



SCOTTSDALE DOWNTOWN PLAN UPDATE “CULTURAL FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS” 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?

- New Development
 - Resurgence of Downtown investment and residential areas
- Character
 - Unique character
 - Small town feel
 - Downtown has a sense of place
 - Distinct architecture
 - Charm and originality
- Arts and Culture
 - Center for the Arts
 - Number and variety of art galleries
 - Diversity of offerings: cultural and historic venues
 - Availability of the arts
 - Public Art
 - Long history of support for the arts
- Economy
 - Local shops
- Urban Form
 - Current density is good
- Civic center
 - Civic Center park
- Entertainment
 - The dining and night life
 - “I like everything I have seen in Scottsdale from bars to parking to stores.”
 - Restaurants
- Diversity
 - Variety of uses in a small area
 - Great diversity
 - “You can shop, dine, and view live art all in a compact location.”
- Circulation
 - Good accessibility
 - Good walkability

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

- Arts and Culture
 - Need a larger arts center
 - Need arts education for kids
 - Need greater visibility on how to find public art.
 - Need maps of where public art is located.
 - Need additional facilities to experience live arts
 - Need to cluster current and future cultural offerings
 - Need the Museum of the West to become a reality
 - Bring back “pre-events”
- Entertainment
 - Need a mix of night life activities
- Public/Open Space
 - Need more open and green spaces Downtown besides the Civic Center Mall
 - Change the name of the Civic Center Mall. Use a word like “Commons” instead of “Mall”
- Housing
 - Need affordable housing- under \$1,000,000
- Economic
 - Need more retail options
 - Need retail that is open on nights and weekends
 - Want to be a 24-hour City
 - Need to crack down on fake discounts, sales and going out of business sales. Same owner, same product, different name on the store.
- Circulation
 - Traffic flow
 - Needs to be more walkable
 - Need alternative transportation options
 - Need to improve circulation in general
 - Fix the traffic problems; not just the traffic, but how it performs. The timing is off.
 - Need to be more pedestrian friendly. Use shade to accomplish this.
 - Crossing Scottsdale Road is not pedestrian friendly.
 - Expand the trolley service and keep it free
- Landscaping
 - Streetscapes need improvement
- Urban Form
 - Void pockets like that of the Galleria

- Connectivity
 - Need to improve the flow to Downtown from other areas of Scottsdale.
Example: North Scottsdale to Downtown
- Parking
 - Need free parking
 - Need more parking
- History
 - Need continued and more emphasis on historic sites

SPECIALIZED QUESTIONS

1. **Merriam-Webster Online Definition of Art: *the conscious use of skill and creative imagination especially in the production of aesthetic objects; also: works so produced***

Merriam-Webster Online Definition of Culture: *enlightenment and excellence of taste acquired by intellectual and aesthetic training; also: acquaintance with and taste in fine arts, humanities, and broad aspects of science as distinguished from vocational and technical skills*

What does art and culture mean to you? Where do you attend or access arts and cultural activities (statewide, regionally, Downtown, etc.)?

- Art and culture means:
 - Theater
 - Dance
 - Concepts
 - Food and wine
 - Art Walks
 - Films
 - Film festivals
 - Public art
 - Galleries
 - Art and culinary festivals
 - Sports arenas
 - Wine tastings
- Locations:
 - Scottsdale Center for Performing Arts (SCPA)
 - Herberger Theater
 - Symphony Hall
 - Cave Creek Coffee Company- it has an art gallery
 - Celebrity Theater

- Desert Stages Theater
- Kern Center
- Gammage Auditorium
- Tempe Arts Center
- Mesa Arts Center
- Orpheum Theater
- Scottsdale Fashion Week

2. What is your primary art or cultural destination when you come to Downtown Scottsdale? When you attend cultural events, do you participate in any other activities before or after the event? Example: going to dinner.

- Primary destination:
 - SCPA
 - Main Street Art Walk
 - Scottsdale [generally]
 - [Our Lady of Perpetual Help] Mission Church
 - Camelview Theater
- Activities before or after an event:
 - Dining before a presentation
 - Dinner
 - Coffee
 - Wine Tastings
 - Eat
 - Drink cocktails
 - Park
 - Walk



Participants placed dots on a Downtown Map to show cultural places that they frequent.

3. What are opportunities and constraints facing art and cultural programs in Scottsdale today? In your opinion, what needs to be done to keep downtown Scottsdale competitive in art and culture?

