



SCOTTSDALE DOWNTOWN PLAN UPDATE “DOWNTOWN VISION REVISITED” 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.

SPECIALIZED QUESTIONS

- The following statements represent [generalized] reoccurring themes that citizens have identified throughout the Downtown Plan Update public outreach process. Please indicate which themes you feel most strongly about, either positively or negatively. Can you identify other themes that should be included?

(Some participants did not respond to the themes “l” through “s” because of time constraints)

General Themes from Public Outreach	Yes	Abstain	No
a. Preserve the “Old West” atmosphere in Old Town	18	0	2
b. Downtown should remain cutting edge by supporting new-/re-investment while promoting itself as the place where the “Old West meets the New West”.	16	0	4
c. The cultural facilities such as theaters and museums must be first class with a variety of venue sizes	19	0	1
d. Mixed use development should be located in the Downtown to support all aspects of the 24/7 lifestyle of live/work/play	16	0	4
e. Allow height and density, two or three stories and no more than eight, where appropriate while utilizing progressive urban design concepts	1	17	3
f. Sustainability, green building, and LEEDs principles should be reflected in Downtown development	18	0	3
g. Take care to transition Downtown development when bordering surrounding residential neighborhoods	21	0	0
h. Walkability and pedestrian safety and comfort are necessary partners in promoting mobility and connectivity in the Downtown	21	0	0
i. Support quality pedestrian park facilities, open spaces, and shaded areas	21	0	0
j. Enhance pedestrian comfort-shade, district connections, and improve universal accessibility. Create a pedestrian urban environment through sustainable design	20	1	0
k. The trolley system should be expanded beyond a just tourist amenity to provide neighborhood circulator service	10	11	0
l. Overall, the current boundaries of Downtown are sufficient; however the inclusion of some specific areas is acceptable, such as: The southwest corner of Miller and Camelback Roads; Two parcels at the southwest corner of Osborn and Scottsdale Roads; Southeast corner of Camelback Road and 68 th Street; and Chaparral Road and Highland Avenue east of Scottsdale Road	7	2	3
	7	1	4
	10	0	2
	8	1	3
m. Rename Civic Center Mall to something more representative of the actual location and experience while strengthening the connectivity of its civic spaces and cultural facilities to Downtown	9	1	3
n. Nurture and expand upon the galleries, shopping, and dining experiences currently offered Downtown	10	3	0

o. The Public Realm – improving and expanding (through public/private partnerships) the use of the public realm including parks, plazas, streets and the canal. Programming new spaces for community uses.	13	0	0
p. Enhance existing or create new connections into and throughout Downtown: district, pedestrian, bicycle, transit (trolley), and vehicular connections	13	0	0
q. Celebrate and honor our history/sense of place/identity	12	0	0
r. Downtown should attract every walk of life – “from eight to eighty”.	12	0	0
s. Implementation of the plan should include both public and private partnerships to achieve community goals	12	0	0

Additions: West Main Street area should be improved as a walkable destination.

Comments in order of corresponding letter/theme:

- a. **Preserve the “Old West” atmosphere in Old Town**
 - Old Town should be preserved, but allow improvements to the area
- b. **Downtown should remain cutting edge by supporting new/reinvestment while promoting itself as the place where the “Old West meets the New West”.**
 - Disagree with the statement because tourists do not like contemporary [styles].
 - “I do not care for western architecture. I like the contemporary feel of the Waterfront.”
 - Agree with the statement. The Old West and the New West need to be balanced. Scottsdale needs both.
 - Need a mix of the Old West and the New West
 - Tourists are not spending money in the “western” areas
 - Some merchants are doing well [in the western areas] and others would not do well no matter where they were [located]
 - It was once stated that Scottsdale has a “Class B movie set.” Do not tear it up.
 - The Old West character in Old Town is what draws people
 - “The West’s Most Western Town” does not work for us. This statement [Old West meets the New West] reflects where we came from and where we are going. It celebrates our history and our future.
 - Old Town should be preserved as western, but other districts are different. People want to live [Downtown] and want to bring their guests.
 - Should not blanket Downtown in the Old West style
 - We need to become competitive
 - “I like the statement.”
 - The Waterfront embodies this statement [southwestern style]
 - I disagree. The Waterfront is Tuscan style.
 - The Downtown Plan needs a policy that defines “Southwestern character,” but do not take over the current “Old West” style

