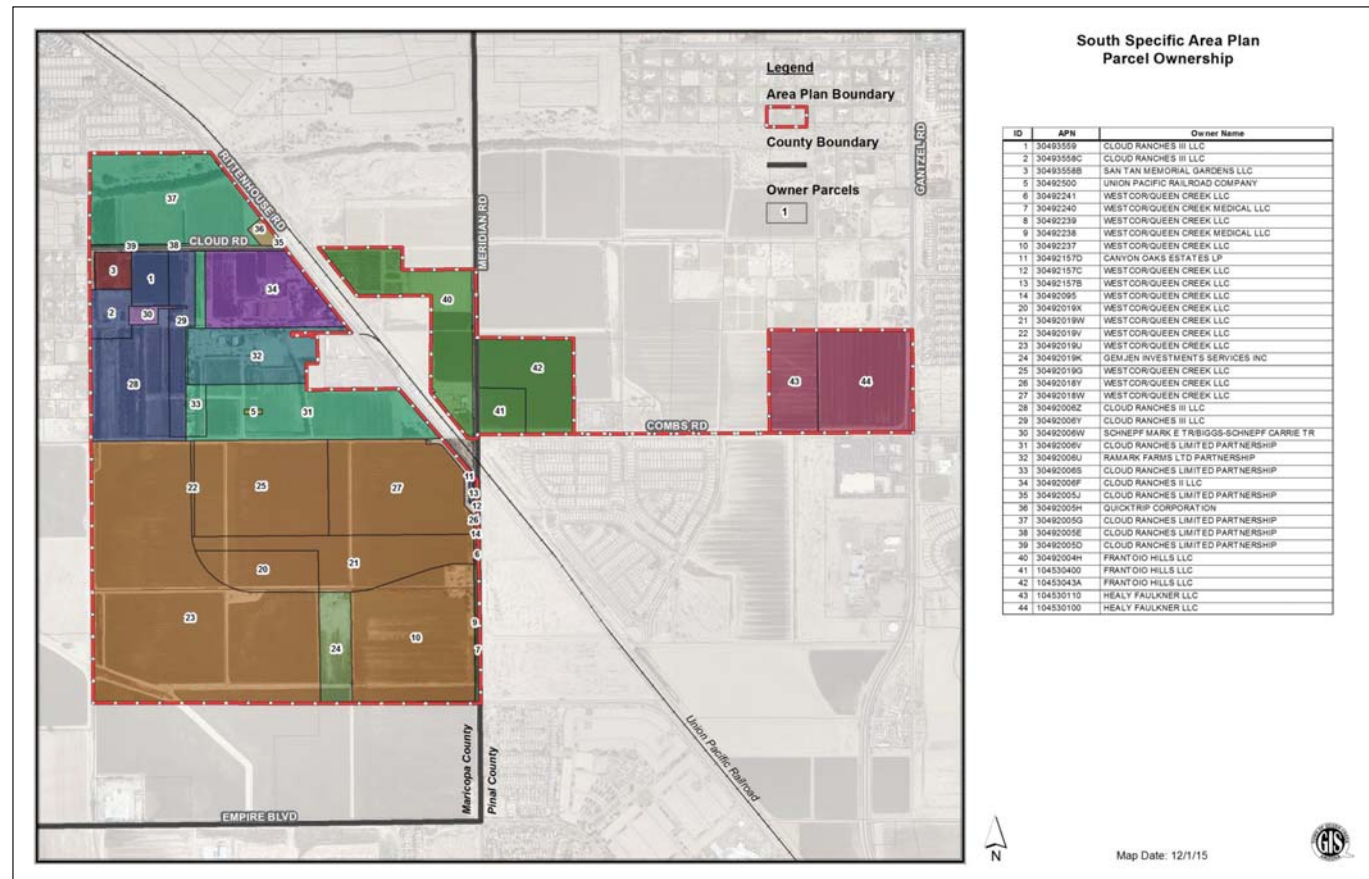


	Minor	Major	# of Acres
2008		3	421
2009	1	2	263
2010		1	770
2012		5	2,275
2013		6	1,165
2014	2		29

In early 2014, staff and the property owners determined that the specific area plan approach to development offered the best opportunity to ensure the proper development of the area. In February 2014, Town Council members approved the idea and authorized staff to begin the process to establish a specific area plan for this area.

The two main benefits of incorporating all the elements for the Town's North and South Specific Area plans are:

1. A cross-departmental approach is required to ensure work plans within Development Services, Utilities, Economic Development, and Finance are brought to the table during the development of these plans. There will be a higher level of coordination and less conflict with regard to planning and executing development for these areas of the Town in the future.
2. Much of the work that is already happening across Town department lines will receive more concentrated focus, improved documentation, and an accelerated approach to completion.



This Southeast Quadrant of the Town had been most recently planned before the “great recession” during a period of robust growth and unabated investment. This specific area had plans for a large amount of “mixed-use” zoning in addition to a regional retail center and hospital facility.

Since then, the proliferation of community health centers and changes to healthcare delivery models has diminished demand for a second large hospital facility at this location. The Banner Ironwood Medical center is a mile away with enough vacant land for continued expansion, also reducing the likelihood that this area will see a new hospital facility in the years ahead.

Also, the attractiveness of this site for a regional mall has abated as retail growth responds to changes in consumer habits and preferences. The growth of online shopping has reduced new mall construction, and planned regional retail centers in the Phoenix region are now exclusively located along established freeways. Furthermore, the continued build-out of Town Center retail centers at Queen Creek Marketplace, Fiesta Center, and the newer Queen Creek District would not be advantaged in the near, medium, or longer-term by another regional center 3 1/2 miles away. While the Town should maximize its potential retail growth, this effort should focus on where that growth can thrive and be sustained. In the short and medium term, areas where the Town has already made capital investment in streets and utilities are seeing responding private retail investment.

One trend that supports continued retail and commercial investment in this area is the growth of the farm-to-table and locally sourced food movements. This area offers an authentic, distinct, and very relevant set

of properties, operations, and assets that can build on the agritainment brand of Queen Creek without directly competing with the retail offerings at the Town Center.

ATTRIBUTES OF THIS PLAN

The purpose of this SSAP is to improve the tools for managing growth towards the stated and desired outcomes for the Town. These include job growth, compatible land uses, transportation and land use planning that increases the quality of life for residents; design of buildings and open spaces that reflects the community; and the long-term financial viability of Queen Creek.

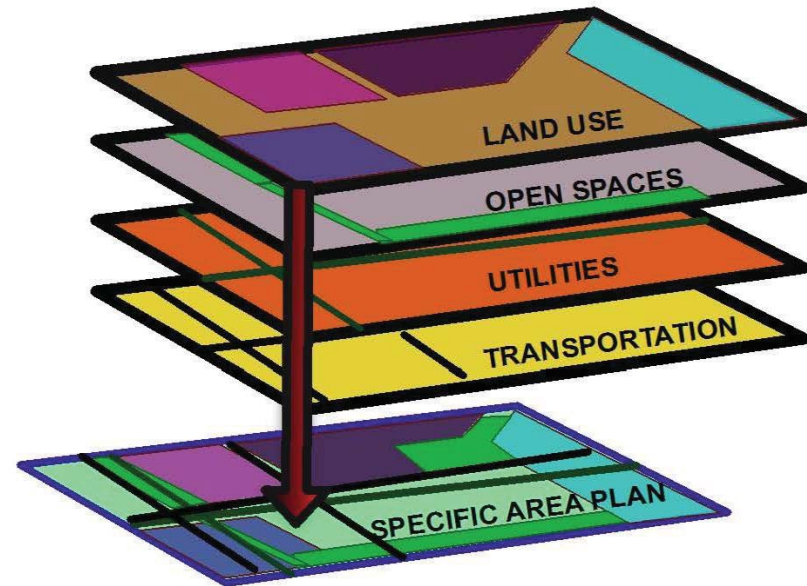
The SSAP is designed to meet the goals and policies of the General Plan, providing for a more balanced land use framework for future development. This SSAP provides a coordinated development program for residential, commercial, employment, open space and retail uses to guide future public and private development.

It should help to preserve and protect agritainment uses in the southeast quadrant of Queen Creek.

All the features of this SSAP are consistent with the goals and policies set forth in the Town's General Plan, which establishes a vision for the entire Town. This Specific Area Plan explicitly denotes a mix of land uses for the area, based on Town wide zoning designations. Any issue not covered in this plan shall be subject to the applicable standards of the Town of Queen Creek Zoning Ordinance, Town Code, Town of Queen Creek General Plan, Town of Queen Creek Subdivision Ordinance and Architectural Design Standards for the Town of Queen Creek.

The Goals included at the end of each section of this document are intended to provide guidance to the public and Town officials while considering future development in the SSAP area.

Implementation of this plan will be achieved through detailed development standards, design guidelines, and land use regulations established for in future applications within this SSAP.





HOW THIS DOCUMENT IS USED

These properties are proposed in this SSAP to help adjust to the emergence of hospital and regional retail mall uses around the Town boundaries, and to establish a more balanced land use portfolio that considers both housing and future employment, and the ratio of each. **Chapter 2: Economic Development Analysis.**

This SSAP contains the authentic agritainment and surrounding properties in the southeast quadrant of Town that will see future re-investment, or that have yet to be specifically planned for projects. Preserving the Town's uniqueness and enhancing authentic character while this growth occurs has been a topic of consideration by all the contributors to this plan. Overall design philosophies that serve to support the Character and Vision are included. **Chapter 3: Character and Design Standards.**

This area is geographically at a connection point between San Tan Valley residents and their transportation options to job centers in the Valley of the Sun. Ideally located to serve as a major gateway into the Town, the planning and provision of sensible options for both destination and commuter traffic are important here. Area freeway growth should guide long-term investments for this part of the region, however short and mid-term transportation needs should be adequately addressed in this high-growth area. **Chapter 4: Transportation.**

The capacity for the SSAP to provide adequate sewer, water and telecommunication services now and in the future has impacts on road planning and patterns of future development. **Chapter 5: Infrastructure.**

Within the SSAP, the Town has facilitated neighborhood growth over the last decade that may generate the need for an additional planned community park. The existing system of wash trails may be further connected to develop an 11-mile loop of multi-use trails linking this SAP with other key nodes and centers of major investment in Town. These include the Town Center; Horseshoe Equestrian Park; existing and planned parks; and eventually the San Tan Regional Park. Such an 11-mile loop wholly in the Town can help elevate the program of public events and tourism economy in addition to increasing the quality of life for all. **Chapter 6: Open Space.**

The SSAP encompasses approximately 852 acres and is surrounded by various land use types. Agricultural tracts of land that will see future investment in both Maricopa and Pinal County surround this SAP. This area has the potential to be a gateway into Queen Creek and a point of community pride connecting multi-modal transportation options to open spaces, unique entertainment, historical, and farm-to-table experiences for the region. **Chapter 7: Land Use.**

In conjunction with a revised Land Use program and considerations for how this area becomes a point of vibrancy and community pride, there are also considerations for the Town's current and future economic sustainability. Without current, near-term, and long term opportunities for this area to balance new revenue sources with demands for services, the prospect for this plan to be actualized diminish. An examination of the potential revenues and costs over time in this area rounds out this plan. **Chapter 8: Economic Considerations.**

Chapter 2 Economic Development Analysis

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS

PURPOSE OF THIS CHAPTER

This chapter serves to frame the identified goal and policy needs that should be addressed to further the goals of this SSAP.

Major needs identified in the development of this chapter include:

- **The amount of acres identified in the current General Plan for regional commercial and employment.**
- **Market conditions, timing and protection of the Town's agritainment destinations.**

Over the years, different visions have been presented for a large part of the SSAP project area. Land uses have changed from Very Low Density Residential to Commercial/Services and Employment, and most recently Regional Community Commercial (RCC). Regional Commercial Center promotes land uses at a larger scale and greater intensity than found in other commercial and employment areas within the Town, and may include regional malls, auto malls, medical campuses and similar uses.

The current General Plan Land Use Designations were based on multiple variables including existing and projected demographics, jobs, regional retail business models, existing and planned commercial within the trade zone, and availability of infrastructure and capital. This project area was envisioned to provide for a regional trade area and would have included retail, services, entertainment, employment, higher density residential components, as well as institutional uses such as a regional hospital.

Although the Town and the current property owners shared a vision for this property as a regional commercial center, a series of influences, that when combined, have rendered this geographic location unrealistic for regional commercial. Below is a summary of the findings:

- **Infrastructure:** The lack of a regional transportation network, such as a freeway, renders these properties as unsustainable for RCC development.
- **Economics:** A shift in purchasing trends towards discount retail type uses and on-line purchases, have significantly and negatively impacted the ability for regional commercial developers to adequately fund and build sustainable projects at a regional scale.
- **Population Growth Patterns:** While population growth in this area slowed over the last few years, growth is again increasing for the trade area; however, the residential densities of these growth patterns cannot financially sustain the previously envisioned regional use at this location.
- **Trends in Healthcare:** Development of a regional hospital (Banner Ironwood Medical Center) within one mile of the project area has discouraged development of the previously anticipated regional hospital within the RCC designation. Trends in new health centers and outpatient surgery centers have also decreased the need for full-service general hospitals.
- **Commercial Development:** The successful growth of retail uses around the Ironwood and Combs intersection in Pinal County, future commercial planned for the northwest corner of Ironwood and Combs, and development that has occurred in Queen Creek's Town Center are a significant benefit for the community. The addition of regional commercial uses at the RCC site might have a detrimental effect on the long-term vitality and sustainability of the Town Center due to its relatively close geographic proximity and competition for market share.

SSAP land use changes

Under the current General Plan within the SSAP, there are 117 incorporated acres designated RCC, for the purpose of developing a major regional mall. There were also 46 incorporated acres designated for Employment uses. Under the SSAP, the 117 acres would become Medium Density Residential (0-3 DU/AC), with a maximum of three dwelling units per acre. Assuming the maximum currently permitted density, an additional 351 single-family residential homes may be permitted. The 46 Employment acres converting to Medium Density Residential under the SSAP means that an additional 138 single family residential homes could be constructed, bringing the total new permitted homes permitted in the RCC designation to 489.

To support the questions addressed in both area plans, the Town commissioned TischlerBise *Market Demand and Absorption Analysis* and the *Employment Land Use Demand Analysis* by ESI Corporation. These analyses provide updated perspectives on critical topics regarding realistic absorption of various land use types for the Town over the long term.



The TischlerBise and ESI studies confirm that the number of acres likely to be absorbed for retail town-wide is 105 and 240 respectively, assuming a mid floor area ratio (FAR).

Commercial Uses: New Land For Entire Incorporated area (in acres)¹

	Per Current QC General Plan	Per Proposed North and South area plans	TischlerBise: Maximum acres absorbed by 2053	ESI: Maximum acres absorbed by 2050
<i>Retail</i>	1,506	879	157	240
<i>Industrial</i>	1,942	1,447	546	345
<i>Office</i>	311	243	161	337
<i>Agritainment²</i>	0	242	0	0
Total	3,759	2,811	864	922

¹The Current General Plan includes 60% of total Mixed Use acres (502 of 837 total acres). Since total Mixed Use is reduced by 227 acres in the SAP, this impacts retail acres in the SAP significantly. Office figures also include 30% of Mixed Use acres in both of the Current General Plan and SAP columns. In the fourth column, ESI findings, the office figure includes medical office, hospital and related uses as well.

²Agritainment use is located in the South Specific Area Plan which is a companion document to the North Specific Area Plan and is being processed separately. It is shown here to identify the total acreage anticipated to be included in this category.

Summary of Findings:

- Column 1, (blue): Summary of the Incorporated Town Limits, per the Current General Plan.
- Column 2, (orange): Summary of Incorporated Town limits, with North and South Specific Area Plans adopted.
- Column 3, (green): TischlerBise recommended land use mix.
- Column 4, (yellow): ESI recommended land use mix.

The proposed land use changes in the SSAP reflect a significant number of new residential lots where regional commercial, including a shopping mall, hospital and a mixture of residential densities was originally planned. The proposed land use changes which reduce retail uses are appropriate, based on the studies, considering the existing and anticipated retail development in the Town Center and future commercial development anticipated for the northwest corner of Ironwood and Combs Roads.

As the 2013 Applied Economics "Fiscal Balance Report" report commissioned by the Maricopa Association of Governments details, the fiscal impacts from residential development are namely a function of the tax structure of cities in Arizona. Queen Creek had the highest revenue to expenditure ratio of the Phoenix metropolitan area cities, and was one of only two cities that showed a non-negative impact for residential development.

This further supports a reduction in major commercial land uses for the medium density residential land uses proposed in the SSAP.

Fiscal Balance Report, October 2013.

This report was prepared by Applied Economics for Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG). A summary of the report is best described in the table shown here.

Notable information includes: **Section 4.8.1 Industrial Development.** This section outlines that, "Industrial development generates a moderate positive fiscal impact for most cities. For Queen Creek that has a relatively high local property tax rate, the ratio of revenues to expenditures for industrial development ranges from 1.63 to 2.55 indicating a strong positive impact." **Section 4.8.2 Office Development.** This section outlines that office development creates a positive impact for most cities, with the ratio of revenues to expenditures ranging from 0.68 to 2.53. The greatest positive impacts are in cities with both high sales tax and property tax rates which include Queen Creek. The report outlined that retail development has the greatest positive impact and highest revenue to expenditure ratio at 15.09 for Queen Creek.

FIGURE 4-6
NET IMPACTS PER ACRE OF DEVELOPMENT BY CITY AND LAND USE TYPE
AND REVENUE TO EXPENDITURE RATIOS

		Industrial	Office	Retail
Phoenix	Revenues	\$2,665	\$15,347	\$38,154
	Expenditures	\$2,761	\$13,803	\$3,681
		0.97	1.11	10.37
Mesa	Revenues	\$1,967	\$9,880	\$33,107
	Expenditures	\$2,920	\$14,602	\$3,894
		0.67	0.68	8.50
Glendale	Revenues	\$3,660	\$17,013	\$54,921
	Expenditures	\$2,920	\$14,602	\$3,894
		1.25	1.17	14.10
Scottsdale	Revenues	\$2,617	\$14,204	\$31,838
	Expenditures	\$2,920	\$14,602	\$3,894
		0.90	0.97	8.18
Chandler	Revenues	\$2,574	\$11,691	\$29,237
	Expenditures	\$2,937	\$14,685	\$3,916
		0.88	0.80	7.47
Tempe	Revenues	\$4,417	\$21,610	\$40,498
	Expenditures	\$2,881	\$14,407	\$3,842
		1.53	1.50	10.54
Gilbert	Revenues	\$2,016	\$10,116	\$28,817
	Expenditures	\$2,920	\$14,602	\$3,894
		0.69	0.69	7.40
Peoria	Revenues	\$3,270	\$16,131	\$35,320
	Expenditures	\$2,881	\$14,407	\$3,842
		1.14	1.12	9.19
Avondale	Revenues	\$3,470	\$20,664	\$48,778
	Expenditures	\$2,541	\$12,707	\$3,389
		1.37	1.63	14.39
Surprise	Revenues	\$4,637	\$22,582	\$43,850
	Expenditures	\$2,881	\$14,407	\$3,842
		1.61	1.57	11.41
Goodyear	Revenues	\$3,744	\$22,738	\$48,907
	Expenditures	\$2,941	\$12,707	\$3,389
		1.27	1.79	14.43
Fountain Hills	Revenues	\$3,815	\$18,741	\$50,896
	Expenditures	\$2,205	\$11,026	\$2,940
		1.73	1.70	17.31
Paradise Valley	Revenues	\$3,385	\$16,368	\$49,272
	Expenditures	\$4,752	\$23,758	\$6,336
		0.71	0.69	7.78
El Mirage	Revenues	\$5,878	\$29,131	\$58,803
	Expenditures	\$2,303	\$11,514	\$3,070
		2.55	2.53	19.15
Buckeye	Revenues	\$4,138	\$28,894	\$58,175
	Expenditures	\$2,541	\$12,707	\$3,389
		1.63	2.27	17.17
Guadalupe	Revenues	\$4,162	\$22,675	\$75,835
	Expenditures	\$3,945	\$19,723	\$5,260
		1.06	1.15	14.42
Wickenburg	Revenues	\$3,927	\$19,972	\$42,918
	Expenditures	\$4,191	\$20,954	\$5,588
		0.94	0.95	7.68
Tolleson	Revenues	\$4,516	\$21,920	\$49,102
	Expenditures	\$5,281	\$26,405	\$7,041
		0.86	0.83	6.97
Litchfield Park	Revenues	\$2,789	\$17,360	\$53,376
	Expenditures	\$3,233	\$16,165	\$4,311
		0.86	1.07	12.38
Cave Creek	Revenues	\$3,912	\$19,175	\$57,729
	Expenditures	\$2,318	\$11,589	\$3,090
		1.69	1.65	18.68
Queen Creek	Revenues	\$4,634	\$25,212	\$44,369
	Expenditures	\$2,205	\$11,026	\$2,940
		2.10	2.29	15.09
Youngtown	Revenues	\$2,934	\$18,331	\$57,117
	Expenditures	\$4,173	\$20,865	\$5,564
		0.70	0.88	10.27
Carefree	Revenues	\$3,912	\$19,175	\$57,729
	Expenditures	\$4,749	\$23,747	\$6,332
		0.82	0.81	9.12
Gila Bend	Revenues	\$3,506	\$20,590	\$57,563
	Expenditures	\$3,971	\$19,856	\$5,295
		0.88	1.04	10.87
Apache Junction	Revenues	\$3,128	\$13,696	\$42,715
	Expenditures	\$1,925	\$9,625	\$2,567
		1.62	1.63	16.64
Florence	Revenues	\$2,968	\$18,886	\$39,060
	Expenditures	\$2,541	\$12,707	\$3,389
		1.17	1.49	11.53
Maricopa	Revenues	\$4,164	\$20,562	\$40,513
	Expenditures	\$2,981	\$14,905	\$3,389
		1.40	1.38	11.95
Pinal County	Revenues	\$5,953	\$28,158	\$13,529
	Expenditures	\$3,025	\$15,123	\$4,033
		1.97	1.86	3.35
Maricopa County	Revenues	\$1,587	\$8,290	\$1,216
	Expenditures	\$1,036	\$5,182	\$1,382
		1.53	1.60	0.88

Source: Applied Economics, 2013.

Preserving, Protecting, and Growing our Agritainment/Agritourism Sector

Changes proposed to the land uses in SSAP also reflect the Town's strategic initiatives to preserve the community's heritage and to protect tourism destinations that set Queen Creek apart from neighboring communities. The transportation infrastructure needed to support RCC would have had a negative impact on Schnepf Farms, and especially the Queen Creek Olive Mill. The agritourism destinations that exist in the Town not only embody the popular farm-to-table movement but provide a unique experience that is frequently shared by national and international visitors.

Farm-related recreation and tourism can be traced back to the late 1800's, when families visited farming relatives in an attempt to escape from the city's summer heat. Visiting the country became even more popular with the widespread use of the automobile in the 1920's. Rural recreation gained interest again in the 1930's and 1940's by people seeking an escape from the stresses of the Great Depression and World War II. These demands for rural recreation led to widespread interest in horseback riding, farm petting zoos and farm nostalgia during the 1960's and 1970's. Farm vacations, bed and breakfasts and commercial farm tours were popularized in the 1980's and 1990's. Today, a farm destination for visitors or consumers is typically referred to as **agritainment**, agriculture plus entertainment, or **agritourism** when tourists make up a substantial part of the target market.

