

ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENT

The Town strives to ensure that Queen Creek residents live in a clean, safe, and environmentally friendly community. The Town believes in and supports sustainable development and practices in efforts to conserve our most precious resources. The Town's current sustainability programs include:

Green Building

Queen Creek's Green Building Policy, adopted in 2007, commits the Town to finance, plan, design, construct, manage, renovate and maintain its facilities in accordance with the U.S. Green Building Council's Leaders.

Air Quality

Since 2007, the Town has been a leader in the region in reducing dust pollution and improving air quality. PM-10, particulate matter 10 microns in diameter or less, which includes small particles of dust, dirt, smoke, or soot, can create health problems and air quality challenges. The Town has committed to providing a high level of outreach and communication to the community about easy steps they can take to keep our air clean.

Recycling

The Town has a goal of diverting 23% of the residential curbside material from the landfill through curbside recycling. The Town also holds a variety of recycling events and diversion programs throughout the year for items like appliances, metals, electronics, latex paint and Christmas Trees.

Hazardous Household Waste Disposal

The Town has an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Town of Gilbert to dispose of Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) at Gilbert's HHW facility preventing disposal of hazardous waste materials into landfills, sewer, and stormwater facilities.

Water Conservation

The Town is responsible to meet Best Management Practices (BMP's) as required by the Arizona Department of Water Resources Conservation Program in order to provide a more integrated approach to water conservation in Arizona.

Stormwater

The Town is developing a new Stormwater Management Plan (SWMP) to prevent pollution and protect water resources, including the Queen Creek and Sonoqui washes and the groundwater system. The SWMP will identify pollution prevention efforts through public outreach and education; public involvement and participation; preventing illegal discharge into the washes and open spaces; monitoring construction activity for pollution runoff; observing constructed developments for proper stormwater controls; and maintaining Town-owned facilities and operations.

Planning Considerations

Air pollution

In 2007, the Environmental Protection Agency found the Maricopa County area was in "nonattainment" or did not meet the PM-10 Emissions Standard, which includes small particles of dust, dirt, smoke, or soot, can create health problems and air quality challenges. As a result, Maricopa County was designated as a Serious Area under the Clean Air Act. In response, the MAG's Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee was tasked to bring regional municipal, tribal, and private entities together to commit to implementing air quality control measures to reduce air pollution in the region. Due to these efforts, the region has now been designated as "in attainment." The region and the Town is committed to maintaining the "in attainment" status and continue to implement air quality control measures and show continuous improvement to reduce PM-10 emissions.

Water conservation

Fresh potable water is vital in order to sustain life in the desert. Without diligent conservation efforts, this essential supply of water may be exhausted. While the Town is able to meet water demands when the Planning Area is at build-out, the Town will need to continue to implement and evaluate water conservation practices to conserve water resources.

Water quality

In 2016, the Town was designated as an Urbanized Area of at least 10,000 people, which required the Town to submit a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permit to address stormwater runoff and pollution prevention. The permit includes the development of a Stormwater Management Plan, which includes six Minimum Control Measures and select Best Management Practices to reduce stormwater pollutants and identify progress toward measureable goals.

Goals, Strategies, & Actions

GOAL 1:
PROTECT AND IMPROVE AIR QUALITY.

Strategy 1.A: Educate and inform the public on air quality issues in the region.

Action 1.A.1: Continue to educate the public on air pollution challenges utilizing the Town's website, events, and social media.

Action 1.A.2: Develop step-by-step guides for residents on how they can reduce air pollution.

Action 1.A.3: Leverage Maricopa Association of Governments' resources to help educate the public about air quality in the region and its importance to the health of Queen Creek residents.

Strategy 1.B: Implement programs that the Town can initiate to reduce air pollution.

Action 1.B.1: Continue providing dust emission minimization services, including the annual unpaved shoulders stabilization program and street sweeping.

Action 1.B.2: Continue to control dust emissions at Town facilities and during Town dust generating operations by implementing the Reasonably Available Control Measures as outlined in the Town's Annual Block Permit from Maricopa and Pinal counties, including training and recordkeeping processes.

GOAL 2:
REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF SOLID WASTE.

Strategy 2.A: Promote and provide opportunities to utilize "waste as a resource" through extensive public education and outreach efforts.

Action 2.A.1: Develop new programs for green waste and hard to recycle materials.

