



**TOWN OF FOUNTAIN HILLS
STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS
Our Town. Our Choices.
A Road Map to the Future**

**Town Hall I: April 15-16, 2005
Small Group Discussion Notes**

Carlos Duarte Herrera, Facilitator, Rm. 109

Participants

- Carol Crane
- Mary Dahl
- Bruce Florence
- Stephanie Haddy
- Hugh B Henry
- Joan K Jaeger
- Jim Land
- Jackie Miles
- Claire Rosenfeldt
- John Stiles
- Richard Stimmler
- Oronzo Ventrella
- Frank Walters

What do you like about Fountain Hills, and what would you change?

| <i>Like</i> | <i>Change</i> |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Not a retirement community | Emergency medical services |
| Friendliness | Architecture |
| Progressive town | Cost of real estate |
| Well educated | Lack of community space |
| Community spirited | Funded senior center |
| Having friends in town | Transportation to the valley |
| Volunteerism | Functioning bus service |
| Feeling that change is possible | Improved arts |
| Culture: arts, letters, sciences | Promote and encourage arts |
| Arts and sciences community | Armadas in trust land for arts and or science |
| Town in process | Planetarium |
| Less traffic | Inconsistency rules |
| Know people | Time/dollars/construction permits |
| Easy to get involved | Concern: land trust |
| Quiet, peaceful, relaxed | No light industry |
| Natural beauty | Diversity jobs |
| Landscaping | Affordability of housing |
| Closeness to major cities | Natural resources |
| Not only retirement community | Bo on guard |
| Mixed age population | Expand volunteer base |
| Topography openness | Recycling |
| Stars at night | Multi purpose auditorium |
| Relaxed atmosphere | Become full service self contained community |

| <i>Like</i> | <i>Change</i> |
|---|---|
| Paradise Choice Golf Skies and mountain views Weather Friendliness Natural beauty Closeness to native Americans Programs (in house concerts) Community openness Civic participation Smallness You are not anonymous Safety | Arts center Hospital Downtown expand Neighborhood watch Self sustaining Dollars Quality dining, groceries, shopping Need of an image, identity, architecture, continuity of design Cohesive downtown Need to travel to Scottsdale cultural center Lack of common style Expensive golf Becoming too affluent Impact in schools |

Core Values

- Community
- Culture (arts)
- Environment (Natural beauty)
- Neighborly town (neighbor support)
- Aesthetics
- Responsible government
- Civic participation
- Safety
- Mixed age
- Cultural/racial diversity
- Identity
- Sustainable/self sufficient
- Freedom (personal)
- Economic vitality
- Friendliness
- Education
- Cultural diversity
- Public safety
- Environment
- Community participation and volunteerism
- Preserve small town character
- Recreational opportunities
- Sense of community (no gates)
- Community events
- Fountain and town identity
- Affordability/degree/compatibility/for whom
- Arts and culture
- Limit growth, quality, continuity
- Architecture (unique, non-uniform)
Compatibility, commercial residential continuity
- Local public transportation
- Accessibility to town
- Communications and technology
- Community resources (water)
- Traditions and entertainment
- Kid friendly in schools, community and parks
- Fiscally sound government
- Dark skies
- Social services
- Entertainment and night life
- Spirit of commercial vitality
- Maintain property values
- Sustainability: self sustaining town

Vision Components

- Government that encourages public participation and is responsive to it
- Financially strong community that is able to fund and support its core values
- Be a destination point for others to enjoy and spend in
- FH is a self-contained community that meets the needs of all its residents
- Become a cultural center in AZ
- Preserve the natural beauty
- Quality aesthetic development
- Become the cultural center in AZ
- Identity is established by the presence of fountains in private and public facilities
- Meet the recreational needs of all groups

Vision Attainment Strategies

Accessibility/Transportation

- Via Linda (open for transit)
- Build road to Mesa
- Increase bus service
- Financial incentives to public safety and education and security
- Good benefits for town employees
- Premium pay for contractors

Recreational/Culture

- Local artists presentations
- Regular music in the park (variety)
- Movie theater
- Old classic movies/discussion
- Shakespeare in the park
- Chapter of lyrical Opera with facilitator
- Travelogues
- Freestanding senior center
- Public swimming pool
- Recreation center for teens, after school and evening

Architecture Identity

- Hire city planning consultant to work with architecture committee
 - Encourage new business via fast permitting processes
 - Define continuity of style
 - Restrict height of construction
 - Combine commercial & residential (lofts above retail)
 - Businesses should be revenue generating
 - Diverse business that draw from outside the community
- Enforcement of guidelines
- Architectural clarification: compatibility yes but “diverse” buildings do not make sense as architectural compatibility doesn’t fit with diversity.

