



Scottsdale Downtown Plan Update
VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE

SUMMARY REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

The Downtown Virtual Open House engaged 16 community members over a six-month period to explore the future of Downtown Scottsdale. The Virtual Open House enabled the community to comment on Downtown’s future any time or place from September 2007 to February 2008 on the city’s website. This was the first time that community-input was gathered in such a manner in Scottsdale.

This report provides a summary of the Virtual Open House process, along with community-identified visions, questions, and valuable new ideas and concepts related to Downtown Scottsdale.

VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE PROCESS

The unique Virtual Open House process incorporated themes generated from the Downtown Scottsdale Town Hall event in November, provided documentation from the update process and included a forum for public comment. This section outlines the community-based process and the general outcomes of each theme. Individual responses are included in the Appendix for more detail.

Themes that were available for comment:

<p>VISION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downtown’s Future • Existing Vision 	<p>DISTRICTS & BOUNDARIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edges • Boundaries • Identity 	<p>PUBLIC REALM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streets • Pedestrian Ways • Parks & Events
<p>DESIGN & CHARACTER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinct features • Development Quality • Appearance 	<p>LAND USE & URBAN FORM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Density • Noise • Land Uses 	<p>INTERCONNECTIVITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linkages • Canal • Parking • Mobility
<p>CULTURAL PROGRAMS & FACILITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performing arts • Public Art • Festivals/events 	<p>ECONOMIC VITALITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic engines • Revitalization • Market 	<p>CIVIC SERVICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure • Sanitation • Maintenance • Streetscaping

VISION

The vision theme was intended to engage the community on topics such as the plan's existing vision, the community's vision for the future, downtown's role in the city and region and downtown's quality of life.

Participants who responded to "Vision" focused on the following items:

- Parks for downtown residents and nearby city residents
- Providing facilities for families
- More parking structures
- Increasing and enhancing the public realm

DISTRICTS AND BOUNDARIES

The districts and boundaries theme asked participants to evaluate downtown's current boundary, to discuss district identities, and to identify connections and cohesion downtown.

Participants who responded to "Districts and Boundaries" mentioned the following items:

- Connect downtown to Papago Park (use trolley service, signage, etc)
- Establishing a vision for the southernmost boundary of downtown (near Thomas Road)

PUBLIC REALM

The community was also asked to evaluate downtown's public realm (such as streets, pedestrian ways, open space, parks and other public amenities) and make suggestions for its improvement.

Participants who responded to "Public Realm" discussed the following:

- Create a pedestrian connection from the northern part of downtown to the southern part
- Divert higher-speed traffic to the couplets [Drinkwater and Goldwater Boulevards] and make Scottsdale and Indian School Roads more pedestrian-friendly
- Ensure the city has enough funds to increase the amount of public realm downtown
- Consider businesses when installing landscaping in high-traffic areas

DESIGN AND CHARACTER

The design and character theme focused on the character of downtown and what makes it unique.

Participants who responded to “Design and Character” suggested that:

- Design guidelines should work to minimize the impacts of redevelopment and road widening on adjacent residential neighborhoods
- Integrating context-sensitive design to reduce negative land use and transportation impacts

LAND USE AND URBAN FORM

Land Use and Urban Form was intended to stimulate discussion on preferred heights and densities, the existing and preferred urban form of downtown, and connections between different land uses.

No Participants discussed Land Use and Urban Form.

INTERCONNECTIVITY

The interconnectivity theme was intended to engage the community on topics such as linkages, parking, pedestrian and bicycle mobility and vehicular mobility.

Participants who responded to “Interconnectivity” focused on the following items:

- Expand center islands past the crosswalk [bulb-out] on Scottsdale, Indian School, and Camelback Roads to make them safer for pedestrians
- Make downtown more bicycle-friendly. Make it safe and easy to find a bike-rack
- Develop a comprehensive bicycle/pedestrian pathway along the canal
 - Create pedestrian underpasses so that people do not have to cross major streets to use it
- Encourage affordable housing downtown
- Enhance connections to the Indian Bend Wash from downtown
- Connect Fashion Square Mall to the Waterfront via a pedestrian tunnel
- Add bike lanes downtown and along Scottsdale Road. Connect these bike lanes to the downtown-adjacent neighborhoods
- Make some roads one-way streets
- Current pedestrian and bicycle designs need more continuity



One participant’s example of a safe crosswalk, a bicycle/pedestrian path and a pedestrian underpass, respectively.

CULTURAL FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS

Participants were asked to examine downtown’s current and future cultural facilities and programs in this open house theme.

No participants responded to this topic.

ECONOMIC VITALITY

The economic vitality theme asked participants to think about and respond to downtown’s economic engines, possible areas of revitalization, future strategies for downtown’s economy, downtown’s role in the regional economy and downtown’s role as a live/work/play environment.

