

Desert Discovery Center Concept Survey Results

Executive Summary:

These are the results of the Desert Discovery Center Survey that was handed out at the following community meetings:

- Monday, April 26, 5:30 p.m. – Taliesin/Ancala/Scottsdale Mountain
- Tuesday, May 2, 4:30 p.m. – Grayhawk HOA Board
- Tuesday, May 10, 6:30 p.m. – DC Ranch
- Wednesday, May 11, 5:30 p.m. – McDowell Mountain Ranch Women’s Group
- Monday, Aug. 8, 1:30 p.m. – Convention & Visitors Bureau Round Table (with Thinc Design)
- Tuesday, Aug. 9 – 5:30 p.m. – Community Leaders Reception (with Thinc Design)
- Wednesday, Aug. 10 – Chamber of Commerce Dinner (with Thinc Design)
- Thursday, Aug. 11, 5:30 p.m. – Education and Community Partners Meeting (Scottsdale Community College, Paradise Valley Community College, Phoenix Herpetological Society)

The intent of the survey was to use the results to help guide the project team through the design process.

Report Contents:

	Page Number
Question 1: On average, how often do you visit Scottsdale’s McDowell Sonoran Preserve?	2
Question 2: Where do you currently access the Preserve?	2
Question 3: How far do you live from the proposed location of the DDC at the Gateway Trailhead (Thompson Peak Parkway & Bell Road)	2
Question 4: What is the primary reason you usually visit the McDowell Sonoran Preserve?	3
Question 5: What issues would you like to see addressed as part the planning process for the Desert Discovery Center Concept?	3
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.	6
Question 7: Please provide any general comments on the DDC Concept and this evening’s public meeting.	8
Zip Code of Survey Respondents	9

Community Meetings

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

- 3 Daily
- 11 Weekly
- 7 Monthly
- 17 A few times per year
- 3 Never

Question 2: Where do you currently access the Preserve?

- 21 Gateway Trailhead
- 5 Brown's Ranch Trailhead
- 2 Quartz Trail
- 3 Tom's Thumb Trailhead
- 3 124th Street/Lost Dog Wash Trailhead
- 2 128th Street
- 2 Trevas
- 1 Sunrise Trailhead
- 1 Granite Mountain Trailhead
- 1 Taliesen
- 1 Shea Blvd.
- 1 Jomax
- 1 Via Linda

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

- 7 Less than a mile
- 18 1-5 miles
- 25 5 – 10 miles
- 2 10+ miles
- 1 Other City

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

39	Hike
4	Bike
1	Horseback ride
4	Other

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

Educational opportunities for people of all ages but would definitely like educational partnerships with our community colleges. I love the idea of a restaurant. That may be an opportunity to include education on local food. Great job!!

Financial sustainability, neighborhood impact, sound, light pollution.

I see traffic as a big problem-noise-homes are in the area. Wrong area-lots of animals.

Possibility of movement of DDC to Bell corridor. I like the concept, but not in the preserve. Financial sustainability.

I like the idea of a Discovery Center. I don't like the idea of it being at Gateway.

The DDC concept is worthwhile, but the facility should not be located at Gateway.

We do not want this built in the Preserve! Period! Really.....let's dig up the desert & displace the animals to educate people about preserving the desert and protecting the wildlife! Does that make sense? Now tell me my housing development destroyed the desert...my development wasn't conceived to preserve the desert. What we have now is great! We don't need more buildings, a restaurant, and a gift shop selling tacky plastic rattlesnakes and tarantulas. We don't want the added traffic in our area!!! Build it somewhere else! Keep the preserve the way it is right now!! If you want to add more education signs, fine. No added buildings!! This will not bring in the traffic anticipated and our taxes will need to be raised again for maintenance. NO to the DDC in the Preserve!!

The need-why do we need this? The residents do not want this. The need for a public vote for approval of this project. Listen to the residents-other locations!!! NOT in the Preserve!

Acreage, size of buildings.

Educational opportunities for school children.

Outreach & education on conservation to the broader community.

Opportunities for research. Place for seminars. Special exhibits.

Education of and sustainability of the preserve. Venues for lectures for all ages.

Financial sustainability-operations plan.

Traffic, handicap access, bed tax contribution.

We are already committed to preservation. Why put a commercial enterprise (and the associated traffic) next to the Gateway? How about moving it North at least, next to the Village? Or out of the preserve. The DDC seems to be incompatible with the concept of "preserve".

Over all traffic especially with the Sterling Condos 213 units. Especially the single-lane bridges on Legacy & Thompson Peak Parkway. Noise-ie: concerts or outdoor speeches. The sight of buildings replacing parts of the set aside preserve. Vague concept.

Traffic, noise, non-preserve activities (use such as a nice place for a business meeting).

I do not want the DDC in my backyard! It absolutely should not be nested into DC Ranch/Silverleaf. Choose a different location that will not obstruct our traffic and add noise to our beautiful community. We chose to live here in Silverleaf because it was quiet, safe. We paid a lot to live in a quiet, peaceful community.

Don't make it a tourist trap. Educational and local is fine.

