



SCOTTSDALE DOWNTOWN PLAN UPDATE “INTERCONNECTIVITY” 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?

- Character
 - Charm of older buildings
 - Old Town “western” theme
 - Urban lifestyle
 - The new residential and mixed use environment
 - “I like the fact that Downtown does not look homogenous.”
- Circulation
 - Scottsdale Road makes mobility through Downtown easy
 - Couplet [Goldwater and Drinkwater Boulevards] makes it easy to get through Downtown
 - “I like the trolley system. I encourage a different mode of transportation.”
 - Downtown is a pedestrian-friendly environment
- Shopping and dining
- Arts and Culture
 - Museums
 - Like the arts districts
 - Like the pedestrian-friendly area in the arts district
 - Like the charming and historic feeling of the arts area
 - Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art (SMoCA)
 - Scottsdale Center for Performing Arts (SCPA)
 - Multiple venues Downtown
 - Desert Stages
 - Theater 4301
 - Art galleries
 - Unique atmosphere
 - Makes Downtown a great place to visit
 - Art walks
 - Street fairs
 - “I like the urban flavor of different activities Downtown.”
- Economy
 - Small, entrepreneurial businesses
 - Downtown has great, unique small businesses.
 - Boutiques and a lack of large chains make for interesting people and great dynamic.
- Urban Form
 - Like the current height limits
 - Like the introduction of more residences Downtown

- Like that buffers, like the Indian Bend Wash, separate land uses
- Like the scale of Downtown Scottsdale
- Civic center
 - Nice park setting
 - Is unique
- Entertainment
 - Scottsdale Stadium [like the look of it, too]
- Community involvement
- Appearance
 - Signage is low key
- Diversity
 - “I looked at First Street and bought there because it is extremely diverse”

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

- Design
 - Galleria is an eyesore and is too big
 - Need to be open to diverse building design
 - Would like to see more architectural diversity
 - “People have different tastes. Just because one person does not like it, does not mean it is bad design. We need to teach our elected officials to be design savvy.”
 - “Downtown Scottsdale is starting to look like a cheap Santa Barbara”
 - “How did we come across the rusty-iron look?”
 - Need a sign color that is uniform so that one can see it
 - On the planning end of things, it is homogenous.
 - Old Town needs updating in terms of variety
- Arts and Culture
 - Downtown should become an education center; campuses bring vitality
 - Need a farmers’ market
 - Need a larger arts center
 - Need more reasons to go Downtown
- Public/Open Space
 - Civic Center Mall is dated, internalized, and not easily accessible. “Something isn’t working”
 - Public needs to be better educated on what “Mall” means
 - Need more public open spaces
 - Lacks a city center
 - Need “destination spaces” like McCormick-Stillman Railroad Park
 - “Scottsdale needs a heart” [a center]
 - Want to be able to see Camelback Mountain

