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Scottsdale Greater Airpark Community Area Plan Q & A

What is the Scottsdale Greater Airpark Community Area Plan?

The Scottsdale Greater Airpark Community Area Plan is a set of general goals and policies for the future of the Greater Airpark. Compared to the broadness of the Scottsdale General Plan, the Community Area Planning method involves more detailed goals and policies for specific geographic areas of the community. The Greater Airpark Community Area Plan establishes the vision for the Greater Scottsdale Airpark and will provide the basis for Greater Airpark decision making over the next 20 years. The plan contains goals, policies, and illustrative graphics to articulate the vision for the Greater Airpark and the necessary implementation programs to achieve the vision.

As directed by public input, the Greater Airpark Community Area Plan focuses on enhancing mobility and wayfinding, sustaining existing neighborhoods, encouraging a variety of land uses and activities, expanding business diversity, enhancing aviation, encouraging recreation and open space, promoting sustainability and “green” design, enhancing identity and architecture, and maintaining and enhancing the area’s regional economic role. The Greater Airpark Community Area Plan establishes a comprehensive, long range vision for how to accomplish these goals.

Why is the City of Scottsdale formulating the Greater Airpark Community Area Plan?

Nearly 30 years have passed since the 1981 Airport Area Plan specifically addressed the Scottsdale Airpark from a policy level, and the Scottsdale General Plan superseded that plan in 2001. The State of Arizona mandates that all municipalities must update its General Plan every 10 years. The City of Scottsdale has chosen the Community Area Plan method for its 2011 update, collectively six Community Area Plans will make up the Scottsdale General Plan.

What difference does it make whether the city has such a plan?

The plan is like a roadmap for the future. Without it, direction will be less clear and certain. For example, without a clear understanding of future densities, the city will not know how much infrastructure will be needed. The 2001 General Plan designated the Greater Airpark as a growth area—meaning it is most appropriate for development and will experience significant growth over the next 20 years. The plan sets the framework for growth so that it occurs in a way that is aligned with the community’s values.

What is the difference between the Greater Airpark Community Area Plan and zoning?

There is often confusion or blurring of the distinction between the role of policy level documents like the Greater Airpark Community Area Plan and the role of the Zoning Ordinance. The Greater Airpark Community Area Plan is a “general” policy document that establishes the community’s vision and goals for the Greater Airpark at the macro level. The Zoning Ordinance, and associated zoning maps, are legal instruments that define with significant precision the permitted land uses and associated performance standards for every property within the city. Any Zoning Ordinance amendments that may help implement the Greater Airpark Community Area Plan would be adopted separately, after additional public review.

If the Greater Airpark Community Area Plan is approved as drafted, how will it affect the areas that give the Greater Airpark its character, such as the Scottsdale Airport, the Tournament Players Club Golf Course, and WestWorld?

Generally, the goals and policies in the Greater Airpark Community Area Plan underscore the importance and uniqueness of the Scottsdale Airport. The plan’s goals and policies are designed to help sustain and enhance the Scottsdale Airport as a preeminent aviation facility, and a major economic engine of the Greater Airpark. Additionally, the goals and policies in the Greater Airpark Community Area Plan are designed to support and enhance existing tourist attractions and event facilities like the Tournament Players Club and WestWorld.

How does the plan affect height and density in the Greater Airpark?

The Greater Airpark Community Area Plan is a policy document that does not give property owners legal “entitlements” to any changes in height and density limits. Instead, it sets goals and policies that guide the community’s vision for future height and density in the Greater Airpark.

The plan maintains the community’s goal to keep the Scottsdale Airport as a preeminent aviation facility, and the Greater Airpark Community Area Plan will not allow any additional height or density that would infringe on prudent and safe Airport operations or that is inconsistent with the regulations of the Federal Aviation Administration.

The Draft Greater Airpark Community Area Plan proposes three Development Types— A, B, and C—A being the lowest scale and C being the greatest. The location of Type C is provided only where directed by extensive public input. Also, development flexibility is contingent upon the provision of public amenities and benefits such as reduced energy consumption, alternative energy, open space, etc. Additionally, to implement these policies, the Scottsdale Zoning Ordinance would have to change. Any Zoning Ordinance amendments that may help implement the Greater Airpark Community Area Plan would be adopted separately, after additional public review.

Who has been involved in formulating the Greater Airpark Community Area Plan?

To ensure that the Greater Airpark Community Area Plan reflects the community’s vision and goals for the Greater Airpark, an extensive public outreach process was conducted

from May to October 2008. During this time, over 400 community members participated. The public had diverse opportunities to participate, including a series of business forums, large group workshops, small focus group discussions, online surveys, virtual workshops, and both individual and community group meetings with staff. As directed by public input, the Greater Airpark Community Area Plan focuses on enhancing mobility and wayfinding, sustaining existing neighborhoods, encouraging a variety of land uses and activities, expanding business diversity, enhancing aviation, encouraging recreation and open space, promoting sustainability and “green” design, enhancing identity and architecture, and maintaining and enhancing the area’s regional economic role.

What are the next steps in the process?

As of Sept. 17, 2009, the Draft Greater Airpark Community Area Plan has been made publicly available both online and in hard copy print for public review and comment. The City of Scottsdale Planning, Neighborhood, and Transportation Division and the Advance Planning Department will be asking to present the plan to community groups, associations and stakeholders, and is also willing to meet with individuals upon request. The plan is scheduled to proceed to the City of Scottsdale Planning Commission for working sessions in September 2009. Presentations and feedback with community groups, City of Scottsdale Boards and Commissions, and other interested parties is expected from September 2009 through April 2010. Possible adoption of the plan by the City of Scottsdale City Council could occur in October 2010.

How does the Greater Airpark Community Area Plan relate to the General Plan, the document that guides the city’s overall planning for the future?

The Greater Airpark Community Area Plan will be a component of the updated City of Scottsdale General Plan set for adoption in 2011. Community Area Planning, which includes a focus on the Greater Scottsdale Airpark, has been chosen as the preferred method of updating the 2001 General Plan. Six separate Community Area Plans, including the Greater Airpark Community Area Plan, will be integrated into the updated 2011 General Plan.

The latest version of the Scottsdale General Plan was adopted by the City Council in 2001 and ratified by voters—as required by state law—in 2002. The state also requires cities to update the land use portion of their general plans and submit them to voters at least every 10 years. The city is on track to bring an update of the General Plan to the Council in 2011 and then submit it for voter ratification.

The city and community are currently working toward the 2011 General Plan update using the Community Area Plan (CAP) process. The Downtown Plan was the first Community Area Plan adopted by the City of Scottsdale City Council in early 2009. When a new General Plan is approved in the future and submitted to voters, that new plan will describe how the Community Area Plans are integrated as part of the plan for the whole community.