Agritourism has emerged as an opportunity for many farm owners to diversify their agricultural operations and connect people with agricultural products, services or experiences. Agritourism has increased the

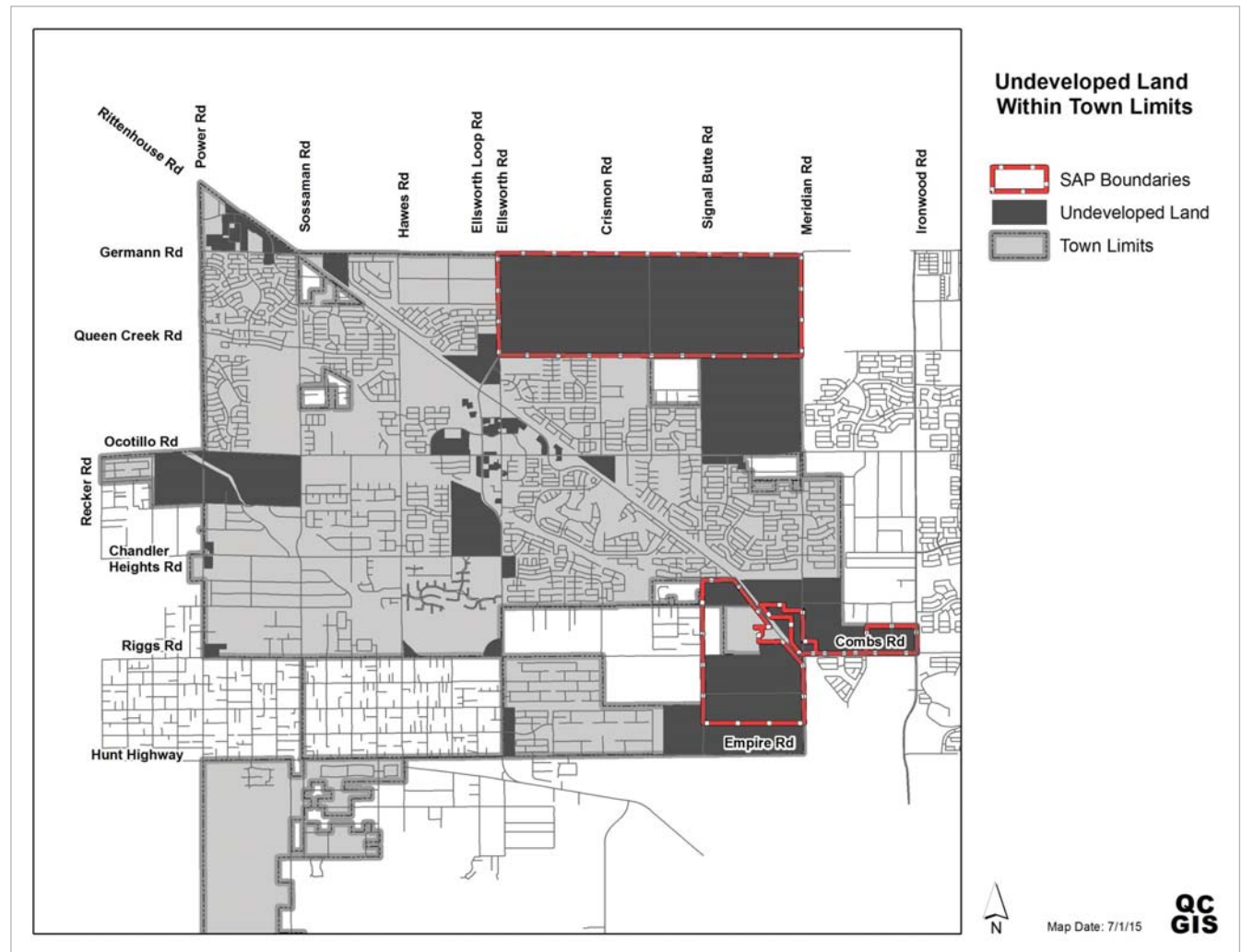
awareness and education of the non-farm general public about agriculture; activity options range from u-pick or pick-your-own, petting zoos, hay rides, children's play areas, children's discovery farms, corn mazes, pumpkin patches, seasonal and fall festivals, Halloween attractions, haunted attractions, school field trips, farmers markets, farm restaurants, milk and cheese creameries, wineries, breweries and distilleries.

Today, many more people now live in urban areas than in rural ones. As a result, many have limited connections with farms, but have an increased interest in rural lifestyles and farming, nostalgia, or an interest in learning about family and cultural history through farming. Travelers are increasingly seeking unique, authentic experiences and changes in travel behavior have led to an increase in weekend and local travel, and an increase in travel to rural areas to visit local attractions. Consumers are also showing a growing interest in understanding food production and in buying fresh, locally produced products.

Queen Creek's Economic Development and Marketing efforts over the last several years have included strategic initiatives to promote the unique destinations that exist in the community. From marketing partnerships with the Town's destinations, to the more recent partnership with Visit Mesa, Queen Creek is encouraging both domestic and international tourism visitors to the community. In addition, Economic Development is actively promoting Queen Creek as an agritainment investment opportunity and is working to expand agritainment to include other destinations such as a brewery, creamery, winery, or other similar operations.

AVAILABLE LAND

This map shows the proposed North and South Area Plans in context with the remaining properties within the Town that are likely to be “developed” in future years. The North and South Area plans comprise the bulk of land in Queen Creek that have yet to be planned for development.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Goal 1 Support an expanded Agritainment District. This district should support and enhance agriculture as an attraction for entertainment, tourism and educational purposes. Assist this cluster to grow into a place of recognition and civic pride beyond our borders.

- Develop and launch a Queen Creek Agritainment promotional campaign
- Facilitate the continued completion of the local transportation network
- Complete needed infrastructure to support growth
- Support efforts to bring commuter rail from Phoenix to Tucson through this SSAP

Goal 2 Encourage investment that is compatible with agriculture, and may include uses that support open space, natural resource management, outdoor recreation, enjoyment of scenic beauty, commercial and residential uses.

Goal 3 Provide areas for local retail development to prevent retail sales leakages and promote the capture of retail sales tax.

Goal 4 Support investment in a hotel site in the SSAP to promote tourism and new revenue for the Town.

Chapter 3 Character and Design Standards

CHARACTER AND DESIGN STANDARDS

PURPOSE OF THIS CHAPTER

This chapter serves to define what agritainment is for Queen Creek, so that we may preserve, protect and grow this unique cottage industry.

This chapter also examines “Character and Vision” with a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis to help identify how the SSAP can shore up negative attributes of these properties, while also leaning on other, existing positive attributes.

Next, theming and design cohesion establishes shared expectations for these properties when describing what and how these properties should develop over time, and what qualitative outcomes should be expected in architecture and the design of facilities within this SSAP.

ANALYSIS

This portion of Queen Creek has a collection of significant and authentic resources that support the Town’s agritainment brand and heritage.

While currently underserved by every type of transportation option, this area also has the largest potential to be near, and precisely on, future transportation corridors that include freeway, commuter rail, arterial roadways, multi-use paths and equestrian trails.

Property owners in the area have a clear plan and vision for creating an experience that brings additional housing, retail, commerce and entertainment together in a setting that is evocative of the rural lifestyle enjoyed by residents in the southern part of Queen Creek for many years.

Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gateway to Queen Creek • Wash system connects to this area • Proximity to Banner Ironwood Hospital • North-South Freeway Corridor extension planned nearby • Available undeveloped land • Major property owner timelines and plans for development are compatible with each other • Established authentic brand of Schnepf Farm • Established authentic brand of Queen Creek Olive Mill • Proximity to existing workforce 	Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited transportation continuity • No direct freeway access • Distance to freeway access • Lack of built infrastructure • Heavy traffic from San Tan Valley on existing street network
Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for new Town park location • Diversity of residential housing • Promote improved quality of life • Walk-able neighborhoods • Establish long term financial sustainability • Enhance attractiveness of this location • Opportunity to see additional compatible investments to Schnepf Farm and Queen Creek Olive Mill • Growth of Banner Ironwood Hospital • Creating synergies with hospital for additional commercial/employment uses such as medical offices or medical retail. • Strong, continued future growth in San Tan Valley and Pinal County adds to trade area and traffic counts making stronger case for commercial investment 	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of regional transportation funds • Incompatible development adjacencies • Zoning incompatible with current General Plan • Regional employment capacity • Inactive sand and gravel pit at wash

EXISTING UNIQUE CHARACTER

Agriculture is an integral component of Queen Creek's heritage. Citrus, cotton, wheat, pecans, potato, olives and other crops supported the foundation upon which Queen Creek developed. Agriculture continues to be a key piece of the Town's present success, and plans for the future. At the core of the SSAP, there are two unique agritainment destinations that help to celebrate the Town's history while providing a combination of entertainment and tourism unique to the area.

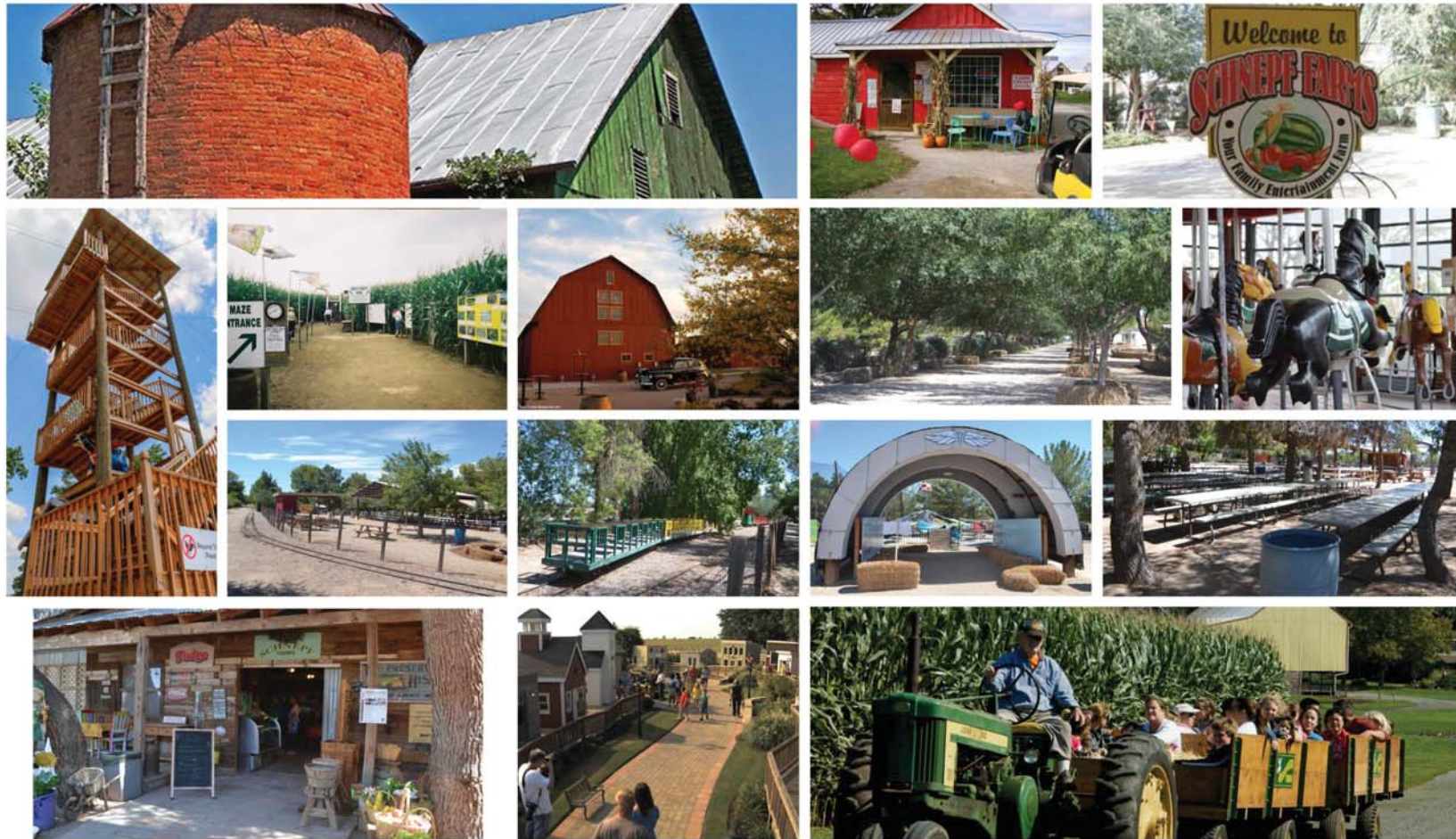


Schnepf Farms - Mark and Carrie Schnepf, with their four children, are the sole operators of Schnepf Farms. Back in the early 1940s, Ray and Thora Schnepf moved to the desert community of what was then, Rittenhouse. The Schnepf's joined other notable farmers to begin clearing the brush to prepare it for row crops. The farmers soon realized the sandy soil in this area was perfect for crops such as cotton, wheat and vegetables. Before long, the Schnepfs were farming over 5,000 acres and shipping vegetables across the country. As visitors drove out to the small farming community, they would often stop and ask if they could pick a few ears of corn and some peaches. It wasn't long until Ray realized that selling corn and peaches for U-Pick was the way to go, and Schnepf Farms' commercial uses began to grow.

In the 1990's the Schnepfs wanted to keep guests on the farm longer, so they started diversifying. Land was sold as the farm downsized and agritourism began. In 1994, the country music festival known as Country Thunder USA began as a major event at the farm. 250 acres were set aside to host this concert that remained on the farm for the next nine years. New attractions were added to the farm including a petting zoo, carousel rides, landscaping, a bakery and more. Visitors could enjoy a petting barn, play yard, narrow gauge train and carousel. In 2000, the Schnepfs started relocating old farm buildings from neighboring farms that were being developed. In 2002, the Schnepfs moved the original 100 year old homestead and created the Schnepf Family Museum which tells the history of the family farm dating back to the late 1800's. Today, the original Roadside Stand is now the Country Store and Bakery. The original family home is now a wedding and reception center called "The Farmhouse". All these improvements took place while still maintaining a strong agricultural presence. Today, the Schnepfs are the largest organic peach grower in the state, and still farm hay, vegetables and other crops. Despite the pressure to sell to commercial and residential developers, the Schnepf's goal is to leave a legacy and preserve a little of Queen Creek's agricultural history.

The Queen Creek Olive Mill - In the late 1990's, the Queen Creek Olive Mill (QCOM) was established in Queen Creek. The Rea family left Detroit and relocated with their children to Phoenix, AZ. Starting with 1,000 olive trees on 100-acres in Queen Creek with a 5,000 square foot shed, the Rea family transformed their dream of producing fresh, local Extra Virgin Olive Oil for the residents of Arizona, into the unique agritainment/agritourism destination you see today. Today the QCOM is a destination offering farm fresh, local food, Extra Virgin Olive Oil, tours and a unique retail experience while keeping it local. People from all over come for the renowned olive products and food, but also for the ambiance and character the QCOM offers. Twenty five of the farm's 100 acres are dedicated solely to the production of Extra Virgin Olive Oil. Today, the farm has over 7,000 trees and 16 different varieties planted in different planting configurations.

Nationwide, agriculture-based tourism is one of the fastest growing tourism segments. Based on the strong presence Schnepf Farms and the Queen Creek Olive Mill have in the community, these unique destinations need to be preserved and protected as new development occurs in the southeast portion of Queen Creek.



Schnepf Farms

SOUTH SPECIFIC AREA PLAN

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Olive Mill

SOUTH SPECIFIC AREA PLAN

SUCCESSFUL AGRITAINMENT OPERATIONS

Jaemor Farms in Georgia

The Echols family has been harvesting crops for over 100 years at Jaemor Farms. Jaemor Farms offers a wide variety of produce such as peaches, apples, strawberries, blackberries, muscadines, scuppernongs, concord grapes, watermelon, squash, tomatoes, zucchini, pumpkins and more. Jaemor Farms has over 750,000 customers annually, and over 350 acres of land in production. Jaemor offers event facilities for rent, a corn maze, u-pick events and festivals.



RustRidge Ranch, Winery and Bed and Breakfast Inn in California

Susan Meyer's family purchase the ranch in 1972 and the family founded the winery in 1985 in a renovated cattle barn. Vines are organically grown and dry farmed, creating RustRidge's award winning wines including Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc and Zinfandel. RustRidge also offers a Southwestern ranch-style bed and breakfast, with wine samplings in the evenings in the country kitchen.



Black Star Farms in Michigan

In 1998, the founding partners purchased a 120-acre equestrian facility, renowned for its palatial red estate house, stables, barns, and outlying paddocks. Upon purchase, the partners realized the farm presented a unique opportunity to create a world class winery and agricultural tourism destination, capturing the essence of the surrounding land and lakeshore. The property was named Black Star Farms after the stylized star in the marble foyer of the estate house. It is now a popular Northern Michigan agricultural destination with an inn, artisan wines & spirits, a seasonal vineyard restaurant, boarding stables, and wedding or event opportunities.



Lattin's Country Cider Mill & Farm in Washington

This small, family-owned apple farm and cider mill has been producing award winning cider and perfecting their recipes since 1976. In addition to the apple orchards, the farm hosts tours, school visits, special events, as well as a fruit market in partnership with nearby growers.



THEME AND DESIGN

The heritage of a place is not only built of physical objects such as structures and materials; but also of intangibles, such as the sense of community, tradition, emotions, and memories. The textures and materials of the South Specific Area are intended to represent timelessness, durability and sustainability; all the ideas that exist today in the traditional structures that grew from the Town. The architectural materials such as block, brick, stone, wood, and plant life used in the South Specific Area will exhibit the key characteristics (i.e. simple, traditional lifestyle) of the Town.

Residents have established the unique character of the Town through the traditions of agriculture, rural entertainment, and hospitality. These traditions provided the foundation to define this SSAP's theme: an agrarian and family-oriented community that celebrates gathering together and enjoying the history and culture of Queen Creek. The theme of the area further evokes a sense of community that is already engrained in the history of the Town.

What does good design mean?

- Creates an identity for a community.
- Provides visual interest.

How this design element is important for this unique area?

- Will establish a level of quality for this area.
- Quality design can spread through a community when established in an area.

What can be achieved with good design standards?

- Unique design solutions creating a variety of designs from one development to another.
- Sets and maintains a level of quality throughout the community.
- Promotes higher land values through creating desirable and sought after communities.

How can quality of the design be achieved?

- Encourage the development of four-side architecture where all sides of a building will be visible from public view.
- Promote the use of varying masses on elevations.
- Promote single story elements on structures.
- Promote a variety of architectural styles.
- Promote creative solutions to standards as opposed to dictating specific required elements.

What are potential negatives of such design efforts that should be considered?

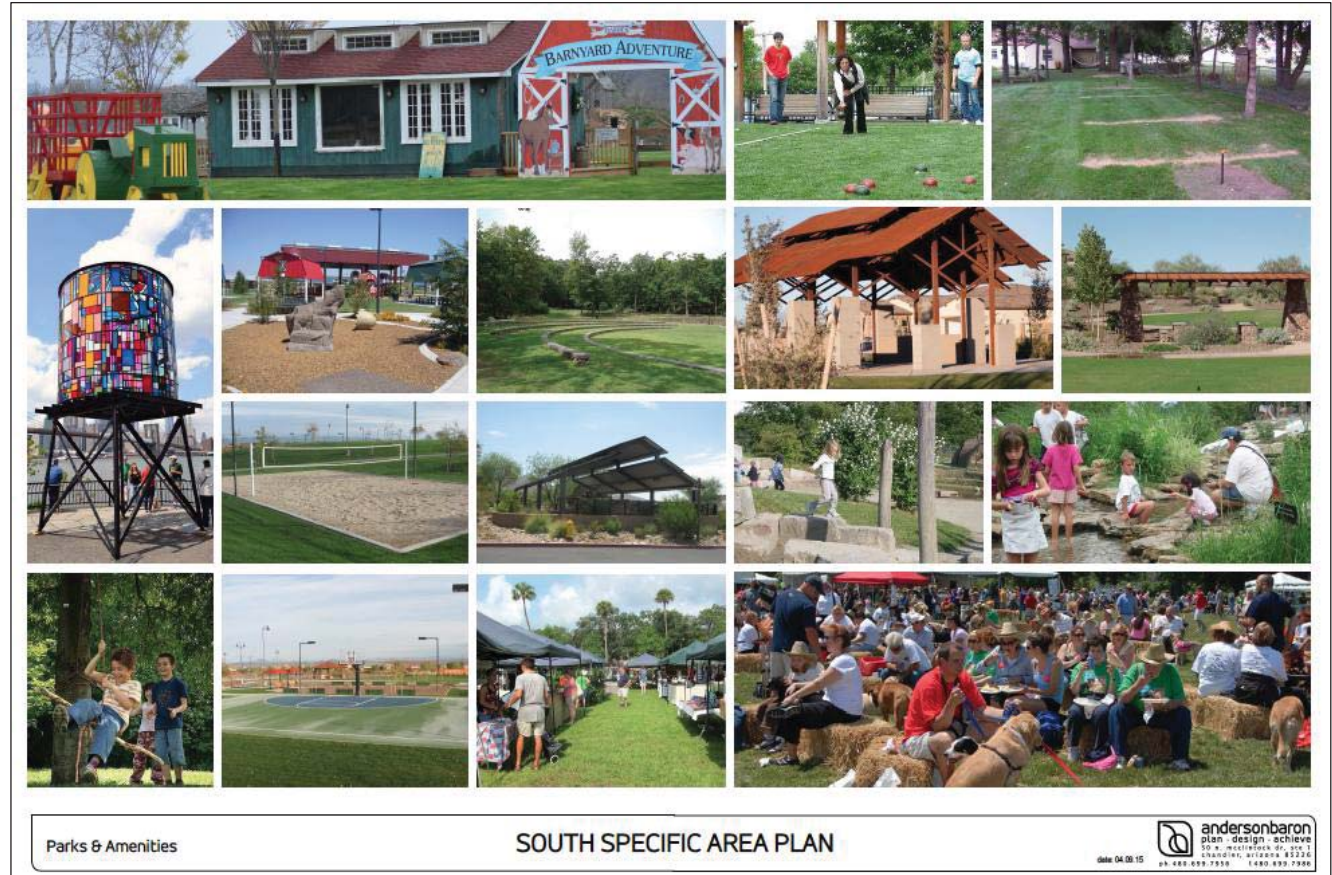
- Creating design standards which are so restrictive and specific that there is only one design solution, leading to monotony.
- Standards that require so much detail that the cost of the architecture is prohibitively expensive.

DISTINCTIVE NEIGHBORHOODS

Developments within the South SAP are an extension of the agritainment heritage and not just the traditional residential development seen throughout the Valley. Parks and amenities should be designed to incorporate distinctive features that evoke a rural character, non-traditional active areas, and large gathering spaces.

Landscape and open spaces are focal points that interact with the community spaces, and are a continuation of the agricultural surroundings. Rather than concrete and traditional sport courts, parks should include a wider variety of sports or activities.

Iconic features strategically located in a park or open space that continues the place-making theme of the agritainment district is also used as important focal points.



Parks & Amenities

SOUTH SPECIFIC AREA PLAN

date: 04.08.15

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plan · design · achieve
300 N. MULTNOMAH DR. SUITE 1
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CHARACTER OF THE AREA

The character of this area can be realized by providing a quality built environment. Design standards help to create vibrant, attractive, lively and aesthetically appealing communities to promote the quality and distinct characteristics of the natural and built environment of the area. Great design can help create lasting value in neighborhoods, walkable street patterns, safe and easily accessible public spaces and connections between people and places. Considering design concepts like interconnected streets, bike lanes and sidewalks, the provision of open spaces, access to schools and jobs, recreation areas connected to Queen Creek and the regional trail systems, all serve to increase the value proposition for being part of the Queen Creek community.

Considering the duration for this area to fully develop, there should also be an ethic of flexibility in these standards to allow for adaptation to shifts in market conditions and consumer demands. For example, the introduction of a hospitality component or additional investment in the food or entertainment uses within this area will undoubtedly change over time to meet consumers' changing demands. Even parking ratios and transportation solutions may change with new options and technologies.

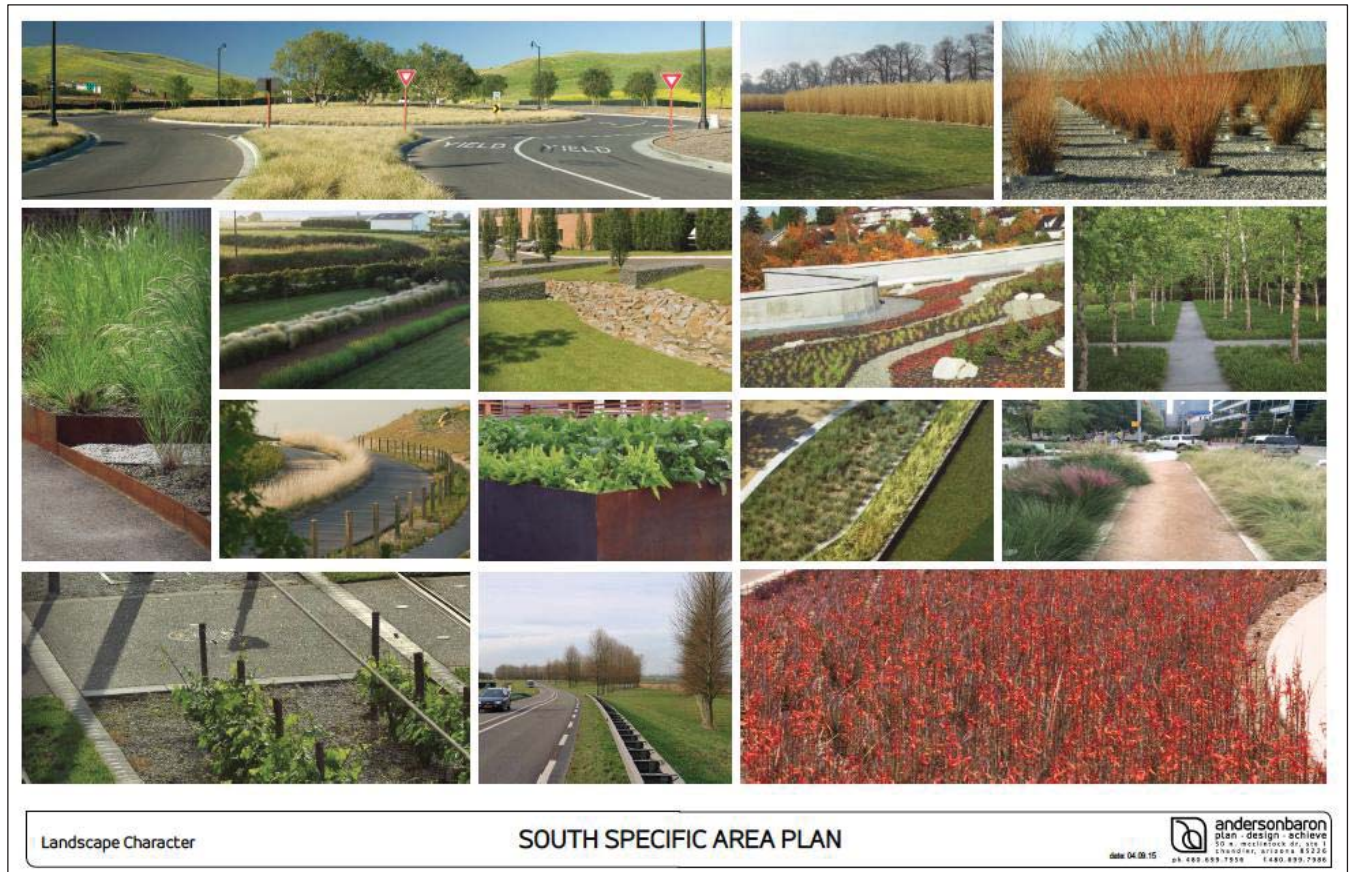


LANDSCAPE AS SIGNAGE

As part of the process of examining what makes good design sense for an agritainment district, it became apparent that in some instances, organized patterns of landscaping can be more evocative of a rural area than direct, message-oriented signs and billboards.

