



SCOTTSDALE DOWNTOWN PLAN UPDATE “PUBLIC REALM” DISCUSSION GROUP



DISCUSSION RESULTS

Originally adopted by the City Council in 1984, the existing Downtown Plan still serves as the long-range policy document that guides growth and development decisions for Downtown Scottsdale. Over the past twenty years, the plan has framed public policy and development with regard to Downtown Scottsdale.

The **Downtown Plan Update** will review the 1984 policies and consider Downtown’s future for the next twenty years. Like the City’s General Plan, the Downtown Plan takes a *broad* look at the future, setting *goals and policies* that will shape future Downtown development and investment. In considering the discussion questions, participants were asked to think of them from the “10,000 foot level,” thus establishing the *vision* for the future of Downtown.

CORE QUESTIONS – *Asked of every group*

1. What do you see as the **strengths** of Downtown Scottsdale – in other words, things you want to keep the same or have maintained?

- History and Preservation
 - Appreciate the preservation of the historic past
 - Historic setting makes it unique
- Design and Character
 - Mix of old & modern
 - Small business character of the downtown
 - Appreciate the effort to keep endearing things from the past while encouraging new taller buildings which are wonderful for the community
 - “I like the buildings along the canal bank”
 - Planters
 - “Looks like Scottsdale, not Disneyland”
 - Peaceful setting
- Civic Center Mall Public Space
 - Park
 - Library
 - Proximity to many other things
 - Variety of activities offered
- Open Space
 - Marshall Way Bridge and Plaza
 - The Canal
 - Civic Center Mall
- Old Town
 - Diversity of buildings & stores
 - There are no skyscrapers in Old Town
- Urban Form
 - Increasing density
 - Ability to walk to things
- Art and Culture
 - Like the public and for-sale art
 - Art Walk
 - Art district
- Entertainment
 - People are outside in the evening
 - Not dead like Downtown Phoenix at night
 - Overall vitality and nightlife
 - Spring Training
 - Fashion Square
 - Golf is nearby

- Wide range of activities can be found Downtown
- Hospital
 - Location
 - Proximity to Downtown Residential
- Parking
 - It is available
 - It is free
 - The parking is great!
- Identity
 - “We need to follow through with our uniqueness”
 - Five distinct districts
 - 5th Ave is unique and is a draw for shoppers

2. What would you like to see changed or improved; what is your vision for the next ten years?

- Boundary
 - Downtown is too big
 - Dislike the feeling of infringement or encroachment of the new development on adjacent residential areas
- Land Use and Urban Form
 - Don’t want too much upscale development
 - Don’t want to be Downtown Tempe—we need more affordable and funky spaces for the Downtown
 - Concerned about businesses surrounding residential development
 - High rise buildings are too close to the residential areas
 - Density & height rings around Old Town could be “stepped up”
 - Before considering density, think about water and waste disposal [impacts of density]
 - Increase density, but responsibly
 - Start high [tall] in center and work our way out
 - Downtown needs a market place
 - Should be fewer high-rise condos
 - Set a height standard in Old Town and stick with it... same at the Canal
- Access & Connectivity
 - Should open the Civic Center park to Indian School Road
 - Extend Civic Center Mall from Miller to Goldwater (as a pedestrian way) & have a light rail station in middle
 - This would bring in pedestrians and lead them to the districts
 - Connect light rail to north Scottsdale and Phoenix
 - Improve transition of space between Stetson and Fifth Avenue
 - Need better connectivity using shade, signage and bicycle access
 - The alleys are dark and scary

- Public Transportation
 - City needs to encourage it
 - There should be less dependence on gasoline
 - Would like light rail in downtown
 - Transit needs better promotion
 - Expand the trolley service
 - Use the bus instead of more parking
 - Need better use of the Loloma Transit Area. It's a dead space
- Landscaping
 - Needed for vitality
 - Heat island reduction
 - Need to use more drought resistant plants
 - There's not enough shade!
- Pedestrian friendly streets
 - Shade trees, not palm trees
 - "Boulevarding" on Main (i.e. food carts and seats in street center)
 - Walkability should be improved
 - Add boulevards on Marshall Way & Main Street
- Open Space
 - Need for all-age use
 - Need more plazas
- Parking
 - Provide additional underground parking that provides access to parks and the trolley system
 - No on-street parking during the day
 - Park-n-Rides—and promote them!
 - For the ArtWalks
 - Use with the trolley
- Art & Culture
 - Need more cultural diversity (museums, etc)
 - Provide more diversity of culture
 - The bar scene has colored the Downtown in a negative way
 - i.e. the lingerie bowl
 - We don't need any more bars Downtown
- People
 - Make Downtown kid friendly
- Improve civic involvement
 - The community should do this for themselves
 - Need a greater diversity of voices
- Affordability
 - Want to create live/work/play environment but affordability is a problem
- Safety
 - Downtown needs more police presence

