

# SOUTHERN SCOTTSDALE COMMUNITY AREA PLAN BUSINESS & PROPERTY OWNERS FOCUS GROUPS SUMMARY

July 24<sup>th</sup>, August 7<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> and September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2008

*Southern Scottsdale is comprised of strong family-focused neighborhoods, rich in character and history, and connected through recreation, community activities, and local gathering places. It is a unique community with viable retail and entertainment that serve both residents and visitors. Neighborhoods are founded on strong community values, diversity, and sustainability (Gathered from Community Outreach participants March, 2008).*

## Introduction

The Southern Scottsdale Business and Property Owners Focus Groups represent a component of the public outreach process associated with the Southern Scottsdale Community Area Plan (CAP). Beginning in spring 2008, the outreach process asked residents and stake holders to identify themes they felt were important for expressing a future vision for the Southern Scottsdale Community.

During the outreach process, participants consistently mentioned economic vitality as one of their most important themes. Consequently, Advance Planning held a series of four focus groups to engage the community's business and property owners in a conversation about Southern Scottsdale's future economic growth. Beginning in July and ending in September 2008, twenty nine business and property owners participated in the focus group process. The results of this outreach can be found in the following summary of the responses offered by these participants.

## Business & Property Owners Focus Group Questions

### Vision Questions

**How do you perceive the Southern Scottsdale business community as it relates to Scottsdale as a whole and the surrounding region?**

The majority of focus group participants' perceived Southern Scottsdale as a collection of "Mom and Pop" shops and other small businesses. Some focus group member's observations about the Southern Scottsdale business community included:

- Run down and in need of reinvestment and structural/ façade improvements;
- Revitalization efforts should include a concentration and balance of neighborhood serving businesses and businesses that have a regional draw;
- Development of businesses in the area is hindered by what other communities surrounding Southern Scottsdale have done to become larger draws for customers. This has affected local business and Scottsdale's ability to compete;

- Motor Mile vacancies along McDowell Road provide a new opportunity to redevelop that space into a regional destination which can compete with other cities; and
- The area should begin to develop its identity with a focus on the local businesses that makes it a unique community within this region.

**In the next twenty years, what do you envision or picture for the Southern Scottsdale Business Community?**

The Focus Group participants' visions for the next twenty years included:

- Variety of transportation options, besides the automobile, that connect with the overall region and provide excellent connectivity;
- Pedestrian friendly community that is highly walkable, highly connected, with an abundance of shade;
- A business community that is a diverse mix of small, medium, and large businesses that support the local neighborhoods and have regional significance;
- Regionally and nationally significant destination; and
- Community with an abundant diversity in housing and an emphasis on mixed use developments that positively work with, transition to, and compliment existing neighborhoods.

**What policies would you suggest the city consider to assist in reaching your twenty year vision?**

Participants' suggestions were as follows:

- Create incentives through zoning, districting, and tax relief;
- Provide micro loans to small businesses;
- Capitalize on and enhance existing opportunities and assets like the Indian Bend Wash, McDowell Road (Old Motor Mile) and SkySong;
- Provide "perks" and incentives for redevelopment and reinvestment, such as in the Downtown Overlay;
- Increase height along major corridors to make development and redevelopment more economically feasible;
- Thoughtfully consider surrounding neighborhoods when increasing height; and
- Support legislation to pass Tax Increment Financing and use those taxes to spur new investment and reinvestment.

**Economic Revitalization Question**

**What are specific geographic areas within the Southern Scottsdale business community that lend themselves to focused economic development?**

Participants identified several geographic areas mostly located at major arteries and corridors.

- Intersection of Scottsdale and McDowell Road;
- Along major corridors such as Thomas Road, Scottsdale Road, portions of Hayden Road, McDowell Road, and McKellips Road;
- Secondary corridors such as Osborn Road, 68<sup>th</sup> Street, 64<sup>th</sup> Street, and Miller Road.