In particular, this South Area is at the intersection of arterial roadways, paths, and equestrian trails that will be repeatedly frequented. A “softer” and more subliminal messaging through the use of roadway landscaping can become a more powerful messaging tool to define this place than medium, or large-format signage. Signage requires maintenance and deteriorates over time, whereas well planned landscape grows stronger in character over time.

Appropriate landscaping with distinct patterns is encouraged for this area in place of regional directional and identification signage.



Landscape Character

SOUTH SPECIFIC AREA PLAN

AGRITAINMENT PROPERTY SIGNAGE

The Agritainment land use and Agritainment Planned Area Development (PAD) overlay zoning district allow for specialized land uses and activities, and also help define the special character within the Town of Queen Creek that further identifies the unique atmosphere of the community, and highlights its rural and agricultural history.

One element important to this place-making concept of agritainment as a specific segment in Queen Creek is signage, both temporary and permanent. Character and appearance of signage surrounding and including agritainment operations should be distinct and separate from signage in other areas of the Town. Considering the opportunities for special events, festivals, arts and culture, and farm or agritainment operations, signage in this area may take advantage of alternative designs, materials, and locations that may not be appropriate or available for typical businesses throughout the Town.

For properties proposed to be zoned Agritainment, a Comprehensive Sign Plan may be separately submitted for review and approval by the Town as permitted in Article 6 of the Town's Zoning Ordinance. Such Comprehensive Sign Plans should only include elements and content that relates to on-site activities and events, or shared events between multiple Agritainment properties within close proximity to each other. These elements may include, but are not limited to:

- Temporary Banner locations and other unique signage or branding that may exceed the Town's standards for size and location, especially if related to periodic and/or recurring activities.
- Signage or branding that is on-premises, but not attached to a building structure, such as fence signs, "berma-shave" signs, or other similar signage intended to inform, direct, or draw the attention of visitors from outside the Town.
- Parking directional and wayfinding signage
- Building mounted signage
- Monument, icon or similar freestanding signage



The following table is intended to provide possible design elements that may assist in deriving an overall character consistent with the SSAP. The applicability of these considerations is focused on the protection, preservation, and expansion of the agritainment theming of this area, and as a result, the increased desirability of this part of Queen Creek as a place to live, and shop; to entertain and be entertained; to enjoy an authentic setting rich in community; and a place to enjoy a high quality of life with others.

Macro Level Planning Considerations (Master Plan Community scale)	Micro Level Planning Considerations (Neighborhood scale)	Residential Design Considerations	Non-Residential Design Considerations (Commercial and Office)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connections to the “looped” wash system • Complete street design for arterial and neighborhood street • Formal layout and central open space for events and un-programmed uses. • Creation of informal open space areas that can serve as functional passive or active recreation areas within the hierarchy of open space. • Non-uniform or horizontal and vertical articulation through the use of varying materials and form to create a more visually aesthetic street scene • Non-uniform open spaces along roadways • Street landscaping that is evocative of rural life; linear and repetitive massed planting designs; viewable from automobiles • Pedestrian connectivity • Open space connectivity • Detached sidewalks • Way-finding signage that differs from other commercial centers in the Town through the integration of agrarian character elements which compliment the area without becoming contrived or over emphasized • Enhanced landscaping • Useable area of turf, where turf is included in common areas • Hardscape treatments, benches, lighting, site furnishings • Iconic district gateway • Accessible district transit stop(s) • Family recreation • Integrated, pedestrian oriented street network with identifiable crosswalks • Landscaped medians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing product diversity • Variety of front yard setbacks including reduced setbacks to create a visually diverse street scene • Logical internal street networks • Formal layout and central open space • Non-uniform or horizontal and vertical articulation through the use of varying materials and form to create a more visually aesthetic street scene • On-street parking on local streets • Integrated, pedestrian oriented street network with identifiable crosswalks • Detached sidewalks • Open space connectivity • Usable open space • Enhanced landscaping • Useable area of turf, where turf is included in common areas • Street tree program • Community gardens • Use of special paving to create interest and delineate crosswalks • Landscaped medians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing product diversity • Increased Emphasis on housing designs that are viewed from arterial and collector street system • Minimize garage dominance • Reduced front yard setbacks to create a visually diverse street scene • Street tree program • Detached sidewalks • Open space frontage – proximity to playgrounds and active or passive recreation • Usable open space • Varied setbacks • Building geometry that is compatible with Rural, agricultural forms and design • Varied building massing, roof lines, façade treatments, and colors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broken building masses • Varied building massing; roof lines façade treatments, and colors that are evocative of rural country life • Building size diversity, geometries that reflect rural, agricultural construction • Buffers through use of open space and landscape where adjacent to residential • Varied setbacks • Pedestrian focused • Easy building access • Building massing and façade treatments that are compatible with a very rural character • Landscape for visual interest • Development frontage and quality streetscape design • Landscaped medians

NEIGHBORHOODS



Residential
Architectural Character

SOUTH SPECIFIC AREA PLAN

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10 N. WILLOWDALE DR. SUITE 1
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date: 11.24.15
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COMMERCIAL PROJECTS



Commercial & Office
Architectural Character

SOUTH SPECIFIC AREA PLAN

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date: 11.24.15
ph. 480.699.7956 fax 480.699.7988

CHARACTER AND DESIGN STANDARDS GOALS

Goal 1 Acknowledge the agricultural history and culture of the Town.

- Encourage the use of landscape materials and design that have cultural significance to the Town of Queen Creek. Promote the ideals of timelessness, durability and sustainability.
- Encourage the use of architectural forms and styles in residential and commercial development that harmonize with the architectural character that is a foundation of the agrarian and rural traditions of the Town.
- Encourage the use of materials that are true and authentic to the character of a rural community including block, brick, stone, wood, and plant life.

Goal 2 Create visually interesting communities that build a sense of community

- Promote the use of landscape systems that utilize symmetry and repetition. Use “landscape as signage” where possible, to evoke a sense of being in a rural place, close to farming and rural life.
- Promote the development of architecture that has architectural character and massing for all elevations that are visible to the public.
- Create a character in the landscape that is unique to the SSAP area.
- Provide an open space network that allows for and encourages the exploration of the entire district.
- Provide open spaces that vary in scale to allow for the assembly of residences of all sizes.
- Promote the integration of public art that ties all parts of the district together.

Goal 3 Provide a pedestrian environment that encourages walkability.

- Providing amenities such as shade, seating, drinking fountain and minimal occurrences for pedestrian/vehicle conflicts.

Goal 4 Require commercial uses to be pedestrian-oriented.

- Include internally integrated outdoor spaces, contributing to a sense of place, interconnected with residential neighborhoods and non-residential uses.

Goal 5 Streets and intersections are designed to complement the theme of the SSAP.

- Design streets based on Complete Streets guidelines that provide for a balance of transportation modes including pedestrian, equestrian, bicycle, public transit, and vehicles.
- A more attractive public realm helps to balance pedestrians and bicyclists with other vehicles.

Chapter 4 Transportation

TRANSPORTATION

Purpose of this Chapter

This chapter serves to establish what considerations in the streets and transportation program should be made to support the vision for this South Specific Area Plan.

CURRENT ARTERIAL STREET SYSTEM

Queen Creek was originally developed as a rural residential and agricultural community. With increasingly rapid growth in the Town, as well as in the nearby areas in Mesa, Gilbert and Pinal County, it became necessary to plan the roadway and other transportation systems to accommodate future traffic and to avoid congestion and other transportation-related problems in the Town.

The Union Pacific Railroad mainline serving Phoenix passes through Queen Creek diagonally, introducing a challenge to systematic arterial access across the Town. The number of available railroad crossings is limited, and those crossings become key nodes as the Town's transportation system matures.

Regional access to the Town is accommodated by major arterial roads linked to State Route 24, the US 60 (the Superstition Freeway) and the Loop 202 (San Tan Freeway), which connect to Interstate 10 and to the Phoenix Metro Area.

CURRENT CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Allocating available resources during the Town's re-emergent growth and development presents an array of opportunities to address immediate, mid-term, and long-term transportation needs.

The hazard of applying available funding exclusively to the immediate transportation system needs is that with additional growth and development, those projects will present a diminished return on investment and improved quality of life over the long term.

A balanced approach of mitigating immediate needs while investing in reasonable long-term transportation infrastructure can ensure road projects can meet the needs of current and future residents.

The volume of commuter traffic passing through Town seeking to access the regional freeway system is heavy, relative to locally-generated traffic. Planning the road network to minimize this "cut-through" traffic over time can help reduce the costs for maintenance and policing of Town roadways, the costs of responding to larger volumes of traffic accidents, as well as simultaneously increasing the quality of life for Town residents.

In the long-term, the proposed North-South Corridor will act as a reliever road and help the Town in reducing congestion anticipated from the projected regional growth. This corridor will provide direct connection between southern Arizona to the eastern portion of the Phoenix metropolitan area.

RECENT CONSIDERATIONS IN THE SOUTH SPECIFIC AREA

In 2011 and 2012, the Town in partnership with Pinal and Maricopa County and stakeholders, dedicated resources to study how to best complete Meridian Road as a major north-south arterial of regional significance. The pressures that brought these parties together included existing commuter traffic congestion and plans for future growth and development in both counties that were expected to exacerbate the existing conditions in the near term.

Another consideration was the Union Pacific Railroad crossing and the desire to consolidate a single crossing for Rittenhouse Road and Combs Road at Meridian Road.

As a result of these efforts, several alternative designs for this significant intersection were drafted and analyzed. Ultimately, the option labeled "Alternative D" became the preferred alternative to meet the project objectives.

"ALT. D" MERIDIAN ALIGNMENT

This solution was the lowest cost solution of all the alternatives, and proposed a single at-grade crossing at the UPRR.

This exhibit shows the Alternative D design. Below is a summary analysis of the positive and negative impacts, and the project cost at the time.

Details:

- Meridian realigned to existing at-grade UPRR crossing
- No structures
- Similar to recently improved Power/Pecos intersection at UPRR
- NE/SW corners: by-pass right turns
- Minimal impacts to adjacent properties—potential land-swap opportunity

Pros:

- Acceptable intersection operations
- Best solution for access
- Creates developable piece of land in NW corner

Cons:

- UPRR crossing diagonal through intersection
- Minor additional parcel impacts (vs. Alt B and C)

Intersection Project Costs: \$27,704,598



REVISED MERIDIAN ROAD ALIGNMENT

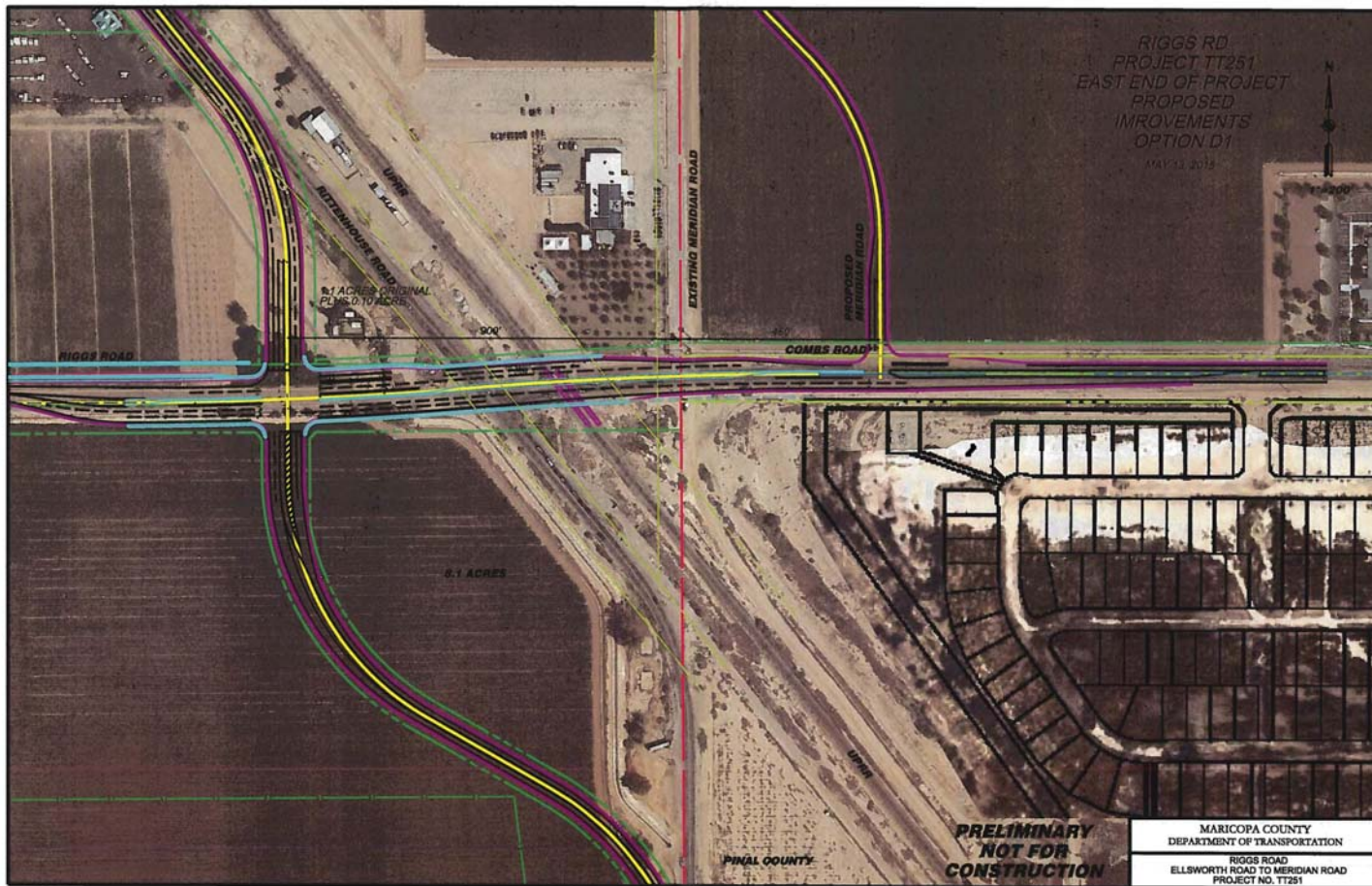
As a result of the South and North Specific Area Plan projects, Town staff began to assess additional considerations that had the potential to impact both the cost and utility of Alternative D. These considerations included:

- The emergence of SR-24 as a freeway connection of choice for commuters to and from valley job centers.
- The lack of opportunity for Meridian Road extend north into Mesa along the county line, and eventually to the SR-24 and US-60 freeways.
- Lack of available funding for any of the partner agencies following the “great recession” to include the project on shorter than a 5-year completion horizon.
- Continued success of the Queen Creek Olive Mill and increasing uncertainty that Alternative D posed to their continued operation and future growth.
- Additional direct costs of this project associated with the business impact of Alternative D to the Queen Creek Olive Mill.
- Need to preserve and protect our agritainment and agritourism potential, and the opportunities an alternative design may present.
- The continued need for a single railroad crossing.
- Considerations in the North Specific Area plan that would downgrade the utilization of Meridian Road as a connector to the SR-24 and beyond.
- Use of Gantzel/Ironwood Road as a traffic reliever for existing and future commuter traffic.

- The desire of the Town to encourage a pedestrian and bicycle friendly district in this area.
- A solution that would not further burden the Town’s small but growing 5-year construction plan for streets.
- A solution that would look at maximizing the existing and future planned street network built by non-Town funding sources.
- A solution that would avoid additional multi-million dollar costs along the Meridian Road alignment north of this area to connect commuters to the SR-24.

Taking these factors into account, a revised design was drafted in partnership with our agency partners and stakeholders and is depicted in the next exhibit.

Exhibit showing revised Meridian Road alignment with related railroad crossing and arterial connections



PROPOSED ROAD NETWORK

This alternative design was approved by the Town Council during the summer of 2015. Among other advantages, it emphasizes the continued use of Hunt Highway and Ironwood Road over time to move commuters around the Town and to job centers versus directing increasing traffic through Queen Creek neighborhoods.

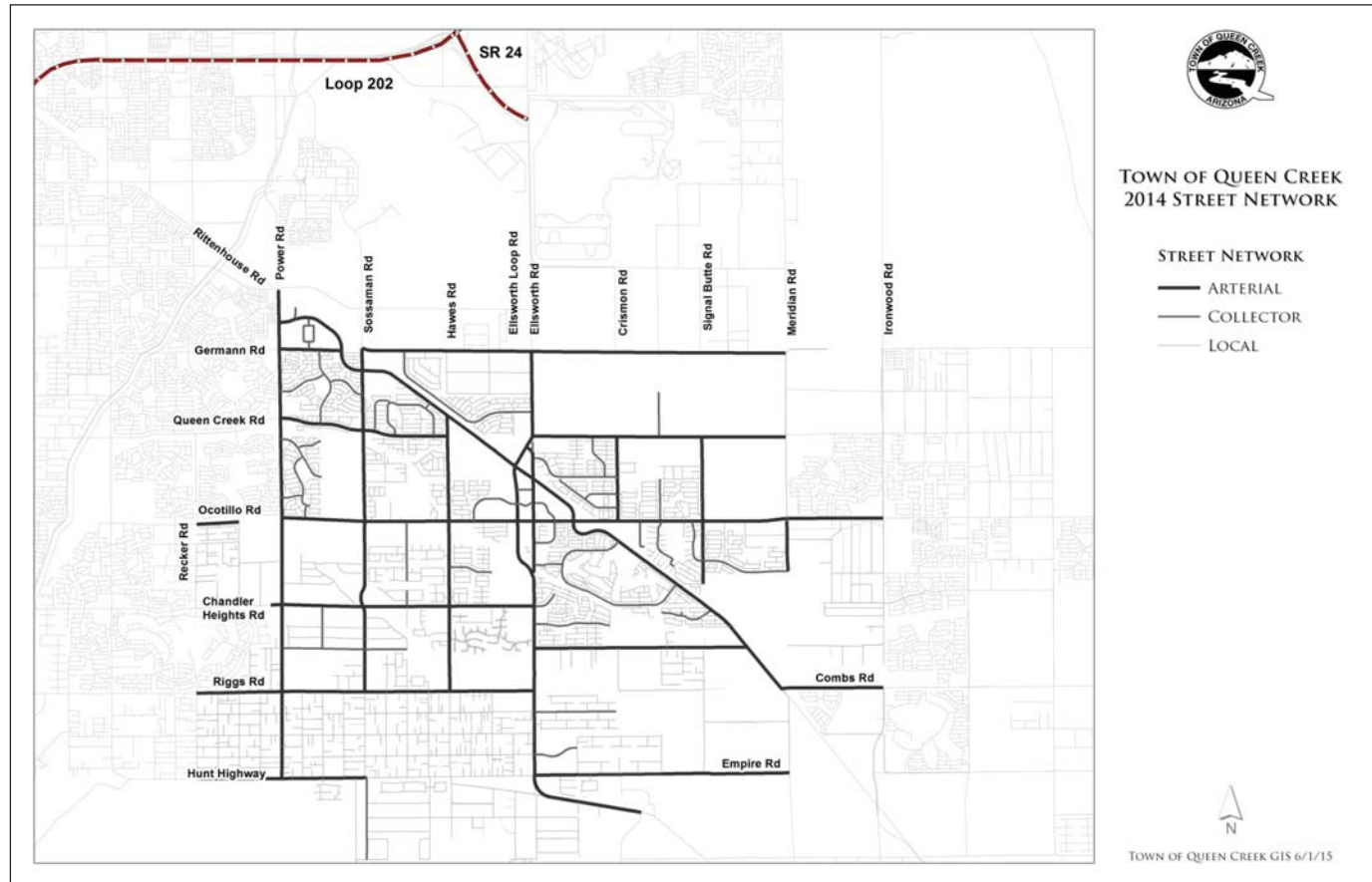


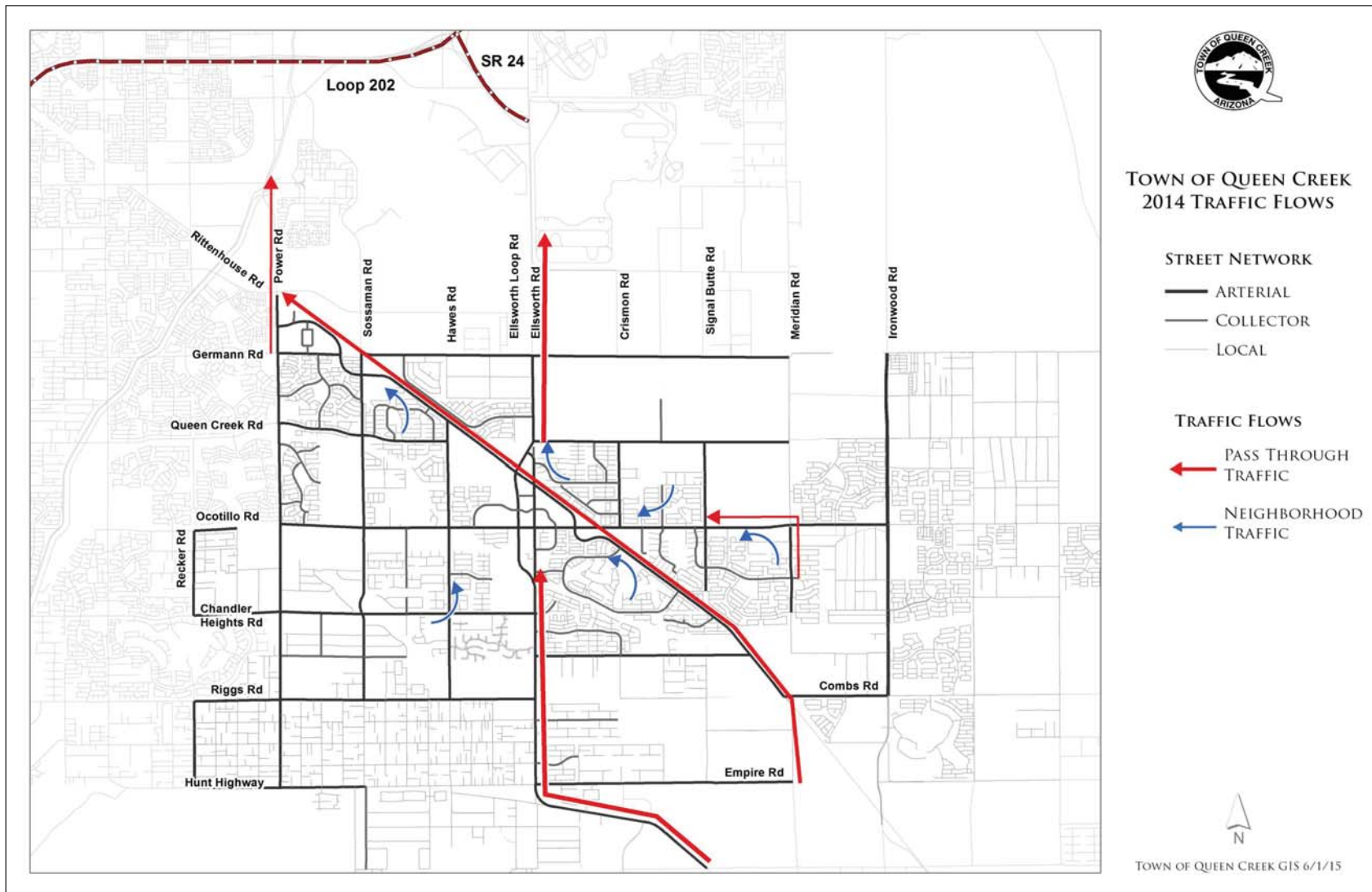
NEAR AND LONGER TERM ANALYSIS

The following series of maps shows the potential for street grid growth over time for the Town, and is helpful for charting out the changes in commuter traffic as a result of the use of Ironwood Road as the regional North-South road of significance.

