

## **EXHIBIT F: RECREATIONAL PURPOSES AND ASPECTS**

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As stated in Arizona Administrative Code R14-3-219:

*“State the extent, if any, the proposed site or route will be available to the public for recreational purposes, consistent with safety considerations and regulations, and attach any plans the Applicant may have concerning the development of the recreational aspects of the proposed site or route.”*

Recreational facilities and activities within the PSA range from developed activities in mixed use areas such as golf courses, ball fields, or designated open space to dispersed, undeveloped activities on private and state land.

## **REGIONAL AND COMMUNITY PARKS**

San Tan Mountains Regional Park is located south of Hunt Highway and west of Thompson Road south of the Town of Queen Creek, northeast of the Gila River Indian Community. The park lies within Pinal County but is managed by the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department through an intergovernmental agreement with Pinal County and through a Cooperative Recreation Management Area (“CRMA”) agreement with the Bureau of Land Management. Consisting of approximately 10,200 acres (7,938 acres of currently designated park land and 2,260 acres of adjacent Maricopa County land), the park ranges in elevation from about 1,400 feet to over 2,500 feet.

The park has limited existing facilities, including a Visitor’s Center with restroom facilities and water, equestrian trails, jeep roads, and unimproved trail routes. Additional amenities, such as a family campground, picnic area, equestrian staging area, multi-use trail system, and multi-use competitive track are proposed for future development. Goldmine Mountain is located in the northern portion of the park, with the main Santan Mountain ridge in the southern portion of the park. The vegetation changes from creosote flats to dense saguaro forest and an abundance of wildlife may be observed, including birds, mammals, and reptiles.

The Arizona Preserve Initiative (“API”) is designed to encourage the preservation of select parcels of State Trust land in and around urban areas for open space to benefit future generations. The law specifies a process by which State Trust land can be leased for up to 50 years or sold for conservation purposes through public auction. Included in the API conservation land reclassification, is 600 acres of land located within the study area, east of and adjacent to the San Tan Mountains Regional Park.

A Petition for Conservation Reclassification was submitted on April 27, 2000 for these 600 acres by Pinal County and the Town of Queen Creek. A Reclassification Order and Five-Year Withdrawal Order was issued on October 11, 2001 for 320 of the 600 acres. No action was taken on the remaining 280 acres pending future consideration. The land is still reclassified as suitable for conservation, but the Withdrawal Order has since lapsed. There are currently no development applications on the 600 acres at this time. Therefore, there are no restrictions upon its purchase should a development application be filed.

Many trails can also be observed throughout the PSA. These trails include hiking, biking, and equestrian trail corridors, such as in the foothills of the Santan Mountains and along the RWCD and adjacent to CAP canals. Recreational biking and pedestrian trails occur along the Queen Creek Wash, the washes within the Santan Mountains, and within multi-use corridors along major arterials. Equestrian-only trails are found along major and minor washes, such as the Sonoqui Wash and within designated multi-use corridors.

## LOCAL PARKS AND RECREATION

### Town of Queen Creek

The Town of Queen Creek, located entirely within the PSA, has several existing parks and parks under construction within its boundaries. These parks include:

- Town Hall Park, 17 acres adjacent to the Town Hall on several parcels owned by the Town of Queen Creek. Roughly 2.25 acres are developed for recreational use, while 10 acres remain undeveloped and are expected for future park development.
- Founders Park, 10 acres developed at the Queen Creek Community Center on Ellsworth Road, including a softball field, sand volleyball pit, soccer field, tennis court, and two outdoor basketball courts.
- Desert Mountain Park, 33 acres located at the southeast corner of Ocotillo Road and Hawes Road, along the Queen Creek Wash. The park includes a mix of active and passive recreational uses, including ball fields and picnic areas.
- Gracia Hawes Brown Park, 18 acres along the Sonoqui Wash, located west of Sossaman Road between Ocotillo Road and Chandler Heights Road. Currently under construction, the park's amenities will include equestrian facilities, trails, armadas and/or picnic areas.
- Horseshoe Park and Equestrian Centre, 128 acres located on the north side of Riggs Road between Hawes and Ellsworth Roads. This project, currently under construction, is located on the site of the old Queen Creek Landfill, which officially closed on May 31, 2007. The site will include an equestrian events center with two lighted arenas (one covered), a 100-stall barn, parking, vendor areas, maintenance and business offices, multi-use space, restrooms, a meeting room, and two rings. A future phase will include multi-use trails, playground equipment, and picnic areas.
- Chandler Heights Park, 33 acres on the northeast corner of Sossaman and Chandler Height Roads, along the Sonoqui Wash. The park is currently under construction and is a shared use facility with the Maricopa County Flood Control District as an on-line retention basin. The park will include an equestrian riding area, round pen, large shade canopy adjacent to an arena, three-acre open turf area, large and small ramadas, equestrian trailer parking lot, and multi-use trail with connections to the Sonoqui Wash trails. The historic Desert Wells Stage Stop will also be a key park feature, incorporating an interpretive area and outdoor classroom adjacent to the structure.