We do not want bus traffic in our neighborhood. We do not want car traffic on Bell and Thompson Peak, can you move the location to another mountain range? Please do not destroy the desert by putting a building there, The traffic on one lane roads is a dangerous idea. Zero DC Ranch residence members want this!!! TRAFFIC!

Complete bridge on Thompson Peak Pky to have 2 lane traffic on both sides. Complete bridge on Legacy. There should be no plans on _____ with DDC until bridge issue is resolved. Move site closer to downtown-near Salt River Stadium.

Consider alternate sites outside of the Preserve-The Preserve is to be "preserved". Lots of open land off of 94th & Bell Road! Scale back the number of buildings. If tourists want a destination, consider the Grand Canyon. I don't want my tax dollars to pay for this-we already paid for the preserve itself. The people's preserve is not paid for by the tourists. We already have way too much tourist traffic here. These people can go on the trail right now...no buildings required. Dynamite Rd. would also provide great access.

Resident concerns regarding traffic, crime and value of properties.

Keeping small, preferably not at all. Concerned about increased traffic, lights, noise & _____ increased in the preserve area.

Educational on several levels from the young to the knowledgeable of some of the desert already. Interactive-digital, speakers, one on one. Venue-exclusivity evening events with facilities for caterers to work out of it. Adventures for those high energy visitors.

Spiritual component should be transparent. Educational component both interactive as well as written word. Structural design should be materially indigenous and you will be well served not building up. Build out. Flora and fauna I believe should be emphasized. Water and the desert- identify and explore the waste.

Focus on "Living Desert". Use of technology integrated with nature. Quinescential viewing area for Sonoran Desert. Inspiring outdoor experience with indoor public food, water and bathrooms nearby. Celebrate "Skyscape" and AZ's signature sunsets that frame our special saguaros. Opportunity to learn about plant & wildlife native to our area. Location that celebrates western pioneers, Spanish & Native American explorers. Habitation of the desert. Introduces people to the people that have learned how to live & thrive in desert. Share-worthy "must see's" & "Must do's". Engagement in "live" programming activating desert.

Use of land-living off of the desert, variety of landscape even just in our Sonoran Desert. Preservation, circle of life.

Native American histories.

Stewardship/the arts:visual & performing.

Diversity of the desert, climate change, plant & animal adaptation, limited footprints for buildings, a LEED certification of buildings-emphasize sustainability.

Incorporating technology-phone use. You will miss out on an entire demographic without incorporating use of phones in some way.

Friendly to "all people" to experience. Instill an experience that creates a memory.

Desert Awareness Committee, Carefree. Foothills Community Foundation. "Desert Edibles" & "Medicinals".

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

- 7 Visitors walk away respecting, valuing and connecting with the desert
- 5 Renowned as a global research center on desert environments
- 7 DDC respects neighbors – human and wildlife
- 5 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
- 6 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”
- 6 Scottsdale becomes known for its environmental and conservation ethic
- 7 Becomes “the” field trip for Scottsdale and surrounding area school children
- 8 Serves as a point of pride for Scottsdale residents – a place they want to be and that they want to take visitors
- 4 DDC partnerships reinforce and support the DDC’s mission
- 3 Provides enhanced opportunities for volunteerism

Educational Opportunities

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

Visitor Experience

- 5 Offers changing exhibits – you rarely see the same thing twice
- 5 Provides interactive, high-tech multimedia experiences
- 5 Daily rituals – sunrise/sunset ceremonies, Native American traditions
- 7 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
- 8 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.

Paths-we were told they would be dawn to dusk to protect the wildlife. Constant bikers at night, riding with lights on their heads! Nothing done after numerous calls!!! Do something-(ie: gates that close at dusk at all trailhead entries!) – to stop this!!!

City Council Members show yourselves!! Come to meetings – don't hide.

Thanks to all the volunteers working for this!!

Great idea!

Thank you for a wonderful presentation!

Love the idea of learning and living changed.

The current location is open to all – no need to “enhance” it with buildings on this preserve.

Great opportunity if executed well, perhaps a phased approach starting relatively small Phase I and based on the acceptance, proceed to Phase II and III. Just as the trailheads phased in over almost 10 years.

100% of attendees had very negative feedback!

Move it to somewhere near McDowell Mtn. Park or Pinnacle Peak. The proposed site is way too close to people's homes & neighborhood. The preserve is not to be used for commercial purposes such as this-It's not compatible with the Preserve Ordinance.

I think it is a great start and I am honored to have been asked for opinions on how to make it great.

Call me anytime to help.

Desert inspired design. Sunrise/sunset viewing deck. Interpretive video and/or large video screen presentation. “Blooming” desert, desert life/animals, desert survival/thriving techniques in desert.

Keep it a discovery center, don't get lost in just hosting events or concerts...don't get lost in the “glitter” of Scottsdale. I love the authenticity of what it can be!

Zip Code of Survey Respondents:

85004 - 1
85008 - 1
85251 - 1
85253 - 1
85255 - 25
85257 - 1
85258 - 2
85259 - 4
85260 - 1
85264 - 1
85266 - 1
85281 - 1

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