

## GREATER AIRPARK COMMUNITY AREA PLAN



### ECONOMIC VITALITY FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION SUMMARY

The City is in the process of updating its General Plan—a policy document that guides future growth and development for the entire city. To accomplish this, the Planning Department is using a process referred to as Community Area Planning (CAP). The CAP process divides the city into six geographic areas that will serve as the foundation for the 2011 General Plan update. The Greater Airpark CAP process was initiated in May and July 2008, with approximately 200 community members participating in events. The themes and ideas that emerged from these events served as the basis for this discussion group topic.

The **Greater Airpark Plan** will examine the existing conditions of the area and consider the Greater Airpark's future for the next twenty years. Like the City's General Plan, the Greater Airpark Plan takes a *broad* look at the future, setting *goals and policies* that will shape future development and investment. The specific zoning standards, design details, or development projects will not be part of the Greater Airpark Plan itself, but will be implemented subsequently based on the policies set forth by the plan. In considering the discussion questions, participants were asked to think of it as looking at the Greater Airpark from the "10,000 foot level".

Participants were asked to consider the following in this focus group:

Respect each other and each other's point of view at all times

Focus on ideas and refrain from personal attacks

No idea was a bad idea, participants were asked to feel free to dream big!

The goal is not to agree, it is about hearing and exploring different perspectives

The following pages consist of comments made by participants in a small discussion group of ten people. The input received from this discussion contributes to the overall long-range vision, goals and policies for the Greater Airpark Community Planning Area. The results of all public outreach efforts, including the input received in this discussion, will ultimately be compiled to find areas of commonality and areas in need of further consideration within the community.

In the end, a vision, and goals to realize the vision, will be created based upon community input and data analysis.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND RESULTS

### 1. In terms of business mix, what is working well in the Greater Airpark?

- ❖ Close proximity of businesses, specifically the Hayden Road area between Redfield Road and Frank Lloyd Wright Boulevard has great retail
- ❖ Like the mix of retail and service companies
- ❖ The areas like the Promenade and Kierland Commons have a lot to offer in one area, such as eating establishments, hair salons, Christmas shopping and holiday events
- ❖ Scottsdale Quarter
- ❖ The recent expansion of the Airport facilities
- ❖ The area is more than just retail, everything you want is within five minutes
- ❖ Retail and services are all right there
- ❖ It is the smallest planning area (in the City of Scottsdale), but has the most stuff
- ❖ Like the health and wellness businesses such as the Ice Den and Kids Gym—it couldn't be planned any better
- ❖ Love the Frank Lloyd Wright spire
- ❖ The improvement of the intersection of 73<sup>rd</sup> Street at Thunderbird Road was great

### 2. What is your vision for the economic future of the Greater Airpark?

- ❖ Need hospitality on the west side of the area
- ❖ Encourage more physicians offices
- ❖ Access to Bahia Drive is awkward currently. It is hard to get to the medical offices there
- ❖ Need to be pedestrian friendly and have public transit
  - Right now we have to drive everywhere
  - Scottsdale Quarter may help add to a “pedestrian feel”
- ❖ Put light rail on the Loop 101
- ❖ Trolley circulation from business to business would be great. It would also be great if it could take you to restaurants in the area. This would help with traffic congestion. Need a “Disneyland-type” trolley.
- ❖ Need more public transportation. One-third of the workforce rides the bus or uses rideshare. With wages the way they are, it is hard to attract employees and compete with other cities
- ❖ Would kill for an east coast-type subway or trolley system. A person could use it to go to lunch and it would provide more access to an employee base

- ❖ The runway is currently an obstacle to circulation
- ❖ Need a footbridge across Scottsdale Road from Kierland Commons to Scottsdale Quarter. Elevated walkways could also provide views of the mountains.
- ❖ Need decorative shade. Use the Esplanade/ Biltmore area shade structures as an example
- ❖ Need more public art in the area
- ❖ Create a greenbelt or pedestrian/ bicycle passageway
- ❖ Add pedestrian and bicycle tunnels under the major intersections. This would create more walk/bike-ability and would not congest traffic.
- ❖ The infrastructure and technology in older office buildings is a challenge
- ❖ Need to be more aesthetically pleasing
  - No more Dial-height buildings.
  - I dislike the “concrete battleship” type building (One Scottsdale Building)
  - Use southwestern architecture with muted colors
  - Very few businesses take advantage of the 36-foot height limit
  - Need to be pickier about what is allowed
  - Try building down (underground)
    - We can’t do that because the city is in a flood plain
- ❖ The area is a tourist attraction and Scottsdale is called a “Most Livable City.” And that is because of the low-density, low height, luxury and open spaces. The development approvals today are not following that character.
  - On the flip side- Scottsdale Healthcare had to fight for just 36-feet to build a hospital that serves the community. We need to consider economic drivers when thinking about height. If we limit it too much, we may not be able to maintain or add community services
  - Taller heights should be closer to the Loop 101 freeway
  - Heights can affect homes
- ❖ Infrastructure
  - The construction of Scottsdale Quarter may affect what 73<sup>rd</sup> Street looks like in terms of traffic. It is a giant shopping center on a side street.
  - I do not take Scottsdale Road to go anywhere because the traffic is too bad
  - Sewer system capacities should be considered in development. Do not develop ahead of capacity
  - Need wi-fi connectivity throughout the Airpark
  - If cable is cut in the Airpark, businesses lose access to customers
  - Communication towers are okay as long as they are tasteful looking
  - Tourists want free access to the internet
- ❖ Low flying helicopters may not encourage people to move into the Airpark. Helicopters are okay, but they’re not great.