Series 1: Year 2014

This exhibit shows the current configuration of Town streets. Notice the lack of east-west connectivity between Ellsworth Loop and Ironwood Roads. Residents from San Tan Valley use Ocotillo Road, Rittenhouse Road, and Hunt Highway as preferred routes to the Valley's freeway system as a result of this lack of east-west connectivity in town.

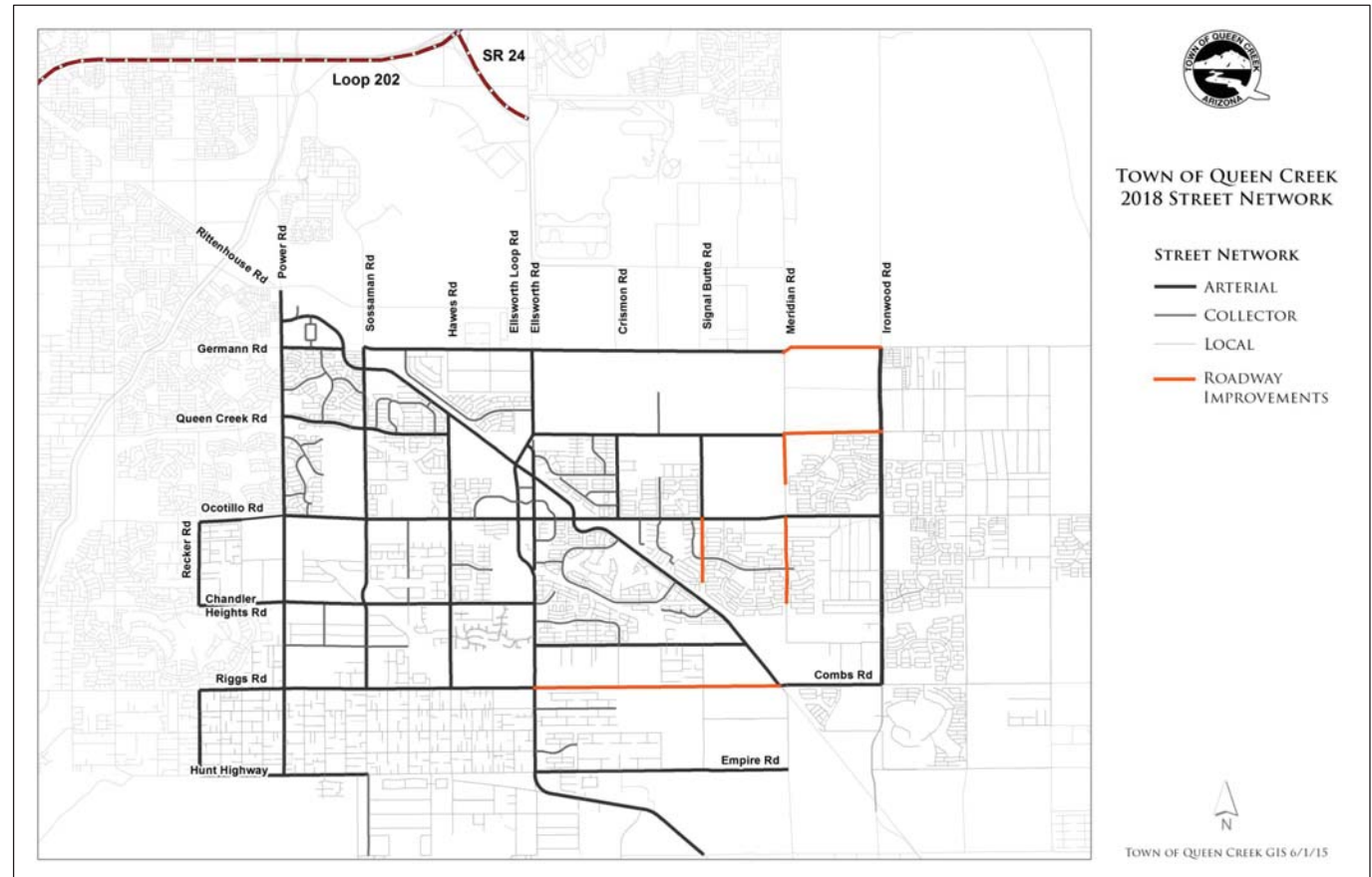


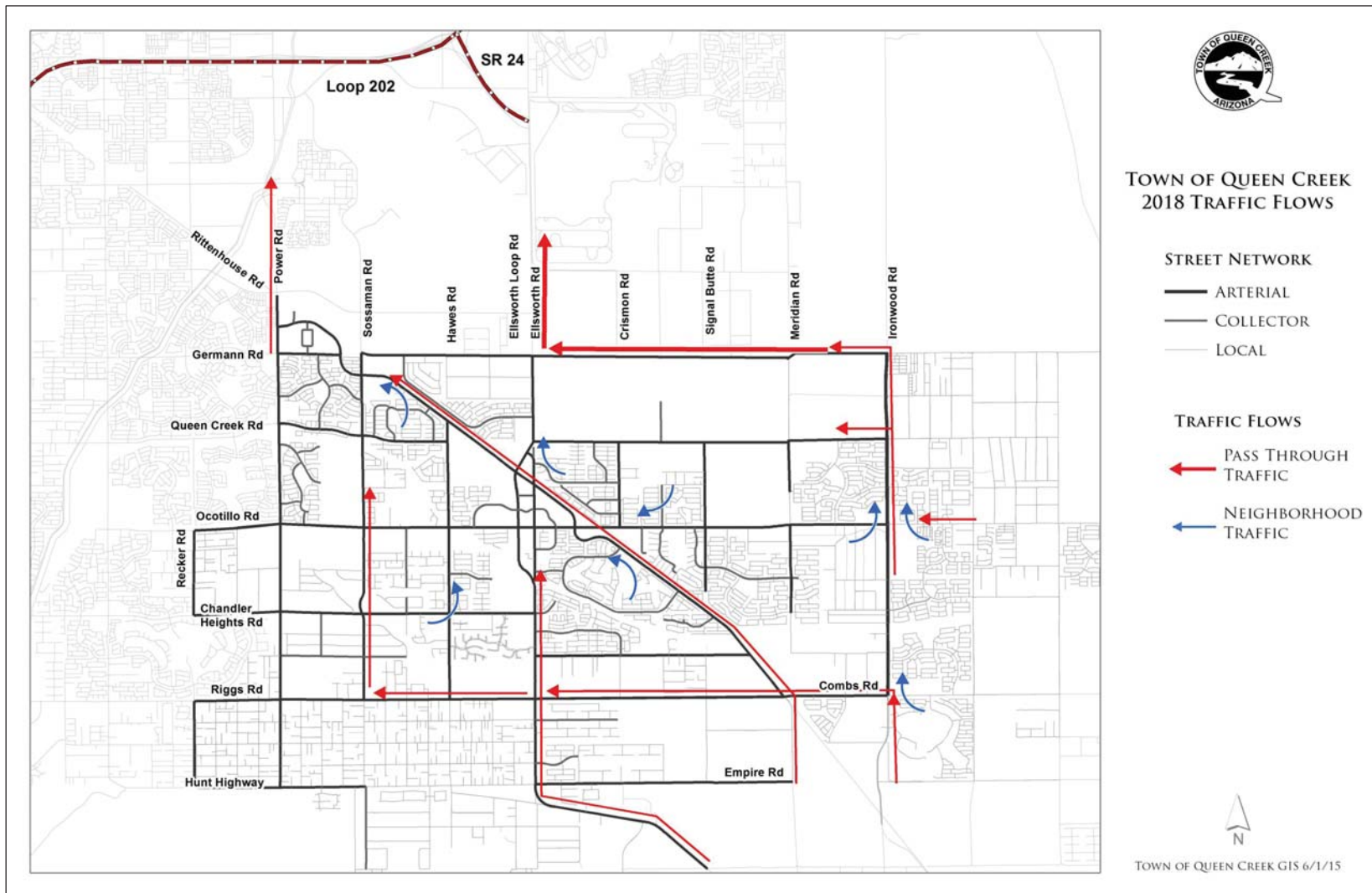


Series 2: Series 2: Year 2018

This exhibit depicts road projects that are currently funded with non-Town resources and in the process of being designed and installed.

These projects provide east-west connectivity that begins to increase the overall transportation system capacity for commuting traffic – away from Ocotillo Road and towards Germann Road.

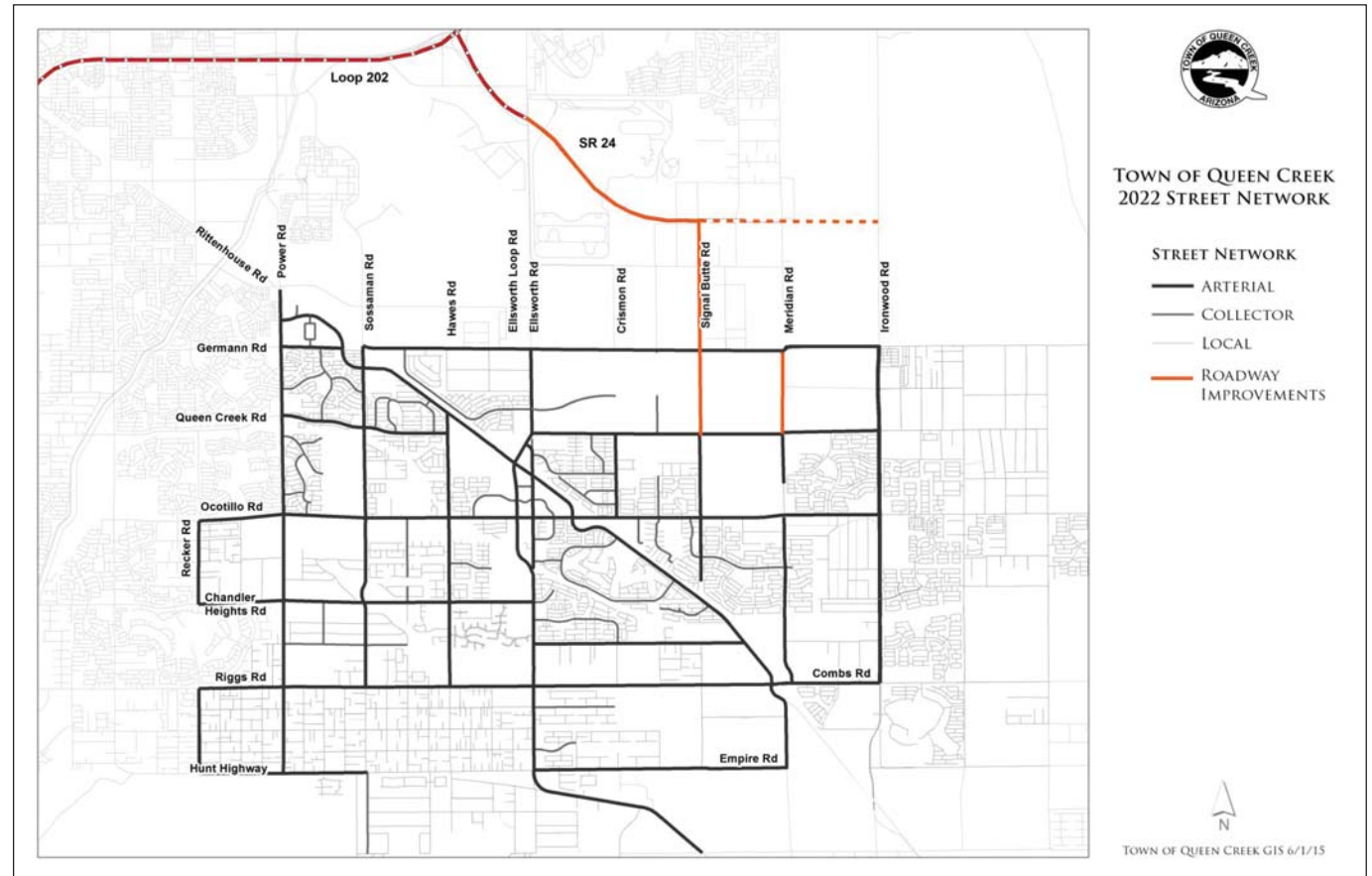


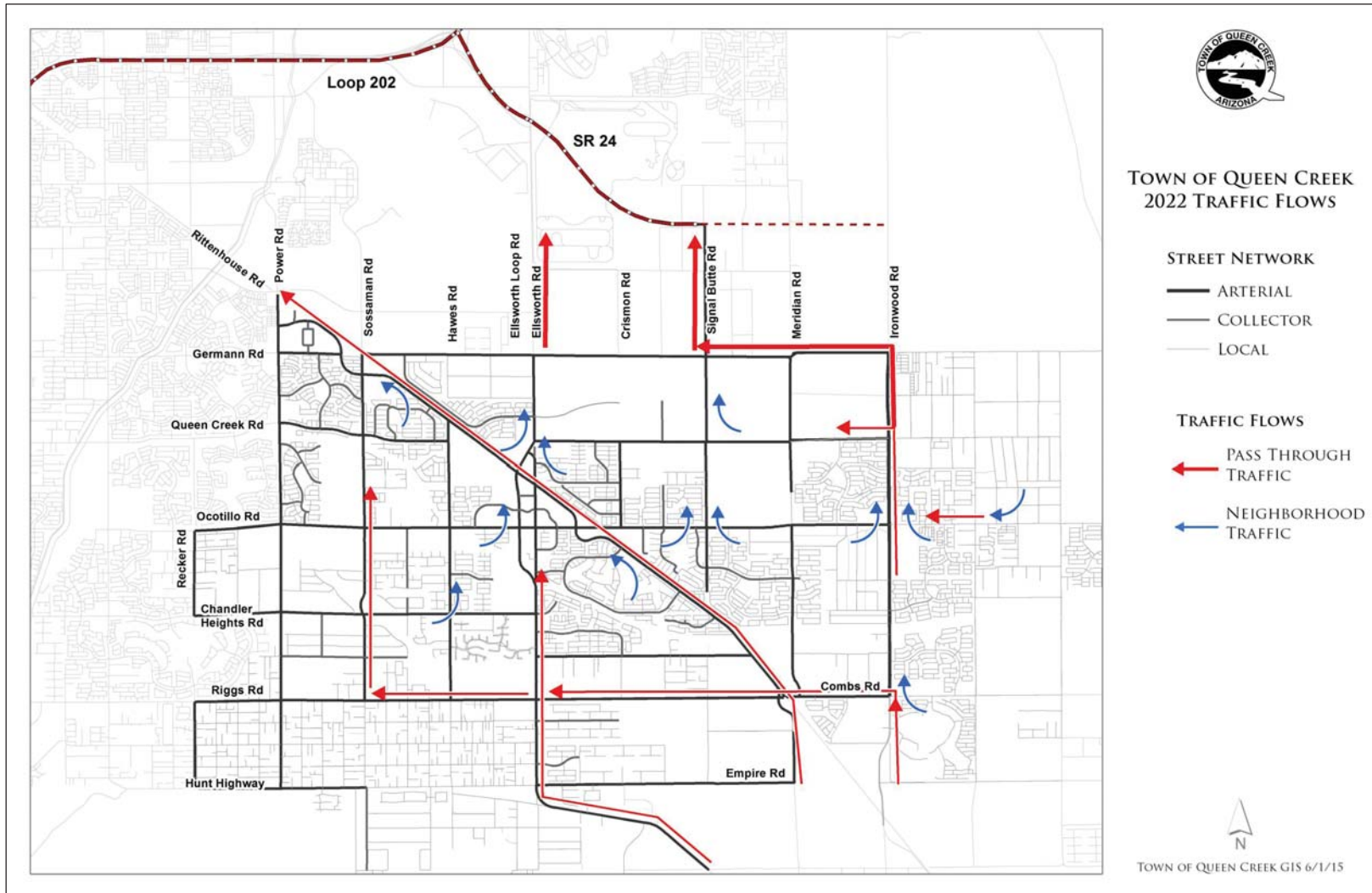


Series 3: Year 2022

This exhibit depicts longer-term road projects that are currently planned and in the process of being funded. Ironwood Road becomes a major reliever of a portion of “cut-through” traffic for the Town, while the revised intersection at Riggs/Meridian Roads protects and preserves the Town’s “Agritainment District.”

These projects significantly impact the choices available for daily commuters, from and through the Town.



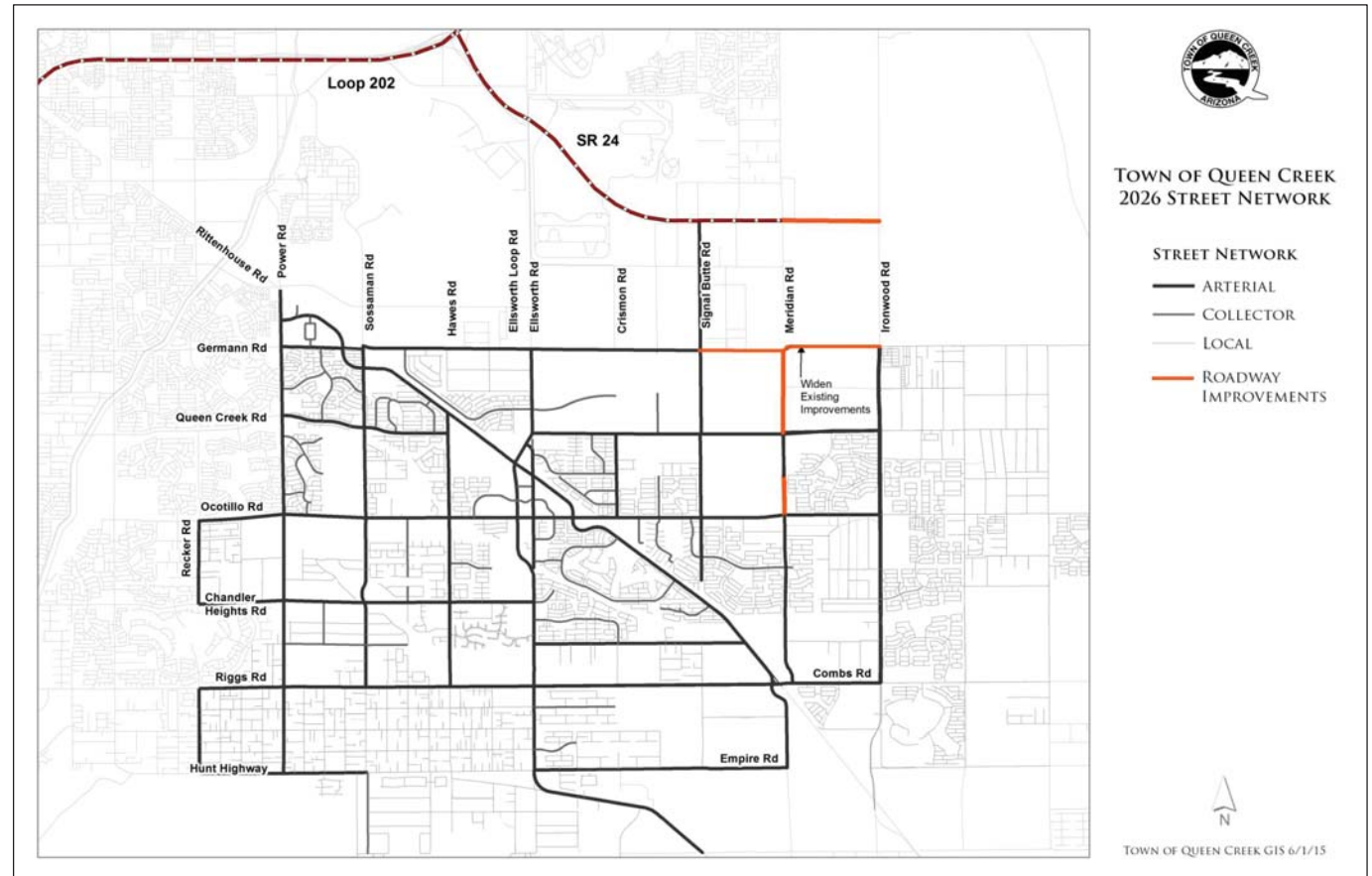


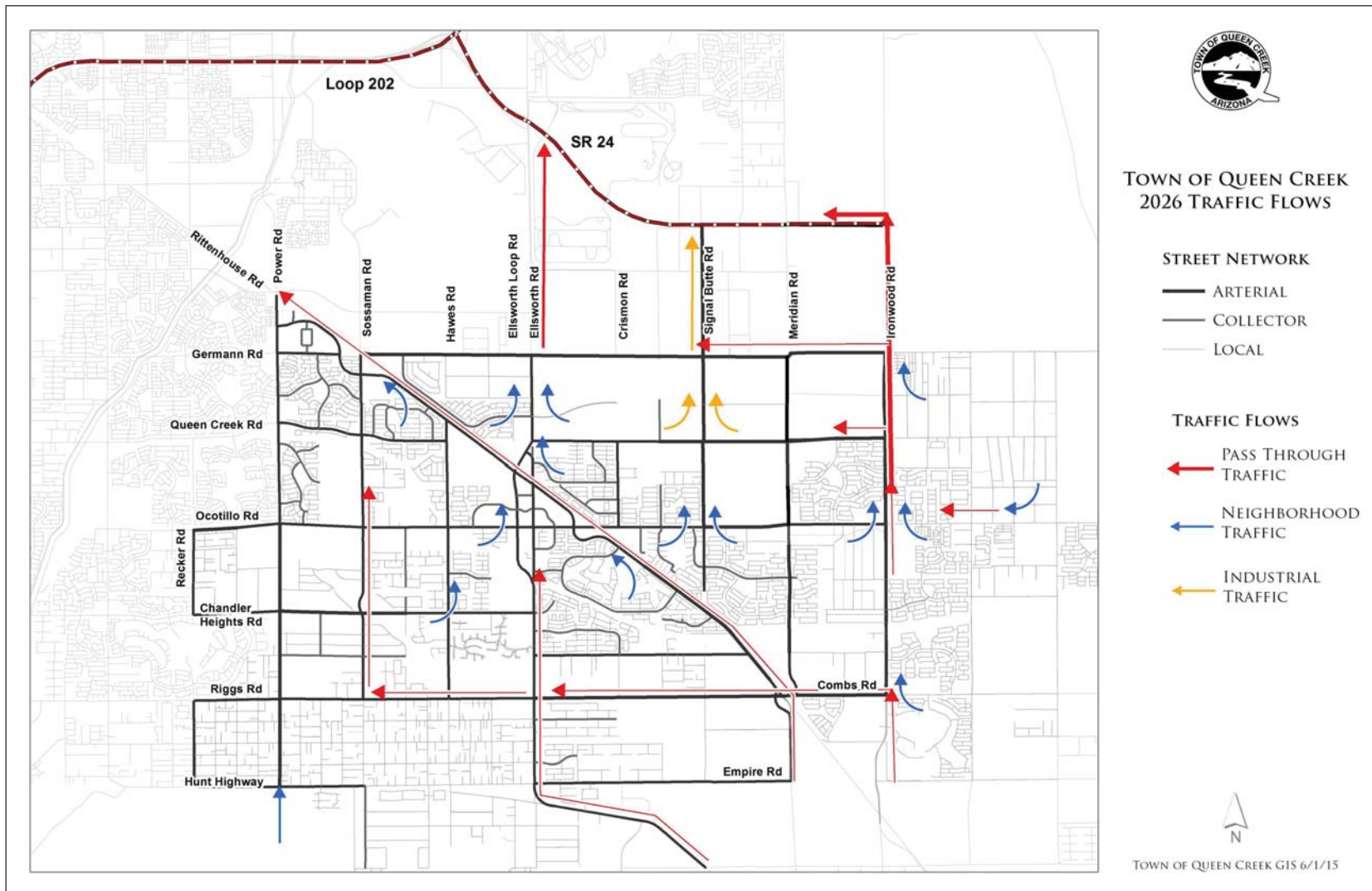
Series 4: Year 2026

This exhibit depicts longer-term road projects that should be considered in the Town's Transportation Master Plan and regional planning efforts.

As more residential neighborhoods are built in the eastern half of Queen Creek, providing both north/south and east/west connectivity will offer more direct and needed access to an extended SR 24 and the state land holdings to the northeast of Queen Creek.

These projects moderate the impact that limited railroad crossings have to the quality of life for many Queen Creek residents seeking to connect to the Valley freeway system.