The Town of Queen Creek has also approved the master plan for four additional community parks. These proposed parks are as follows:

- East Park, 130 acres north of Queen Creek Road, east of Signal Butte Road. This park will be designed as an active-use sports complex facility with eight youth baseball/adult softball fields, eight multi-use fields, batting cage area, basketball courts, and tennis and volleyball courts. There will also be a three-acre lake surrounded by picnic and group ramadas, shaded play area, and concessions and restroom facilities.
- West Park, 78 acres north of Ocotillo Road between Sossaman and Hawes roads. This park will provide four lighted baseball/softball fields, three lighted multi-use fields, basketball courts, skate park, and an equestrian trailhead. A lake will feature a number of recreational opportunities including fishing, kayaking, and canoeing.
- San Marqui Park, 14 acres located in an established residential area along the Sonoqui Wash, east of Sossaman Road between Chandler Heights Road and Riggs Road. The park will be designed primarily as an open space preserve, but will feature a covered play structure, turf area, picnic facilities, restroom facilities, and parking area.
- Sossaman and Cloud Park, 23 acres along the east side of Sossaman Road, south of Cloud Road. This park will offer a dog park, three-acre lake, and plaza area including a shaded play area, restroom building, and group and picnic armadas.

### **Town of Gilbert**

The Town of Gilbert has two parks under construction within the PSA:

- Chandler Heights Basin, a district/regional park currently under construction adjacent to the RWCD Canal between Queen Creek and Chandler Heights roads.
- South Recharge Facility, a public open space area will surround this facility, now under construction east of the future Chandler Heights Basin, on the northeast corner of Ocotillo and Higley roads.

The Town of Gilbert has one planned park within the PSA:

- Rittenhouse Basin, a district/regional park planned for the area north of Rittenhouse Road between the RWCD Canal and Power Road. A fire training facility is also planned within this park, south of Pecos Road.

### **City of Mesa**

The City of Mesa's boundaries fall within the northern portion of the PSA, between Power and Meridian roads. Within this area, there are no existing, planned, or proposed City parks. The PSA does, however, fall within an area the City has targeted for future park development.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS AND GOLF COURSES**

Neighborhood parks and golf courses were inventoried throughout the PSA, and were especially prevalent in master planned communities within the Towns of Queen Creek and Gilbert, and within Pinal County to the west of the Hunt Highway corridor. These neighborhood parks and golf courses are dedicated, owned, and maintained by private homeowner's associations

## **OTHER RECREATION FACILITIES**

Other recreational facilities inventoried in the PSA include both private and public recreational facilities. These include the Barney Family Sports Complex on the north side of Queen Creek Road between Crismon and Signal Butte roads and numerous public schools equipped with sports facilities.

## **POTENTIAL PROJECT EFFECTS**

The proposed Project facilities will not directly impact the San Tan Mountain Regional Park. The nearest proposed Project alignment, the Ocotillo Alignment and sub-alternatives, is located over 1.5 miles from the park boundary. The proposed Project facilities associated with the Ocotillo Alignment may indirectly affect developed recreational trails along the RWCD and Sonoqui Wash, but no permanent, long-term impacts will be expected to the facilities. The addition of a transmission line may result in indirect visual effects to trail users. The transmission line associated with this alternative alignment may also have minor effects to the existing and planned parks along the Sonoqui Wash and the Horseshoe Park and Equestrian Centre, although the transmission line facilities will generally be compatible to the types of recreation opportunities at these sites.

Neighborhood parks, golf courses, and other public and private recreation facilities will also be generally compatible with transmission line facilities. The proposed Project alignments with the most potential to affect these facilities are the Ocotillo Alignment and Sub-alternatives. The remaining alternative alignments and sub-alternatives will not traverse designated recreational areas.