- ❖ Would like to see more air festivals
- ❖ Need activities that bring people together

### 3. How can small and start-up businesses be supported and maintained in Greater Airpark?

- ❖ Scottsdale is known as “stopsdale” in terms of the permitting process. It is very difficult to upgrade or expand your building or business
- ❖ Composition of typical industrial workforce in the Airpark:
  - 1/3 are long-standing employees that live in the area. They bought here before the prices went up
  - 1/3 are mid-level pay commuters
  - 1/3 are quick turnover employees because the cost of gas is too high for entry level positions to be worth it
- ❖ One problem is that there is very little workforce here
  - High School graduates leave the area
  - We need transportation to bus in lower income individuals, which can be a safety issue
- ❖ Safety is also a concern on nights and weekends because no one is in the area
- ❖ Workforce housing is not financially feasible
  - Who would want to live in the Airpark? I don’t
    - Disagreement- it could be enticing, cosmopolitan
  - Some people want to live near the Airport, but it is hard to see the places because of the buildings on each side
  - Need to understand who can afford to live in the area
  - Push workforce housing onto Scottsdale Road because height is suitable there... it does not block mountain views from existing neighborhoods
- ❖ I do not think there are many future retail opportunities in the Raintree Drive/ Hayden Road area. It seems like an industrial area
- ❖ I do not think of the Airpark as a place to go to shop or to eat
- ❖ The area needs marketing, maybe television advertisements
  - Generally need more branding, make it a destination
- ❖ There are many great mom and pop stores in the area
- ❖ Consider a city grant matching program to include technology and building refurbishment. Call it “business enhancement partnership”
  - It would have to show a public benefit to work
- ❖ Signs need to change, especially mom & pop stores and retail. They need better signage to show presence. Right now people use panel trucks as signs. We need “real” signs.
  - There should be some kind of exception to the sign ordinance in the Airpark

- We also need directional signage that looks nice
- Sign restrictions can be bad for parcels with small frontages, especially stores and offices
- Large setbacks also make it hard to see the buildings
- Signs are not really an issue for manufacturing businesses
- It is hard to see the building numbers because trees block them
- ❖ Less concrete and more shade would make the area more inviting
- ❖ Need people walking around and dining
- ❖ A great big parking lot does not guarantee foot traffic

#### 4. Where is reinvestment needed in the Greater Airpark?

- ❖ The area on the west side of the Airport is old and in need of reinvestment
  - I have seen some tear-downs in that area
  - The building stock is dated
  - There is more office and warehouse reinvestment needed on the west side because of the shift in newer offices to the area around McDowell Mountain Ranch
  - The empty buildings there have a negative impact on the area as a whole
- ❖ Keep in mind the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) height restrictions along the Airport
- ❖ There is a lot of concrete and not a lot of green
- ❖ The area north of the CAP Canal is far younger than the area to the south. The north, McDowell Mountain Ranch and the Perimeter Center are the oldest pieces. To the south, the buildings are 30 to 40 years old
- ❖ Infrastructure improvements should be the City's responsibility and they should be updated to ensure that the areas are livable and function well
- ❖ Technology is everyone's responsibility. There should be a public-private partnership to add more to the Greater Airpark
- ❖ The private sector should reinvest in the area, but the city should make it easier to do so (i.e. streamline permit process, have fewer regulations and meetings for smaller projects and remodels)
- ❖ I do not typically like incentives
  - Disagreement- It's always better to use a carrot than a stick
- ❖ Consider aggregating properties. There are many small properties now. Aggregating them is the only way to make a change in character.
- ❖ There are currently no incentives to upgrade a property
- ❖ Condemnation?
  - It happened at the Scottsdale Healthcare-Osborn Campus in order to expand
  - Other cities like Detroit and Boston are using it

- Need to consider what would go in its place
  - What would it do to rents? It needs to stay affordable
- ❖ I do not want to see people who do not take care of their properties
  - “Clean it or leave it”
- ❖ Residents sometimes have Home Owners Associations (HOAs) or Codes, Covenants and Restrictions (CC&Rs). Something could be done similarly for business areas
- ❖ I located my business in the Airpark because it had cheap rents and was close to the Airport