SPECIALIZED QUESTIONS

1. How do you define the public realm and what activities do you see occurring in the public realm downtown?

Definition of Public Realm:

- “I define it as everything you can walk to, or would want to walk to, from Brown to the Canal Bank.”
- Anywhere you can walk to and not bring your wallet
- Anywhere you can walk, especially the canal
- An example is the Valley Ho where they closed Main Street
 - Should have created a relationship between public and private realm
- Open spaces for public performances
 - “This is why snow birds like to walk everywhere. They have walked to places I have never walked and did not know about” [they discover activities by walking]
- There’s something to do once you get there
- “Porosity”- the ability to move from one area to another with no barriers or obstacles
 - Visual and auditory senses need to be respected (beauty, quietness, no pollution)
- Accessibility, safety and walkability

Activities in the Public Realm:

- Sidewalk cafes, museums that adjoin public realm, shops, walkable spaces, bicycles
- Family activities, cafes, places for all ages to feel comfortable
- Night clubs made it a 24-hour Downtown
- Dog cafes
- Outdoor music, on a regular basis
 - Every week for families
- Cafes
- Free activities
- To create public realm, create a partnership between public and private
 - Should be a collaboration between government and citizens
 - Need to reclaim the original thinking of what the public realm was originally used for
 - “Everything grows from something else”
 - Examples: Boston Common, Madison Ave
 - Los Angeles is a mess because of strip malls
- Trash pickup, loading and unloading, etc
- Alleys can be used as feeders and connectors

- Use the canal for walking (paths & benches), non-motorized boats and connect parks along the canal
- “We have an opportunity to redefine diversity in looking for collective values that can join us together like food, music and art. Things about the Old West and exhibits of the Old West can be incorporated into kiosks.”
- Cultural Activities
 - Free Indian Dances like those in the Civic Center Mall
 - Flyers should be sent to residents to explain the activities Downtown
- Music
- Fairs
- Public Art
 - Needs to be spruced up, though. Do not like the look of “Bonanza” or South Beach Miami
- Farmers Market
- Businesses should do demonstrations in the open spaces and parks

2. With the higher land values in downtown, what trade-offs, if any, would you be willing to make in order to create more public space in Downtown Scottsdale?

- Density
 - Well-planned density that will accommodate growth
 - “A city that doesn’t grow, dies”
 - Every block should have a small park (in new developments)—trade density with developers
 - Have to get away from auto-centric ideal
 - Downtown needs to be built for people, not cars
 - Need to increase density to do it
 - More height and density would be okay if more open space were supplied.
 - Not willing to trade height restrictions
 - It is better to have one great designed tall building than many mediocre small buildings
- Increase taxes
- Infrastructure
 - Use street right-of-way to expand the Civic Center Mall
 - Plan infrastructure and open spaces first, then develop
 - I hate alleys. Have businesses use the alleys and close them to traffic. Use chairs and benches for coffee, etc. That would be a great enhancement to the Downtown.
 - “There are some trade-offs here, though, since these alleys act as service roads which are necessary for garbage pickup.”
- Better infill development

- There is currently nothing to draw people from Marshall Way/Fifth Avenue/Rose Garden to the Civic Center. People do not know about the Civic Center Mall and its green spaces. We need to supply better communication.
 - Aside: Civic Center Mall name needs to change
- We have plenty of public space
 - Do not displace businesses; program activities in the current spaces better
- Protect Old Town heights
 - Build in the green space where we can
 - Protect Old Town, but need to decide on what to preserve
- Partnerships
 - Builder works with the city to provide open space
 - Need to push developers to provide more public amenities
 - But it shouldn't be all private
 - Space should be marshaled for the future, like the Waterfront Project—a 20-year horizon that took planning into the future
 - Require large developments to supply more open space. The trade-off is to allow new development if more open space is made available.
- Should not trade safety and security
- Integrate pocket parks in the canal
- Parking
 - Buildings should not face parking lots
 - Need to get rid of parking lots and nine-lane streets
 - Parking lots seem like undeveloped land. Let's make them attractive.
 - Parking is not sacrosanct.
 - Use non-intrusive signage to identify parking
 - Encourage use of the top of parking structures as green space
 - Trade—in taller buildings—above grade parking green roofs
 - Maybe parking should be underground instead
 - Problem: It is more expensive. So what about people with average incomes? They can't afford any of this!
 - Aside: There is not enough workforce housing. The city should provide an incentive to encourage it

3. With the addition of more residential units into the downtown area, do you see the necessity for additional or different types of public realm spaces downtown?