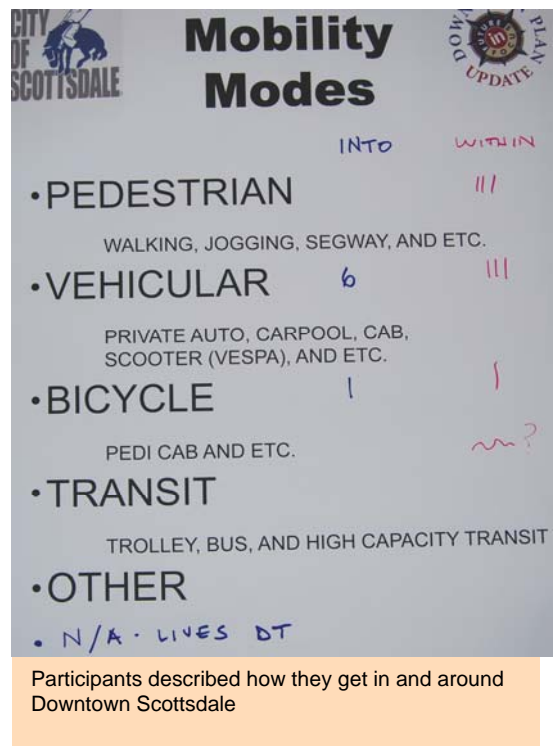
- Canal
 - Has dirt banks, which is unattractive
 - Needs trees
 - Needs walking paths
 - Needs lighting
 - Needs landscaping
 - Should allow for the ability to ride a bicycle on it
- Identity
 - Improve Downtown’s image
 - Downtown is so large that it is losing a defined identity
 - “I think of the 5th Avenue shops when I think of Downtown”
 - “Are we really the ‘West’s Most Western Town?’”
- Circulation
 - Traffic congestion and parking need to be improved
 - Need better mass transit
 - Auto traffic needs to be tamed. Pedestrians and bicycle traffic need to be separate from automobile traffic.
 - Not all people like to walk, and business owners want parking right in front of their door
 - The 4,000 new residents in the Downtown area create more traffic
 - There should be a bicycle lane on Scottsdale Road
 - I might walk if I felt safe
 - “I was disappointed that we didn’t get light rail”
 - The bus is inefficient [time-wise]
 - We need something to move people who do not have cars or cannot drive
 - The couplets are not working as bypasses because people are building adjacent to them
- New development
 - Need to continue to improve the canal banks
 - Need more mixed use density, with residential support services
 - Need a grocery store and the basic amenities to live in Downtown
 - “That will make or break revitalization”
 - Those without a car that live Downtown cannot get groceries
 - Need services to support new residential units
- Landscaping
 - Need more shade and seating in pedestrian areas
 - Need more covered areas
- Urban Form
 - Preserve views by varying building height
 - “I like the current districts style, but I want to see density like at Scottsdale Road and Camelback Road along the south canal bank”
 - Do not want Scottsdale to feel like a tunnel [with too tall buildings]

- Connectivity
 - “Downtown is a patchwork quilt that needs to be connected. It needs a common theme.”
 - Need catwalks, bridges and details to make connections
 - Need bridges across Goldwater and Drinkwater Boulevards
 - The arts area is completely invisible, and the Civic Center needs a statement of “You are here!”
 - The Civic Center Mall is disconnected from the rest of Downtown Scottsdale
 - There is no cohesiveness Downtown
- Zoning
 - Do not change set backs
 - Maintain current setbacks or make them larger
 - Do not want to look like Downtown Tempe [buildings are too close to street]
 - City needs to take a strong stance on zoning. No high rises! They take away the need for business owners to update their buildings.
- Parking
 - City should buy a larger piece of land to build a parking structure to feed the trolley
- History
 - Need better historic preservation
 - Need our historic elements

SPECIALIZED QUESTIONS

1. Currently when traveling into, around and out of Downtown Scottsdale, which mobility modes do you primarily use?

- To get into Downtown: 13 drive cars, 1 rides bike, 0 take trolley, 0 use bus, 0 walk [Totals are for two focus group discussions]
- To get around Downtown: 7 walk, 4 drive, 3 rides bike, 0 take trolley, 0 use bus [Totals are for two focus group discussions]
- “The trolley is for tourists”



2. Which mobility modes would you like to use that you currently do not use or are unavailable to use in the Downtown at this time? Why?

