

Barney Farms History – March 28, 2013 (Updated August, 2023)

Year/Date	Event	Notes
1948	Newell and Katherine Barney purchase and clear raw desert to create Barney Farms.	
1950's	Williams Military Base grows after WWII ends. Local farmers are concerned that that the growth of the base will create restrictions on what they could do with their land. In a “summit” style meeting with the county board of supervisors, farmers are told: “You don’t really think we would restrict use of your land without compensating you for it, do you?”	In those days, zoning and general plans were far less dominant or non-existent concepts. There is no way a farmer in 1950 could anticipate the scope and magnitude of restriction that could come in to play 40-60 years later. Land use regulation today is many, many orders of magnitude more dominant and restrictive today that it was back then. Nevertheless, the farmers still intuitively anticipated concern but were given assurance that restrictions would not occur without fair compensation. In today’s regulatory environment, no consideration is given to compensation when land use is restricted for the benefit of the airport or other community related uses such as employment land preservation.
1990	The Town of Queen Creek Incorporates. The first General Plan is adopted in 1990 designating all of Barney Farms as Employment with additional restrictions to remain in effect as long as Williams is a military base. Some of those restrictions included limiting structures to one-story and encouraging buildings with automation and robotics so as to limit the number of people, including people in a workplace, in the approach to the airport. Later on when the base was decommissioned, those restrictions went away and focus shifted to attracting jobs for actual people. But caution regarding people living at Barney Farms would continue for several years.	From very early on, out of a desire to protect the airport, there was a mindset to err on the side of an “abundance of caution.” In those early days, because it wasn’t clear how much protection was enough, lines were drawn and restrictions put in place that in hindsight can be seen as excessive, but at the time were a best guess at caution. Since that time, with changes in FAA regulations and airplane noise and the introduction of better data, and over 25 years of new history, those restrictions have been able to be refined.
Early to Mid 1990's	Neighboring Gilbert remains largely undeveloped. Large scale residential housing growth in south Gilbert, let alone Queen Creek, is not yet seen as a pending consideration. Market opportunities for home builders in Queen Creek do not yet exist in large volume.	
Early 1990's	Williams Air Force Base is converted from a military base to commercial airport in a regional alliance. Opportunities are sought to leverage the asset and grow the region as a major employment hub. The significance of the opportunity is widely recognized, but, the future of scale, character, dynamic, and growth patterns remains speculative and uncertain. Mesa takes the lead role in organizing tone and strategy of the airport. Gateway becomes Mesa’s best hope to re-emerge as a viable and sustainable city. Mesa becomes extremely focused on protecting the airport. While other neighboring communities were included in Gateway leadership and would also benefit from opportunities Gateway would create, the airport was and continues to be dominated by Mesa in terms of policy, management, and benefits.	In the early days of the airport conversion, due to lack of certainty around future growth patterns, a rightful and well-intended abundance of caution to protect the airport fostered a “wait and see” attitude toward all but the most obviously compatible land uses in surrounding areas. While this was important for protection against legitimately harmful airport encroachment, it created potentially artificial or unnecessary constraints to land uses that could more than just compatible, but supportive to the vitality of the airport region.

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Early 1990's	With lack of major residential market opportunities, newly incorporated Queen Creek seeks to leverage the new Gateway Airport opportunity for employment users. At that time, high end office and corporate campus type users were not attracted to neighboring Gilbert and Southeast Mesa let alone Queen Creek. The only remaining target sector appeared to be large tract heavy industrial users. That would typically include heavy manufacturing with large scale outdoor intensity similar to TRW that operated at the time just north of Germann in Mesa or the CMC Steel smelting plant (mid-2000's) that now operates next door to TRW, also in Mesa.	Heavy industrial as a target sector was chosen not so much because it was highly desirable to Queen Creek's goals, or because it was the highest and best use for the area, but because at the time, it seemed to be the only market viable land use due to lack of demand in other more attractive uses such as high end corporate campus or even residential.
Early to Mid 1990's	The City of Mesa asked the Barney Family to zone the entire Barney Farms as I-2 (M-2 in Mesa) heavy industrial in order to pursue airport related industrial users. In exchange, Mesa could more easily provide the wastewater, water, and other utility infrastructure necessary to attract major employers. At the time, Queen Creek did not have the ability to provide any level of infrastructure service. Queen Creek also asked the Barney's to hard zone to I-2 suggesting that would make it easier to bring utilities. With no other market viable land uses available at the time, the Barney's agreed to rezone the property. This was done speculatively and in collaboration with Queen Creek. It is common to "hard zone" property to make it more attractive to potential users. Unfortunately, two decades later, none of those users have come proving the "speculation" to have been overreaching.	<p>Although the hard zoning was completed, infrastructure sufficient to attract major employers was not implemented. Along with lack of other marketable uses at the time, this hope to bring infrastructure was the primary driver in Barney Farms being zoned industrial and ultimately designated as employment later on in the general plan.</p> <p>Time has since proven that employment absorption expectations at the time were excessive. According to Mark Schnepf, Mayor at the time, by the end of the 1990's, the council was recognizing this miscalculation and was prepared to shift focus to a more viable mix of land uses.</p>
Mid 1990's	The Barney's begin to actively market Barney Farms as large parcel heavy industrial.	
Mid 1990's	Gilbert approves several thousand acres of residential development west of Gateway Airport in areas designated by the Part 150 Study as Overflight Area II.	<p>Those housing developments have since become some of the most desirable neighborhoods in the southeast valley including Morrison Ranch, multiple Circle G's, etc. Real Estate values have remained consistently 20-30% higher than comparable neighborhoods in the region. That area has not become a comparably higher source of conflict or complaint for the airport. Furthermore, due to prevailing winds, that area is predominantly under the take-off pattern, significantly noisier than the approach patterns that dominate Queen Creek. Morrison Ranch is approximately 2 miles off the runway. Barney Farms is approximately 4 miles off the runway.</p> <p>Morrison Ranch and other neighborhoods in that area are a case study showing that similar development at Barney Farms would not harm the airport and could become a highly desirable community.</p>