- Opportunities:
 - Free Downtown parking
 - For more small and large performing arts centers
 - Variety of talent
 - “Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art (SMoCA) Nights”
 - Diverse populations: Diverse ages and ethnicities can be a positive difference

- Most of the arts patrons in the Valley live in Scottsdale. Many people have moved here because of the reputation Scottsdale has in the arts.
 - Entertainment after performances
 - Small theaters are in lower rent areas
 - Seasonal residents are an opportunity because they are wealthy
- Constraints:
- Need an indoor or outdoor theater
 - Need a large theater- 1800 seats
 - Need to create an experience
 - Money, money and land
 - Lack of vision
 - Increases in admission prices. Consider fixed-income citizens
 - Cost of living's negative effects on creating art works
 - Convincing North Scottsdale that Downtown is a cultural hub
 - “When I go to Mesa, I see people trekking from Scottsdale to see other venues”
 - Seasonal residents’ lack of loyalty to Scottsdale
 - Area facilities are lacking for the amount of people that enjoy the arts
 - Missing areas to live and work
 - Restaurant kitchens close too early
- Needs:
- A larger facility. The SCPA is only 832 seats
 - Concert facilities
 - A larger theater. 35 years ago it [SCPA] was the right size, but now it needs to be over 2000 seats
 - We need to bring high quality artists. People who live here have come to expect the highest quality of artist, but it has become too expensive to have the venues to display their work. These people go to New York, London, etc to see the high quality artists.
 - A diverse theater [different types of performances]
 - Subsidizing to bring in venues
 - To find a venue that can be a creative factory. Where 800 seats is too large, subsidize a venue to let it germinate to bring artists here to grow.
 - Implode the old SCPA and create newer, larger facilities with artist spaces
 - Cost effectiveness is important for artists
 - Big names to stay competitive with other cities
 - Look at the big picture. It is not an either/or solution.

4. What other art and cultural opportunities are you interested in? How can the community encourage these opportunities and where should they be located? Example: artist live/work spaces, open studio demonstrations, clubs with live music, street performances, street vendors, bookstores or cafes with readings and poetry, etc).

- A government-sanctioned commune [for artists]
- Art space company
- “Artists are frustrated with rents rising; financially making a living is difficult for artists.”
- “The challenge in Scottsdale is the economy. What the City can do to help an area is to help its economy.”
- “Scottsdale isn’t the arts community anymore. Phoenix and Mesa are way ahead of Scottsdale’s programs, commitment and money.”
- Vision and leadership are missing in the city
- Offer incentives to create opportunities
- “How many scorpion paper weights can people buy?” [Need more variety downtown].
- Need local dance and arts groups. Need craftsmen, guilds and theaters for local groups.
- “What about interfacing with Scottsdale Community College?”
- “Do we have a commitment from the City of Scottsdale leaders for supporting the arts?”
 - Scottsdale spends \$12 per person on the arts
 - Phoenix spends \$35 per person on the arts
 - Mesa spends \$55 per person on the arts
- “According to USA Today, people are going to the Super Bowl in Glendale, but everything will be here in Scottsdale.”
- Need promotions for the arts.
- “Can we attract more large gatherings like ten-day events?”
- Need a film center
- Will have Scottsdale Museum of the West which will be an international draw. It will show art and history of the true Southwest.
- City needs to partner with the private sector for projects that will assemble [implement] the plan.
- Need more venues
- Need to expand the SCPA
- Need to target a greater diversity of ages, attendees and art board members
- Attracting younger age groups is important
- Interactive arts are needed
- Need to provide a venue for street performers
- Need a county art tax to provide more opportunities for the arts
- Need community and regional support for the arts
- Appeal to investors

- Create districts to create diversity in the marketplace
- Public bonds or taxes and fundraising

5. The existing Downtown Plan identifies all of Downtown as an “Arts District: rather than designating one specific geographic location within Downtown as an “Arts District.”

a. Is this philosophy still valid today?

- It should still be valid for tax increment [financing] districts
- All of downtown should be an arts district
- “District” is generic in the Valley
- “Do what San Francisco has done. When you build something, it increases the tax. Then, the tax is given to the area.”
- The State does not offer tax increment financing, and that is a problem.
- We need to find an equivalent to tax increment financing
- In the down cycle [referring to the economy], isn’t there a way to sneak arts in the door?
- Yes the philosophy has to be valid today
- The arts is more concentrated in Downtown than in overall Scottsdale
- Need to keep the location of the arts organic
- The district should be more defined

b. What types of policies should be developed in the Downtown Plan Update (in terms of land use, economic, population or space) that could foster an art and cultural center for the city and region?

- Artist live-work studios (artist in residence program)
- The area between Osborn to McDowell is a possible location for artist centers
- Set aside a percentage of land for the arts
- Expand the public art policy. Make opportunities in venue development instead of just art. We need to be creative about this, like with the Museum of the West.
- People love to see artists work. It gives the artist the ability to be noticed. Create policies that allow this.
- Expand the arts in the schools
- Incentivize a small “black box” theater for an exchange in height
- City could provide incentives and work with developers to create more venues
- Expand policies beyond “pop art.” Create policies for venue operations and development

Other comments:

- “I would ride the bus everyday if it wasn’t three miles from my house.”

- Do not allow large shopping centers in Downtown. They should be in places like Kierland Commons
- “We can come up with wonderful ideas, but it takes the planners and the legal office to convert these ideas to the General Plan and how to do it with incentive tradeoffs. Take these ideas and make them happen with overlays or whatever.”
- “We need responsive planners to take community needs and ideas and create them—bringing them into reality.”
- We need proactive grassroots movements to make things happen
- Should make a presentation to a citizen task force on this subject
- Need to hold people responsible for implementation of the plan