

Desert Discovery Center Concept Survey Results

Executive Summary:

These are the results of the Desert Discovery Center Survey that was conducted at the April 20, 2016 public meeting that was held on the DDC project. The intent of the survey was to use the results to help guide the project team through the design process.

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April 20, 2016 Public Meeting

Question 1: On average, how often do you visit Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve?

- 3 Daily
- 13 Weekly
- 5 Monthly
- 5 A few times per year
- 1 Never

Question 2: Where do you currently access the Preserve?

- 18 Gateway Trailhead
- 6 124th Street/Lost Dog Wash Trailhead
- 5 Tom's Thumb Trailhead
- 5 Brown's Ranch Trailhead
- 2 128th Street
- 2 Sunrise Trailhead
- 2 Granite Mountain Trailhead
- 2 Shea Blvd.
- 1 Fraesfield Trailhead
- 1 Bell Road
- 1 Happy Valley Rd.
- 1 Paradise Trail
- 1 Pinnacle Peak

Question 3: How far do you live from the proposed location of the DDC at the Gateway Trailhead (Thompson Peak Parkway & Bell Road)

- 3 Less than a mile
- 8 1-5 miles
- 9 5 – 10 miles
- 2 more than 10 miles
- 3 within Scottsdale
- 1 in another city

Question 4: What is the primary reason you usually visit the McDowell Sonoran Preserve?

- 24 Hike
- 2 Bike
- 3 Horseback ride
- 3 Other

Question 5: What issues would you like to see addressed as part the planning process for the Desert Discovery Center Concept?

Very excited. Want to have learning experiences like Sonoran Desert Museum has. Want teach about animals/plants and environment.

Sustainability-mainly financial. Insurance of anti “slippery slope”-i.e. allowing private commercial vendor use of public lands.

Why is the city spending money on this when they can’t maintain the public parks south of Shea Blvd?

Let’s get this done. It would be a great project. We need to be able to attract tourists. Field trips for kids also great.

Financial responsibility. Traffic flow. Programming. Continue education. Generational extension.

Reaffirming what a great asset this is for the community.

Noise-particularly at night. Traffic plans-will widen roads? Add traffic lights. Impact to wildlife. Lighting-particularly at night-also from cars accessing and leaving at night. Odors from a restaurant/café-will draw animals day and night.

Traffic, noise, lights, hours of operation, location. I do not want the DDC in the Preserve. I do not support the current location at the Gateway Trail. I would support the buildings if the location was moved to West World. Don’t ruin our NATURAL preserve. A public vote should be mandatory!

This should be a public vote. Such a commercial development should not be allowed in a Preserve and/or under the current Preserve ordinance. The trailhead at Gateway is widely known by visitors who appreciate an untouched Preserve versus a commercialized venue that will compromise the integrity of the Preserve. The DDC may be a worthwhile venue, but has no place within a Preserve. Alternate sites should be re-evaluated. Noise levels, lights, traffic, hours, architecture among other items, should be addressed. What is your return on cost projections and how do you guarantee this? There should be no evening hours in order to preserve the quiet neighborhood area.

What will it cost? Who will pay for it? What will it cost to run? Who will pay to run it? How big in footprint? How many buildings? How many paid staff? Can it be built without a vote of Scottsdale citizens? Did the city attorney give an opinion that a simple majority of the council could authorize the DDC?

Integrity of the land being used and impact on surrounding area.

I live in the area and want it to remain PRESERVED! PLEASE DO NOT DESTROY OUR DESERT!

I am against building the DDC because of: Location. Cost. To learn about preserve, it doesn't have to be on preserve. STOP PLANNING & MORE STUDIES. Too costly. Bring DDC to a vote.

Not at Gateway. Next to Butterfly Farm & Aquarium or SE 101 & Pima Princess Basha shopping center.

I would like this to be voted on by all the residents of Scottsdale. I will be watching how each council person votes. I and my friends will not vote to support council members who support the DDC. For the public record.

How the DDC will be put to a vote. Which City Councilmen (and women) are for/against the DDC so we can make appropriate decisions at their next Council election. Why previous bond elections that went against the DDC are not definitive.

STOP THE PLANNING! USE WEST WORLD OR A COMMERCIAL SITE!

Move it to another location out of the Preserve!!