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1996	Gateway Airport completes its Part 150 Study providing a framework and data set for noise compatibility reference.	This would become the data source for policy making that would persist through to present day. According to the study, some of Barney Farms is in AOA I, not appropriate for residential development. The Barney's have never sought residential in this AOA I zone. However, over half of Barney Farms (designated AOA II and AOA III) is appropriate for residential development with proper notification and mitigation, just like Morrison Ranch. However, as part of the "abundance of caution" approach, and in conflict with findings of the Part 150, regional and local policy makers encourage a more overreaching policy of discouraging residential in AOA II. Since Morrison Ranch had existing entitlements, it was allowed to develop.
1998	"Growing Smarter" legislation requires all jurisdictions to implement and make binding a "General Plan".	Barney Farms being identified as industrial pre-dates the existence of the General Plan concept as a binding legal construct. Because it was already zoned I-2 (speculatively) during the early days of Queen Creek's General Plan, it was naturally designated as employment. Thus, the "Employment" designation in the General Plan was much more the result of circumstance and the timing of market speculation than it was strategic master planning and pursuit of highest and best use. In retrospect, heavy industrial, with all its "dirty" aesthetics and lower end jobs is not highest and best use for Barney Farms, a key entrance corridor to Queen Creek, and not ideal for Queen Creek's employment and community profile goals.
1999	FAA institutes new noise regulations mandating quieter aircraft. Gateway's 1995 Part 150 study is based on noise levels prior to the new quieter regulation. According to a 2009 Williams Aviation study: "On December 31, 1999 Stage 2 aircraft were prohibited from operating in the U.S. and were replaced by Stage 3 aircraft. This had the effect of significantly compacting noise contours".	As a result of this regulation, the Part 150 study became outdated with overreaching noise contours. As of 2013, the study has not been updated. Combine an originally overreaching interpretation of the study with outdated data, and it seems a new look at Part 150 policy implementation is clearly in order. Gateway still relies on outdated mid-1990's era interpretation and policy implementation.
Early to Mid 2000's	Queen Creek ramps up economic development as a key area of focus and identifies higher end employers and high quality jobs as a key economic development goal.	Large swaths of I-2 do not create the high end jobs targeted by Queen Creek. More targeted and strategic land use policy and planning are needed.
Early to Mid 2000's	The Barney Family continues unsuccessfully to market Barney Farms to industrial users. Key factors for lack of interest are distance from major freeways and lack of infrastructure.	