- Developing gathering places within neighborhoods. A successful example of small neighborhood serving shops and services is La Grand Orange and Postino's in Phoenix; and
- City should engage major employers and employment centers such as General Dynamics and ASU Sky Song in open dialogue to create long term relationships to support and enhance the neighborhoods around these centers.

**What are the specific uses to be considered in each of the areas you just identified?**

The proposed uses for these areas are:

- Located along Scottsdale and McDowell Roads, especially the Motor Mile would be a good opportunity for the Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning district. The PUD would also be appropriate along other corridors as long as there was thoughtful transition to the existing single family neighborhoods;
- Participants envisioned mixed-use developments along major corridors with moderately priced restaurants, clothing stores, small light manufacturing and some major retailers. This would provide shopping options for the surrounding neighborhoods and a variety of employment opportunities. Participants felt these businesses, with residences located above, would have a stable supply of local customers;
- In residential neighborhoods: small businesses dedicated to serving the immediate neighborhoods, with services, and as gathering places, such as La Grand Orange in Phoenix;
- The need for service businesses such as grocery stores, dry cleaners, drug stores, book stores (e.g. Changing Hands) is apparent. Providing a mix of smaller stores and businesses that are based on serving the neighborhood was more important to participants than large grocery and or drug stores that serve the broader community; and
- Large businesses are beneficial such as Target and Lowe's, yet there is a definite need of smaller, more neighborhood serving, businesses.

**Retail/Commercial Question**

**What new or additional types of retail/commercial/office opportunities would you suggest be located in the Southern Scottsdale business community?**

Participants identified the following:

- Artist studios;
- Live / work spaces;
- Turn some neighborhood houses into local restaurants and businesses that are neighborhood gathering spots;
- Community coffee shops and delis';
- Bowling alley, ice rink; and
- Adaptive reuse of existing buildings, such as houses into restaurants, like Arcadia Farms Restaurant in Downtown Scottsdale.

### **Residential/Housing Question**

#### **What types of housing do you suggest be developed for Southern Scottsdale?**

The following housing types were the most popularly mentioned during the events:

- Apartments (rental housing);
- Town homes;
- Patio homes;
- Homes with zero lot lines (homes built to the property line);
- Flex space;
- Condominiums; and
- Lofts.

### **General Plan Mixed Use Urban Neighborhood Classification Question**

#### **Do you support “mixed-use” in the Southern Scottsdale Community Area Plan boundaries?**

All focus groups expressed great support for mixed-use developments. Participants mentioned the following:

- Scottsdale needs a larger population base to support new and existing businesses and an increase in population would provide a ready supply of customers for expanded businesses;
- Mixed-use developments should be populated around major corridors, with three to five stories, and on minor arterials, with two to three stories;
- Height of mixed-use developments also depends on the neighborhoods directly adjacent to where these developments are being considered; and
- The Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning district is important to future mixed-use development.

In addition to the development of mixed-use, participants felt that many other services need to be addressed such as:

- Expanded Trolley routes and service hours;
- Additional transit options; and
- More open space opportunities such as pocket parks.

To encourage mixed-use development, the City should consider:

- Reducing parking requirements;
- Revisit mass transit; and
- Utilize and build off of existing businesses and developments, (such as SkySong and Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community).

#### **What types of uses would you like to see incorporated into mixed use development?**

Participants expressed interest in:

- Local, neighborhood-serving businesses;

- Businesses that have regional draw, such as resorts and tourist destinations;
- Local gathering places;
- Artist spaces and;
- New housing options.

**Conclusion**

This report represents a summary of the focus group information offered by Southern Scottsdale business community regarding a future economic vision for Southern Scottsdale. The focus group responses will be used in conjunction with the Southern Scottsdale CAP Existing Conditions Report to create goal and policy statements and implementation strategies for the Southern Scottsdale CAP. This plan will provide a path to guide the development of Southern Scottsdale for the next ten to twenty years.