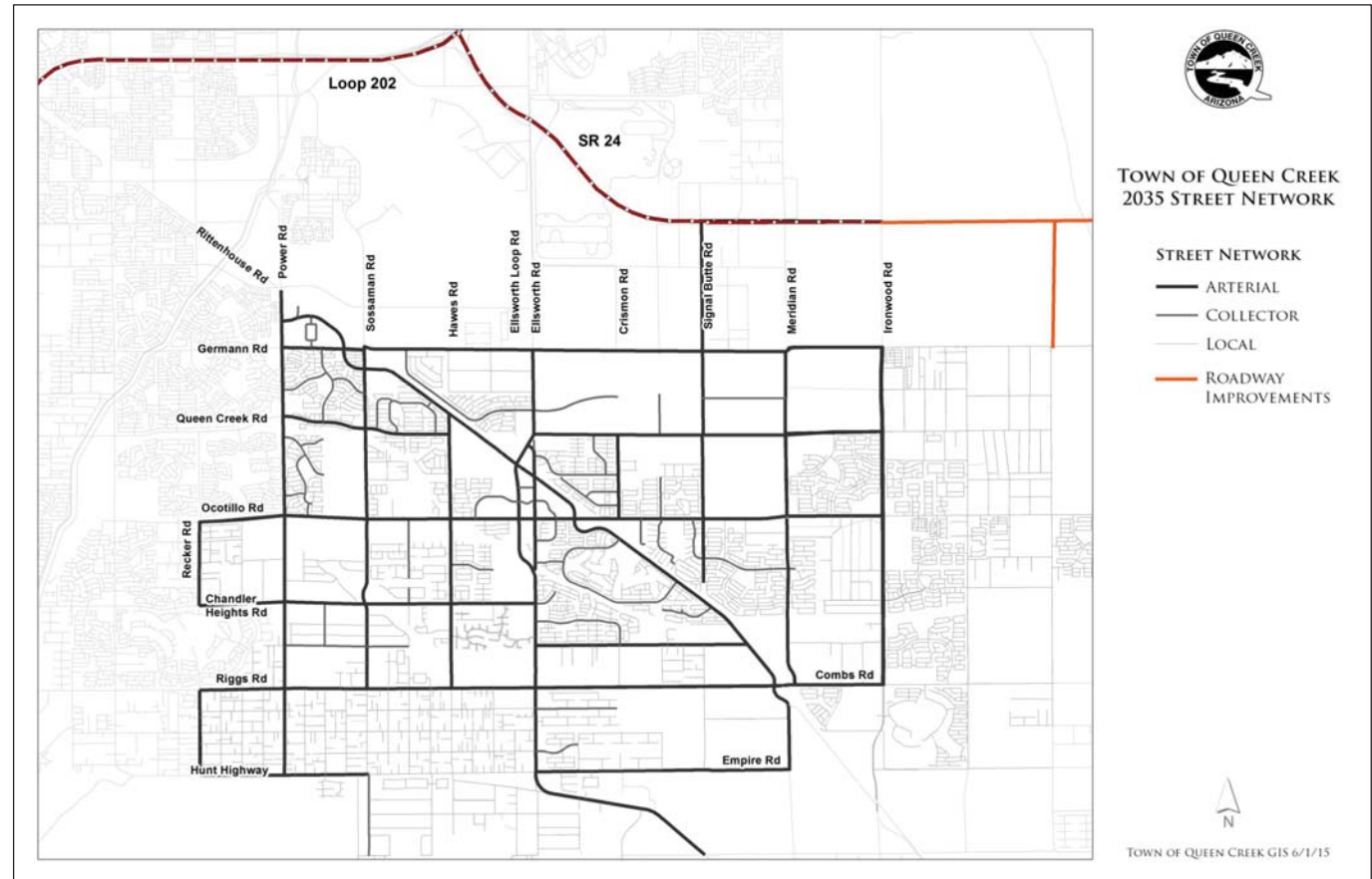


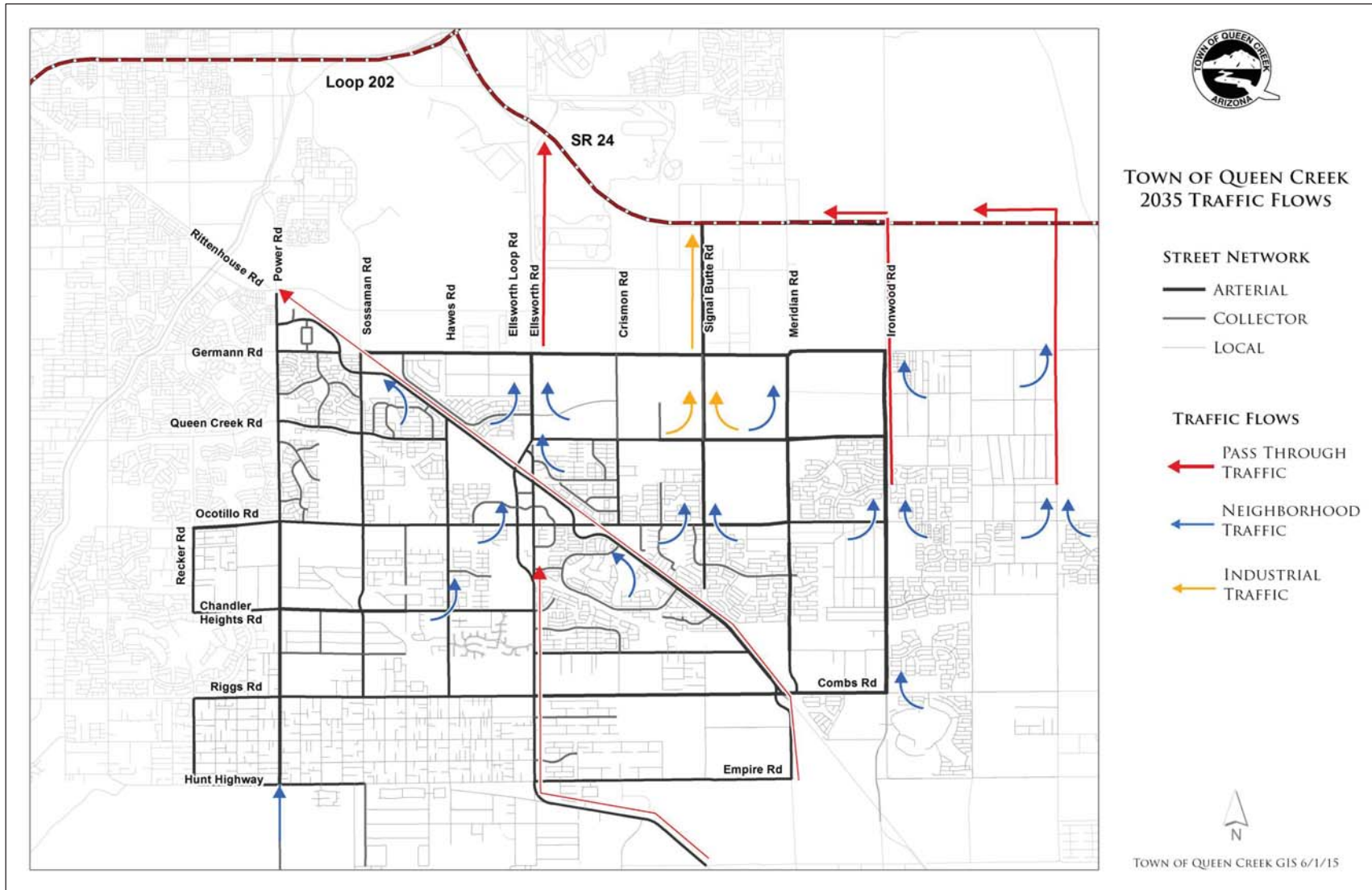


Series 5: Year 2035

This exhibit depicts an eventual connection of the SR 24 to the North/South Freeway being proposed in Pinal County.

As the East Valley sees this level of investment in the regional transportation system, Queen Creek will see the investments in its short- and medium-range transportation capacity give way to benefits from longer-term investments in regional connectivity. Today's "cut-through" traffic capacity becomes available for additional localized traffic, with the capacity for both provided.





2015/2016 TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN

The purpose of the Transportation Master Plan (TMP) is to provide a guiding document for transportation-related policies and capital projects.

A TMP in 2015/16 will address a number of important transportation issues for the Town. These issues include: how transportation directly and indirectly affects economic development, component analysis of land use, modality, congestion, lifestyle and other factors. The TMP will correspond to, and build upon, the Town's General Plan, Intersection and Circulation Plan, Arterial Street Plan, and other agency plans such as Maricopa County Department of Transportation, Maricopa Association of Governments, and adjoining municipalities.

This effort will guide the development and funding of the Town's transportation network, providing for mobility within the Town in a way that preserves a high quality of life for residents and an improved experience for visitors. The TMP will establish guidance for policy decisions on how to prioritize the Town's transportation improvements and how to identify the Town's strategic interests in regional investments, adjacent transportation facilities, and funding alternatives.

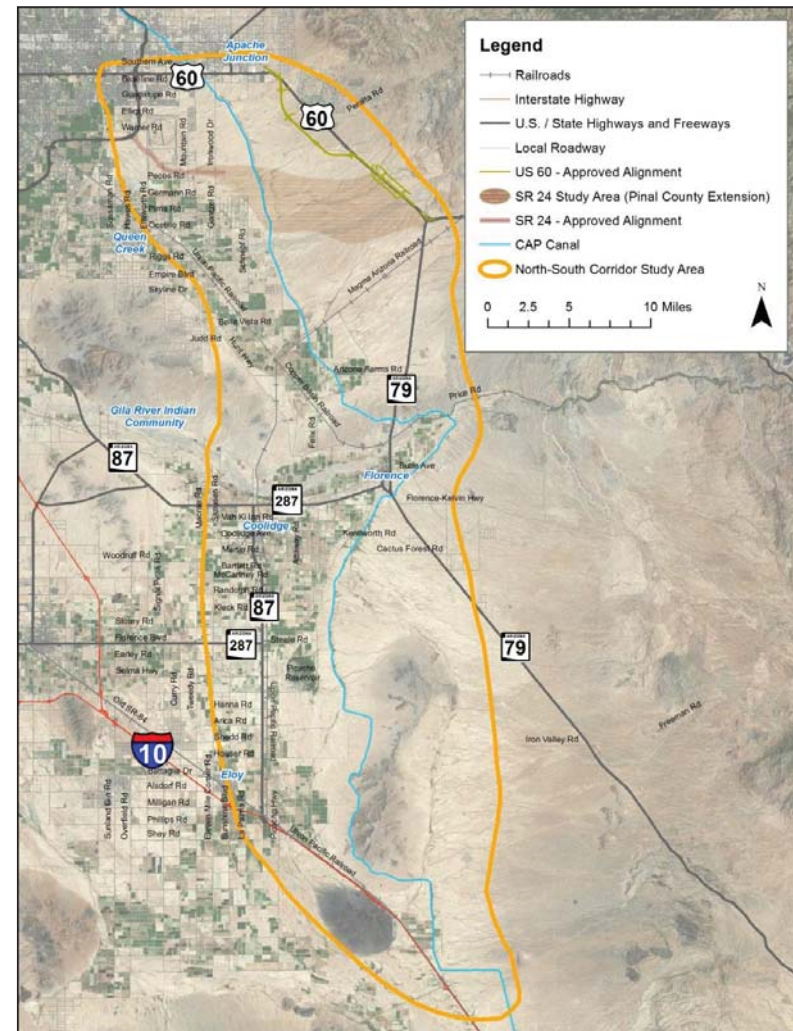
SR 24 AND NORTH-SOUTH FREEWAY CORRIDOR – ADOT

State Route 24 (SR 24), also known as the Gateway Freeway, provides connectivity and enhances the economic development potential of the Southeast Valley. The one-mile stretch of the SR 24, which is already operational, connects the Loop 202 San Tan Freeway with Ellsworth Road near PMGA. The future extension of SR 24, which will connect Loop 202 with US 60 or SR 79 near Florence Junction, will enhance the accessibility of the Town to the Phoenix Metropolitan Area.

The North-South Corridor Study being conducted by ADOT will deliver a preferred route alternative in 2016. The 45-mile-long, 900-square-mile study area is bounded by US 60 on the north; I-10 on the south; roughly the Loop 202, Gila River Indian Community, SR 87 on the west; and roughly SR 79 on the east. Local governmental entities within the study area include Central Arizona Governments (CAG); Pinal County; Gila River Indian Community; Cities of Apache Junction, Coolidge, and Eloy; and the Towns of Florence and Queen Creek.

The North-South Corridor is also part of the Sun Corridor study connecting Tucson and Phoenix to improve the connectivity between the two metropolitan areas.

The yellow boundaries in the map below show the boundary of the North South Corridor study area.

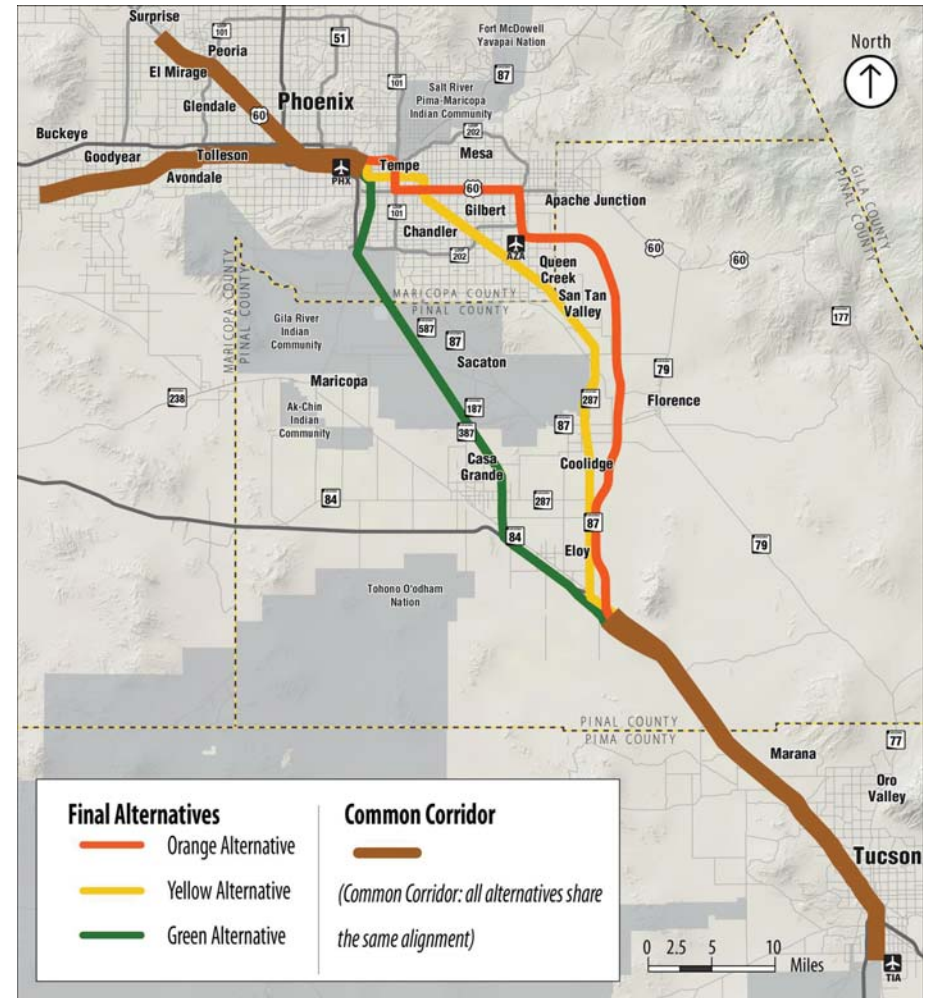


The Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) has identified a need for an alternative transportation mode to help meet existing and future travel demand in the Maricopa, Pima, and Pinal tri-county area. By 2035, the travel time between Tucson and Phoenix via Interstate 10 (I-10) is projected to take 26 percent longer than the travel time in 2010, and by 2050, 59 percent longer even if the highway is widened to 10 lanes. The Arizona Passenger Rail Corridor Study (APRCS), led by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), builds on statewide and regional planning efforts and initiatives to investigate alternative approaches to implementing passenger rail service between Phoenix and Tucson, Arizona's two largest cities.

State and regional planning initiatives recommended implementing passenger rail to add travel capacity to what is already offered by highways. Having an additional travel mode for the trip between Phoenix and Tucson could enhance highway safety and reduce air pollutant emissions. ADOT's 2010 Statewide Rail Framework Study and subsequent State Rail Plan showed that of all possible locations within the state, a passenger line between these two cities would serve the most people. Such a line could connect intermediate locations within the region and be the starting point for later rail connections to other regions of the Southwest and beyond.

In recent decades, population and employment within the Maricopa, Pima, and Pinal Study Area have increased. With only 17 percent of Arizona's land in private ownership, most of the state's developable land is located between the Phoenix and Tucson metropolitan areas, and is projected to develop as a continuous urban corridor between these two cities.

In late 2015, ADOT released their draft Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement, which recommends the “Yellow” line as a preferred alternative. Should this alternative continue as the State’s selected route for future funding, the Town of Queen Creek may be presented with an opportunity to site a station location along our UPRR alignment, including potentially in the heart of the proposed agritainment/ agritourism center in this SSAP.



MAG 2010 COMMUTER RAIL SYSTEM STUDY

This regional analysis was developed based on the thorough data the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) maintains on traffic patterns, planned land use, and growth trends in our region.

Some excerpts from that study are included here to illustrate the tremendous mid-term growth potential between Phoenix and Queen Creek, referred to here as the Southeast Corridor, which mirrors that portion of the “yellow line” route in the ADOT Arizona Passenger Rail Corridor Study (APRCS).

2.5 Southeast Corridor

The 36-mile Southeast Corridor has been defined by a two-mile radius surrounding the UPRR line between Union Station in downtown Phoenix and the intersection of Ellsworth Road and Rittenhouse Road in Queen Creek. The cities, towns, and Indian Communities that fall within the Southeast Corridor include:

- City of Phoenix;
- City of Scottsdale;
- City of Tempe;
- City of Mesa;
- City of Chandler;
- Town of Gilbert;
- Town of Queen Creek; and
- Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community.

2.5.1 Demographics

*The Southeast Corridor had a total population of just under 698,000 people in 2007 and will experience a 32 percent increase in population to approximately 922,000 people by 2030. **The most significant growth is expected to occur in Queen Creek, with a 177 percent increase in population,** while the City of Phoenix and the Town of Gilbert are expected to grow by 44 percent and 42 percent respectively.*

*The Southeast Corridor is also expected to experience an increase in employment growth during the same period of time. The Southeast Corridor had a total of 560,000 jobs in 2007 and will experience a 39 percent increase in employment to approximately 777,000 jobs by 2030. Similar to the results seen in population growth, **Queen Creek is expected to experience the most significant employment growth, with a 406 percent increase.** Other municipalities expected to experience considerable employment growth are the Town of Gilbert, with a 66 percent increase, and the City of Chandler, with a 40 percent increase in employment by 2030.*

2.5.2 Land Use

The Southeast Corridor includes a variety of land uses as it stretches between downtown Phoenix and downtown Queen Creek as shown in Figure 2-10. Table 2-16 summarizes existing land uses as of the year 2004 as well as future land use at build-out within the Southeast corridor distinguished by land use category. The most prevalent existing land use in the corridor is residential, which comprised 33 percent of the total corridor. Other significant existing land uses are Open Space/Recreation at 26 percent and vacant land occupying 11 percent of the corridor. **At build-out, the land use mix is expected to be similar to existing uses, with residential uses comprising 47 percent of the total corridor.**

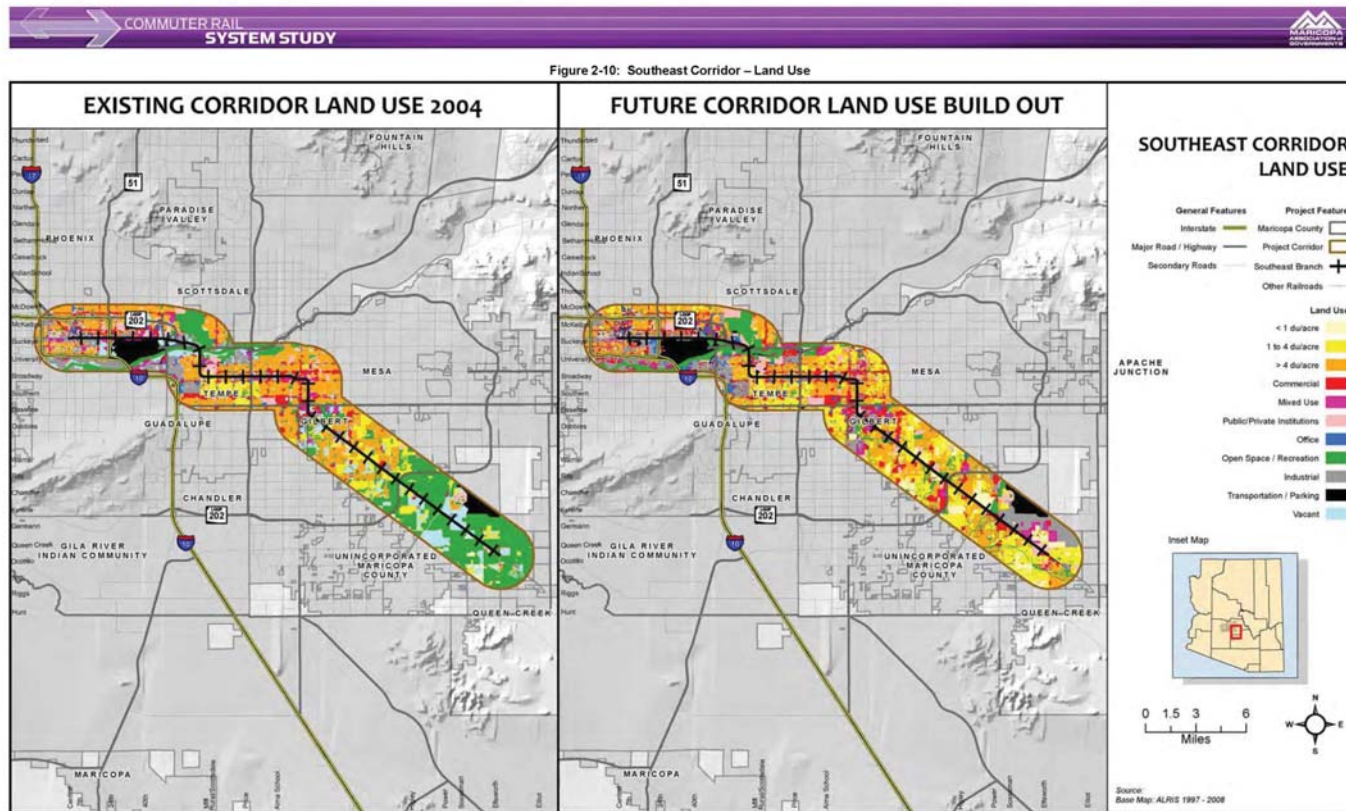


Table 2-16: Southeast Corridor Existing and Future Land Use

Land Use Category	Existing Land Use (2004)		Future Land Use (Build-out)	
	Acres	Percent of Total	Acres	Percent of Total
Residential (<1 du/acre)	561	0.6%	4,122	4.6%
Residential (1 – 4 du/acre)	6,765	7.6%	15,590	17.4%
Residential (>4 du/acre)	22,242	24.8%	22,364	25.0%
Commercial	4,848	5.4%	8,209	9.2%
Industrial	7,490	8.4%	10,551	11.8%
Mixed Use	2,468	2.8%	3,263	3.6%
Office	1,094	1.2%	1,869	2.1%
Open Space / Recreation	23,479	26.2%	8,225	9.2%
Public / Private Institutions	5,179	5.8%	8,194	9.2%
Transportation / Parking	5,573	6.2%	7,143	8.0%
Vacant	9,831	11.0%	0	0.0%
Total	89,530	100.0%	89,530	100.0%

Source: MAG, 2007c, 2007d.

2.5.7 Summary

The Southeast Corridor is expected to experience significant changes in its demographic makeup between 2007 and 2030. During this time the corridor is expected to experience a 32 percent increase in population and a 39 percent increase in employment. **The majority of the change expected to occur will take place southeast of SR 202.** Coinciding with population and employment growth, the change in land use is anticipated to largely be an increase in residential development, the majority of which will be located southeast of SR 202.

TRANSPORTATION GOALS



- Goal 1** Seek to improve connectivity with SR 24, the future North/South Corridor, and other major arterial streets, with a goal of minimizing commuter “cut-through” traffic through Queen Creek.
- Goal 2** Pursue and complete a Town-wide transportation Master Plan.
- Identify funding opportunities and match available resources to identified transportation needs.
- Goal 3** Encourage safe, efficient and multi-modal traffic circulation.
- Pursue construction of bicycle, pedestrian, and multi-use amenities in coordination with regional trails and facilities.
- Goal 4** Support the selection of the “Yellow Line” as the state’s preferred alignment for future commuter rail between Phoenix and Tucson.
- Goal 5** Consider and plan for the establishment of a transit center within the SSAP that may meet the near, mid, and longer term needs for East Valley commuters, while also helping achieve the Economic Development objectives of this Plan.

