

STAY CONNECTED

Providing citizens with progress updates, information, events and reports, and the opportunity for input are key elements in our strategic planning process.

For detailed information, go to www.fh.az.gov/ourtownourchoices, and download reports and data from the on-going strategic planning process.

Reports and information available online:

Where We Are Now Report Strategic Choices Report Newsletter – Updates #1 & 2

The *Our Town. Our Choices.* Speakers Bureau is available to update any community group, club, or organization on Town Hall #2 and the strategic planning process. If you would like to host an update session, please call the Strategic Plan update line at (480) 816-5295 to schedule a presentation.

The Strategic Plan update line (480) 816-5295 is available to provide general information about upcoming events and to receive inquiries.

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Our Town. Our Choices. A Road Map to the Future

Coming to Consensus – Moving Forward

COMMUNITY SURVEY

In the next few weeks a random sample of citizens will be contacted and asked to participate in a public opinion survey. The survey will broaden input received during the Town's ongoing strategic planning process, including attitudes toward strategic initiatives, and willingness to pay for them.

Unbiased data from a broad cross-section of the public is important to the plan's success; please take a few minutes to participate if you are contacted. If you are one of the 2,400 residents selected, you will receive the survey by mail, and if you do not respond to it after a few days, interviewers will call you to administer the survey by phone. You should be able to complete the survey in just 10-20 minutes.

Building consensus and refining priorities was the focus of Town Hall #2. Starting with the “top 10” focus areas generated at Town Hall #1, citizens expressed ideas and concerns, stated their positions, and often as not, changed their minds, as tough decisions were hammered out. Early in the discussions, low implementation costs helped some focus areas rise to the top of the priority list. At the end of the sessions however, many extensive projects remained priorities because of their importance to the quality of life in Fountain Hills.



“I was pleasantly surprised at the level of courtesy the attendees extended to each other,” said Ivonne Smith, a first time participant. Because my husband and I are ‘Generation Xers,’ we were prepared to be ignored or blown off. Happily, we felt our opinions and ideas were given full consideration in the group discussions, and we are looking forward to continuing our participation.” Baron Smith added, “We struggled with giving up a whole Saturday for the Town Hall, but figured that nothing is going to happen with this process if people like us don’t participate. As it turned out, we feel grateful to be living in a Town that gives its citizens this opportunity to give input and shape the future.”

The day started with 40+ projects, policies, or programs that were the product of Town Hall #1 discussions. By noon, the list was narrowed to 11 initiatives for further consideration.



In the afternoon sessions, participants wrestled with costs vs. benefits of each initiative. The groups arranged and rearranged their preferred initiatives and then placed them into an implementation time frame:

Phase I: 1-3 years Phase II: 4-7 years Phase III: 8-10 years Phase IV: 11+ years

At the end of the discussion sessions, moderators presented the work of their respective groups, – complete with timelines and approximate cost allocations – to the entire gathering of Town Hall #2 participants. Attendees then voted for the plan they liked best, and celebrated the completion of another milestone in the citizen-driven Strategic Planning process.



CHARTING THE COURSE TOGETHER...

Coming to Consensus – Moving Forward (continued)

When the votes were tallied, the top six plans were selected by 87% of the participants who voted. These plans ranged in cost from \$133 to \$254 for Phase 1 (1-3 year time frame).

The remaining 12% of the votes were spread over the remaining six plans. The priorities in the most popular plans will be evaluated for inclusion in the Strategic Plan. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) will conduct a thorough analysis of how these initiatives are related, and how they interface with current Town projects and existing policies, and make appropriate recommendations.

A complete list of the strategic focus areas and projects, programs and policies reviewed at Town Hall #2 is available at Town Hall and Community Center and online at www.fh.az.gov/ourtownourchoices.

Reprinted from Fountain Hills Times, August 17, 2005

Our viewpoint – A living document

The Fountain Hills Community Center was a beehive of activity all day Saturday (August 13) as nearly 200 citizens came together as part of the second “town hall” gathering to participate in yet another stage of the town’s strategic planning process.

This was a critical stage too, because those attending were being asked to pare down a rather lengthy list of 40-plus “wants and needs” that were compiled from the first town hall session. Saturday’s events prioritized some of the issues at hand.

It’s easy to sit back and take jabs at public officials, but it’s another to make a commitment, devote the time, get your hands a bit dirty and participate in a citizen-driven process that in the end will benefit the community. But those, in a nutshell, are the same basic tenets upon which this country was established more than 200 years ago.

In the end, this will make a difference. There won’t be magical changes in Fountain Hills overnight, but this is part of a road map to guide the Town Council and community in general toward a direction that makes sense – practically and financially. The strategic plan doesn’t have to just sit on a shelf and collect dust – it can be a living document that is massaged and updated over the years to reflect the wishes of a growing and vibrant constituency.