Stop the whole project! At the Preserve at Gateway.

I want to know how the DDC is estimating that the budget will be in a \$1.6 million dollar deficit. I have never known a government agency hold the line on expenses. I know the deficit will go much higher and I for one do not want to use tax dollars to pay for it.

A citizen wide vote before this proceeds. Personally, I hate it & find it incomprehensible that the city council is trying to jam it down the city's throat. This is NOT what voters intended when they agreed to buy land for the Preserve.

GET IT DONE!

Good job with tonight's meeting. Though individuals comment should be kept to say 2-3 minutes, one woman hijacked the discussion which is not good!

Economic impact for the city through tourism.

Why wasn't moving the original site at Pinnacle Peak to the Gateway site put to a public vote? Why isn't the amendment changing the original intent of the Preserve being put to a public vote?

I have been a steward since 2006, and performed Pathfinder duties throughout my stewardship. I have received hundreds of comments from visitors complimenting the Preserve and all it offers. Not once have I ever had a visitor ask that we build a center where they could go enhance their Preserve experience. I realize there have been discussions and explorations over the past 20 years as to the feasibility of a "Desert Discovery Center". I'm curious as to just how much City of Scottsdale (COS) money has been spent researching this proposal? I do recall in 2010 there was a very expansive program and display of architect renderings of DDC buildings and exhibits. I'm sure that cost the City of Scottsdale quite a bit of

money. We know the latest exploration is costing the COS 1.7 million dollars. How much money are the citizens of Scottsdale prepared to waste doing the same thing over and over again, and expecting different results? The market, our visitors to the preserve, are not asking for a Desert Discovery Center. If visitors are unable to hike the preserve or do not wish to hike the Preserve, we currently have three interpretive trails that are easily accessible to all individuals, and provide them with excellent information and examples of our Preserve. We also have stewards serving as Nature Guides to help educate visitors to our Preserve. All of which is free. We do not need a Desert Discovery Center. This “if you build it, they will come attitude”, has not been supported by market research over the past twenty years. A Desert Discovery Center does not fulfill an existing need for our market.

I am adamantly opposed to the DDC at the proposed Gateway location. 1) The land purchased for the Preserve is intended to remain undeveloped with the exception of trailhead facilities. 2) Commercial activities such as a gift shop and a restaurant, even though compatible with the DDC, were specifically prohibited when the Preserve was originated. 3) Even with the “donation funding” which has been requested, a large amount of taxpayer funding will be required to build and operate the facility. The obvious source for the majority of this funding is the remaining preserve bond fund capacity. No matter that someone creates a legal, rational, this is still far outside the original intent and language of the Preserve’s originating documents. 4) A project of this size and expense should be decided by the voters, not by the City Council. 5) A DDC which is not located on Preserve land may be a good idea, as long as it is not constructed or operated with any Scottsdale taxpayer funds.

I am a North Scottsdale resident and a realtor speaking to you against the Desert Discovery Center Project: I am speaking on behalf of the all the beautiful plants, saguaro cacti and fauna, the lizards, scorpions and all the animals that live in this wonderful desert preserve. I am also concerned about the plans for this project for the home owners and people that live in this beautiful area including myself. I pass the Preserve almost daily and love the open views to the mountains in the rain, the cloudy days and sunshine, it is always so beautiful. I walked the trail on new year’s day and enjoyed the clear views to the lower Phoenix where the smog was hanging over that area and enjoyed the peace on the trails. Since the day I found out there were plans to bring cement parking lots, traffic, smog and buildings and plants to cut down the preserve’s natural growth! I saw in the Face Book site endorsements, it said SAAR, Scottsdale Arizona Association of Realtors endorsed this project, we did not, we had at some of our realtor morning meetings a rep from the SAR office come and speak to us on this but there did not ask for opinions or votes. There are many of us that are against this Desert Discovery Center, we want to leave it as it is, natural and pure. There is a water fountain and toilets, that is all that is needed for us to enjoy this natural nature area and its trails.

Question 6: The project team would like to incorporate your thoughts regarding the planning and vision for the Desert Discovery Center into the planning process– what experiences might visitors have there, how can the DDC be a community resource, what should the architect and experience designer keep in mind as they begin their work? Please take a look at the following list and check those items that would be important to you as a community member.

