Community Involvement

VISION STATEMENT

Scottsdale is a community with a rich history of citizen involvement, having encouraged public participation through such programs as STEP, Scottsdale Visioning, and CityShape 2020. In the future, Scottsdale will be a leader in promoting open government processes that are accessible, responsive, and fair to all of its citizen participants. We will reach beyond the minimum standards for citizen involvement and be attuned to the community's growing and changing population as we plan long-term and adjust to intermediate situations and opportunities. Scottsdale will be a community that has collective responsibility and ownership for where it is and where it is going. City processes will be characterized by deliberation, dialogue, and thoughtful, respectful discussion, followed by collaboration for informed decisions and creative solutions. Scottsdale will be a community where constructive dialogue involving individuals, the business community, organizations, institutions, and government is the cornerstone of successful planning, decision making, and community building. We will always consider new ways to promote community involvement recognizing the diversity and unique elements of our community and its citizens.

Introduction

Public participation is an important component of successful planning and community building and decision making. Citizens (residents, business people, and property owners) need and deserve ongoing communication regarding projects and issues that affect their community. While we recognize that a city as complex and diverse as Scottsdale will rarely have consensus, public participation may bring understanding and dialogue to complex issues.

The city of Scottsdale has a rich history of community involvement. Because of this legacy of civic participation, citizens expect the city to inform them of public issues and give them an opportunity to be heard on issues. Here is a partial listing of the major public participation efforts that make up Scottsdale's heritage:

- 1966 - the Scottsdale Town Enrichment Program (S.T.E.P.) forums (provided the impetus for a Comprehensive General Plan study, Indian Bend Wash, Scottsdale Airport, and the Civic Center Master Plan)

- 1970 - Brookings Institution (consultant-facilitated seminars regarding community issues)
- 1973 - Charter Amendments (examined development and signage issues)
- 1974 - series of S.T.E.P. forums (discussed issues of community-wide impact including legislation and transportation)
- 1981 - Scottsdale 2000: Directors For Tomorrow (discussed bond issue items, Mustang Library, new Corporation Yard)
- 1990 - Scottsdale Visioning (evaluated the direction of the city for the next 25 years, created the Shared Vision)
- 1994 - CityShape 2020 (examined the General Plan through the "lens" of the Shared Vision, created six guiding principles and a three-level structure for the General Plan)

Numerous standing and ad hoc committees, commissions, and boards addressing a wide range of subjects have also characterized Scottsdale's tradition of community involvement. And as part of the public involvement process, citizens have spent thousands of hours involved in the planning process, zoning cases and development review cases.

**"Tell me, I forget.
Show me, I remember.
Involve me, I understand."**

Chinese Proverb

Through the guidelines contained in this element, Scottsdale demonstrates its commitment to encouraging early and meaningful citizen input in these important processes. Such participation will help the city resolve concerns early in the planning process, and level the playing field for citizens, property owners, elected officials, other stakeholders, and the development community. It also provides an opportunity for early input into the formation of city policy and regulations. The ultimate goal is to ensure a level of dialogue that is mutually respectful, responsible, and civil. The city's role is to reflect and respond to citizen proposals/comments by forging partnerships between citizens, stakeholders, elected officials, and the city organization, so that all parties are involved, informed, and responsive to the needs of a dynamic community.

Key elements of Scottsdale's past and future community involvement programs include:

- The benefits of the community as a whole are balanced with the advantages to discrete elements of the community;
- Community dialogue is conducted in an interactive manner;
- Complex issues are explored from a variety of perspectives rather than a presentation from one perspective;
- Community understanding is enhanced when citizens are actively

involved, and the city facilitates opportunities for participation, dialogue and interaction;

- Community participation is best achieved when the roles and responsibilities of citizen, staff and elected officials are melded and all groups actively participate in public dialogue;
- Community dialogue uses a diversity of communication and participation methods, keeping the tradition of the spoken and written word while embracing emerging technologies.
- Community involvement policies encourage participation from all parties.

The goals and strategies included in this element are meant to serve as suggestions for ways to effectively inform and involve the community in city-related discussions and decision-making processes. However, it is important to understand that effective and meaningful communication techniques and technologies change and evolve over time. Techniques that may be appropriate today may not be as effective and meaningful in the year 2020.

Scottdale Values ...

Scottsdale's Community Involvement Element embraces the core values developed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), considered a global leader in public participation process. The IAP2 core values were developed with broad input to identify those aspects of public participation, which cross national, cultural, and religious boundaries. The purpose of these core values is to make better decisions, which reflect the interests and concerns of potentially affected people and entities.

- The public should have a say in decisions about actions that affect their lives.
- The public participation process communicates the interests and meets the process needs of all participants.
- The public participation process seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected.
- The public participation process involves participants in defining how they participate.
- The public participation process communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.
- The public participation process provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.