Identity

- Small friendly town beautiful vistas and quaint restaurants and shops with local artists and a big fountain – composite

Environmental

- Plan to preserve & maintain washes, etc.
- Limit public lighting for dark skies

Economic Sustainability

- Volunteerism has saved the town \$\$\$ (example Fountain Hills Meals on Wheels outstrips Phoenix's efforts)
- Taxes – dirty word- likely to raise taxes to raise taxes ½% to provide for the arts
- Reach out to educational institutions across the state
- Arts/Parks/ performances – start charging something
- Maintenance infrastructure in town and utilities, sewer piping, etc. –plan for infrastructure checks and maintenance so don't have too many expenditures
- Tie sales tax to arts and culture – SEE Video of Arts Campus:
- Become a Cultural Center – (“Major” Cultural Center may be presumptuous) – Under one campus who are artist – painters, writers, performers put their work in progress can work and meditate and encouraging townsfolk to come to this center; public viewing and open artist (e.g. a Taliesin) visual arts and performing arts and classrooms and studios and community theater

Additional Notes:

Individual Likes/Dislikes

1. Likes living in paradise; everyone used to live close to their business or in crappy place; now choice to live here; clear skies, playing golf vs. smog, crazy people. Wants self sustaining funding to sustain community to bring in funding to support community activities and to do things here vs. Scottsdale. Good dining, shopping, be able to buy trash or trinkets
2. Weather; friendly related to weather and so many transients all in the same boat together; people have to make friends; FH is dire need of an image i.e. architecture is lacking – no continuity of design in downtown are; need guidelines, and help define community
3. Natural beauty and diversity of people and closeness of native people and proximity; programs offered in-house concerts to community, not happen in Willamette; feel comfortable to be here; changes will come by citizen input exciting process personally very exciting; architectural identity and cohesive downtown area to allow us to have a place of destination to go to; spend time going to Kerr cultural center and want to go here; good starts are Wells Fargo days are nice for events but a place of destination is needed.
4. Resident now – like smallness of the community; say hello and recognize people on the street so important to me; more safety here than in larger metro areas; agree with needs and architectural issues – isn't there any planning to community no rhyme or reason; the town center area it is a shame it could have been another unique area like Kierland and it is a hodgepodge a mishmash and hopefully in future

newer buildings in town center and continuity in building codes. Golf is way too expensive for the avg. person so a municipal course or if you are a resident get a more reasonable rate; we drive all over valley to play golf at reasonable prices; concern about too affluent a community and want a mix of people living here are we able to attract younger couples; need not just a retirement community what will happen to schools and standards if not be able to support.

5. Long term resident - happy with mountain views etc. But 153 days to get a building permit and rules are difficult, nit/nat to death and inconsistent; 20 feet from road vs. 50 feet from road now. Prices of things are unbelievable \$1,100 for building permits etc. in Payson? And here. Ridiculous.
6. Opportunity to see town still in process; back East is really a done deal; the vision will impact 10-15 years down the road; the land trust and density; any light industry or how jobs and families would establish themselves; 4-7.5K more people is crisis/-opportunity; can school teachers afford to live here? Natural resources and preservation; encompass preserve the natural views in strategic plan; Scottsdale is too late.
7. Safety and familiarity with neighbors; concerts started; change the volunteers as we grow to more people getting involved; more recycling plastic and glass; performing arts or multi-use facility or part of senior center for more activities.
8. Quiet and peaceful and relaxing community; no changes in mind- a satisfied customer.
9. Attracted to area is natural beauty and signage, low density and small town feel and close to major cities and sport and cultural events; like the low traffic but maintain that if town grows. Town needs to grow from bedroom community to be more self contained - hospital, dining, arts, example of community center attached to school and a variety of ages; providing of jobs broader based than retail and housing.
10. Lay of the land topography and openness and not hemmed in an urban context- e.g. hiccup and your neighbor hears you; no commercial aspect and no hunger for that keep open stars at night and keep that feel; downtown needs plan – fountains are what all roads lead to but the down town is only half-baked. Big concern the medical services – where is the nearest medical emergency room? There is a little clinic of sorts – but there is no emergency room (group discussion).
11. Bought property 33 yrs. ago. Look forward to moving out here not want to go to a Sun City. Fountain Hills is ideal – 62% of our community is still working. Like relaxed friendly atmosphere and camaraderie, blessed with affluent, well-educated and community spirited group. Number one thing that bugs me is architecture- everything under the sun; Jackie's husband is on architectural committee but doesn't get into the commercial properties and it is all volunteer. Fountains on one side and desert on another and plan to be controlled and lots of thoughts over the years but architectural needs to be controlled. And preserve Friendly atmosphere
12. Friendly small town sharing and spirituality of using talents to volunteer for community. Concern for future is a Senior Center and they need to have some attention paid to them; getting squeezed out by other functions – as we share with Parks & Recreation and getting squeezed out. Need a freestanding community center for seniors – population and participation is growing (have statistics

- available). Transportation in and out of the town drive in and out of Phoenix; seniors don't drive and need access to large metro area ; our bus service is not there yet.
13. 1988 resident Town services on permits etc. not like it used to be. The arts and culture, letters and sciences – choir, concerts, art league, and Friday night jazz – marvelous things are happening! I like to see us take advantage of them that we are know as the cultural center of the state. We can become the “Santa Fe of AZ.” Trust land ramadas and artist can keep materials and work at times in Fountain Hills – Planetarium. Build on out writers, scientists, artists and couple that with the mountains and scenery – couldn't we attract an institution that combines all of this.