- Need to have a blend of styles
 - First Street from Brown Avenue to Scottsdale Road represents the New West even though it is in Old Town
 - “I would like to see ‘southwestern flavor,’ like adobe, incorporated throughout Downtown
- c. **The cultural facilities such as theaters and museums must be first class with a variety of venue sizes**
- No comments
- d. **Mixed use development should be located in the Downtown to support all aspects of the 24/7 lifestyle of live/work/play**
- “This statement is fine, except we’re losing family-style restaurants. We need places for families.”
 - Sauce [restaurant] is a place that incorporates families
 - “My family, including my 15-month old, eats at Food Bar, Bungalow and Olive & Ivy. People need the unique, diverse culinary experiences offered in Downtown.”
 - This comment represents a change that is in direct conflict with what built [Downtown]. It will change it. 24/7 is not what it is today.
 - This “change” will come soon. We should embrace it.
 - We are a city that is changing and has changed
 - Brooklyn, New York is an example of an exciting place that is 24/7 and is family-friendly. It embodies more of an urban lifestyle that I am fond of.
- e. **Allow height and density, two or three stories and no more than eight, where appropriate while utilizing progressive urban design concepts**
- The problem with this statement is that more than eight stories will not fit within 72 feet.
 - Do not like the part about “progressive urban design concepts”
 - Should the same rules north of the canal apply to all of Downtown?
 - “The truth is that the Waterfront is benefiting Old Town.”
 - Those standards should not apply everywhere.
 - Height should be based upon the quality of the development
 - This statement contains conflicting language
 - “My focus group said it should be open to interpretation. Downtown should not be limited to these constraints.”
 - This statement is ambiguous and complex
- f. **Sustainability, green building, and LEEDs principles should be reflected in Downtown development**
- “This is a good policy”
 - LEEDS requirements tend to be very costly

- g. **Take care to transition Downtown development when bordering surrounding residential neighborhoods**
 - No comments
- h. **Walkability and pedestrian safety and comfort are necessary partners in promoting mobility and connectivity in the Downtown**
 - No comments
- i. **Support quality pedestrian park facilities, open spaces, and shaded areas**
 - No comments
- j. **Enhance pedestrian comfort-shade, district connections, and improve universal accessibility. Create a pedestrian urban environment through sustainable design**
 - This sounds like “h.”
 - The Downtown Task Force in 2001 covered h, i, and j
 - Need to explain “pedestrian-friendly sustainable urban design.”
- k. **The trolley system should be expanded beyond a just tourist amenity to provide neighborhood circulator service**
 - The trolley has expanded some, but this could become a tax issue
 - This assumes that the trolley is ineffective, and I do not disagree with that.
 - This is fine as long as the trolley remains free of charge
 - The current neighborhood circulator route is used well, but it needs to go to a grocery store
 - With time, public transportation will improve, but I am not sure if it should be a policy in the Downtown Plan
 - This statement is good because it connects with the overall vision of “connectivity”
 - It needs to coordinate with the Transportation Master Plan
- l. **Overall, the current boundaries of Downtown are sufficient; however the inclusion of some specific areas is acceptable, such as: The southwest corner of Miller and Camelback Roads; two parcels at the southwest corner of Osborn and Scottsdale Roads; southeast corner of Camelback Road and 68th Street; and Chaparral Road and Highland Avenue east of Scottsdale Road**
 - No Comments
- m. **Rename Civic Center Mall to something more representative of the actual location and experience while strengthening the connectivity of its civic spaces and cultural facilities to Downtown**
 - No Comments
- n. **Nurture and expand upon the galleries, shopping, and dining experiences currently offered Downtown**
 - Should also enhance these items

[There were no comments made on the remainder of the statements.]