Chapter 5 Infrastructure

INFRASTRUCTURE

Purpose of this Chapter

This chapter serves to establish what supportive utility and traditionally public investment projects need to be considered for this plan to be successful.

- **Do we have the capacity to make this plan happen?**
- **What remaining capital improvements are required to facilitate future investment in this area?**
- **What improvements have already been planned for and/or funded?**

EXISTING AND PROPOSED SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE

Queen Creek currently has more than 2.2 million gallons per day of unused capacity out of the total 4 million gallons per day capacity at the regional wastewater treatment facility. Wastewater collection pipes are sized to meet future demand based on the land uses established in the 2008 General Plan. Any amendment to the General Plan will require a detailed analysis of the overall impact on the Town's infrastructure to determine Queen Creek's ability to serve the project.

Wastewater generated on properties east of the railroad right-of-way will flow down existing 12-inch to 30-inch sewer trunk lines to the railroad crossing at Queen Creek Road. Wastewater generated on properties west of the railroad will flow down existing and future 10-inch to 30-inch sewer trunk lines to Queen Creek Road where the two systems converge. From the point of convergence, wastewater flows are conveyed in 30-inch and larger sewer trunk lines to the regional wastewater treatment facility. The Town's current and planned wastewater collection system has or is planned to have the capacity for the projected flows that will be generated from the SSAP area.

The following maps identify Town's Sewer Master Plan Build-Out Sewer System Exhibit and identify existing sewer trunk

lines and future required lines in the SSAP as the area develops. The sewer improvements identified are anticipated to be constructed through the Town's CIP program. CIP funding is expected to be generated through the Town's applicable capacity charge per connection.

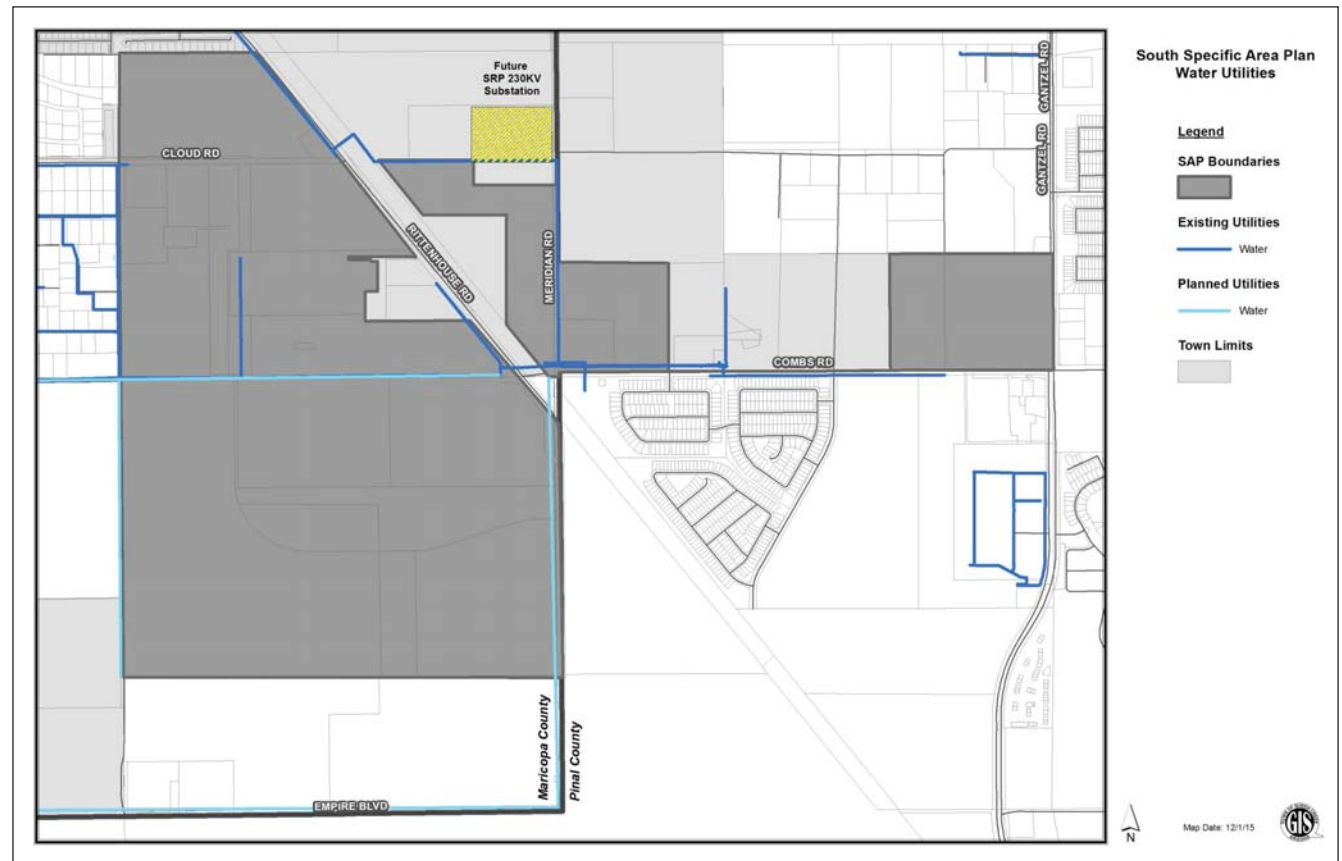


EXISTING AND PROPOSED WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

The Town of Queen Creek Water Master Plan, anticipated for adoption late 2015, serves as the guiding document behind the development of the Town's water system, including in the SSAP area. The Water Master Plan model included in the master plan accomplishes the important task of identifying the infrastructure necessary to combine the Town's water system with the recently acquired H2O water system.

The following maps identify the existing system improvements such as water lines, wells, storage tanks, and other devices necessary within the SSAP. Existing potable water mains that will serve the SSAP are currently available on Combs Road east of Rittenhouse Road and Ironwood Road north of Combs Road via 12-inch pipe. Source wells in the area include the Schnepf Well. An additional well and storage tank are identified for development in the southwest area of the SSAP.

The water related improvements identified in the Water Master Plan are planned to be constructed through the Town's CIP program. CIP Funding is expected to be generated through the Town's applicable capacity charge per connection.



STORM WATER MANAGEMENT

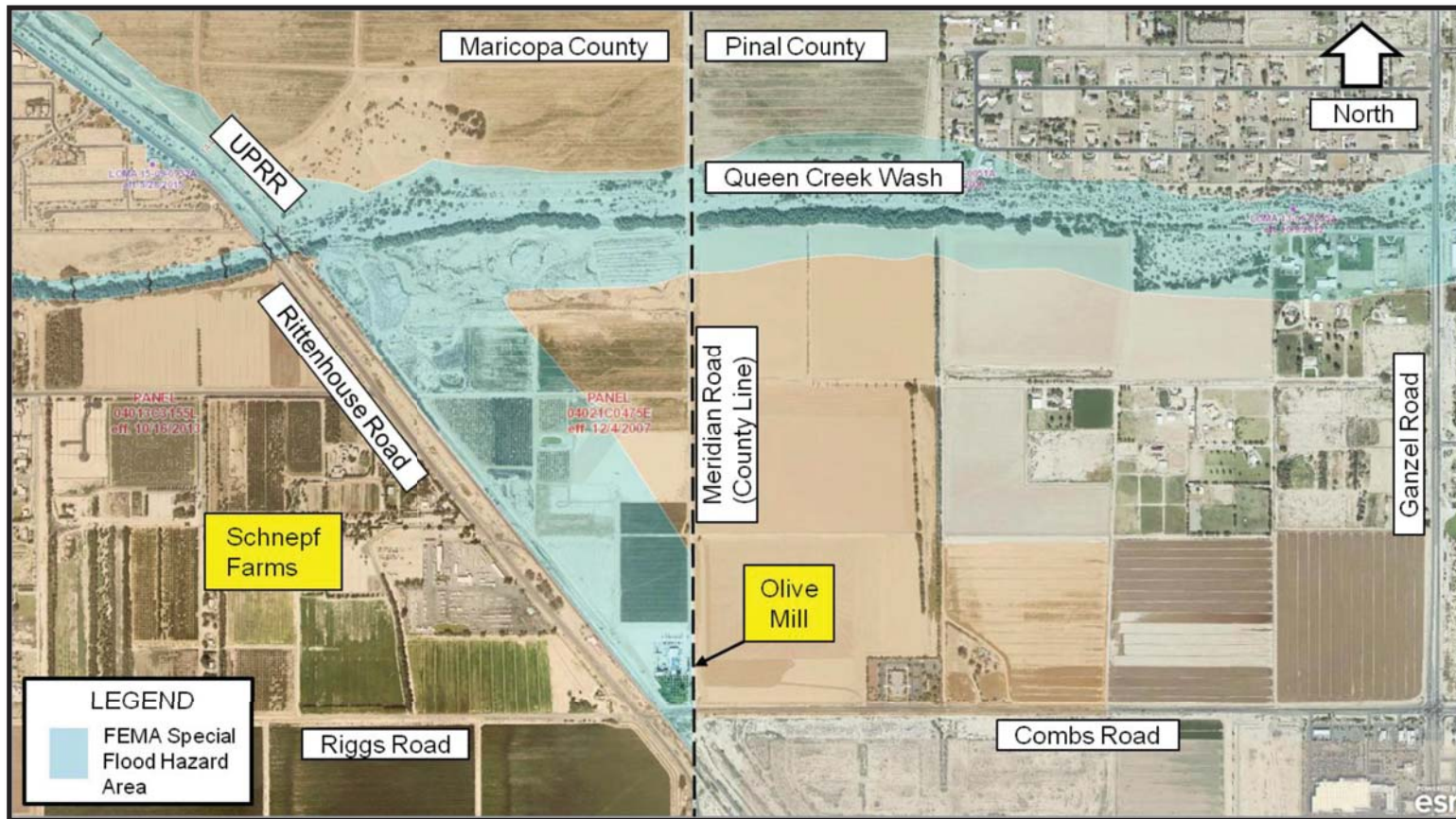
Portions of land within the South SAP study area have been identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHAs). The SFHAs are officially mapped and designated by the “degree of flood risk” on the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs). These FIRMs are reviewed and updated by FEMA periodically as land is developed or as conditions change that could alter a flood prone area.

The areas shaded in light blue on the adjacent image identify the locations of the flood hazard areas that are generally located along the Queen Creek Wash corridor and the UPRR/Rittenhouse Road Corridor. Any development within SFHAs must satisfy the minimum requirements of the FEMA National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and the Maricopa and Pinal County Floodplain Regulations.

There are various methods for developing within these SFHAs. One method is to place “fill material” to elevate the land above the 100-Yr flood level and formally submit an application to FEMA to review, adjust and/or remove the flood hazard zone from the FIRM. This process is known as the FEMA Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) and Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) process.

Another method is to apply for an individual floodplain use permit from the appropriate county to build an individual structure within an SFHA. For this method, the finish floor elevation of the structure is required to be elevated a distance (typically a minimum of 12 inches) above the 100-Yr flood elevation and an “Elevation Certificate” must also be completed by a licensed engineer or land surveyor verifying the finish floor elevation after construction is complete. These are just a few examples and each project is considered on a case-by-case basis.

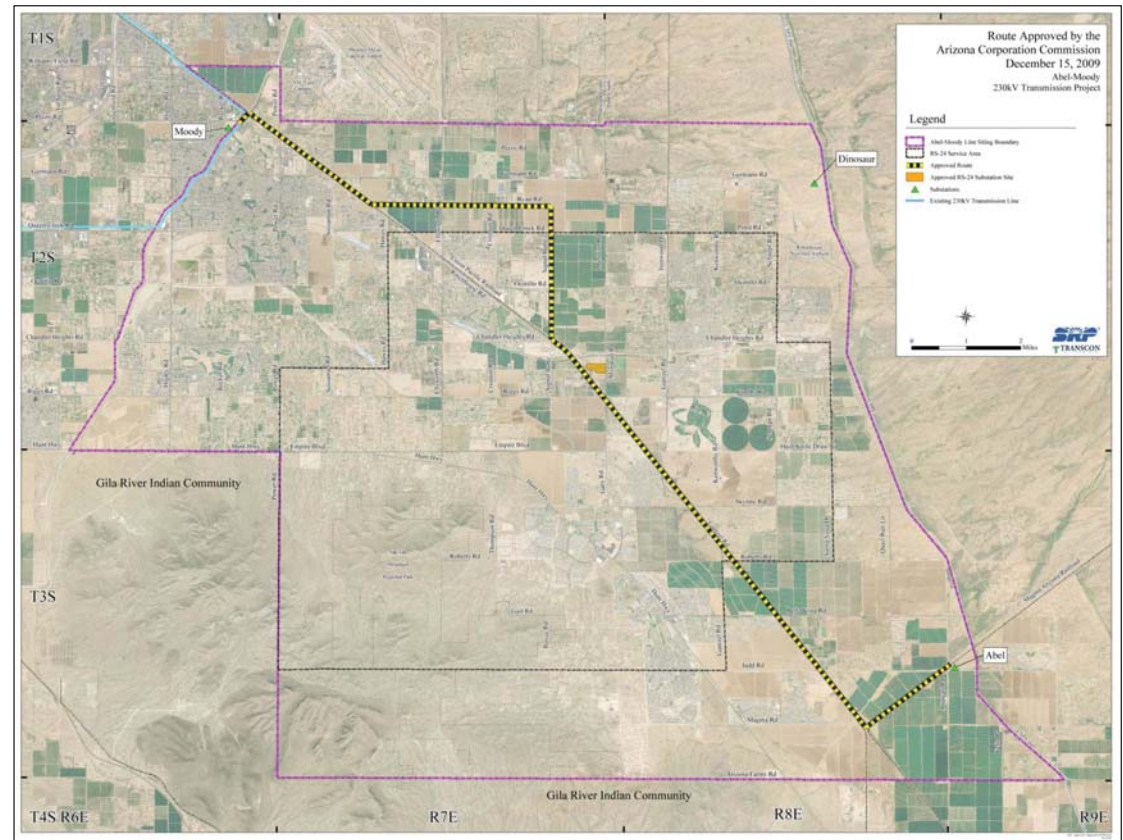
For drainage design and storm water retention, any new development(s) will require onsite drainage retention for a 100-Yr/2-Hr storm event which is the Town's standard. For offsite drainage design, the storm water approaching this area of Town generally comes in the form of shallow sheet flow from the south and east flowing in a northwesterly direction and eventually draining into the Queen Creek Wash. As the area north and east of the UPRR continues to develop, there may be potential storm water management design options that could be considered for managing offsite flows such as developing an interceptor channel along the east side of the future Meridian Road to capture the drainage flows and convey to the Queen Creek Wash, or possibly through the use of “sub-regional” retention basin(s) in combination with drainage channels to manage the storm water prior to discharging into the Queen Creek Wash returning it to its existing flow condition.



ELECTRICAL SERVICE

In 2009, the Arizona Power Plant and Transmission Line Siting Committee recommended that SRP be granted a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility (CEC) for the Abel-Moody 230kV Project, Case #148. The new 230kV line starting near the Moody substation and extending north along the Roosevelt Water Conservation District (RWCD) then south along the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR), east on Ryan Road, south on Signal Butte Road to the UPRR, then following the UPRR south to the Magma Railroad into the Abel substation. It also identified the site of the new RS-24 substation, northwest of the Meridian and Combs intersection and south of Queen Creek wash.

This new transmission line in Queen Creek is intended to meet increased electricity demand and growth. SRP plans to construct an approximately 20-mile, double-circuit, 230-kilovolt (kV) transmission line, connecting two SRP-owned and previously sited 230/69kV substations. The new transmission line also will connect a new 230/69kV substation that will be sited and built as part of this project. That new substation is adjacent to this South Specific Area.



INFRASTRUCTURE GOALS



- Goal 1** Facilitate the provision of water distribution and sewer collection infrastructure necessary to serve the requirements of residential, commercial, and industrial customers in the SSAP.
- Goal 2** To develop source and storage facilities to appropriately provide for the continual supply of potable water to the area.
- Goal 3** Continue to manage and control drainage conditions in this plan area to prevent limitations on investment and development.
- Goal 4**
- Goal 5** Advance the design and construction of projects where needed and practical.
- Goal 7** Collaborate with utility providers to deliver necessary business-level telecommunication and data services and infrastructure.

Chapter 6 Open Space

OPEN SPACE

Purpose of this Chapter

This chapter serves to reaffirm the desired outcomes of the requirements for open spaces, both public and private, for this SSAP.

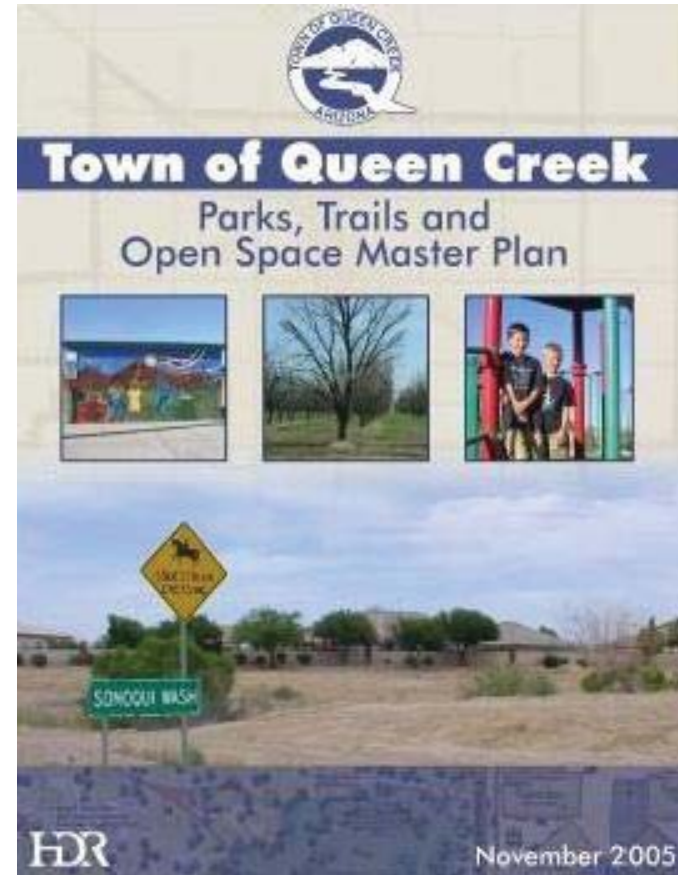
- **How do we ensure open spaces are built and used effectively for the benefit of all?**
- **What can we do to ensure the Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan is implemented and improved upon over time?**
- **What opportunities exist to use public parks and open spaces to appropriately support, preserve and grow the agritainment centers?**

BACKGROUND

Open space plays a vital role to enhance the quality of life in communities. There are a wide range of benefits of the open space as it provides active and passive recreational opportunities in the community; promotes an active and healthy lifestyle; acts as a boundary between incompatible land uses; and provides natural safety such as flood control, clean air, and protection of wildlife habitat. Open space also helps to foster the economy by enhancing real estate values, attracting businesses and increasing tourism. It is found that even the crime rate of the Town remains low through properly planned open space and recreation facilities. To maximize the benefit of open space, it is important to seek meaningful and integrated parks, trails and open space systems. Communities need to plan for open space lands together with other land uses when planning the entire area.

As mentioned in the Town General Plan, Queen Creek wants *"to preserve the benefits of rural life while providing an avenue for managed change."*

In November 2005, the *Parks, Trails and Open Space Master Plan* was created by the Town with a goal of sustaining and improving the quality of life of Queen Creek for both rural and emerging suburban neighborhoods.

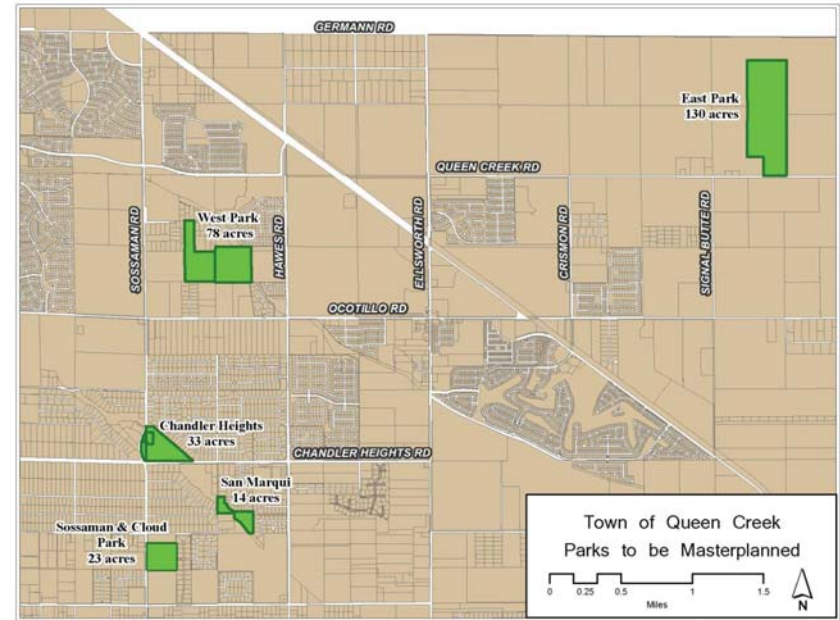


In 2016, The Town will update this Master Plan as well as the 2007 *Five Parks Masterplan*, to integrate the thought and planning of the Town's Parks, trails and open spaces.

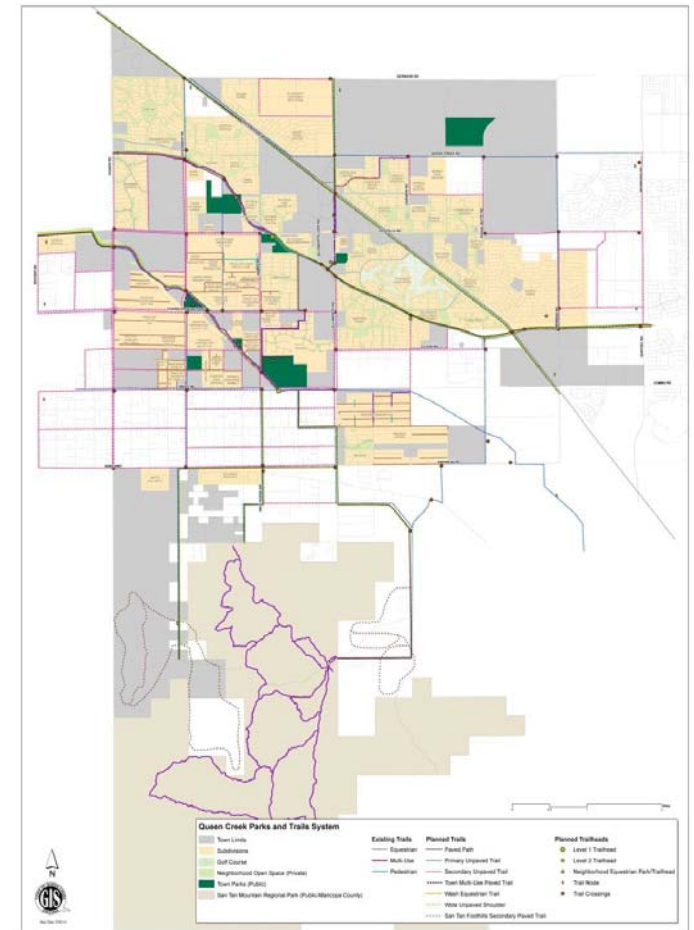
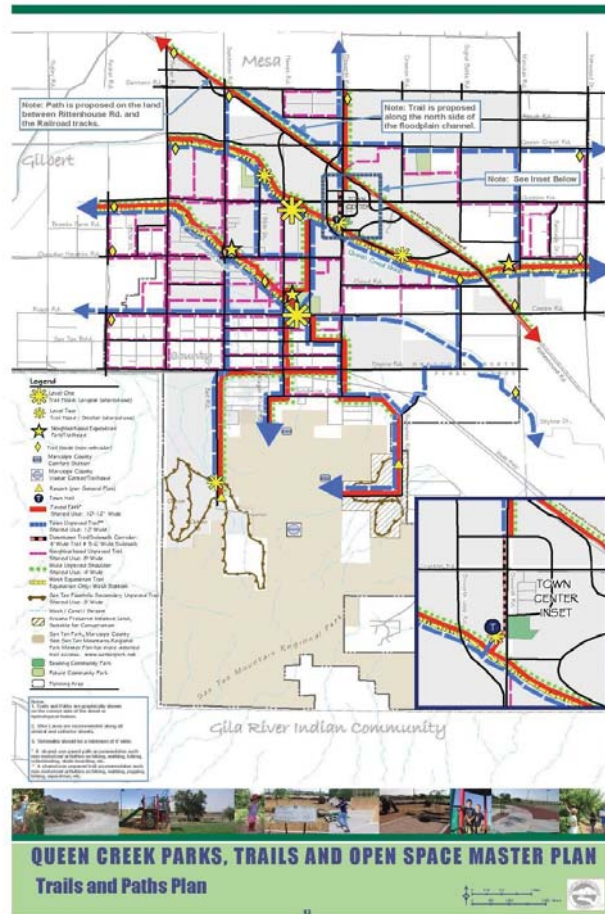
FIVE PARKS MASTER PLAN

Town of Queen Creek
Maricopa County, Arizona

Council Approved
August 15, 2007



This plan map was an outcome of the November 2005 Study, was digitized in 2013 and incorporated into the Town's development plan review process to ensure opportunities are not lost to incrementally implement this plan as growth continues.