- Public transportation [Metro Bus]
 - Would use if it were much more time efficient
 - Would use if it provided more reliable destinations
 - Would use if it provided more frequency and choices
 - The express bus would be better if it were a straight shot up Scottsdale/Rural Road from Tempe
 - “I do not have time for public transportation”
 - “If we made it easier, maybe people would take the bus”
 - The bus system has a bad rap. It needs to be better marketed. It is inefficient and not easy to ride. It is also too expensive.
- Would need critical mass of density and height to make it work
- “The big part of the problem is there is not enough transportation available to staff at Scottsdale Healthcare Osborn Campus”
- Downtown transit may be achievable, but for getting in and out of Downtown – probably not.
- Trolley
 - Like the trolley but would like to see it go up to Lincoln Drive
 - The trolley is more inviting than the buses
 - The trolley has not been effectively marketed in the past
 - It is more user-friendly and more maneuverable
- Downtown residents can move around without a car, but those who come into Downtown have the issue. They need a car.
- In cities like Paris, there are many transit choices which makes getting around easy
- Light Rail
 - It is too big to circulate. Maybe use streetcars instead.
 - Tucson has a streetcar on a linear route
 - If Scottsdale were to use streetcars, it would relieve congestion because people could get on and off faster
 - “They have taken a light rail scenario between towns to show student transit from both Arizona State University Campuses”
- Pedestrian
 - “I love to walk Downtown; if there is anything that can be done to enhance it, I would like it.”
 - The fact that Downtown is not pedestrian-friendly makes it intimidating

3. Pedestrian Environment

a. Please identify areas in the Downtown that are pedestrian friendly/promote walkability

- Main Street, west of Scottsdale Road to the Valley Ho
- 5th Avenue

- Marshall Way –Stetson Drive– Craftsman Court
- Waterfront shops
- Interior of Civic Center
- Optima Camelview Development. The first level is open, and it is very permeable within the project. Also, it is not gated, which creates an urban environment.
- East-West streets are incredibly walkable
- North-South streets are cumbersome to pedestrians
- Main Street in general is a good walking street

b. Please identify areas in the Downtown that are NOT pedestrian friendly or walkable

- Scottsdale Road needs a buffer between pedestrians and cars
- Camelback Road
- Indian School Road
- Goldwater Boulevard
- Any place where the sidewalk abuts high speed traffic
- Couplets [Drinkwater and Goldwater Boulevards]
- Optima Camelview [contrary to statement in part a] does not connect to the rest of Downtown
- “Entertainment district” [area generally bound by Camelback Road, Scottsdale Road/Drinkwater Boulevard, Sixth Avenue and 75th Street] because it lacks shade
- Getting to the Civic Center Mall

c. What suggestions do you have for improving pedestrian walkability in the Downtown?

- Need more shade
- Need better crossings at major roads [signals, timing, etc]
- Focus on smaller streets as the walkable areas
- Close small streets to cars
- Repeat Civic Center mall concept across Scottsdale Road and Couplet
- Take Marshall Way out and make it for pedestrians only
- Create pedestrian malls for use by walkers, bicyclers and trolleys [some participants disagreed with this statement]
- Couplets would make good pedestrian connectors
- Narrow the roads and make pedestrian bridges



Participants explained, on a Downtown Scottsdale map, pedestrian-friendly and unfriendly areas.

- People do not mind wide streets as long as there is a safe way to cross them
- Spend money to create the small projects, and think big!
- Buffer pedestrians from high traffic speeds, especially when speeds are 40+ miles per hour
- Need continuous bicycle routes on North-South streets
- The optimal pedestrian experience has shade, seating, benches and is buffered away from traffic
- Rent-a-bike
 - Would be good for riding around town
 - “I do not see Scottsdale as a rent-a-bike kind of town”
 - The Valley Ho has rentable bikes
 - The city would need to find out if people want to ride bicycles and walk, first
- Trolley
 - If there is a way for people to grab a trolley and walk, it would be better and more frequently utilized
 - Get people to a central parking area and move them around on the trolley [park once]
 - “The trolley already does that”
 - “We need a parking center, the trolley was built to transport people between the resorts”
 - Trolley is not promoted enough
 - Build a parking structure outside of Downtown and transport them in



Participants' idea for the location of a bridge, like that of the Civic Center Mall

- If money were unlimited, more bridges [like the Civic Center Mall bridge] should be built
- Turn a street into a park and use water to buffer noises

4. Downtown Scottsdale has been described as a collection of areas or districts. How might linkages between districts be improved? Where should the linkages be?