In addition to the international values, the City of Scottsdale developed a number of local values from its history of community involvement:

- Diversity …of lifestyles, of backgrounds, of opportunities, of choices.
- Equal weight given to the voice of everyone that lives, works, or owns property in Scottsdale. *Individual comment is an important component of collective policy making but not necessarily the ruling component of decision-making*.
- Understanding of the "big picture" and an informed citizen perspective in the formation of city policy.
- Respect and courtesy for all participants in civic dialogue.
- Citizen involvement as part of a community process for creative problem solving. Constructive recommendations/solutions are more helpful than critical judgment.
- Give and take discussion with the aim of understanding community issues and learning alternative viewpoints - "deliberation".
- Communication techniques that create balanced dialogue.
- Opportunities for public involvement that accommodate the lifestyles and activities of the community rather than requiring citizens to adapt to city schedules and locations.

Goals and Approaches

1. Seek early and ongoing involvement in project/policy-making discussions.

- Maximize opportunities for early notification of proposed projects, or projects/issues under consideration using signs, information display boards, web site postings, written correspondence, and other methods, as they become available.
- Institute and use public involvement plans to identify interested parties, their concerns and interests, and opportunities for providing information and involvement.
- Encourage that project developers/owners, realtors and the real estate

industry, corporations, and other public entities take responsibility for sharing information, framing issues surrounding projects, and shows accountability for being responsive to constructive citizen comments. (The responsibility of citizens and project sponsors for deliberation and dialogue is a shared one).

- Ensure project developer/owner is able to demonstrate citizen involvement and how comments were incorporated into proposal/issue recommendations.
- Partner with the real estate community, corporations, and other public entities to inform the public and provide accurate, complete information regarding projects/issues.

2. Proactively seek community-wide representation on issues through vigorous outreach programs that engage citizens who are not typically involved.

- Determine the range or distance of public notification based on the characteristics of the specific case or situation. All notification issues should focus on impacts at the neighborhood level.
- Create and use community-wide mailing lists that include representation from homeowners associations, neighborhood and service groups, the faith community, the school districts, the business community and other special interest groups.
- Provide community-wide information and notification of public involvement opportunities in ways that communicate with our diverse population. Use written and electronic means now, and future means as they become available.
- Incorporate public involvement opportunities for a broad cross-section of community demographics including school age children, students, and seniors.
- Utilize communication vehicles that reach minority populations within the community.
- Encourage voter registration and increased voter participation through broad distribution of information materials via mail, technology and printed materials to ensure community-wide representation on issues that require ratification.

3. Publish and process city issues in a manner that is relevant to citizens' daily lives and personal and professional interests.

- Provide multiple locations/times/communication avenues for public involvement to accommodate a wide diversity of lifestyles, work schedules, and time available for input.

- Use a wide variety of communication tools, resources, and techniques to reach a broad cross-section of residents.
- Use speakers' bureaus to provide information as part of meetings held by citizen and neighborhood boards and organizations.

4. Accept and respond to new ways of communicating and new technologies.

- Provide multiple opportunities for input through use of technologies such as: on-line public comments, on-line dialogues, on-line and computerized questionnaires and surveys, and computerized survey techniques or mechanisms.
- Provide information in a variety of ways, including: written and spoken communications, city and neighborhood web sites, electronic notices, cable TV, faxes, electronic mailing, and other current and future communication technologies.
- Use data visualization and simulations to explore complex city issues.
- Use technologies like teleconferencing and broadcasting of meetings to allow greater participation at locations throughout the community.
- Partner with other organizations to use their in-place networks to further communication and to sponsor links to city information.
- Embrace new techniques and technologies for communication.
- Adapt communication techniques and technologies to each situation.

5. Make available facts and information about community issues to increase understanding and insight into the complexity of challenges that affect the community.

- Use systems to track, measure, and identify community issues, community trends, and community concerns.
- Provide community-wide access to data that reflects current facts, figures, demographics, trends analysis, etc.
- Create public information materials that accurately reflect the facts surrounding issues, i.e. the purpose, timing, and need/benefits for a project or proposal, and where possible which explain the differing perspectives being heard within the community.

6. **Foster community partnerships, community catalysts, and community networks as a means of sharing information and responsibilities and working on collaborative solutions.**

- Coordinate with Neighborhood Citizen Service Centers to seek neighborhood partnerships, information, and involvement.
- Clarify citizen, project owner, and the city's role in responsible civil dialogue on community issues.
- Continue the tradition of "Community Visioning" to reevaluate community issues, goals, and vision for the future.

Related Plans and Policies:

- Matrix of potential public involvement techniques
- S.T.E.P. forum summaries
- Shared Vision Report of Scottsdale Visioning
- CityShape 2020 Comprehensive Report