



SCOTTSDALE DOWNTOWN PLAN UPDATE “ECONOMIC VITALITY” 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 & Design
 - Unique atmosphere of Old West meets New West
 - Like the Old Town, Western Theme
 - Like the general appearance of Downtown Scottsdale
 - Like the design of Old Town buildings
 - Arts and Culture
 - World class arts district
 - Downtown is the center of major cultural facilities with easy access
 - Performing arts
 - Downtown has a variety of cultural options like movies, parks and Old Town
 - Like the Public Art
 - Like the art galleries and artists downtown
 - The art downtown sets us apart from other communities
 - Parada del Sol
 - Downtown is becoming more than just a heritage area
 - Civic Center Mall
 - Love the Civic Center Park by City Hall
 - Like the civic core of buildings around the park
 - Urban Form
 - Open green spaces
 - Green belts
 - High density and mixed use within easy walking distances
 - Narrow streets with on-street parking
 - Buildings on the lot line
 - The canal is a visual amenity
 - Circulation
 - Pedestrian Areas
 - Like the trolley
 - Downtown is walkable
 - “Downtown Scottsdale is the most walkable area in metropolitan Phoenix.”
 - Like the current traffic patterns
 - Land Use
 - Shopping
 - Wide variety of shopping experiences
 - Like the Native American jewelry shops

- Nightlife
- Restaurants
- Variety of shops and restaurants
- Old Town
 - Old Town is charming
 - Old Town is a citizen and visitor destination
 - Like Old Town's uniqueness
 - Old Town is convenient and walkable
 - Has a variety of shops, places and galleries
 - The heart of Old Town is Main Street
 - Old Town is the East Main Street area with the western architecture
 - Old Town is 68th Street to Miller Road and Chaparral Road south to Earll Drive
 - Old Town is simply western architecture
 - Old Town is a specific area. It is the old architecture south of Indian School Road and east of Scottsdale Road
- Safety
 - Downtown is safe for families to walk and shop, even at night
 - Security and safety makes it attractive

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

- Arts and Culture
 - Need significant investments in the arts
 - Expand Downtown's cultural services
 - Need family-oriented attractions
 - Need a larger concert venue
- Public/Open Space
 - Promote spaces to sit and people-watch within Downtown
 - Need lighting along the canal (soft lighting)
- Economic
 - Expand Downtown's residential services (small shops, delis, dry cleaners, etc)
 - Need to encourage grocery store development
 - Need to support businesses suited for full-time residents
- Circulation
 - Improve major Downtown access routes like Scottsdale Road, Indian School Road and Chaparral Road
 - Need better walkability

- Need more shade
 - Improve the sidewalk conditions
 - Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility needs to be improved
- Scottsdale Road is a barrier for pedestrians
- Create pedestrian-only malls with no automobiles on it
- Use the canals for some form of transportation
- Need an alternate east-west traffic route
- Need to integrate light rail Downtown
- Need to improve traffic flow
- Need to improve pedestrian movement
- Need more parking
- Need to improve public transit and its connectivity to places Downtown
- Bike paths are not safe on arterial streets
- Bike paths are okay, but you cannot get to them
- Connectivity
 - Need better wayfinding and connectivity between Downtown areas
 - Improve transportation to Downtown Scottsdale from north of Bell Road
- Housing
 - Need newer, middle-class housing for year-round residents Downtown
 - Need more diverse housing types
 - Reinvest in residences
 - Integrate more affordable housing types
 - Need to attract families to neighborhoods
- Promotion
 - Need to market Downtown better
 - Need to market to Downtown residents
 - Better marketing of Downtown events is needed
- Civic Involvement
 - Downtown residents need to be recognized in processes
 - Downtown residents should be more involved
 - “You are a part of something.”
 - Make Downtown inclusive for residents throughout the City of Scottsdale
 - New downtown residents should get a “welcome packet”
- New Development
 - Need more allowances for variations in building height