- District identity:
 - Districts are not recognizable
 - Consider all districts as “Old Town”
 - South of Fashion Square Mall is considered “Old Town”
 - Use the major streets as district dividers

- Not having districts is okay from a planning perspective
- Preserve appropriate buildings in respective districts to preserve the flavor of each district
- “Old Town” is only for visitors, and it does not have a local draw
- Do not want to be “Anywhere USA”

– Linkages:

- Grade separated crossings - bridges over, tunnels under
- Dedicated path protected from vehicles with shade and seating
- Use gateways and signage to link districts
- Use different colored signage or different logos for each district, like historic districts often do
- Do not want to use pedestrian bridges
- Remove physical barriers for the pedestrians. The pedestrian has to be more important than the car
- Require developers to create linkages in the new developments to existing buildings
- Require a link to parking in new developments



Participants' suggestions for trolley routes, park-n-rides and other connections Downtown

5. Parking is an important issue with any downtown district, including Scottsdale. What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses parking provided currently in Downtown Scottsdale? How does this compare to other downtowns you might be familiar with?

– Strengths:

- Scottsdale has done well with parking lots and structures, but we will need more of them and need to get new development to contribute to public parking
- Free parking is good and important [contrary view in following list]
- Scottsdale is very “park-able”
- Parking garages are great [good design and city has the ability to create]
- Parking is available, but one must be willing to walk
- Like underground parking
- There are no meters

- Weaknesses:
 - Civic Center Garage design does not encourage nor draw pedestrians into the Civic Center Plaza/Park/Mall
 - 3- Hour limit may diminish people’s willingness or ability for walking downtown.
 - Do not want Scottsdale to be “park-able”
 - Free parking is a bad thing
 - Scottsdale used to be “park and go right in.” In 20 years, it will not be that way. Cannot take large shopping items on the trolley. Need the car.
 - Need more parking and structures
 - Need better marketing/signage/education of parking structure locations
- Suggestions:
 - Maybe some convenience parking could be metered
 - Would pay for parking if it were convenient, covered
 - Perhaps valet is a good solution for paid parking
 - Would pay for secure/safe parking
 - Valet parking in Downtown takes too long (such as at Nieman Marcus)
 - Continue to add bicycle lanes
 - Signs directing people (bicycle & pedestrians) to Downtown parking would help
 - Strengthen connections to parking
 - Limit parking by having areas for pick up and drop-off
 - Limit parking times to 30 minutes
 - Use Kierland as a model of a good parking system. There is very little parking inside and most of it is located outside.
 - New development should provide more parking
 - Do not punish people for staying in Downtown longer than three hours
 - Need to accommodate a diverse population [residents and visitors] with different needs
 - People are willing to pay for convenience [example: valet parking]
 - Do not mind paying for parking, if I do not have to continually refill a meter

- 6. Downtown Scottsdale is served by several east-west and north-south streets. Please describe your opinion of these streets as they exist and operate today. What would you maintain or change about these streets over the next ten years?**
- a. **Scottsdale Road**
 - b. **Camelback Road**
 - c. **The Couplet (Goldwater and Drinkwater Boulevards)**
 - d. **Indian School Road**

e. Other streets

- Couplet
 - Direct traffic to the couplets, they are underused now
 - Parking should be closer to the couplets
 - Signage needs to be improved on the couplet
 - May need to use the couplets more in the future [because of growth]
 - Redesign the entrance to the couplet so that it is easier to access
 - One should not have to think to enter and exit the Couplet
- Scottsdale Road
 - Should be one lane each direction
 - Should have walkable medians
 - Scalability is off, the right-of-way is too large
 - Need to narrow the right of way and have a median in the middle
 - Abandon as the major way through Downtown
- Indian School Rd
 - Too many traffic lights
- Other Streets
 - Chaparral needs to be widened
 - Time the traffic lights between Hayden and Scottsdale Roads