Congratulations again, to all those who participated. And thank you.

Let’s make sure this spirit of community lives on...

Top 11 Initiatives

(1-10 year time frame)

Annex State Trust land

Preserve natural environment – views, washes and night sky

Build a multi-generational aquatic/activity center

Enhance small town identity – sense of community

Attract businesses to enhance commercial diversity

Create lifelong learning opportunities for all ages – increase courses

Encourage use of natural landscaping (xeriscaping)

Add amenities to the parks system – trails and programs

Enforce General Plan and zoning ordinances

Build stand-alone senior center

Acquire 15 acres of new community parkland

KICKOFF
JANUARY 29

YOUTH VISIONING
MARCH 16

TOWN HALL #1
APRIL 15-16

INFORMED CHOICES
WORKSHOPS
JULY & AUGUST

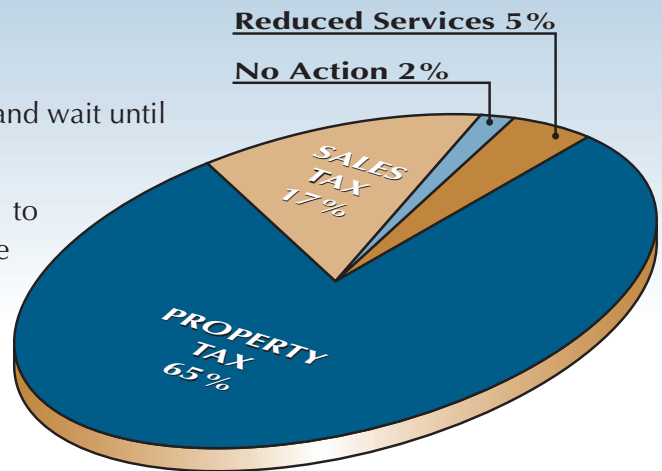
Taxing Topic

Fountain Hills' 20-year financial overview revealed that by fiscal year 2013, our Town will need to make financial choices before construction revenues diminish and a deficit occurs. As part of the fiscal decision-making exercise portion of Town Hall #2, participants were polled to evaluate four options to achieve Town financial stability in the coming decade. The options included:

- A. Increase the Town sales tax by about 0.2¢ per dollar, from 2.6% to 2.8%.
- B. Levy a new primary property tax of about 0.285¢ per \$100 valuation, or about \$66 per year on the median home worth \$248,000 in 2004.
- C. Don't increase revenues; instead, reduce Town services.

D. Take no action, and wait until deficit hits.

Nearly 83% chose to take action to fill the future budget deficit. The majority (65%) chose a primary property tax, 17% chose to increase the sales tax, with the remaining 7% choosing to reduce services or take no action at all.



Tax Comparison

Fountain Hills has one of the highest sales tax rates in the Valley and the second highest in the state; Sedona, Carefree and El Mirage are higher. Conversely, it has no primary tax and the lowest secondary property tax rate among Valley cities.

Sales Tax Rates

| Jurisdiction | Sales Tax Rate |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| Chandler | 1.5% |
| Gilbert | 1.5% |
| Mesa | 1.5% |
| Paradise Valley | 1.65% |
| Scottsdale | 1.65% |
| Phoenix | 1.8% |
| Tempe | 1.8% |
| Glendale | 1.8% |
| Prescott | 2.0% |
| Payson | 2.12% |
| Cave Creek | 2.5% |
| Fountain Hills | 2.6% |
| Carefree | 3.0% |
| Sedona | 3.0% |

*Data from Town, City or County websites.

Property Tax Rates per \$100 Assessed Valuation

| Jurisdiction | Primary | Secondary | Total |
|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Carefree | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 |
| Paradise Valley | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 |
| Payson | \$0.29 | \$0.06 | \$0.35 |
| Fountain Hills | \$0.00 | \$0.51 | \$0.51 |
| Prescott | \$0.23 | \$0.37 | \$0.60 |
| Cave Creek | \$0.00 | \$0.64 | \$0.64 |
| Scottsdale | \$0.44 | \$0.60 | \$1.04 |
| Chandler | \$0.38 | \$0.90 | \$1.28 |
| Tempe | \$0.52 | \$0.83 | \$1.35 |
| Glendale | \$0.35 | \$1.37 | \$1.72 |
| Phoenix | \$0.80 | \$1.02 | \$1.82 |

TOWN HALL #2
AUGUST 13

SURVEY
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

TOWN COUNCIL
APPROVAL

CELEBRATION
JANUARY 2006