Environmental/Conservation Considerations

- 9 Visitors walk away respecting, valuing and connecting with the desert
- 7 Renowned as a global research center on desert environments
- 9 DDC respects neighbors – human and wildlife
- 7 Built as a model for sustainable, low-scale/impact, desert architecture
- 4 Policy makers take notice of research to inform global decisions regarding living in arid environments
- 7 Serves as a portal for the McDowell Sonoran Preserve so visitors better understand the surrounding environment

Community Impact

- 4 Tells the story of “The People’s Preserve”
- 5 Scottsdale becomes known for its environmental and conservation ethic
- 6 Becomes “the” field trip for Scottsdale and surrounding area school children
- 6 Serves as a point of pride for Scottsdale residents – a place they want to be and that they want to take visitors
- 6 DDC partnerships reinforce and support the DDC’s mission
- 5 Provides enhanced opportunities for volunteerism

Educational Opportunities

- 8 Provides opportunities for learners of all ages (preschool through adult learners)
- 5 Conducts scientific research on a local and global level
- 8 Changes people's perception of and relationship to the desert
- 4 Adds a Valley focal point for STEM education opportunities
- 9 Inspires the next generation to care for their environment
- 6 Provides a venue for lectures and symposiums

Visitor Experience

- 7 Offers changing exhibits – you rarely see the same thing twice
- 4 Provides interactive, high-tech multimedia experiences
- 7 Daily rituals – sunrise/sunset ceremonies, Native American traditions
- 6 Experience is revelatory – you see the desert from the macro, actual and micro levels
- 4 Provides opportunities to experience the Sonoran Desert in other ways – art, poetry, cooking
- 7 Inspires visitors to change a behavior aimed at preserving the desert environment

Question 7: Please provide any general comments on the DDC Concept and this evening's public meeting.

Who would not check most, if not all?

This is a somewhat done deal. The powers behind the throne. These meetings are just to brainwash the public.

All of the above. Good presentation. Hated to hear that woman go on forever after not even listening to the presentation. Loved the reference to the Ice Den. I remember all the negatives about that. This will be great!

You are all very passionate and I believe this project is in the right hands. I look forward to offering my continued support personally and professionally to move this project forward.

I would like the decision on the project to be decided by the residents of Scottsdale-not just the council. Put to public vote!

The presentation lacked intent of the goal, which clearly is a tourist attraction. Private land should be evaluated off of preserve land, it's not an approved use. Despite quotes of "non-profit", the desired plan is clearly commercial in nature. The city council members may have over stepped their authority.

Why do all this when we have the Desert Botanical Garden here? Does anyone believe the DDC will attract more tourist dollars than without?

For the public record-please bring this issue to a public vote.

I do not want this site touched and built at all. I want it to stay how it is-natural. Please do not cement our beautiful preserve! Listen to the locals and stop the plan!

The preserve that I supported and voted for and pay taxes for was never intended to have a DDC facility as proposed. Elections would have changed if it was known, and future elections will be lost if candidates support the DDC in the preserve. I am a steward from class7 and am appalled that this is happening.

Do not ruin our desert preserve!

Build it in another location!

This sounds like a very positive impactful plan for the community. I have no real concerns at this stage and anticipate schematic design presentations. My husband and I are regular hikers of the preserve and fully support this exciting opportunity.

Abandon the project.

Please let me know how I can help!

I think the Fors and Against groups are closer than they think. They all agree on education & preservation. It's just the details...where, how big, etc. they don't agree on. Of those that are against

“scraping the desert” I assume they all live in tents? Oh no, they live in houses? Don’t they understand the desert was scraped for their house?

Conservation is key. I don’t want this to become a “Bob Parsons” DDC. The man can’t support anything without putting his name on it and getting publicity for it.

If education is already taking place on the preserve as Don Gruber said, why do we need a DDC on the Preserve, too? Informing tourists/public about the Sonoran Desert does not need to be done on the Preserve. The Preserve was purchased to be preserved. There is no reason that I know of, that the DDC can’t be placed off the Preserve and still achieve the same concepts without impacting the Preserve itself.

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Zip Code of Survey Respondents:

85018 – 1
85250 – 3
85251 – 1

85255 – 6
85257 – 1
85258 – 5

85259 – 2
85260 – 3

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