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June 2004	Realizing the extreme lack of viability of industrial land in Queen Creek, the Barney Family submits a Major General Plan Amendment (GPA) to convert the southeast corner of the farm to medium and high density residential. After nearly a decade of marketing Barney Farms to industrial users, it was evident that there was simply not demand or market conditions for industrial land users. The Barney Family simply wanted a small portion of the farm to be converted to a market viable land use. In addition, the slightly higher density would attract a more diverse workforce that would eventually be critical in attracting employers to the remainder of the farm that would always be designated with employment uses as a result being in AOA I, not appropriate for residential development.	<p>GPA attempt #1.</p> <p>By careful intention, the area proposed for residential conversion was entirely within Gateway Airport's Part 150 AOA II and AOA III noise designations. According to that the Part 150, both are appropriate and compatible with residential development with proper mitigation and notification.</p> <p>Barney Farms in Queen Creek is over 900 acres. The 2004 proposal to convert around 300 acres to residential would mean two-thirds of the farm would remain employment. According to an Elliott Pollack study done that year, total absorption potential in all of Queen Creek was only 904 acres, equivalent to the entire Barney Farm.</p>
2004	<p>Elliott Pollack releases a study indicating: "Data compiled from the Queen Creek General Plan indicates that the Town has designated approximately three times as much employment land (based on MAG population projections) than the community will need over the long term to serve its future employment base. If conditions warrant, it would be reasonable for Queen Creek to consider reducing its employment inventory to be more consistent with projected demand." (See report summary at http://www.barneygpa.com/)</p>	<p>Queen Creek has far more employment designated in the General Plan than the market can bear as measured by pre-existing market patterns. Not only is the Barney Family being asked to carry the cost burden of Queen Creek's employment aspirations, but they are being asked to do so at a level that is not market achievable. This essentially renders Barney Farms un-developable creating a huge financial burden to the family entirely for the benefit of the Town.</p>
December 2004	<p>Queen Creek Town Council hears the Barney Farms GPA. Mayor Wendy Feldman-Kerr is understanding of the frustration felt by the Barney Family being stuck with an un-marketable land use. She is also well aware of the primary disadvantage making the area un-marketable as industrial or employment: lack of freeways. At the time, multiple alignment scenarios for the 802 freeway (now known as SR24) were being evaluated by ADOT. Alternative #5 went right through Barney Farms and stood to be Queen Creek's best chance at achieving freeway access ultra-critical to developing employment uses. Mayor Feldman-Kerr asked the Barney Family to table the GPA request so that she could team up with the Barney's and lobby for Alternative #5. The Barney's agreed. For the next 6-9 months, Mayor Feldmann-Kerr, Queen Creek staff, and the Barneys worked ultra-aggressively to bring the freeway to Queen Creek and Barney Farms. Unfortunately, Mesa's political muscle won the day and the now final alignment of SR24 was set a mile and a half north of Queen Creek in Mesa.</p>	<p>Not only is Queen Creek disadvantaged due to distant geography as well as lack of infrastructure and freeways, it is also at a political disadvantage when pitted against larger and better positioned neighbors. This is most evident in the fact that Mesa has all the freeways and Queen Creek has none. However, the imbalance manifests itself in other forms such as Mesa putting its "dirtier" heavy industrial uses out on Queen Creek's front door (i.e. TRW, CMC Steel, etc.).</p>
Mid 2000's	<p>In spite of ongoing marketing efforts, little to no interest is generated in Barney Farms as large parcel industrial. Geographic distance, lack of freeways, and lack of infrastructure continue as deterrents.</p>	

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2005-2006	<p>At the invitation of the Town, the Barney Family and Queen Creek executed a land trade. The Town had previously purchased 76 acres for a park that could alternatively be developed as residential. The idea was to move the park site to an industrial zoned location on the Barney Farm and enable the Barney Family to develop the original park site as residential. Because of a legal requirement for an appraisal based dollar for dollar trade, the Barney Family was required to provide 131 acres in exchange for receiving 76 acres from the Town. Due to lack of marketability of industrial land, the Barney's original industrial property appraised for significantly less than the Town's original property zoned for residential. Although the Barney Family gave 55 acres to Queen Creek in that trade due to the appraisal difference, due to lack viable alternatives, and ongoing resistance to allow residential rezoning on the Barney Farm, the Barney Family accepted this loss/cost from a sense of having no other options to acquire marketable property.</p> <p>It is important to recall that Barney Farms was originally zoned I-2 at the request of the Town. In a spirit of collaboration, the Barney Family went along with that experiment. The resultant I-2 zoning would eventually prove to be a major impediment and source of harm for Barney Farms. In order to extract 76 acres from that predicament, the Barney Family had to convey to Queen Creek an additional 55 acres. The Barney Family understands that this was not the result of ill intent from Town leadership. In fact, this trade was presumably recognition from Town leadership of the unintended adverse consequence of the prior collaboration and a well-intended attempt at partial mitigation. This was certainly a positive and appreciated step forward to the Barney's having developable and marketable land. Unfortunately, due to land trade legal constraints on the Town, the cost to the Barney Family was 55 acres. For every developable acre gained, 3/4 of an acre was lost. Although the Barney Family remains appreciative to the Town for the opportunity and the good will of the Town's intent, they did not accept this opportunity because it was a good option, they accepted it because at the time it was the only option.</p>	<p>This trade was initiated as an offer from the Town as an effort to alleviate the Barney Family's predicament of non-viable land uses. The Barney Family agreed to the loss of 55 acres in this trade out of a feeling of desperation, seeing few other viable paths forward. Although the loss of that much land in the trade was difficult, the Barney's understood the Town's legal constraints and saw the offer as a genuine gesture of good faith effort to mitigate a tough situation. In a history full of tension over land use on Barney Farms, it is important to note instances such as this where compromise and collaboration resulted in progress toward workable solutions. Although Barney Farms has been significantly restrained for the benefit of the Town, this trade, while far from ideal, shows a history of collaboration an effort to offset the harm caused by those restraints.</p> <p>The 76 acres received by the Barney's was eventually designed as the "Barney Park Estates" neighborhood. Due to the market crash, construction was deferred. In 2013, BPE is being purchased by a major home builder and will be coming forward as a high end luxury residential development.</p> <p>The 131 acres received by the Town became East Park in the Five Parks Master Plan. It has been since re-traded to a new and even more viable location on the Barney Farm next to the Barney Family Sports Complex. Construction began in 2023 as the Queen Creek Frontier Family Park.</p>
2006	<p>After the failed attempt to, bring the SR24 freeway to Queen Creek, the Barney Family re-initiates the same general plan application originally submitted in 2004 but withdrawn at the request of Mayor Feldman-Kerr.</p>	<p>GPA attempt #2.</p>