- Urban Form
 - Don't want to be 24th Street & Camelback (Phoenix)
 - Don't "jam" everything in one area
- Shopping
 - Groceries are only reached by car and that's a problem

- Need the numbers of people to get a grocery store to come downtown
 - In the Downtown Town Hall, it was mentioned that basic necessities and amenities must be available at street level
- Infrastructure & Services
 - Need to consider school capacity
 - Need more Police & Fire
- Circulation
 - Bicycles
 - Need to incorporate bike lanes
 - Many younger people ride bicycles; so, there is a need to create better bike paths and trails
 - Need to incorporate SAFE bicycle trails Downtown. Look to McCormick Ranch approach to guide similar development of trails in the Downtown along the canals and connecting them
 - Provide bicycle racks that look like hitching posts
 - Better pedestrian facilities on major thoroughfares
 - Traffic signals should be changed to have sensors instead of timing
 - Mass transit is needed
 - Do people even use the buses? They seem empty all the time.
 - The buses are full in the morning and afternoon during rush hour.
 - Shade is important to pedestrians
 - Need the ability to sit on benches
 - Using the trolleys gives it a homey feeling
- Housing
 - Affordability for average families needs to be created
 - “Housing affordable to everyone should be built Downtown”
 - Need workforce housing
 - But it’s hard to provide an extensive number of “workforce” units
 - The City doesn’t own any land and that’s a problem
- Districts
 - The Cohesive district idea is a bad one. All the districts should be different
 - Make all of Downtown called “Old Town”
 - Tie the districts together with elements of the public realm
- Users
 - There are no children to be seen in Downtown Scottsdale. Downtown needs public space that serves children. Maybe install fountains like the Civic Center Mall that the children can play in.
 - Problem: Wealthy people have fewer children. We need a way for children to get downtown. Children do not ride bicycles or use parks today. Parents are too afraid.

- Our national culture is paranoid. Especially parents about children.
- People north of Shea Boulevard
 - Do they care about Downtown?
 - Does it matter if they care about Downtown or not?
- People see Downtown as the heartbeat of the City. A lot of really cool stuff is going on here.
- “It is hard to connect 185 miles of this City. Yet, Downtown represents all of Scottsdale. Downtown is our Town Center.”

4. Streets are an important component of the public realm. What changes, if any, should be made to the street spaces in Downtown? Should there be a differentiation between the design approach to the smaller shopping streets and side streets versus the arterial streets?

Changes to street spaces:

- Style
 - Make it softer/green
 - McDowell from 101 on is nice
 - Hayden and the freeways are all nice
 - Downtown is not as great because of a lack of space
 - Need shade
 - Provide more shade so you can tolerate the sun
 - “The design of streets should include requirements for more lighting, places to sit, use of shade sails, while at the same time maintaining an artsy look.”
- Maintenance
 - Need well-maintained streets and sidewalks
- On Street Parking
 - Would slow traffic (on Scottsdale Rd)
 - Should have parking garages with retail and secondary exits
 - Use the alleys
 - A good example is the Waterfront parking garage and retail area
 - People are unaware that there is major parking (in Waterfront) and that’s a good thing
- Transit
 - People can’t afford to drive
 - Link transportation modes
- Street components
 - Create two-lanes (instead of four) and reduce the speed
 - Create wider sidewalk and bicycle lanes
 - Use of the couplets= they’re underused, but they are still easy to get through
 - Create loading zones?

- How did we ever end up with triple curbs Downtown? There are safety and space questions to be looked at
- Craftsman Court and Marshall Way need wider sidewalks—safety concerns
- “Install and use solar panels to provide shade. Do not make metal benches that burn into you. Nobody wants to be branded by the hot metal in the summer.”
- Need to close down the streets to allow more pedestrian activities and encourage other uses for the street space
 - Problem: closing the streets has been tried in the Midwest, which makes it hard for people to get to businesses. This is very destructive. That approach could kill the Downtown.
- We need more bike lanes on Indian School Road
 - 68th Street would be safer for bike lanes
 - Need to allow different modes of transportation to use the roadways.
- It’s hard to change from suburban to urban lifestyle
- “What if Scottsdale Road was a pedestrian way only?”
 - Businesses would not like it
 - It’s a main artery, you can’t close it
 - Need it for the hospital
 - The lights aren’t properly timed right now
 - Need left-turn arrows
 - Closed a main street in Chicago, and it was a disaster
- Need more wayfinding signs
 - Post information about the bypass [couplet system] or make it more visible
 - Use a blinking sign that says go from where to where [on the couplet]
- It feels like pedestrians are intruders downtown
- Scottsdale is not that bad. There is some quirky stuff out there.
- W Hotel will extend activity onto the streets that make up the entertainment area
- Developers should always be required to give value back to the City in regards to the public realm. Whether it is shade or parks or whatever.