SPECIALIZED QUESTIONS

1. How can Downtown Scottsdale position itself to remain an important economic engine in Scottsdale's economy?

– Tourism

- Must retain the “West’s Most Western Town” to encourage tourism
- “Downtown has an important recognition factor as the area where the new west meets up with the old!”
- Include images of Old Town in marketing Scottsdale, not just resorts
- Should emphasize images of Downtown as where Old West meets New West
- Old Town Scottsdale should remain the same, while other areas of Downtown should be developed to encourage the next generation’s desire to come to Scottsdale
- Maintain and improve tourism:
 - Revitalization has brought amazing growth and is bringing more tourists here (Hotel Valley Ho, for example)
 - Tourists spend discretionary dollars
- “Tourists are looking for what Old Town already is”
 - It is unlike any other City
 - Old Town used to be the draw for tourists. It was the “West’s Most Western Town.”
 - The people are friendly and horses used to be allowed, which made it unique
 - Its character is unlike any other place—Saba’s Western Wear, Porter’s, Indian jewelry stores
- Tourism supports other areas of the community like:
 - Shopping
 - Cultural amenities
 - The workforce
 - Housing diversity

– Shopping

- What do people want to do/see? Capitalize on these:
 - Shopping
 - World class dining/shopping
 - Natural environment
 - Unexpected cosmopolitan character
- There are enough tee shirt shops; Downtown needs something else
- “No more trinkets and trash”
- Need to attract more top notch stores like Barney’s New York
- Try to encourage more unique shopping experiences Downtown
- Concerned about the development of shopping in North Scottsdale impacting retail in the Downtown
- Need more Kierland-type development such as eating, misters, and overhangs
- Offer real western wear shops not more trinkets or five and dime stuff

- Classy western shops
- Culture & Arts
 - Downtown needs to take the next steps beyond Old West
 - “The nightlife and Old Town flavor fuel the engine that is Downtown”
 - “Blow up Center for the Arts;” it needs to be upgraded
 - Rename the Civic Center Mall to stop confusion with Fashion Square Mall
 - Must upgrade cultural facilities to pull in bigger “name” acts and to encourage future premier theater acts
 - Build a larger theater with additional smaller rooms
 - We need theaters: something twice as big, one the current size, and smaller black box venues
 - Restaurants and galleries: all are great ingredients, but we suffer from poor core development. Need something like a world class center for the performing arts.
 - Scottsdale’s art center is going down hill
- Connecting to the Valley’s public transportation will improve all aspects of the economy.
 - “We are not an island”
- Workforce
 - Maintain vitality of small business and entrepreneurs – keep them viable and active
 - Need to target professional workers, designers, medical professionals, and “computer types”
 - Need a greater diversity of workers
 - Downtown is a service center
- Redevelopment
 - Renew area
 - Preserve our heritage, especially in Old Town
- Compete with other cities – Chandler is positioning itself as “nouveau Scottsdale”
 - Downtown needs more special events and variety to compete
- Housing
 - “Housing is a ‘huge bonus’ for Downtown; granted the condos are not cheap”
 - Need to look at X and Y Generations. They want to live and work in the same place
 - Focus on the creative class
 - This is where Scottsdale needs to go
 - Need to serve this need for the ability to move freely – public transportation/transit/pedestrians
 - Retirees want this too
 - Need a diversity of housing
 - Can incentivize and plan for this at periphery of Downtown Scottsdale

- The development of new housing currently underway should help
- Make certain to offer live/work/play in the Downtown
- The City needs to encourage more housing
- Encourage new housing like the City is doing now
- Locate and develop housing geared for skilled workers
- People do not want to commute and instead want to live-work-play
- Keep doing what the City is doing
- Let the market determine what housing is located in the Downtown
- Downtown is different than other parts of Scottsdale (i.e.. the Airpark, North Scottsdale, Skysong)
 - We need to figure out what makes this area more unique than those
 - The Airpark will never be Old Town or the other areas of Downtown
 - The following make Downtown more unique than other areas of Scottsdale:
 - Cultural amenities
 - Tourism
 - Shopping experiences
 - Heritage
- Need a new identity—“The new west.”
- Utilize the “Western” architecture
- Pedestrian areas are vital. Need areas that address climate and sunshine. Use shade, sidewalk overhangs and misters, for example, to encourage walking

1.2 Are there specific geographic sub-areas within Downtown where economic development strategies should be focused?

- Start at the canal bridge [Marshall Way Bridge] and work out from that
- Will not support large block development; prefer more pedestrian-oriented development
- Craftsman Court is a good area to be addressed
- More space is needed for office development on the outskirts of Downtown. Examples: southern and northern edges and Sun Flower area [Southwest corner of Miller and Camelback Roads]
- Demographics:
 - Tempe is for 20 year olds
 - Phoenix is for 35-60 year olds, people with money, but there is nothing to do there
 - Scottsdale attracts the 23-34 age group to wine bars and other night life
- Entertainment
 - Would be helpful for tourists if entertainment uses were consolidated into one area
 - Expanding the Scottsdale Center for Performing Arts (SCPA) is a great idea.