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Sep 2006	<p>Urban Land Institute (ULI) in partnership with Queen Creek and other East Valley cities releases a sweeping study of the Gateway Region. Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The amount of industrial land (9,000 acres) designated on the cities’ cumulative General Plans is a concern.” • “During the panel’s projection horizon of 25 years, as many as 1,575 acres will be urbanized for warehouse and distribution, flex, research, development, and manufacturing space.” <p>(See full report at http://www.barneygpa.com/)</p>	<p>Queen Creek had nearly double that 1,575 acre amount designated in its General Plan. In other words, the entire region (including Mesa, Gilbert, and Queen Creek) could only absorb half of what Queen Creek was targeting. That was previous to the massive market crash that has now significantly reset absorption potential to lower rates and longer time frames. The disparity now is much more pronounced than it was in 2006.</p> <p>ULI, one of the most credible sources of market study and land use analysis in the nation indicates that Queen Creek’s General Plan targets unrealistic employment goals by multiple orders of magnitude. The Barney Family continued to shoulder the majority cost of the Town’s unrealistic aspirations.</p>
June 2006	<p>In June of 2006 (coincidentally just a few weeks after re-submitting for GPA attempt #2), one industrial user showed interest via letter of intent and went into escrow to purchase nearly 320 acres that included the entire proposed General Plan Amendment.</p>	
Sep 2006	<p>As part of ongoing marketing efforts, the Barney Family sells property to the north in Mesa to a speculator (not a user). Because that property was in Mesa, had access to Mesa utilities, and was closer to the freeway network, it was more desirable to an investor seeking to attract industrial users. The property was eventually foreclosed and resold by the lending bank for a fraction of the original purchase price.</p>	<p>Mesa properties closer to the freeways with infrastructure are more desirable and marketable. However, even Mesa properties have extreme difficulty in attracting users. There is as much as 15,000 acres of vacant employment land around Gateway, at least 9,000 according to ULI. It took the most over-hyped market bubble in Arizona memory to attract even a speculative buyer to a Mesa property. Unfortunately, market fundamentals did not exist for that speculative play, even in Mesa. The deal collapsed and the site will remain undeveloped. Queen Creek industrial properties did not attract even speculators let alone actual users at the height of the bubble. So much the worse as the market returns to a more normal and stabilized state over the next few years, even further slowed by post-crash conditions.</p>
Fall 2006	<p>The Barney Family withdraws the GPA in order to allow the user to move forward with purchasing the property and necessary site plan approval with the Town of Queen Creek.</p>	<p>The Barney Family has always said that if employment uses were viable, the family would gladly pursue those uses. By withdrawing a second time, The Barney Family demonstrated a clear willingness to pursue viable employment users over the alternate residential use.</p>

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June 2007	<p>The transaction was not completed due to lack of economic viability discovered by the buyer during feasibility and due diligence. In addition to distance from the freeway system, high infrastructure costs were specifically cited by the user in the contract cancellation.</p> <p>Although the user did not come to Queen Creek, it did prompt a focused discussion about the type of employers the Town was hoping to attract. The type, quantity, and quality of jobs that particular user would have brought to Queen Creek was not consistent with the Town's goals for higher end employment. Queen Creek was more interested in high quality and attractive employers as opposed to the "down and dirty" looking employers seen across the street in Mesa with fewer jobs of lesser quality.</p> <p>In spite of the most aggressive real estate market in living memory, no other industrial users for Barney Farms has emerged even until present day.</p>	<p>From this we learned that Barney Farm's existing I-2 heavy industrial zoning tends to attract lower paying jobs and fewer jobs per acre. Thus, large tracts of heavy industrial land is not consistent with the Town's economic development goals. In short, there was (and still is) a mis-match between Queen Creek's employment goals and the General Plan and zoning designation. More strategic and innovative land planning would be necessary to achieve the Town's high end employment goals. This need to "plan smarter" is especially critical since Queen Creek has significant competitive disadvantages to overcome with lack of freeways and farther geographic distances from Gateway and other regional employment centers compared to Mesa, Gilbert, Chandler, and Tempe.</p> <p>To restate the critical point, if at the height of the most hyper-inflated market bubble, a large industrial user could not make industrial in Queen Creek work, how is someone going to make it work in a depressed or even normal market? We must re-think, re-focus, re-tool, re-target, and re-work our plan to meet our goals for highest and best use at one of Queen Creek's front doors.</p>
June 2008	<p>In the wake of the contract cancellation, the Barney Family re-initiates for the third time an application to amend the general plan to residential.</p>	<p>GPA attempt #3.</p>
2008	<p>Staff suggests to the Barney Family the need for a regional north-south connector road and suggests that realigning Signal Butte in a curve across Barney Farms to connect to Meridian would be an ideal location to achieve the regional corridor. The Barney Family rejects the concept due to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. significant extra land lost to right of way acreage (over 16 acres more than a standard section line grid road system), 2. bifurcation of the farm thereby limiting, constraining, and breaking up planning and development options, and, 3. the creation of small 'orphan' triangle or wedge parcels that would be difficult to develop. 	<p>To that point, the Barney Family had been shouldering the inordinate cost burden of Queen Creek's employment goals. The Barney Family did not want to add to that cost burden this new and significantly huge cost of solving the Town's regional transportation problem. As a founding family of Queen Creek, the Barney Family is a team player and continues a decade's long attitude of serving and sacrificing for the benefit of the Town. However, past a certain threshold, that becomes no longer reasonable or sustainable. On its own, the road re-alignment seemed to pass well beyond that threshold. Combined with the employment land use burden that had rendered the entire farm un-developable, the road was simply an unmanageable burden.</p>