CURRENT CONDITIONS

For this SSAP, the undeveloped nature of remaining properties represents a great opportunity to apply the Town and region's experiences to get it right the first time when planning new public and private park facilities and the trails and paths that link them together.

Here are some considerations for this area that may impact the planning, budgeting and operation of future facilities:

- Post-recession choices in living and recreation opportunities.
- Completed and emerging residential subdivisions.
- Growth in the southeast quadrant
- Sustainable budgeting and operation of recreation assets.
- Increasing emphasis on local and regional events and economic development efforts.
- Connection of private and public open spaces.
- Programming of public spaces for active use.
- Private/Public partnerships to advance and develop open spaces.

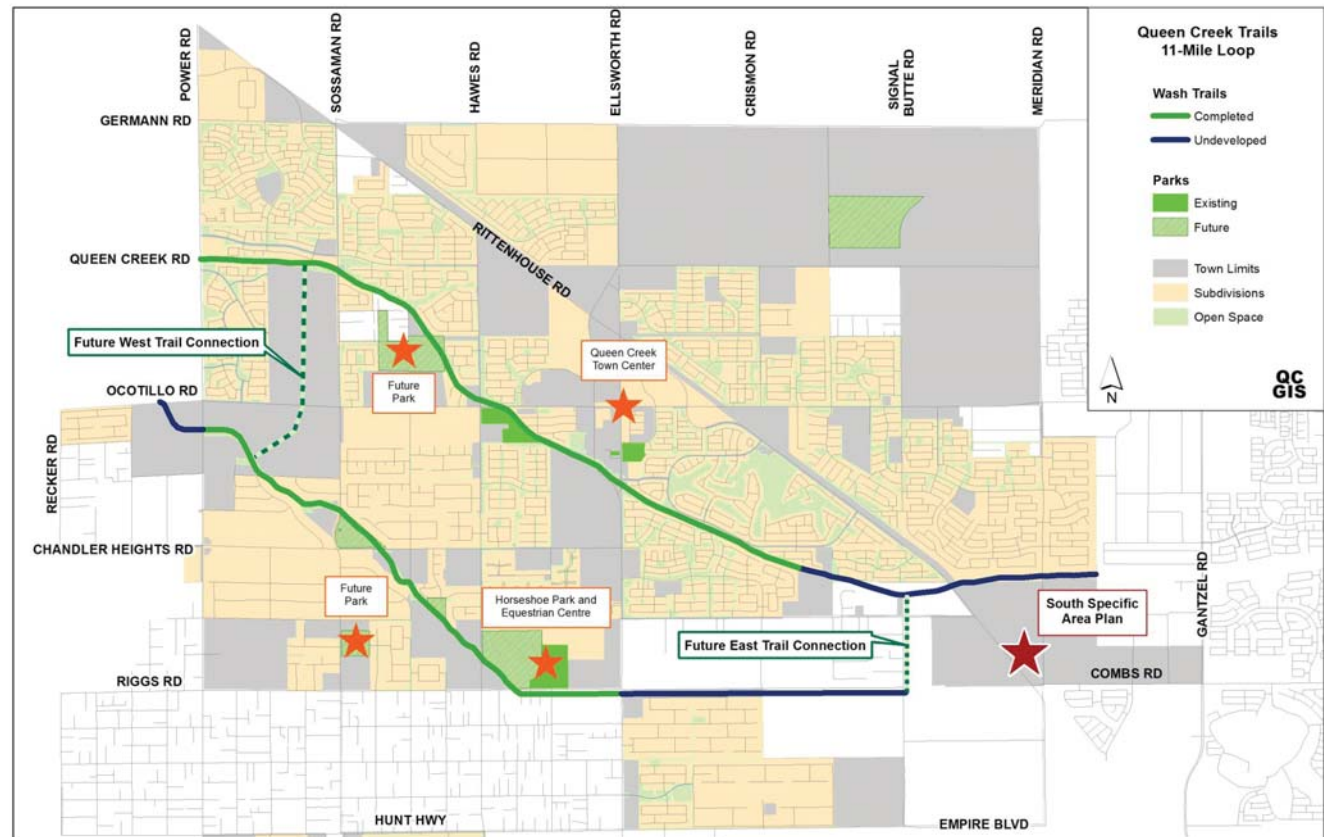


11-MILE WASH TRAIL LOOP

The 11-Mile Wash Trail Loop is a concept that began in 2013 as a way to maximize the investment the Town has been making in its 26-year history to acquire and improve the two natural wash systems that run east-west through Queen Creek.

The Queen Creek and Sonoqui Wash systems today represent years of work and millions of dollars of property acquisition, improvements, and connectivity for the benefit of residents. Both trail systems are regularly used and enjoyed while supporting the outdoor, active lifestyle the residents expect and deserve.

As new housing developments emerged in 2013, an opportunity arose to connect these wash systems into a looped system of both public and privately held property, but with a shared recreational corridor available for perpetual public use.



CONNECTING THE WASHES

At the western connection of the two wash trails, the Sossaman 300 development was approved in 2015 and includes provisions for a publically accessible connection that would be built by the private development with perpetual use and enjoyment for all of the Town's residents.



At the eastern edge of town, the opportunity for connection of the two washes exists within this South Specific Area Plan. There is existing right-of-way for the county road along the current Signal Butte alignment, with potential for a new connection across Cloud Road and north to the Sonoqui Wash.



CONNECTING THE COMMUNITY

The benefits of making these connections and securing an 11-mile looped multi-use path system for the Town are many. There are community assets and point of interest all along this proposed system:

- The Town Center Area
- Horseshoe Equestrian Center and associated parking facilities
- The agritainment and agritourism center of this SSAP and associated parking facilities
- Desert Mountain Park
- Future Park Sites for the Town
- Every Town neighborhood existing and proposed south of the UPRR tracks
- Existing and future Equestrian Trails
- Existing and future trails and green spaces, both public and private

There are social, cultural and financial benefits to completing this "11-Mile Loop" over time.

Trails provide safe, alternative, non-motorized transportation routes to destinations such as workplaces, education facilities, commercial establishments, and recreation, and provide connectivity among different land uses. Trails and paths are used for walking, jogging, hiking, biking, and equestrian use. Multi-purpose trails support these activities for simultaneous use.

Trails provide connectivity to other modes of transportation and thereby support active and sustainable lifestyles. Establishing a trail network that connects desirable destinations maintains a sense of community and provides balanced transportation along with maintaining the culture and character of the Town.

Increasing the connectivity between existing local and regional trails and the heart of the agritainment and agritourism center improves accessibility to this area of Town, further helping to brand it as an area of local and regional significance.



EVENTS AND PROGRAMMING USES

In addition to benefits of increased connectivity, the future active programming of the event, entertainment, commerce and outdoor gathering spaces along the Loop can provide a much enhanced quality of life for the Town and region, while also boosting tourism, local spending, and opportunities for community recognition and pride.

With the many assets along the loop, and future investments as well, there would be no other Valley Community that could offer the range of festivals, entertainment, outdoor athletics, and authentic experiences from farm to food to recreation and shopping that Queen Creek could offer. When the weather permits, the "11-Mile Loop" could successfully park and host visitors for simultaneous festivals and special events on the same day all within the Town.



OPEN SPACE GOALS

- Goal 1** Update the Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan (2005) and Five Parks Master Plan (2007).
- Goal 2** Provide a comprehensive park and recreational network that supports the design and economic development goals of this Plan.
- Goal 3** Leverage other public and private investment when practical to advance park, trail, and open space development.
- Goal 4** Update and actively manage the plan to connect the community's recreation facilities, parks and bicycle network, equestrian trails and access to other active and passive open spaces.
- Goal 5** Actively pursue, develop, and program a united trail and park system uniting the Sonoqui and Queen Creek washes into the "11-Mile Loop".
- Goal 6** Encourage the development of walkable neighborhoods and bike-able streets.
- Goal 7** Encourage the development of non-street adjacent trails as connections open spaces and recreational opportunities.
- Goal 8** Encourage the development of interconnected neighborhoods allowing for the flow of pedestrian and bicycle traffic between neighborhoods.
- Goal 9** Prioritize active recreational spaces where people live.

Chapter 7 Land Use

LAND USE

PURPOSE OF THIS CHAPTER

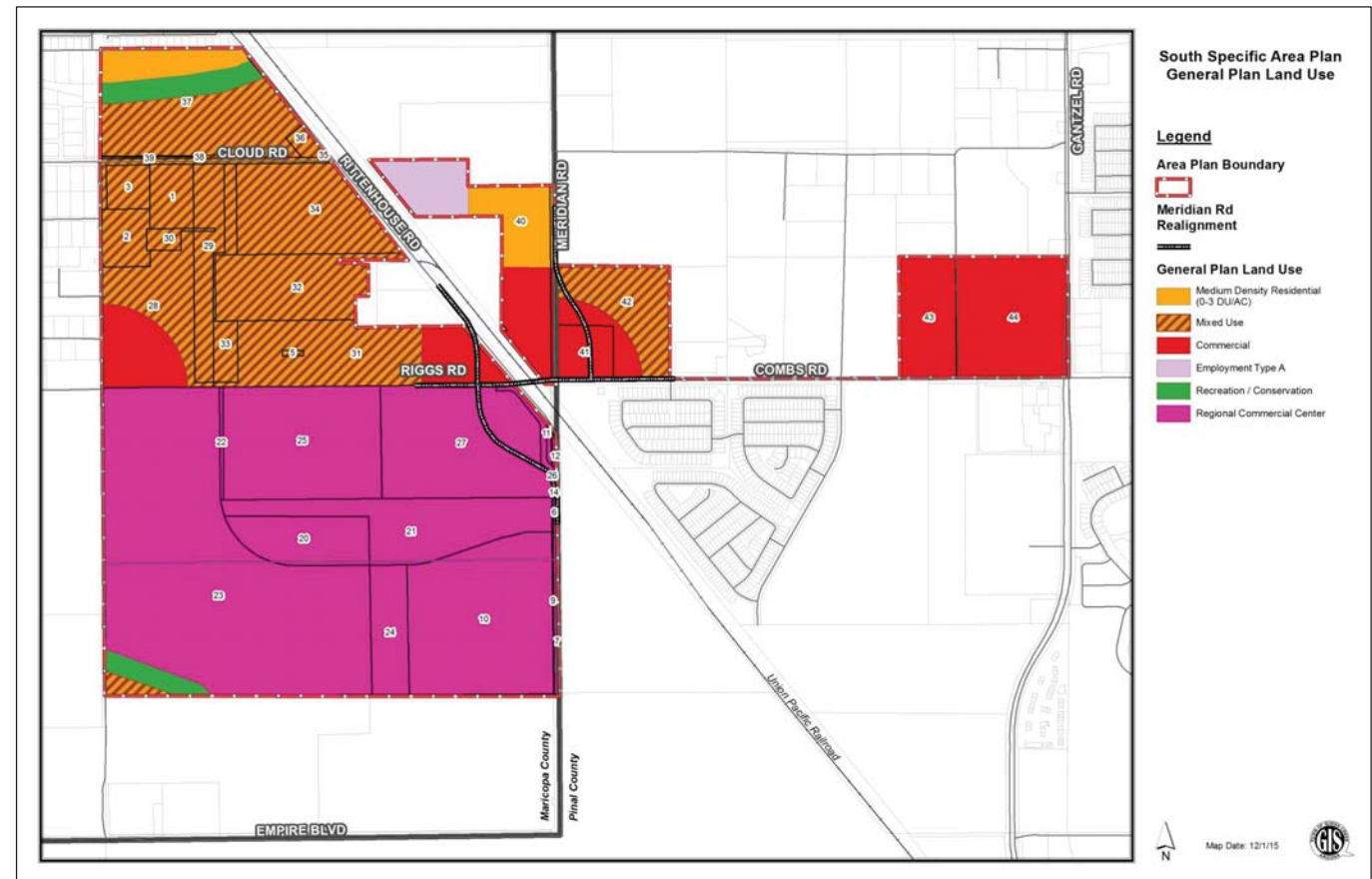
This chapter serves to establish a new mix of recommended land uses that should be considered to advance the goals of this South Specific Area Plan.

EXISTING LAND USE

The current General Plan land use designations in the 823-acre South SAP include:

Commercial/Services, Regional Commercial Center, Employment Type A, Medium Density Residential (0-3 DU/AC), Recreation/Conservation/Parks, and Mixed-Use (see tables later in this chapter for specific acreages).

2008 GENERAL PLAN LAND USE PLAN:

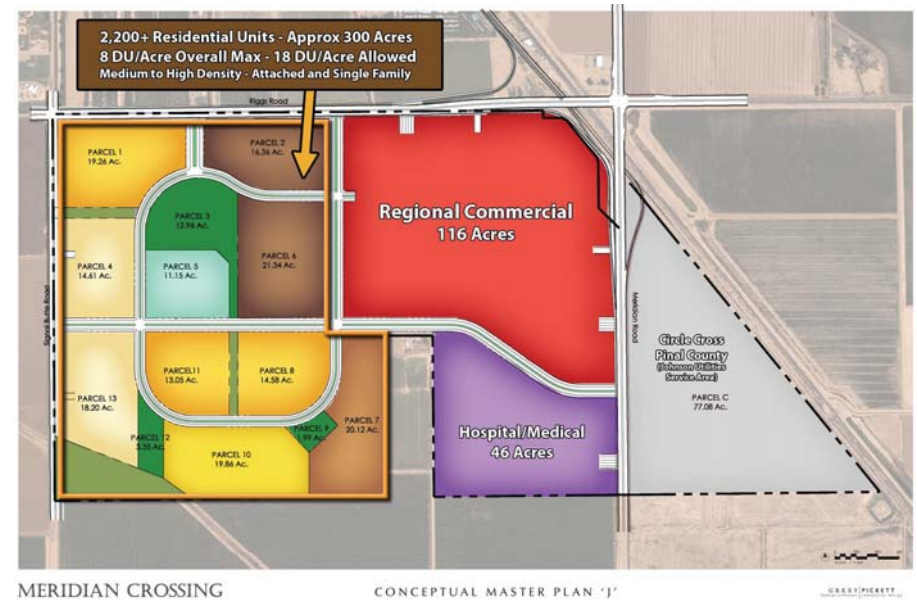


FORMER DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR HOSPITAL, REGIONAL COMMERCIAL, AND RESIDENTIAL (2008)

The southeast quadrant of the Town was most recently planned prior to the Great Recession, during a period of robust growth and unabated investment. The area included in this Specific Area Plan had plans for a large amount of Mixed Use zoning in addition to a regional commercial retail center and hospital facility. Since that time, the proliferation of community health centers and changes to healthcare delivery models has diminished any demand that may have remained for a second large hospital facility at this location. The Banner Ironwood Medical center is now open and located only 1 mile away from the site. The Banner hospital site also contains enough vacant land for continued expansions, also reducing the likelihood that this area will see a new hospital facility in the years ahead.

Furthermore, the attractiveness of this site for a regional mall has abated as retail growth responds to changes in consumer habits and preferences. The growth of online shopping has significantly reduced new mall construction, and planned regional retail centers in the Phoenix region are now exclusively located along established freeways. And, the continued build-out of Town Center retail centers at Queen Creek Marketplace, Queen Creek Fiesta Center, and the even newer Queen Creek District commercial centers would not be advantaged in the near, medium or longer-term by another regional commercial center located only 3.5 miles away from the Town center area.

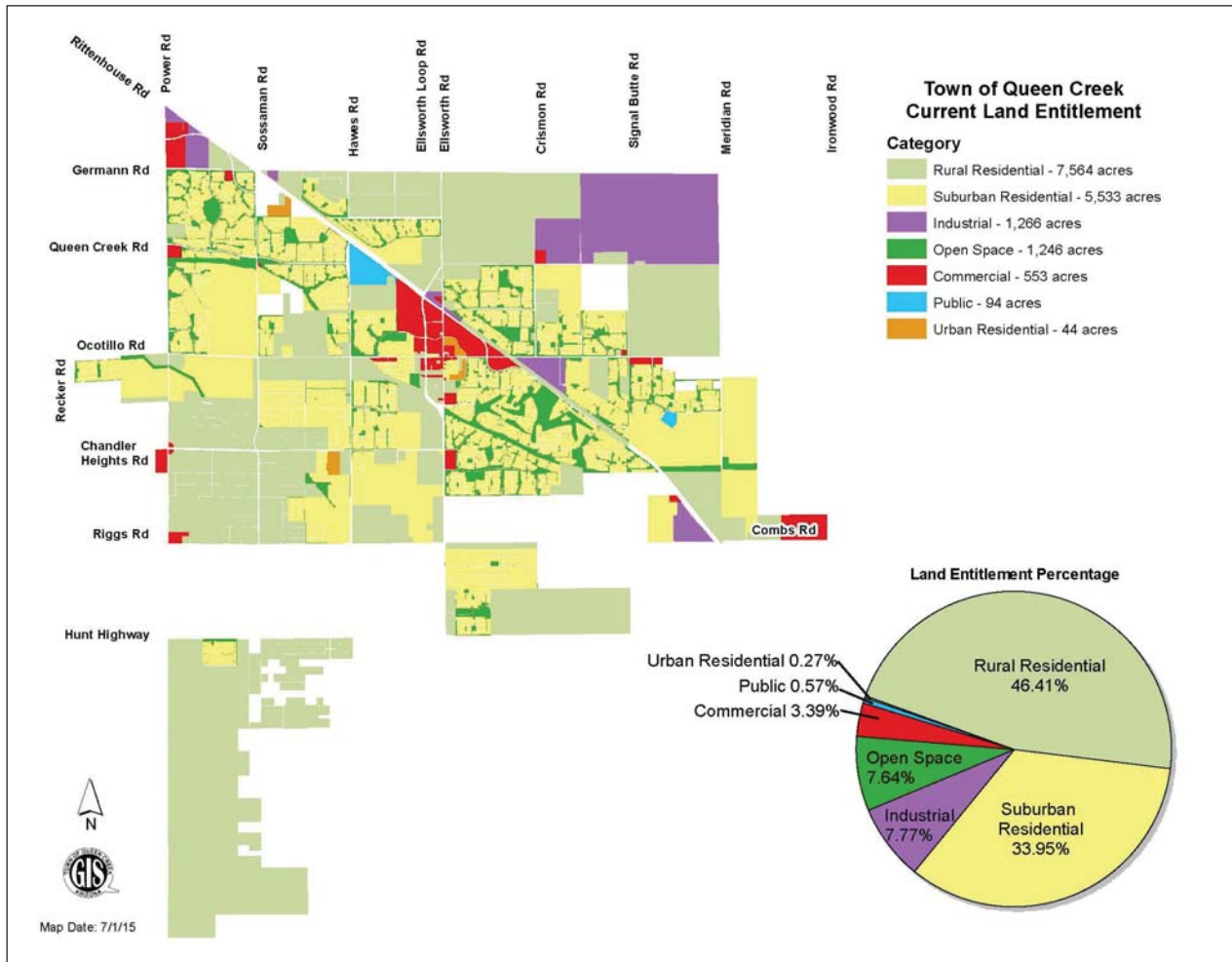
One trend that would support continued retail and commercial investment in this area is the growth of the farm-to-table and locally-sourced food movements. This area offers an authentic, distinct, and very relevant set of properties, operations, and assets that can build on the agritainment brand of Queen Creek (i.e. Schnepf Farms, Olive Mill) without directly competing with the retail offerings at the Town Center.



CURRENT ZONING MAP:



This map shows the mix of existing zoning designations for properties in the Town.



LAND USE MIX IN SSAP

It is advantageous for the Town to have a variety of land uses to achieve economic and social benefits. Additionally, it is necessary to have an appropriate balance and relationship between different land uses to avoid conflicts and achieve harmonious land use patterns in the Town. With the land use patterns in the 2008 General Plan, challenges exist to create viable developments due to land use and development plans that were formulated nearly 10 years ago. The effort to develop this SSAP brought together key stakeholders, property owners, Town staff, and consultant teams to collaboratively address these and other challenges in a deliberate way with consideration of shared needs, desires, and aspirations.

Reflecting on the work of the previous chapters of this SSAP, the appropriateness of the existing land uses in this region as identified in previous development plans and the 2008 General Plan yield concerns related to land use:

- The existing Regional Commercial Center that is no longer appropriate or viable for this area
- Maintaining an appropriate mix of residential and commercial land uses consistent with continuing development trends and market conditions
- Preserving and allowing for future growth for existing uses
- Establishing the Agritainment land use and providing development standards to support and market this region as a unique destination for Queen Creek and the East Valley
- Identifying the need for appropriate buffers between land uses
- Allowing for high-quality yet creative signage that is specific to Agritainment uses, and supporting use of alternative means such as landscape design to highlight the facilities in this area
- Identifying and targeting this area for potential future Town park sites
- Leveraging existing developments in the SSAP to locate a connection between the Town's wash trail systems to support the goal of establishing an 11-mile loop that can attract a variety of activities and events
- An updated streets plan that incorporates an updated design for Meridian Road, which recognizes it will no longer be an arterial road of regional significance, and compliments the future development expansion of the Olive Mill.

This SSAP which includes amending 823 acres on the General Plan Land Use Map from Commercial/Services, Regional Commercial Center, Employment Type A, Medium Density Residential (0-3 DU/AC), Recreation/Conservation/Parks, and Mixed-

Use; and establishing Agritainment, Commercial, Medium Density Residential (0-3 DU/AC), Public/Quasi-Public, and Recreation/Conservation/Parks.

The two major land use revisions proposed include:

- 1) Updating the 423-acre Regional Commercial Center land use to Medium Density Residential (0-3 DU/AC);
- 2) Updating the Mixed-Use land use designation to a new Agritainment land use designation.

The new land use pattern has been proposed to better address the efficient use of the land in the South Specific Area that can further the Town's goals for responsibly managing continued growth.

Agritainment Land Use Designation

In support of the new land use designation, the following is proposed new language to the General Plan text and Land Use Plan:

Agritainment (AT):

The recently updated Zoning Ordinance approved by Council on July 15, 2015 contains provisions for the Agritainment land use designation being proposed with the South SAP, and provides the following description:

Agritainment: A land use that supports and enhances agriculture as an attraction for entertainment and or education related purposes. The Agritainment District implements the Agritainment Future Land Use classifications of the Queen Creek South Specific Area Plan and requires a Planned Area Development (PAD) Overlay.

The Agritainment General Plan Land Use designation is intended to provide for land uses that support and enhance agriculture uses and agriculture-oriented activities in the Town. Such uses shall be compatible with agriculture, and may include uses that support open space, natural resource management, outdoor recreation, enjoyment of scenic beauty, educational experiences, commercial and residential uses.

AGRITAINMENT USES

Agritainment and agritourism are seen as a commercial enterprise that include at the minimum a working farm, ranch or agricultural plant, but also go beyond that to offer activities, events, and functions that support the agriculture-oriented operation by providing a host of activities that bring visitors to their facility and the area. Agritainment has been an alternative farm enterprise for more than 100 years although it's seen a renewed popularity recently. In an effort to support and protect agritainment and agritourism, the Town of Queen Creek adopted a new zoning category as part of the zoning ordinance modernization in 2015.

Besides the traditional uses associated with farming and agritainment, uses may include related or supportive activities. These activities supplement the income of the farm by offering year-round business opportunities and non-agricultural services that fulfill other community needs that may not be provided elsewhere in the area. Additionally, these ancillary uses provide supportive services for visitors and nearby residents.