“Economic vitality” respondents discussed the following:

- Affordable housing is important to downtown’s future
- Encourage more individual and unique small stores rather than large chains downtown because it makes Downtown Scottsdale unique.
- “I am excited about the new redevelopment in Southern Scottsdale, like Los Arcos.”

CIVIC SERVICES

Civic services was intended to stimulate discussion on downtown’s public services (such as water, sewer, safety, etc) and to examine the role of the Civic Center “Mall” and other public facilities downtown.

Participants who responded to “Civic Services” focused on the following items:

- The Post Office should remain in downtown, especially now with all of the new downtown residents

KEY VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE IDEAS

- Pedestrian comfort, safety, visual interest, & connectivity
- Public Realm should be increased and enhanced
- Providing facilities for bicycles to use safely and easily
- Using context-sensitive design principles
- Improving connections to surrounding neighborhoods and trail systems
- Downtown should be family-friendly
- Improve the parking system

APPENDIX

PARTICIPANT RESPONSES

VISION

- I will be moving to the Downtown Scottsdale area in the next year when my condo is completed. I would imagine that the city wants Downtown to be a thriving urban fun place to visit. To accomplish that you need good shopping, restaurants, entertainment and parks. We have no signature park in downtown. New York has central park, Boston has Boston Commons. Scottsdale needs to add grassy areas, fountains and trails to the waterfront.
- I would like to see more covered parking structures in the downtown district, so that businesses would not lose their parking spaces to - for example - visitors who are parking their cars here, only to take a trolley to the baseball game. This blocks parking for true customers of said businesses.
- Growth relies on people. Families equal more people. I wish that somewhere downtown there was a children's museum. I have visited towns like Greensboro, NC in which they have an excellent children's museum. The museum entertained ages 2 through teens with little cost to the parents. It was a great place to take kids of all ages. Let's face it, summer here sucks! We need more to do inside, for our youth of all ages. After all, they are the future community.
- We need a park near the waterfront for people to be able to gather and enjoy a day at the park, shopping, eating and sightseeing.

DISTRICTS & BOUNDARIES

- The Town Hall report, in "Framework for the Future" notes district opportunities as a "hub for vibrant surrounding neighborhoods"... Does this include Thomas Road which is south of the downtown boundary? If so, what is the vision for this adjacent district?
- I have many ideas for the improvement or restructuring of Papago Park. Extend trolley service to Papago Park. You could go from downtown right into the middle of the desert in just minutes. Great for tourist, families, kids. I live right on the edge of Papago Park, Oak Street facing the mountains, is there anything going on with this? I had heard there was going to be some big plans and that all 3 cities would be involved. I would love to be on any committee involving Papago Park plans.
- Would like to recommend a square vs. diamond shape downtown border. I thought the Downtown boundary was from 68th Street to Miller Road and Chaparral Road to Earll Drive. However, I downloaded the Downtown Scottsdale map from Nov-05 and it appears like a diamond shape versus a square. Has the Downtown map changed since 2005? Can you confirm the new Downtown borders for me?

PUBLIC REALM

- I have observed from outside the changes in Scottsdale since 1981. I vacation in Scottsdale almost yearly. I plan on retiring there. While I realize growth must occur, what has evolved in the downtown area in regard to pedestrians is unfortunate. The growth in auto traffic and the subsequent 'paving' of more and more of the downtown area has caused a 'cutoff' of pedestrian traffic. This has made pedestrian access to the downtown area increasingly more difficult and dangerous. The higher speed traffic on Scottsdale Rd, Indian School Rd and the 'bypass' past Scottsdale Stadium has made walking in the downtown area far less enjoyable. Divert the higher speed traffic around the Old Town area especially. Connect the north end with the south end by making it more friendly to foot traffic.
- The Town Hall Report, page viii, says "Even if it requires the removal of existing structures, Chaparral, Thomas and Indian School Roads should be significantly widened to connect Downtown Scottsdale and the 101 Freeway." The impact of this could be a positive redevelopment but costly approach on adjacent neighborhoods, or it could be a very negative and costly approach to increase traffic. Does the City have a vision and budget for the Public Realm to address access to the downtown?
- If landscaping along Scottsdale Road (downtown to McDowell Road) disrupts businesses, it should not be done. Scottsdale should not spend money on light rail.

DESIGN & CHARACTER

- The Town Hall Report, page vii, says "...Downtown Scottsdale must respect and maintain the livability of adjacent residential neighborhoods." I believe this should include a context sensitive approach to integrate land uses and transportation impacts. How will design and character help to mitigate impacts, such as redevelopment and road widening, on existing adjacent neighborhoods, such as the Thomas Road corridor?