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June 2008	<p>Mesa adopts a new Gateway Area Strategic Plan that incorporates a more “form based” strategic and integrated approach to land planning around the airport. Contrary to prior philosophy, the concept was introduced that the right kind of residential in the right places near and airport can actually enhance the vitality and viability of an airport rather than harm it. (See full report at http://www.barneygpa.com/)</p> <p>Gilbert already had a significant amount of residential in AOA II with Morrison Ranch and other surrounding developments. Mesa’s 2008 Gateway Area Strategic Plan opened the door for Mesa to explore more residential around the airport. Queen Creek remains the only airport partner community to not explore more a more balanced approach to development around the airport. Although Queen Creek has the most land negatively impacted by airport protection, it is ironically the most hesitant to be proactive in exploring appropriate and balanced relationships between the airport and residential development. The most harmed community has done the least mitigate that harm. This imbalance is especially pronounced given that Queen Creek will see the least benefit from the airport compared to Mesa and Gilbert.</p>	Well planned residential does not necessarily harm an airport. Rather, it can be a critical part of the mix to make a region work for high-end employment. This signals a key shift from the early 1990’s approach of broad brush land planning and airport protection to a smarter more surgical and strategic case by case approach.
Fall 2008	Queen Creek begins including several thousand acres of state trust land in their planning area and general plan along the future SR24 freeway. This dramatically increases the number of employment acres in the Queen Creek General Plan and creates and innovative new opportunity to achieve employment oriented freeway frontage.	
Dec 2008	Based on ongoing concerns from the airport regarding interpretation of the Part 150 Study, the Town asks the Barney Family to continue the case for a few months and commission an aviation study to further evaluate the Part 150 study and potential noise impacts. The Barneys agree and hire Williams Aviation, a known and respected consultant used by many municipalities in the valley on aviation related work.	
January 2009	The Barney Family opens The Barney Family Sports Complex	This facility was built as a service to the community, not as a for-profit pursuit.
Spring 2009	Staff requests that rather than hear the case from the December continuance, the Barney Family withdraw and resubmit for the 2009 GPA cycle. Although frustrated at yet another year’s delay with unclear justification, the Barney Family reluctantly complies.	
April 2009	Staff offers to support the residential GPA in exchange for the Barney family agreeing to allow the Signal Butte realignment to occur on Barney Farms. The Barney Family recognized the harm the road realignment would cause to the planning and development potential of the farm and the additional land lost (16+ acres) to increased right of way. However, after years of unsuccessful attempts to convert a portion of the farm to a marketable land use, out of a sense of desperation and duress, the Barney Family agreed in order to break the grid-lock and move forward. Again, the Barney Family did not take that offer because it was a good option, they took it because it seemed the only option at the time.	<p>As a result of the re-aligned road, The Barney Family agreed to give up an additional 16.2 acres of future right of way uncompensated in order to accommodate the realignment.</p> <p>Creating a workable residential land plan with the Signal Butte realignment going through the middle has been difficult and will be a major impediment to designing and marketing Barney Farms in the future.</p>
June 2009	The Barney Family re-submits the GPA for the fourth time.	GPA attempt #4.

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Fall 2009	<p>Williams Aviation study is released. Findings indicate that according to the FAA and the Gateway Part 150 study, residential development is appropriate with Overflight Area II with proper notification and mitigation. With all due respect to the airport's abundance of caution, the Barney Farms proposal would not be a threat to the airport.</p> <p>(Full report with executive summary available upon request.)</p>	<p>Several critical inconsistencies were identified in the Part 150 Study, the identification of AOA II boundaries, and the policy interpretations of AOA II as related to compatibility of residential development. In short, for the sake of "abundance of caution", Gateway policies well exceed recommendations in the Part 150 Study that allow for residential development in AOA II. In other words, present day policy to discourage residential in AOA II is not driven by Part 150 data. Rather it is driven by an "abundance of caution" approach still being held over from the early 1990's. Furthermore, there is no documented Board Authority action that formally adopted that policy. Rather, it appears to be a policy that organically evolved with no specifically known legal origin, data origin, public process, or specific decision maker or makers.</p>
Nov 2009	<p>Applied Economics releases an economic absorption study that "indicates that the Town has classified [1,100 acres] more Type A and Type B Employment land than can reasonably be expected to absorb [at build out]."</p> <p>(See full report at http://www.barneygpa.com/)</p>	<p>This study was based on the previous 10 years of Maricopa County growth patterns. In the post-recession economy, slower growth and less absorption can be expected. This study reinforces and largely restates the findings of the Elliott Pollack and ULI studies done previously: Queen Creek has unachievable goals of employment land development and has placed an inordinate burden of those aspirations on the Barney Family.</p> <p>The Town would never force an individual private citizen to pay for a public need such as a park, library, or fire station site. Asking a private citizen to hold their property off the market for an indefinite period comes with a significant measurable cost (i.e. lost opportunity cost). The Town feels strongly that it needs employment land and there are strong and credible arguments and studies that support that view. However, that is a public need in the same way a library or fire station is a public need. Forcing an individual property owner to bear the cost of that benefit to the Town is philosophically similar to forcing a private citizen to pay for a library or fire station site. If the Town needs employment land as a public benefit, it should ask the entire Town to pay the cost just like any other public benefit, not force that cost on individual property owners.</p>