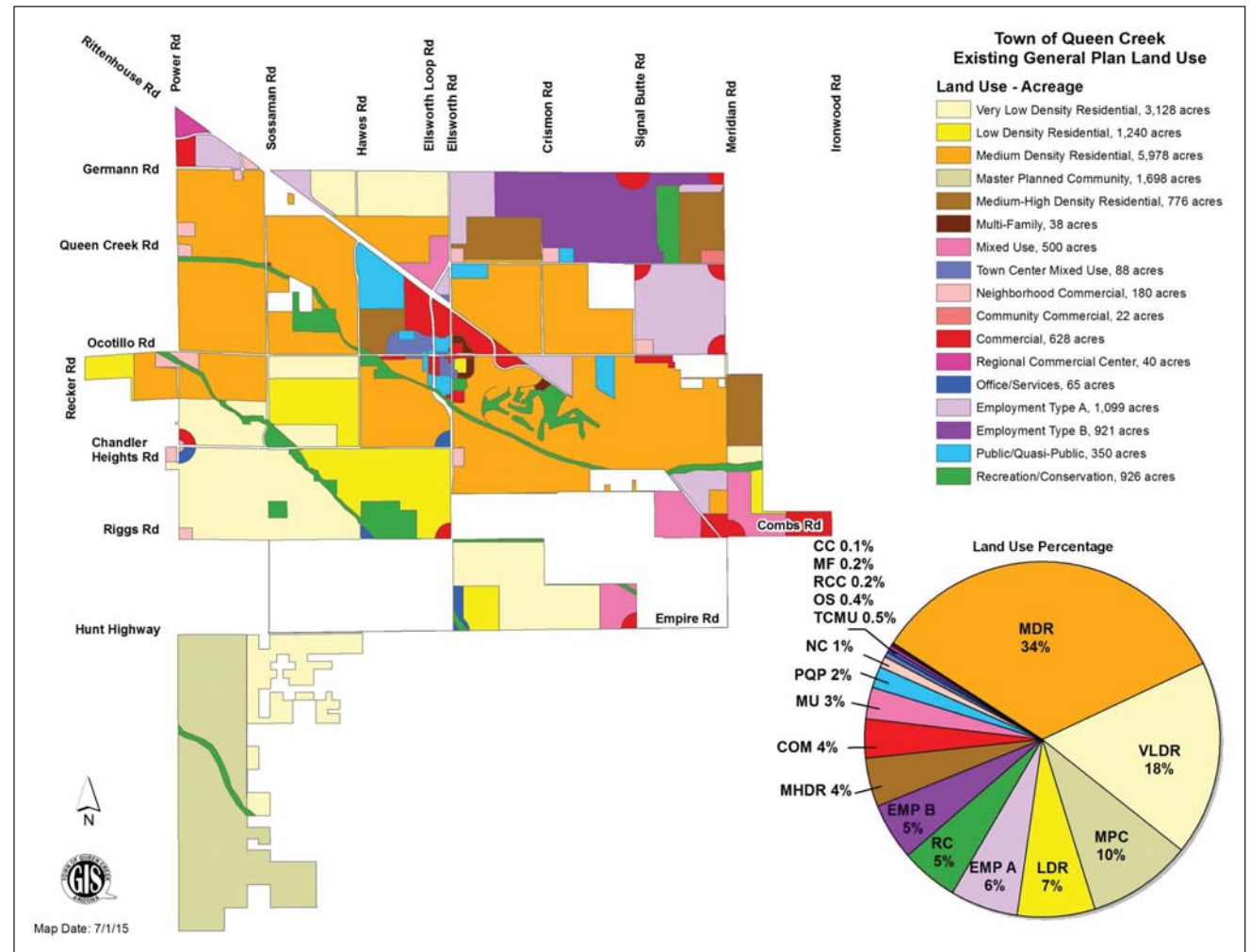
Typical uses associated with agritainment and agritourism, as well as accessory uses that might be found in this category are shown in this table.

Direct Sales	Education	Recreation	Vacation	Entertainment	Accessory Uses
Farmers Markets	Farm tours	Festivals	Farm stays	Concerts	Winery/Brewery
Pick-your-own	Seminars	Corn maze	Working farm vacations	Special Events	Restaurant/Bar
On-farm sales	Interactive displays	Fee fishing	Destination weddings	Festivals, Fairs	Retail stores
Roadside stands	Youth camps	Rodeos	Corporate meetings, retreats	Hunting/Working dog trials or training	Bakery, Food venue
Crafts/gifts	School tours	Paint ball courses	Bed and Breakfast	Amusement park	Outdoor dining
Gift shop	Garden tours	Horseback riding	Guest housing	Haunted house, hayride	Creamery
Food processing	Winery tours	Wildlife viewing & photography	Camping	Outdoor movies	Farm equipment shows
Farming	Microbrewery tours		Guest ranch	Fireworks	Bowling
	Agricultural Technical tours	Picnicking	Youth exchange	Water park	Cemetery
	Historical exhibits	Wagon, Sleigh rides	Elder hostel	Miniature golf	Car shows
	Crop sign ID program	Clay bird shooting	Private parties	Laser Tag	
	Petting zoo	Off-road vehicles	Hotel	Hot-air balloon site	
	Exotic animal farm		Cottages	Guide/outfitter operation	
	Museum		Camping, RV campground	Horse pack team	
	Art exhibitions				

EXISTING LAND USE MIX

The map below shows the various categories of land uses in the General Plan as adopted in 2008, and provides a breakdown of the existing acreage in each category.

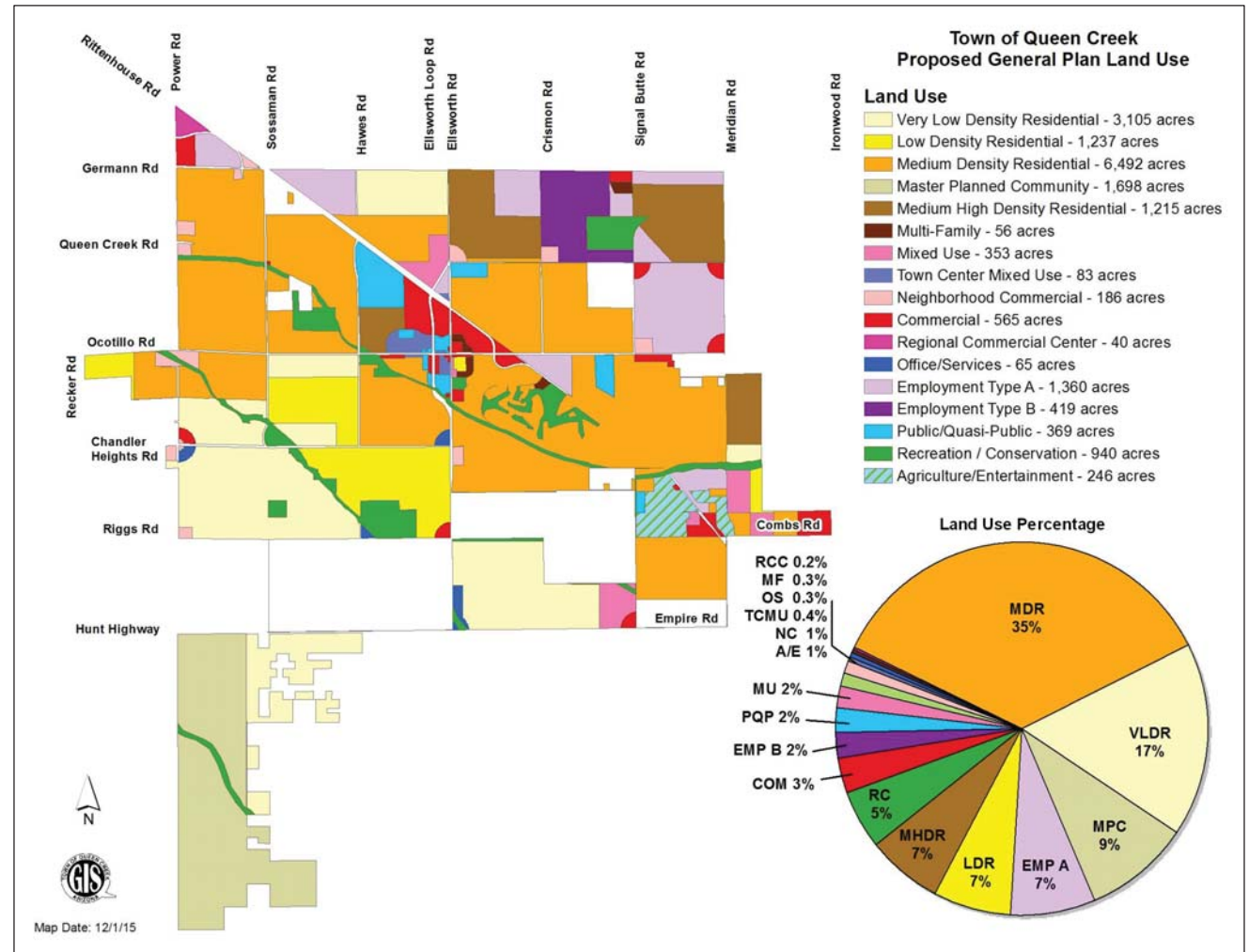
2008 GENERAL PLAN MAP:



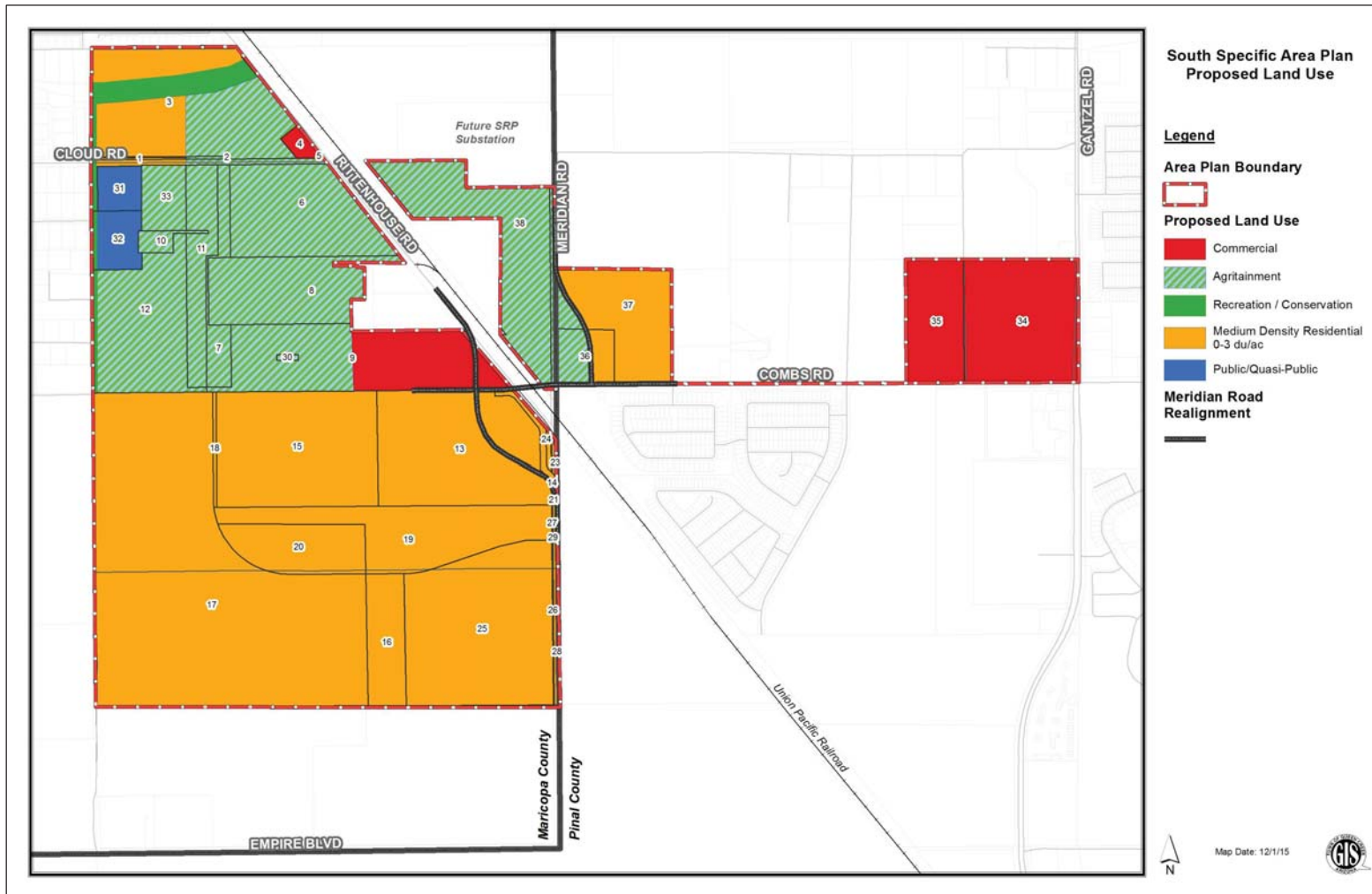
PROPOSED LAND USE MIX

In comparison, this map shows the same information as the previous map throughout the town, and incorporates the proposed land uses for the North Specific Area Plan and the South Specific Area Plan.

2008 GENERAL PLAN MAP WITH PROPOSED LAND USE MIX:



SOUTH SPECIFIC AREA PLAN PROPOSED LAND USE MAP:



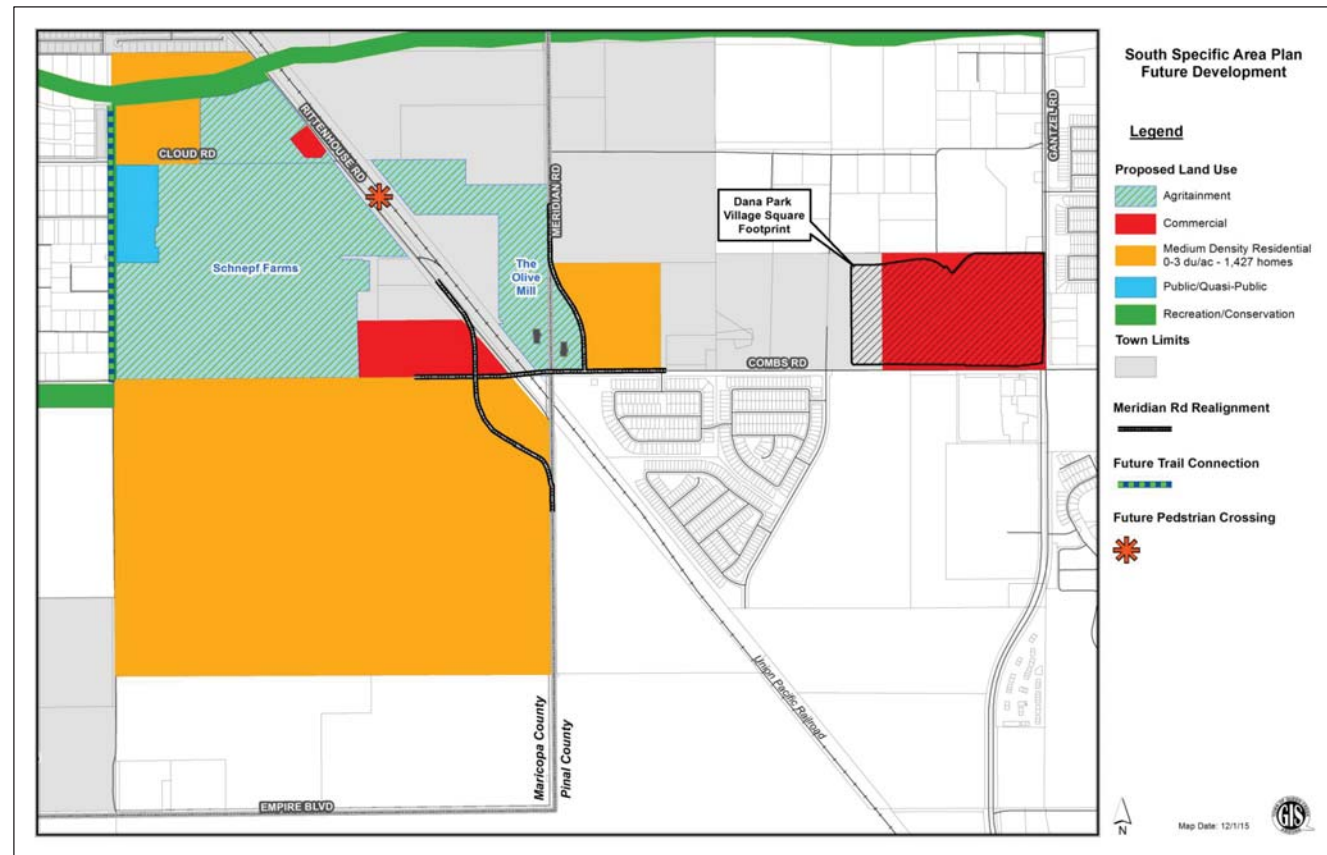
	Existing General Plan Land Use (Acres)	Proposed General Plan Land Use (Acres)	Net Change (Acres)
Agritainment	-	242	+242
Commercial/Services	126	90	-36
Employment Type A	13	0	-13
Medium Density Residential (0-3 DU/AC)	29	492	+463
Mixed Use ¹	245	0	-245
Public/Quasi-public	-	14	+14
Recreation/Conservation/Parks	17	14	-3
Regional Commercial Center	422	0	-422
Total	852	852	

¹Add note for Mixed Use...

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# of Single Family Residences	
Before With 2008 General Plan	After With New Land Uses

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT



LAND USE GOALS

- Goal 1** Promote and support Agritainment land uses in this region of the Town.
- Goal 2** Advance efforts to rezone properties to conform to this South Specific Area Plan.
- Goal 3** Provide noise compatibility through the use of landscaping and innovative design.
- Goal 4** Provide land uses that supports future rail investment in the immediate area.

Chapter 8 Economic Considerations

ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

As we have covered in this South Specific Area Plan, there are aspects to consider that are both related to the land use program for the Town as well as Economic Development goals of the community. Supporting these efforts are considerations for the financial sustainability of the Town. Some of these economic considerations are specifically detailed here, as they were considered and discussed by the project team during the development of this Plan.

The plan's shift from the current General Plan in three main areas does not easily allow for a comparative fiscal impact analysis between the "existing" 2008 land use plan versus this "proposed" 2016 South Area Plan.

First, the 2015 re-redirecting of north-south commuter traffic towards Ironwood changes the potential return on retail investment in each plan. Second, the current attractiveness of the existing "Regional Commercial Center" designation for new investment affects what we would consider to be reasonable assumptions in 2016, regardless of which plan is considered. Third, the new healthcare environment for capital construction also affects what we may consider reasonable in 2016 for a comparative analysis.

In favor of a detailed fiscal impact evaluation as was done with the companion North Specific Area Plan, this section will instead provide snapshots of the recurring positive economic forces that will be preserved, supported, and encouraged to grow with this South Specific

Area Plan. This is done to provide some context to what these aspects of the Plan have in terms of new revenue potential. These forces include the subject areas detailed earlier in this Plan, including:

- Direct sales at existing agritainment businesses
- Moderate growth and effects of expansion of these agritainment businesses
- Introduction of a hotel project within this area plan, and related tourism impacts
- Potential impacts of an expanding portfolio of special events in this area and along the "11-mile loop"
- Retail sales potential at the Northwest corner of Riggs/Ironwood (Gantzel)

Together, the elements of this plan should help advance the goals of the Town in managing growth, encouraging investment, and preserving, protecting, and allowing for the growth of the agricultural history and future of the Town. In addition, cohesive architecture and planning in both public and private spaces a Create Place serves to encourages the development of a place whose whole becomes more significant and impactful than the sum of its parts.

Because it is developed by both public and private sector representatives with not only land uses in mind, but also supporting infrastructure and market forces, there should be near, mid, and long term opportunities that emerge in this this area as a result of this Plan.

DIRECT SALES AT EXISTING AGRITAINMENT BUSINESSES IN THE SOUTH SAP

Visitors to Agritainment sites (in 2014):

Queen Creek Olive Mill:	200,000
Schnepf Farms:	215,000

Average spending per visitor: \$25.00

Estimate of annual visitor spending: \$10,375,000

Estimated annual Town sales tax collection: **\$233,000**

ESTIMATED TOWN SALES TAX COLLECTIONS FROM CURRENT AGRITAINMENT RESOURCES:

\$233,000 ANNUALLY

MODERATE GROWTH AND EFFECTS OF EXPANSION AT AGRITAINMENT BUSINESSES IN THE SOUTH SAP

Projection 8 years from now:

Queen Creek Olive Mill: 234,331 + 175,748 = 410,079 Visitors

(Projected 2% annual growth in number of visitors, as result of increased area population. Additionally, a 75% expansion by year 8 based on capacities provided for in the SSAP.)

Schnepf Farms: 247,461 Visitors

(Projected 2% annual growth in visitors, as a result of increased area population)

Average spending per visitor: \$25.00

Estimate of annual visitor spending: \$16,438,500

Estimated annual Town sales tax collection: \$370,000

Growth from 2014 Estimate: **\$137,000**

**ESTIMATED GROWTH IN TOWN SALES TAX COLLECTIONS FROM PRESERVING, PROTECTING
AND GROWING AGRITAINMENT RESOURCES:
\$137,000 ANNUALLY**

INTRODUCTION OF A HOTEL PROJECT WITHIN THIS AREA PLAN, AND RELATED TOURISM IMPACTS

Sited in the Agritainment land uses of the South SAP:

80-Room Hotel

Average Daily Rate of Hotel: \$115/night

Occupancy Rate: 70%

Annual Bed-Nights: 20,440

Annual Town bed tax collection: (2.25% sales tax + 3.0% bed tax) x \$2,350,600): **\$123,400**

Average tourism spending per Bed-Night: \$25.00

Estimated annual Town sales tax collection: **\$11,500**

ESTIMATED TOWN SALES TAX COLLECTIONS FROM 80-ROOM HOTEL IN SOUTH SAP:
\$135,000 ANNUALLY

POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF AN EXPANDED PORTFOLIO OF SPECIAL EVENTS ALONG THE FUTURE "11-MILE LOOP"

Regionally-significant event venues along the Loop: 4 (*Desert Mountain Park; Horseshoe Park; Agritainment Areas; Town Center*)

Approximate active event weekends per year: 38

Average days per event: 2.5

Average number of regionally-significant events per weekend on Loop at Full Utilization: 3

Event-days per year: 285

Estimated future park rental rate & street closure fees of approx. \$1,000/day: **\$285,000**

Average visitors per event day: 1,500

Approximate visitors per year: 427,500

Average daily spending per visitor: \$20.00

Annual visitor event spending: \$8,550,000

Estimated annual Town sales tax collection: **\$192,000**

ESTIMATED REVENUE AND SALES TAX COLLECTIONS FROM EXPANDED PORTFOLIO OF SPECIAL EVENTS:

\$477,000 ANNUALLY

RETAIL SALES POTENTIAL AT NORTHWEST CORNER OF RIGGS (COMBS)/IRONWOOD (GANTZEL)

With the proposed land use plan in this South SAP, retail sales at this corner will benefit from housing developments in close proximity, both inside and outside the Town. These include future neighborhoods that will emerge along Riggs Road, current Meridian and Encanterra subdivisions; and those present and future subdivisions in Pinal County.

Number of acres designated retail: 60

Approximate FAR of development (Floor-to-Area Ratio): 0.24

Estimated gross square feet of leasable space for this development: 627,264 SF

Estimated net square feet of sales area: 501,811 SF

Approximate sales per square foot of sales area: \$120

Estimated annual sales: \$60,217,320

Estimated annual Town sales tax collection: (2.25% x \$60,217,320): \$1,354,890

**ESTIMATED SALES TAX COLLECTIONS FROM RETAIL SALES POTENTIAL
AT NORTHWEST CORNER OF RIGGS (COMBS)/IRONWOOD (GANTZEL):
\$1,354,890 ANNUALLY**

Also noteworthy are the many capital improvement projects that are currently funded or projected to be brought to this South SAP area.

Capital Improvement Projects for next 10 years:

- Riggs Road: Ellsworth to Meridian
- Rittenhouse Road: Village Loop South to Alliance Lumber
- Meridian Road: Combs to Queen Creek wash

Utility Improvement Projects for next 10 years:

- H2O interconnect at Riggs/Rittenhouse
- Water transmission line from Schnepf well to Gantzel storage tank
- Parks subdivision water line upsizing
- Meridian Rd water line north of Combs Rd
- Riggs Rd 12" water line: Rittenhouse to Signal Butte
- Combs Rd 16" water line
- Empire/Gary 12" water line
- Empire/Signal Butte well and tank site
- Meridian/Combs sewer main line
- Cloud Rd: Crismon to Rittenhouse sewer line
- Riggs Rd/Signal Butte south sewer line

The change in density and number of single-family (SF) homes designated from this South SAP will have an impact on one-time and recurring revenues.

Single Family Home Sites designated in the current General Plan:

Single Family Home Sites Designated in this South Specific Area Plan:

One-time revenue comes in the form of service fees and development impact fees related to needed infrastructure to make the establishment of these neighborhoods as part of the Town possible. Ongoing revenues in the form of annual property taxes exist to fund ongoing services that create an expected quality of life for all Town residents (Police and Fire services, Road maintenance, use of park and other public facilities, local government services, etc.). An update of revenues and costs of Town services related to SF home construction may be valuable as Town staff begins an update to overall General Plan in 2016/2017.