INTERCONNECTIVITY

- The downtown intersections on Scottsdale Road, Indian School, Goldwater, and Camelback should all be made safer for pedestrians to cross. One way is to expand the center islands out past the crosswalk, so that the center island protects pedestrians.
- I wish the city would look a little more at the biking community. Encourage more biking to public places and just biking as transportation. I believe if our public places provided really safe and really awesome places to park our bikes people would be more willing to get out and ride. Right now all you can really find is maybe a small bike rack around a corner or in some other out of the way spot. Sometimes I'm not

- so happy about leaving my bike. If you need some help checking out bike racks around town I'd be willing to do some of the work
- It would be incredible to develop a comprehensive bicycle/pedestrian pathway along the canal as well as somehow interconnect all residences along the canal to this pathway and to adjacent parks. Make more of the waterfront! What part of this area would the city most like to see developed for more dense or affordable housing? Where is the zoning available for such development? My partners and I are actively looking for such an opportunity, especially lots where the highest and best uses are not currently being utilized.
 - I do not currently reside in Scottsdale. We vacation there almost yearly. We plan on relocating to Scottsdale within 5 years. We always stay in or near 'Old Town' Scottsdale. One of the 'attractions' is the ability to access the bike/hike trail and the other activities available along the Wash. Traffic and development have gradually been encroaching on the ability of citizens to access and enjoy the facilities in and along that area. Living outside Scottsdale allows me to compare the area with those I warm familiar with in my locale. Please do not allow the zeal for continued development in Scottsdale to destroy the ability of residents and visitors to access and enjoy some very unique recreational facilities that have been developed in your community.
 - Let's make the canal a pedestrian trail that brings people downtown via underpasses without having to cross streets.
 - With a Fashion Mall on one side of Camelback Road and high-rises & outdoor dining on the other, it took the traffic death of a thirteen year-old girl before Phoenix connected those two popular areas via a tunnel. Let's not wait for a similar tragedy. Let's connect Fashion Square to the Waterfront area via a tunnel or an overpass now.
 - I live just north of Chaparral and west of Scottsdale where a number of families love to ride bicycles instead of driving or walking. It seems that bike lanes are a must for Scottsdale road as well as the downtown area. Currently there are none or a patch work of areas with no connectivity and it is literally "risking your life" to get around. I have brought this up in the past and typical response is a suggestion to use sidewalks - this is not realistic as the sidewalks have the same patchwork issue and sidewalks are designed for pedestrian traffic. I attended the recent focus groups and bikes seem to be an afterthought by most of these groups. I believe this is an important area being overlooked as short trips on bikes have really grown in popularity as well as becoming much trendier in recent years. If we build it, they will come!
 - Make some roads one way and open them to model shops, bikes, walking, etc.
 - Better pedestrian and bicycle access, paths , etc. Current designs tend to be a patchwork design and needs more continuity.

ECONOMIC VITALITY

- The goal of PUD is to create live/work areas. In one statement, not up for vote or regulation, the planning committee eliminated working in downtown, ie. "affordable housing" is too expensive. For some reason I don't picture someone owning a half

million dollar condo and walking down stairs to serve Starbucks at 5 A.M. The council invalidated the entire purpose of PUD's. Scottsdale is developing another unsustainable development (Galleria). There is no way to go from S. Scottsdale to Via Linda between 5 P.M. - 7 P.M. in under 1-2 hours. Developers are paid to attend. So of course, you only hear from developers. The Republic does not deliver the 'Scottsdale Edition' to S. Scottsdale. Your emails do not give enough warning on meetings. There is no serious attempt to involve anyone other than developers to townhall meetings or else you would hold them at a time and place, give proper notice (usps), which you haven't.

- Less chain box stores. More individual and unique small stores. Right now, I get the feeling that downtown is becoming an extension of fashion square mall, without the conveniences. I think that's backwards thinking. Why would I want to visit another big box store when I can order from them online? The old downtown was unique with unique shops that couldn't be replicated. Now there's little reason to visit.
- I have been waiting for many years for the revitalization of South Scottsdale. SkySong was proposed as the catalyst for change. Lowes followed that. Now Los Arcos Crossing is proposed for adding retail and housing. This is an important project that is years past due. I have seen the preliminary plan and am excited to see it move forward. There are nay-sayers who protest most projects. Los Arcos Crossing redevelopment should be encouraged. That area has been blighted for too long.

CIVIC SERVICES

- Now that there will be so many new residents residing in the downtown, why would we move the downtown post office out? We should have a new downtown post office, it would give the downtown another central landmark and a much needed service for residents in walking distance. Downtown residents shouldn't have to get in their car and drive out of the downtown for postal service.