2. The height limits in the existing Downtown Plan have been described as the “Donut” where lower building heights are located in the center [Type 1], and taller heights are found around the outer edges [Type 2]. Would you propose any amendments to the distribution of height limits regarding future Downtown development?
- Need to protect Old Town
 - Old Town needs to be a lower density than the rest of Downtown
 - Need to preserve more than Old Town
 - Old Town should be lower scale
 - No higher than 36 feet in Old Town
 - [Taller] heights should not be located all over.
 - Need to transition from lower intensities [Type 1] to higher intensities [Type 2].
 - There needs to be a middle ground. It is not black and white.
 - It would be difficult to transition from Type 1 to Type 2. There is not enough land.
 - I am not sure where the height fits in.
 - Need height flexibility, especially around the edges of the Donut
 - The “Donut” needs to wiggle around [asymmetrical], especially where it impacts sensitive areas.
 - “I prefer a tent instead of a donut. Higher in the center with a tapered edge. But I agree that heights should not be taller in Old Town.”
 - Need to turn the Donut inside-out
 - Put greater density in the center and lower density at the edges
 - The current plan limits height within the “Donut” to thirty-six feet which is difficult to build in today’s real estate market.
 - It is difficult to provide retail uses which require higher ceilings, especially at street level.
 - It is financially infeasible to have a 36-foot office building. It needs to be taller to be successful.
 - Need to examine the 1984 height limits. They are antiquated.
 - I am concerned about large land assemblages
 - Some people feel that the existing Type 1 areas should remain Type 1 areas
 - Type 2:
 - The hotel area on Earll Drive is how tall the Type 2 areas should be.
 - Heights should be taller along major corridors like Scottsdale and Camelback Roads, but they should not impede on adjacent neighborhoods
 - The roads can handle only so much height. Higher density could cause property to be condemned to make way for road widenings. Public transportation will have to be examined if density increases.
 - Intermediate types of intensities are needed
 - Building setbacks and heights need to be examined together; otherwise it will encourage building big boxes

- “Use care when using the term ‘single family home.’ I live in a condominium, and it is a ‘single family home.’ Make the distinction between a single family home and a detached single family residence.”
- How will increased heights impact historic areas of Downtown?
 - Need to protect our cultural resources

3. Throughout the Downtown Plan Update outreach process, participants have voiced concerns about the compatibility of new Downtown development with surrounding residential areas. What suggestions do you have for addressing the sensitive edges between Downtown and the adjacent heights?

- Need to increase setbacks in these areas
- Do not overpower residential single family neighborhoods
- Buildings in these areas should step back at the top
 - Residential neighborhoods do not like having multistory buildings looking down on them.
- “I do not like how living next to Downtown is being characterized as a negative thing.”
 - There is a lot to be said for walking out your single family residential door, walking into Downtown, and enjoying what is right at your doorstep
- I do not think that protecting neighborhoods per se is the right way to go
- Need a buffer zone around the edge of Downtown
- What works in one area may not work in another
- Consider site planning and building orientation
- The proximity of single family residences to Downtown is amazing and good
- The existing ordinance is good as it stands—no 3+ story buildings within 300 feet of single-family detached residential

4. The original intent of the couplet system (Drinkwater and Goldwater Boulevards) was to provide vehicular movements through and around Downtown, while also allowing for the opportunity to redesign Scottsdale Road to make it more Downtown pedestrian and business supportive. The current Downtown public outreach process has generally confirmed support for this original intent. Do you support maintaining this policy?