- Keep and invest in the performing arts with more restaurants
 - Need to expand the cultural facilities at Civic Center
- Like ideas like the “gas light” district and Mill Avenue in Tempe
 - The Waterfront area has the possibility to become that, but it needs work. It needs key attractions that are centrally located
- Areas of needed improvement:
 - Vacant lots reflect poorly on Downtown [south of the W Hotel]
 - Entertainment District
 - North of Indian School is a maze (Entertainment District – Indian Plaza area)
 - Civic Center Mall
 - Better signage
 - Under-realized asset
 - Pedestrian access
 - No formal entrance to it
 - 5th Ave
 - 12 Indian jewelry stores
 - Greater heights/densities/incentives for investors could enhance area
 - 5-6 stories in this area
 - Build with vertical mixed-use
 - Keep “Old Town” Scottsdale as unique as possible
 - Old Town is surrounded by new development which makes it harder to find
 - “If we destroy what history we have, it will make Downtown ‘Anyplace USA’”
 - Create new themes for the “sub-areas”
 - A pedestrian or transit connection over Scottsdale Road, from east to west, is very important. The trolley does not come to the east side of Indian School Road in Downtown, nor does it go to the Axis/Radius area.
- Would like to see an enclosed walkway from the Galleria to the Waterfront area

2. The existing Downtown Plan identifies that “reinvestment and redevelopment can be slow without incentives which allow the private sector to overcome raw land costs.” Such public incentives have been utilized to support the revitalization efforts downtown over the last twenty years.

a. Do you feel providing public incentives to support revitalization is still a valid long term policy for Downtown Scottsdale?

- Yes
 - To qualified investors only
 - Infrastructure investments should be used to support private development

- Need to continue this policy. The Galleria is an example. It moved from problem to asset.
 - The region is continuing to become competitive. Incentives are important.
 - It would be hard for the city to not incentivize
 - It is especially important for the arts Downtown
 - Scottsdale walks a fine line between incentive and investment
- No
- To incentives for particular types of businesses, like Costco [big box stores]
 - Uncomfortable with paying independent businesses
 - Money should not be directly given to a private business
 - Cities compete too much for sales tax
 - Uncomfortable with investments like the Nordstrom parking structure deal

b. What types of incentives, if any, do you feel would help support the long term revitalization and economic vitality of downtown?

- Need more connections
 - Marshall Way Bridge was a terrific investment. Need to invest in more bridges and connections to areas of Downtown
- Make sure economics work
- Promotion:
 - Need to do the public marketing; offer packages to realize investment
 - Promotion of Downtown is important
- Public funding for Arts
 - Performing Arts
 - Competition from Mesa Art Center
 - Center is lagging
 - Offer more, higher quality, bigger performances
 - More visibility
 - Types (small and large)
 - New performing arts facility
 - Bring other attractions, and have political courage to do so
 - Public funds for theater
 - Improve the Thursday Night Artwalk
- Public-private partnership
 - Is the public sector concerned that private sector makes too much from the deal?
 - If the public benefits, ok
 - Need public-private partnerships. If something is both good for the city and the private sector, then the private sector will make money which is also beneficial to the City

- Regulation:
 - Use district zoning as an incentive
 - Use regulation relief overlay zones to ease up on restrictions for the more efficient use of properties
 - Fewer parking, setback, and zoning changes
 - Need to streamline the zoning process
- Tax incentives
- Infrastructure incentives
 - Need to evaluate the appropriate infrastructure for different types of development
 - For example, in residential areas, the right-of-way is too large, but the city will not abandon it
 - Public parking incentives, but keep the parking free to the public
- Conditional Incentives: incentives should be used for certain types of development like the cultural arts center, more loft type live/work/play areas
- Housing should be market driven

3. What types of private and/or public economic investments could you identify that would attract more business travelers, visitors/tourists to Scottsdale's Downtown?

