



February 18, 2010

Q.C. watching bills that affect its finances

By Amanda Keim
Tribune

Changes in development fee rules and possibly getting a break on a \$10 million loan are among issues Queen Creek is keeping an eye on at the Arizona Legislature this year.

The Queen Creek Town Council received an update on bills its lobbyist is keeping an eye on at the state capitol. Most of the bills have passed one or two committees at this point.

Two pieces of legislation dealing with development impact fees, the money developers pay to help cover building expenses related to growth, could potentially have the biggest impact on Queen Creek if they become law, said Town Manager John Kross.

Multimedia: Queen Creek candidate profiles [http://www.eastvalleytribune.com/page/qc_primary]
Queen Creek candidates tackle issues [<http://www.eastvalleytribune.com/story/149993>]
Queen Creek delays action on developments [<http://www.eastvalleytribune.com/story/147950>]
State gives Queen Creek break on \$10M loan [<http://www.eastvalleytribune.com/story/146729>]
Q.C. development proposals up for discussion [<http://www.eastvalleytribune.com/story/145921>]

The first, HB2249, would require a city to refund impact fee money if the streets, roads and other items it's meant to fund aren't built within seven years.

That could be a problem for Queen Creek, which has used development fees to pay down debt on projects like the new Queen Creek Library, Horseshoe Park & Equestrian Centre and Desert Mountain Park, Kross said.

The second, HB2259, would require existing residents to split the cost of upgraded facilities with new developments if improvements would create a better level of service for residents than what is currently available.

"This, in short, is a backdoor attempt to levy the cost of new infrastructure caused by new development to existing residents," Kross said. "That's contrary to the whole philosophy of the impact fee program in general."

Both bills have passed two house committees.

Another bill was heralded as good news, since it could forgive a \$10 million loan Queen Creek received from the state.

The town, along with Maricopa County and Pinal County, received a \$10 million interest-free loan in 2008 to help widen the part of Ellsworth Road that curves into Pinal County. The loan was granted under a state program to build roads in busy areas. It has been used for widening Interstate 10 on the west side of the Valley, Kross said.

Money for the loan was originally due to the state in 2012, although that was pushed back in the last legislative session to 2024.


But under HB2625, loans under that program would be forgiven as long as the state budget is in the black by 2015-16,

In an act of regional support, the town is also supporting HB2736, the bill that would fund a new spring training facility for the Chicago Cubs in Mesa by adding a ticket surcharge to all spring training tickets and raising rental car taxes in Maricopa County by \$1.

"We really do view this as a regional economic development matter important to the East Valley," Kross said.

Major League Baseball and other teams who play in the Valley have come out against the bill.



 2010 Freedom Communications / Arizona. Permission granted for up to 5 copies. All rights reserved.
You may forward this article or get additional permissions by typing http://license.icopyright.net/3.7220?icx_id=150871 into any web browser. Freedom Communications / Arizona and East Valley Tribune logos are registered trademarks of Freedom Communications / Arizona . The iCopyright logo is a registered trademark of iCopyright, Inc.