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Dec 2009	Town Council hears the Barney GPA and moves for continuance. After multiple additional hearings throughout spring 2010, approval occurs in May 2010.	This decision was received by the Barney Family with a great sense of relief and appreciation. Although it came at significant cost to the family, it finally created a means to pull more of the Barney Farm out of the gridlocked predicament created nearly 15 years previously from a miscalculated experiment in industrial zoning.
2009 to 2012	The residential market crashes and virtually halts. The Barney's delay further zoning and pre-plat planning of the newly approved GPA land waiting for the market to recover.	
June 2011	The original 131 acre parcel the Town received for East Park was long and skinny. In order to get a more rectangular shape, and in order for the Town to leverage the complimentary use at The Barney Family Sports Complex, the Barney Family and the Town trade acre for acre for a new town parcel adjacent to the sports complex. The benefit to the Barney Family is that the remaining Barney Farm would be a large contiguous block without the Town Park in the middle. This would lend more to cohesive and integrated design for the ultimate Barney Farm master plan. In addition, it would create additional residential development opportunities in the AOA II portion of the trade hopefully creating further relief to the long standing dilemma of unviable zoning on Barney Farms. The trade would take approximately two years to complete.	In considering this land trade, the Barney Family was very aware of the new and improved development opportunities, including potential new residential, which would come by putting the 131 acres back into the Barney Farms master plan. Although this would not return the Barney Farm to the level of opportunity it had prior to the ill-fated rezone to I-2 in the 1990's, it would potentially be a positive step in that direction.
2013	The market recovery has begun and the Barney Family is ready to move forward with land planning. In addition to the 257 acres approved in the 2010 General Plan Amendment, the Barneys seek to plan the entire 700+ acre Barney Farms to achieve an integrated and cohesive master plan including employment, commercial, and residential in a mutually complimentary design. Now that the Barney's are trading back into the 131 acres owned by the Town since 2006, it is a good time circle back and evaluate the optimal strategy to integrate that parcel into the master plan for its highest and best use as well as optimal integration into the rest of Barney Farms.	
Feb 2013	After a lengthy hiatus through the market crash, the Barney Family begins detailed land planning on the original 257 acres approved in 2010 in order to prepare a formal re-zone and pre-plat submittal. It becomes apparent that it would be helpful to define the future General Plan designation of the adjacent 131 acres in the final stages of being traded with the Town. Doing so would enable planning elements in the 257 acre plan to more effectively integrate with and connect to the rest of the farm including the newly re-acquired 131 acres.	In a nearly 20 year effort to bring more of the Barney Farm into a marketable land use, a logical consideration would be to evaluate the newly re-traded 131 acre park land for residential use. During the two years leading up to the closing of the trade, the Barney Family expressed this interest and intention often.
May 2013	After many technical complications, the park land trade is complete.	