- More motorcycle venues and places to hang out [like Billet Bar]
- Need to create meeting and people spaces
- Hotels
 - Encourage other types of hotels since boutique hotels are too expensive and not geared towards business travel
 - We have enough hotels
- Transportation
 - Invest in better transportation system modes that connect the north and the south
 - Instead of light rail, use some kind of elevated system, like a monorail
 - More bike and walking availability
- Be careful in trying to encourage more development in Downtown; should not cannibalize from other areas of Scottsdale
- We also have enough nightlife and restaurants
- There are too few places for breakfast
 - Need a more diverse restaurant selection
 - Need some regional chains that are family-oriented, cheaper and provide coffee
- Bring in conventions and weddings
- Tour buses are one industry to target. They visit:
 - Old Town and western themes
 - Pottery and jewelry stores

- Use funding from the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB)
- Arts and Culture
 - Better marketing to residents, not just to tourists
 - Improve the marketing of tourist assets
 - Expand the SCPA
 - Increase the diversity of cultural opportunities
 - For residents, travelers and visitors
 - Examples: Film festivals, western museum
 - “Different events attract different people”
- Marketing/Promotion
 - Create user-friendly websites
 - City website should persuade you to come downtown or link to other websites. It should not be just informational. “Create a buzz.”
 - The Phoenix Convention Center website is a good example
 - Put more promotional information on trolley
 - Need more directories and maps Downtown
 - Promote and market to “foodies”
 - Bring in/recognize James Beard winners
 - Add more culinary schools
- Use the trolley as an economic investment
 - It is currently underused
 - It is faster to walk than take the trolley; it is more touristy than it is useful to residents
 - It follows a strange route that is not conducive to travel
 - It is not interactive. The driver should be a guide or an audio guide should play
- Introduce a docent program, personalized guides of downtown
- Change and enhance Old Town’s western character
 - Buildings are in disrepair. They need to be upgraded but maintain their original character
 - Improvements are needed on Marshall Way between Main Street and Indian School Road
 - Use façade improvement programs to give Old Town a “facelift”
 - Old Town’s unique architecture draws tourists, as well as icons like the saguaro, cowboy and horses
- Improve pedestrian connectivity to enhance tourism
 - Color code the sidewalks to identify individual streets or districts.
 - “It is hard to find the ArtWalk, even with the icons on the sidewalk”
 - It is hard to walk through the Waterfront Area
 - Districts should be better delineated
 - “There is something weirdly confusing about Downtown Scottsdale.”

4. While Downtown Scottsdale offers a diverse inventory of retail shopping experiences, what additional types of retail/commercial/office opportunities would you suggest be located in the downtown?

- Encourage smaller stores like dry cleaners, markets, and great movie houses
- Downtown needs a grocery store
 - Good examples: Trader Joe's, Tesco, other smaller-scale grocery stores
 - Should be within walking distance of major residential places or on a trolley line
 - The trolley does not go to Fry's or Sunflower
- Mixed use is what should be Downtown. Ground level retail with upper levels lofts or retail/office/loft [Vertical mixed use]. Keep promoting this!
- Retro or vintage furniture and/or clothing, like 7th Street in Phoenix
 - This works with "hip" mid-century architecture [Such as the Hotel Valley Ho]
- Gas stations and daily services for Downtown residents
- Pet stores
- Enclosed shopping malls are a part of the past. We need open streets with shops instead
- The Downtown needs many more trees. Shade is important.
- A personal guide service
- Downtown does not lack uses
- A post office
 - The current one is moving
 - The trolley should at least connect to it
 - Need a satellite or "mini" post office Downtown
 - Where will the Pony Express go when the Post Office moves?
 - Example: 44th Street and Camelback Road [Phoenix] has a great mix of a post office and a drug store next to each other.
- Special Events
 - On 5th Avenue
 - Close the streets more often for festivals
 - Some cities close certain streets to cars every Sunday. This is something to consider
 - Close the streets [on the weekends] in places that are dominated by offices or medical uses.
 - The current farmer's market is too small
 - The ArtWalk does not make much money for businesses, but it is good for the residents

5. Scottsdale employers have voiced some concerns about attracting a qualified workforce to serve downtown businesses/major employers. They suggest that housing affordability, long commuting times, and quality of life issues make it increasingly difficult to recruit a qualified workforce. What policies, investments

and incentives would you support/suggest to increase the desirability of working in Downtown Scottsdale?