- The Transportation Master Plan said they would take lanes away from the couplets.
 - The current philosophy has changed. The bypass was once a good thing, but the couplets have created a boundary that has estranged some merchants [pedestrians cannot walk to their stores.] Reducing the lanes on the couplets would create connectivity.
- The couplets should not lose lanes. It is horrible driving through Downtown on Scottsdale Road because of all the [traffic] lights.
- It is hard to turn left from Drinkwater Boulevard [going south] onto Scottsdale Road
 - That is why most people take Goldwater Boulevard [going south] and Drinkwater Boulevard going north.

- A traffic light should be installed at the intersection of Drinkwater Boulevard and Scottsdale Road
- The couplets are dangerous to pedestrians.
 - The speed is horrendous on the couplets and crossing is a major problem, especially with the timing of the [traffic] lights and lack of proper sidewalks.
 - Consider under-grounding Indian School Road at the Couplet intersections to promote congestion mitigation
- “I do not want to see the couplets changed. As congestion builds on Scottsdale Road, the couplets will become more effective.”
- I love the couplets the way they are.
- Second Street connects couplet to couplet, but at Goldwater it needs a traffic light
- I think that Scottsdale Road should become more pedestrian-friendly [instead of the couplets.]
 - But where will the cars go on Scottsdale Road?
 - Mill Avenue in Tempe is an example of a road that was narrowed, and it is awful.
 - Do not narrow Scottsdale Road, but make it more pedestrian-friendly
- Reduce the couplet, but enhance Scottsdale Road if you do.
- “I understand the concept of the couplet system, but not everyone driving through Scottsdale necessarily does.”
 - Need better explanatory signage on the couplet
 - Business owners could be impacted because the couplet signs now say “bypass.” Tourists travel down Scottsdale Road but pass it [the couplet area businesses] by completely.
 - Put “Alternative Access” on signs instead of “Bypass.”
- East/West traffic is a problem

5. The 1984 Downtown Plan designated four formal Downtown Districts (Old Town, West Main, 5th Avenue, and Marshall Way/Craftsman’s Court). Over the last twenty years, other districts have emerged (healthcare campus, civic/cultural, gallery, Waterfront, Fashion Square, and entertainment areas).

Some people would like to see each Downtown district take on a more distinct identity, while others would like to have Downtown become a more unified identity and feel like a “cohesive whole” without designated districts. What is your opinion regarding Downtown districts and why?

- Districting helps with [design] policies and can differentiate areas. More appropriate areas can be developed as well.
 - The districts provide a competitive edge in the Valley
 - Tempe, Phoenix, Mesa, and Chandler all lost their Downtown districts and are now trying to recreate them
 - We need some kind of identifiers Downtown that provide some sense of when you have moved through or are in different areas.
 - Districts should have their own unique design guidelines

- The districting concept is ambiguous. It needs to be more definitive. Maintain building character in the Old Town area, but the rest of Downtown should be more cohesive. We need to blend both concepts.
 - There should be a unifying theme in all of Downtown
- Districting should not be Disneyland-esque.
 - Everything should flow nicely
 - Do not want Downtown to appear “phony”
 - Districts should not be static; they should provide a variety of things
- Cultural changes are okay, but the district concept should be thrown away
 - They should not be “branded” by the government. Leave it up to the merchants and individual areas
 - Old Town and Fifth Avenue are the exceptions to this.
 - Let new districts form on their own. It should not be forced.
 - Do not exclude or segregate uses among districts
- The existing districts are fine now, but more are needed; for example, hospital, entertainment, civic area, etc.
- Re-examine the districts, but include some that cover the entire Downtown
- Are the districts for policy purposes or for tourists?
 - Should not redirect in the wrong way
 - Districting should be decided by business owners in terms of marketing only
- The districts are unknown to the public.

Other comments:

- Downtown is a special place and should be kept that way
 - Need character and openness
 - Need to address infrastructure problems
 - Use local developers
- What makes Scottsdale special? What is it we need?
 - We need housing and shade, and we will have them if the buildings are four stories high.
 - We need trolleys on rail, not tires.
 - We need a walkable city.
- Remember, imagination and memory are what make cities.