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June 2013	<p>The Barney Family submits a new General Plan Amendment that includes the land re-acquired in the park trade to a combination of single family residential and mixed use. In light of Barney Farms being bifurcated by the realigned Signal Butte Road, adding single family acreage within the newly traded 131 acres would create more critical mass to ensure a more cohesive neighborhood on either side of the new Signal Butte. Also, by adding a mixed use element to the overall Barney Farms master plan, Queen Creek in collaboration with the Barneys can more strategically target higher end jobs. Having learned that I-2 heavy industrial zoning does not attract the high end employment Queen Creek desires, the more innovative and flexible “mixed use” designation gives Queen Creek a new tool to target higher end employers.</p>	<p>This is one small step among in a complicated and lengthy history of working out the best land use mix on Barney Farms for Queen Creek and the Barney Family.</p>
August 2013	<p>After 20 years of collaboration with Queen Creek Town leadership in seeking the highest, best, and most strategic land uses for Barney Farms, the Barney Family seeks to continue that long standing spirit of collaboration through the coming months of the general plan amendment process. As noted by this history, that collaboration does not come without difficulty and tension. However, dialog, creativity, and compromise between the Barney Family and Town leadership have proven to be a reliable method for turning tough challenges into workable solutions for moving forward to a bright future for Queen Creek.</p>	<p>In order to undo the predicament created 20 years ago by a well-intended but miscalculated zoning experiment, the Barney Family has given Queen Creek over 70 acres of land, spent over a million dollars out of pocket in general plan processing costs, and lost the financial benefit of a decade and a half of development opportunity. However, the family remains intensely committed to an ongoing key role in making and keeping Queen Creek one of the most amazing, vibrant, and sustainable places to live in our region. It will take un-tiring effort and collaboration between Town leadership and key stakeholders like the Barney’s to make that happen. We hope for new opportunities and forums to increase the communication, citizen participation, and Town collaboration necessary to reach those lofty but important goals.</p>
December 2013	<p>Queen Creek asks the Barney Family to withdraw the 2013 GPA application so that the Town can initiate a new process called a “Special Area Plan” or SAP. This would look at the entire three square mile corridor from Ellsworth to Meridian, from Germann to Queen Creek Road. By doing this, the Town could do their own study on absorption rates of employment land. Using that they could look at how the entire “Northern Tier” employment corridor could be planned in conjunction with proposed changes by all property owners including Barney Farms in the context of absorption data from a Town commissioned study. After a few months of back and forth, the Barney Family agrees to withdraw the 2013 GPA and move forward with the new SAP process.</p>	<p>This comprehensive approach to planning, while time consuming and laborious, would produce a way forward for land owners that is also protective of Queen Creek’s long term planning and economic viability.</p> <p>SAP is a more detailed variation of a GPA. As such, this triggers GPA attempt #5.</p>
January 2014	<p>The Town of Queen Creek had commissioned Tischler Bise to perform a study that looked at likely absorption rates of employment land and make recommendations for how much employment land the Town would actually need at build out. The study results are very similar to the 2004 Pollack Study and the 2009 Applied Economics Study. The Town had at that time double to triple the needed amount of employment land set aside and should strongly consider scaling it back to more realistic levels.</p>	<p>In addition, the study determined that leaving land planned for uses that would never develop incurred opportunity costs not only to property owners, but to the Town also in terms unbuilt roads and other infrastructure.</p>
May 2015	<p>The SAP process continues and is anticipated to conclude in summer of 2015.</p>	

Year/Date	Event	Notes
December 2015	The North Special Area Plan (NSAP) is approved increasing the residential acres allowed on Barney Farms from the 259 acres approved in May 2010 to 476 acres.	In order to compromise on the 1995 Part 150 noise study, NSAP process decided to use the 60 DNL line as a delineator for residential development. Although there was no specific regulatory reason to choose that line, because it already existed as a data point in the study, it was chosen as a point of convenience. As a result of that, a 58 acre triangular parcel at the northeast corner of Queen Creek and Signal Butte remained employment. This site was not ideally situated for employment, but this was a compromise for the benefit of working with the then existing noise contours.
January 2016	As mentioned above, the long standing disconnect with the airport was based on implementation of the 1995 Part 150 noise study. For the sake of caution, the airport authority has operated with a policy of making land use recommendations that exceeded the findings of that study. In addition, due to changes in the late 1990's to FAA regulations for airplane noise, the study had become due for re-evaluation. The airport kicked off a new study in 2016. The general findings resulted in the noise contours contracting. As a result of that, the 58-acre triangle parcel that was left as employment in the 2015 NSAP would now be able to be converted to residential.	
February 2016	The Barney Family submits the 58 acre triangle parcel for a Major General Plan Amendment to convert to residential consistent with the other residential approved in the 2015 NSAP.	
April 2016	Concurrent with the MGPA, the Barney Family submitted a PAD zoning overlay for the entire 534 acres of residential in both the NSAP approval and the 2016 58-acres. The PAD limited the density to 3.5 units per acre and conditioned several mitigation measures to protect the industrial users in Mesa to the north including transition, buffering, and notification.	
September 21, 2016	<p>The Queen Creek Town Council approved both the Major General Plan amendment for the 58-acre triangle, and the PAD for the 534 acres of residential.</p> <p>In the weeks leading up to the hearing, CMC Steel and other industrial users expressed concern about potential conflict between future residential. On August 29, CMC submitted a letter outlining concerns and requesting mitigation measures that included at least a 700' buffer, trees, fencing, and deed notifications to future residents. Conditions of approval on the PAD case were created to comply with those requests. A double row of trees was added in lieu of a request for an 8' fence. At a meeting on Sep 1 with CMC, other industrial users, and representatives from Mesa and Queen Creek, additional concerns were discussed. Traffic was key among several concerns. In response to that, an additional condition was created to eliminate a half mile collector road from the residential to Germann.</p> <p>At the September 21 hearing, the Barney Family recognized Mesa and the industrial users as Queen Creek's most important economic development partner, and expressed a strong commitment to continue working with Mesa and the neighbors to explore opportunities to improve the transition and to be good neighbors.</p>	