- Transportation
 - Downtown needs mass transit
 - Affordable and efficient transportation can be used as an incentive for low-income workers
 - Must add to regional transportation options for those who cannot afford to live here. They need it to get here
 - Moving the labor force efficiently is the key.
- Families
 - Downtown should be recognized as a service center and not a family location
- Housing
 - Look for affordable housing potential in Downtown's edge areas
 - Make housing attractive around the periphery of the Downtown which will encourage workers to be employed in the Downtown
 - Downtown employees live in Chandler because of the quality of affordable housing
 - Areas south of Skysong are considered affordable
 - Southern Scottsdale housing will become rentals; this is not good
 - Families are wanted in Southern Scottsdale neighborhoods
 - Need a rental housing policy
 - Need apartments under \$1,000 per month in rent
 - Higher density could be a trade-off for the provision of affordable housing
 - "I'd rather be shopping than mowing the lawn."
 - Many people do not want or need yards in their living spaces
 - Consider the lower paid professionals and minimum wage workers when crafting housing policies
 - Low-income housing can work
 - Encourage more creative housing types
 - Renting versus owning a home is an issue
 - Subsidized housing, a housing authority, or deed-restricted employee housing could be used to create affordable housing and to attract a qualified workforce.
- Education
 - Improve the schools and parks
 - School quality needs to be addressed to attract residents
 - Schools in Northern Scottsdale are higher rated than schools in Southern Scottsdale. This affects where people choose to live.
 - There is also a big difference between public and private schools
 - Need educational facilities like an extension of Arizona State University (ASU), Northern Arizona University (NAU), University of Arizona (UofA), and Thunderbird in Downtown.

- This kind of proximity to continuing education possibilities will encourage workers to want to work in jobs located in the Downtown
 - Schools should partner with universities like ASU
 - Schools will attract a housing stock that is built for families
- Have employers survey employees to see where they live, commute times and the housing types they require
- Qualified workforce
 - X and Y Generations, teachers, police, fire fighters comprise our workforce
 - Transportation is an issue
 - Possible options: shuttles, van pools, public transit
 - Need to increase wages to be competitive
 - Need to import labor into Downtown. It is becoming harder to attract employees

6. As downtown transitions from a commercial center to mixed-use urban residential neighborhoods:

a. What types of housing products and neighborhood amenities would you suggest be developed downtown?

- Need to develop housing for the 25 to 35 year old demographic using [vertical mixed use] retail on the bottom, then office, and lofts on top [of the same building]
 - This a great way to go with shaded areas and markets. Live ,work, play.
- No area in the Downtown works for single family housing, the numbers do not work
 - Remember, there is currently a glut of high-rise housing
 - Instead Downtown should be working to include other forms of housing such as patio homes and townhouses
- Housing construction Downtown should be driven by the market
 - Since the numbers do not work for market driven housing, traffic flow needs to be increased from the surrounding, less expensive housing areas into Downtown
- More open spaces
 - Use the surface parking lots
 - Urban parks can be used for pedestrian connectivity
- Landmarks
 - Lowes [on McDowell Road] could have utilized the view of Camelback Mountain to create a sense of place.
 - We need to retain our view corridors. This is what makes Scottsdale unique.
- Height
 - Would not like to see increased height, such as that of the Waterfront project
 - Height is important for progress
 - Height is not the issue. Mass is the issue

- For example: Bartlesville, Oklahoma has a Frank Lloyd Wright “skyscraper.” But, because it fits into the context of the city, it does not look as tall as it really is.
 - Height is okay in certain areas, like the commercial core, just not around single-family residential areas
 - Look to Phoenix’s design guidelines
- Products that reflect history
 - Example: The Hotel Valley Ho
 - Need to reflect our past achievements. For example: Have a birthday party for Winfield Scott
 - Utilize the statues, like the Hash Knife and the cultural ArtWalk. They need more recognition.
- A lot is market driven
- Green building policies
 - Green building incentives for private development

b. What types of commercial additions and/or changes would you suggest occur in order to support the new urban neighborhoods?

- Offer Wireless Internet Service [Wi-Fi] that has the capacity for voice, data and streaming video throughout Downtown
 - Yes, but with free connectivity
- Downtown needs to remain in the lead, particularly where the old west and the new west meet
- The aspect of live/work/play should be advertised so that people are aware of the opportunities found Downtown
- We should not lose our identity in all of this
- Need to work with the Native American community to manage development
- Everything should be within walking distance
- Urban neighborhoods should not require a car