Action 2.A.2: Continue to provide opportunities to recycle, divert materials from the landfill, and reduce litter through special events and programs including:

- Shut Your Lid program
- Cooking Oil Recycling program
- Textile Recycling program
- Recycling events for special waste materials

Action 2.A.3: Continue to provide recycling services to multifamily communities or businesses without in-house recycling through the Queen Creek Recycling Center.

Action 2.A.4: Continue to partner with other agencies in the effort to provide proper waste disposal opportunities and other best management practices including:

- Partnership with the Town of Gilbert Household Hazardous Waste facility
- Partnership with the Queen Creek area elementary and middle school outreach and education program.

**GOAL 3:
PREVENT POLLUTION OF THE QUEEN
CREEK AND SONOQUI WASHES AND
GROUNDWATER SYSTEM.**

Strategy 3.A: Develop outreach, education and enforcement programs and policies to meet the Clean Water Act requirements and prevent pollution of the Queen Creek and Sonoqui washes and groundwater system.

Action 3.A.1: Develop a stormwater page on the Town’s website to educate the public on stormwater management.

Action 3.A.2: Work with regional and state stormwater programs (STORM and AZWater) to research and develop educational materials on stormwater pollution prevention and develop appropriate materials for dissemination to the public.

Action 3.A.3: Support community events which provide citizens the opportunity to clean up the watershed and washes.

Action 3.A.4: Continue to implement and document trash cleanup and recycling programs to minimize trash accumulation in the Town washes.

Action 3.A.5: Identify locations of outfalls and other features of the basin and update the GIS-based maps.

Action 3.A.6: Maintain and clean Town-owned stormwater structures and conduct inspections of the appropriate stormwater outfalls and investigate any non-stormwater discharges.

Action 3.A.7: Continue to implement regular construction site inspections and record reports of illicit discharges and/or illegal dumping.

Action 3.A.8: Develop a procedure to provide a review of plans submitted to the Town for construction projects so that the appropriate best management practices to minimize or eliminate pollutant discharges from active construction sites are in place.

Action 3.A.9: Create outreach materials for the business community to educate them about best management practices and requirements for stormwater and pollution prevention.

Action 3.A.10: Develop an inspection schedule and written procedures for assessing municipal facilities to meet the stormwater management plan requirements.

Action 3.A.11: Review and develop an Operations and Maintenance Program to meet the requirements of the stormwater management plan and modify the program as appropriate.

**GOAL 4:
PROMOTE ENVIRONMENTAL SENSITIVITY IN
THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT.**

Strategy 4.A: Implement programs that encourage sustainable building and development practices in new and existing development.

Action 4.A.1: Continue the “green” building program.

Action 4.A.2: Develop programs to promote energy conservation and use of renewable energy sources in the design and construction of new projects.

Action 4.A.3: Promote xeriscapes and the use of indigenous drought-tolerant plant materials and those compatible with them, for all new public and private construction projects.

Action 4.A.4: Discourage the use of non-native plant materials where a comparable or compatible native plant species is available which would achieve the same result.

Action 4.A.5: Implement a program to identify and protect the Town’s historic and archaeological assets.

Action 4.A.6: Continue implementing standards to minimize glare and light control through the “dark sky” program.

Action 4.A.7: Consider noise implications and use of appropriate noise mitigation techniques in the design and location of new projects, particularly when adjacent to residential areas.

**GOAL 5:
MAINTAIN THE DESERT CHARACTER AND
ENVIRONMENT IN THE
SAN TAN FOOTHILLS.**

Strategy 5.A: Evaluate and implement development standards for the San Tan Foothill area.

Action 5.A.1: Maintain and expand programs to encourage identification, maintenance and reuse of existing native plant materials as an element of all new construction projects.

Action 5.A.2: Retain, and enhance where possible, the Sonoran Desert character of the area through use of sensitive building design, architecture, orientation, landscaping and access in the construction of new projects in the area.

Action 5.A.3: Develop standards for development in the area which employ the building envelope concept to minimize the use of cut and fill, and limit development on hillside property.

Action 5.A.4: Where possible, maintain the locations and appearance of natural drainage ways as an element of new development.

Action 5.A.5: Develop alternative street and infrastructure improvement standards which provide for environmental sensitivity, as well as site access and service, for use in desert areas.

Action 5.A.6: Develop programs and policies to minimize large retaining walls, steep landscape banks or cut and fill to create buildable lots.