Year/Date	Event	Notes
October 2016	<p>The Barney Family is in ongoing discussions with home builders to being moving the project forward.</p> <p>Discussion continues with Mesa and the industrial users on better understanding and managing the transition and buffering.</p>	
June 2018	<p>500 acres of Barney Farms is in escrow to be purchased and developed by Fulton Homes. They will be incorporating a spectacular recreational lake and central park. In 2018, they amended the PAD to accommodate the lake. Fulton is scheduled to close and break ground in October of 2018.</p>	
November 2018	<p>Fulton Homes closed the purchase of 500 acres of Barney Farms.</p> <p>The Barney Family retain approximately 180 acres:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 90 acres of light industrial along Germann from Signal Butte to Meridian, 715 feet deep. - 20 acres of commercial at the southwest corner of Signal Butte and Germann. - 20 acres of multifamily just south of that. - 40 acres of light industrial south of that with the town park property to the south of that. 	
May 2019	<p>Fulton construction is in full swing. The remaining commercial, multifamily, and light industrial 180 acres are being marketed for development.</p>	
2021-2023	<p>Fulton Homes opens model homes, begins selling homes, and completes the lakes, clubhouse and aquatic center complex.</p>	
December 2021	<p>20 south of Signal Butte and Germann on the west side of Germann sold to Trammel Crow Residential for multifamily.</p>	
Oct 2022	<p>Surrounded by Trammel Crow multifamily to the north, Fulton Homes Barney Farms to the East, and Frontier Family Park to the south, the 40 acres northwest of Signal Butte and Ryan just north of the future Town of Queen Frontier Family Park is proposed to be rezoned from industrial to multifamily as a more compatible residentially oriented land use with the exception of the small triangle at the southwest of the parcel that remains in the airport overflight zone. As the town seeks to assess overall multifamily strategy, the case is withdrawn to be reconsidered at a later date.</p>	

Year/Date	Event	Notes
October 2022	<p>14 acres west of the southwest 3 acre corner of Signal Butte and Germann is rezoned from commercial to industrial in response to heightened interest from industrial users and to create more industrial land to serve the forthcoming LGE Battery Plant.</p> <p>3 acres on the hard corner remained commercial after this rezone.</p>	<p>In 2016 the southwest corner of Signal Butte and Germann, just under 20 acres, was zoned to commercial as part of the NSAP. This was a massive three-square mile rezone where best effort was made to anticipate future land use needs. At the time, there was a hope that a grocery anchored retail center would come to that site. Unfortunately, with all the industrial to the north, the rooftop county to drive substantial commercial at this location minimizes its commercial viability. Also, Fry's grocery store located one mile to the south at Queen Creek at Signal Butte definitely eliminating any potential for a grocery anchor to come to this site. As such, it was apparent that nearly 20 acres of commercial at this location was too much and would not be viable. The reduction to the smaller 3 acre commercial corner was an appropriate response to real market conditions.</p> <p>Also, when the NSAP was done, Meridian did not have plans for an interchange at SR24. Signal Butte was seen as the superior corner and Meridian seen as a challenged corner. As of 2023, SR24 is partially built with an interchange to Meridian. Signal Butte terminates at the tracks just over two miles south of Germann. As such, Signal Butte is now seen as the challenged corner and Meridian the better corner. This further validates this rezone.</p>
April 2023	<p>In December 2022, the 8 acres at the southwest corner of Signal Butte and Germann is rezoned from industrial to commercial. This was done at the request of the town to offset the commercial that was rezoned to industrial in Oct 22 west of the southwest corner Signal Butte and Germann.</p>	<p>Given the shift since the approval of the NSAP in commercial viability making Meridian more advantageous than Signal Butte for reasons described above, this made sense. This corner still contends with the challenge of no rooftops to the north due to that being all industrial. And, it will compete with the southeast corner across the street (the old Zimmerman dairy) which is roughly 20 acres of commercial. Thus, while being optimistic, a cautious view of the type and scale of commercial viability at this intersection remains merited.</p>
May 2022	<p>67 acres of industrial land on Germann between Signal Butte and Meridian is sold to Thompson Thrift to become Germann Commerce Center. After nearly 30 years of pursuing employment uses on Barney Farms, this marks the first successful location of an employment project.</p> <p>https://www.thompsonthrift.com/properties/germann-commerce</p>	<p>Groundbreaking for Germann Commerce Park occurred in January 2023</p> <p>https://azbigmedia.com/real-estate/thompson-thrift-breaks-ground-on-1m-sf-germann-commerce-center-in-queen-creek/</p>
2023	<p>Town of Queen Creek breaks ground on Frontier Family Park on the Barney Farms 130 acre parcel traded to the town in 2005-2006.</p>	

Year/Date	Event	Notes
2023	<p>Remaining parcels include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 acres at the southwest corner of Meridian and Germann • 10 acres at the southeast corner of Signal Butte and Germann • 3 acres commercial at the southwest corner of Signal Butte and German • 14 acres of industrial just west of that corner • 40 acres at the northwest corner of Signal Butte and Ryan. <p>Active marketing of these remaining parcels continues aggressively.</p>	