VALUES – Exercise of break into pairs and develop from likes/dislikes what FH Values are so important that you don't want to compromise.

Group 1

- Community
- Culture
- Environment

Group 2

- Neighborly town – friendliness, community spirit, volunteerism

Group 3

- Community
- Environment
- Culture

Group 4

- Environment – opens space, architecture, natural beauty
- Culture- expand the existing environment to include a cultural center and combine under one umbrella
- Town Government – responsive to community needs to ensure continued civic participation

Group 5

- Protect Natural Beauty
- Safety – but not shared by group partner; example of big drug bust in FH not a top priority but perhaps more neighborhood watches.
- Diversity – mixed age groups, mixed races and age groups; close proximity to ASU bring in programs from ASU (similar to Kerr Center)
- Responsive Government – less politics, more politics?

Group 6

- Community identity – what is FH? Like teenagers, what do we really want to be?
- Sustainable and Self-Sufficient – Economic viability not always having to go to Scottsdale for shopping, health care

Anything else on VALUES?

- Freedom – freedom from drawbacks from other towns; the old west spirit – you have your piece of dirt and you can do what you want with it; people built what they wanted to build – shacks or ? Not accountable to the government. History of the town was simple in its politics and development; parameters not envisioned to be a Scottsdale – Scottsdale I and II; less restrictions accomplish what you want to accomplish without government jumping on your backs all the time. Provide services and enabling spirit. Felt yesterday was back in Colonial times – bring in witches, get together, (likes process) good to get public
- Economic Vitality –
- Neighborly Community – Most friendly town AZ. We had an unwritten code of friendliness– everyone said good morning and big smile. Water themes and Fountains and all new communities and fountains everywhere in developments and an identity. Oasis in the desert idea.

VISION

Group 1

- Become a Cultural Center – (“Major” Cultural Center may be presumptuous) – Under one campus who are artist – painters, writers, performers put their work in progress can work and meditate and encouraging townfolk to come to this center; public viewing and open artist (e.g. a Taliesin) visual arts and performing arts and classrooms and studios and community theater
- Preserve the Natural Beauty of the Environment – Preserve pristine environment the mountains, land, parks and landscape medians; the physical things we came here for; the trees (e.g. trees not top heavy so they topple)
- Quality Aesthetics in Development /Environment –

Group 2

- Become the Cultural Center of Arizona – Performing arts, summer camps and spaces all over top where activities
- FH Identity Established by presence of Fountains and Community/Private Residences – More fountains and tax credits; or show support
- Meet the Recreational Facilities Needs of all Age Groups --- Parks, and age groups and Recreational Facilities

Group 3

- Government that Encourages Public Participation and is Responsive to It- (e.g. like this town meeting and mile markers and how are we doing? Hard to get folks to participate and continue volunteerism, more specific or focused committees – cultural issues, planning issues
- Financially Strong Community that is able to Fund and Support its Core Values
- Meet community needs of health and welfare and self-contained and sufficient.
- FH is a self contained and sufficient community that meets the needs of all residents.
- A Destination Place that People want to Enjoy (Tourists come enjoy and spend their Money) –

Values Check

- **Identity – the** Identity of the town is not limited to the Fountain
- **Architecture** – unique, non-uniform is opposite than we meant so we need architectural continuity, but not cookie-cutter residential; but we want a quality development and possible conformity. Continuity is required. Our group wants the downtown area to be compatibility and continuity of architecture and was not represented in this 1st Tier Value. Example of the Holiday Inn – commercial can come in and do anything they want? Developer can do design and why is that happening why? I hope this is what this exercise is about to have citizens set what their needs are and affect the process. This comes from citizens so we need a downtown plan. In downtown 3-4 story buildings so set some sort of height limit. Next Thursday AM downtown plan – Walnut Creek speaking to Chamber; why not public?
- **Limit Growth** – our group did not come up with that. Keep density as it is now. We don't want to be too dense. Once we get to 30K will be a bit more crowded but not a lot of traffic or too dense or too high rise. Only 125 build-able lots as we are land-locked so didn't think this was a big issue. High, medium or low density. Figures not available but one participant did talk to lot sizes and density issues.

Vision Check

- We like the self-sufficient small town idea. “Grown-up and sophisticated” is a kid but I am thinking of jobs and sophisticated is mostly college graduates and attend arts if that is the meaning. This is a question is of degree.
- **Affordability or not?** Define “affordability” for Fountain Hills:
 - Protecting property values at the risk of sounding biased.
 - If talking about government too many economic engines. Don't want it to revert back to ghettos, upscale development, cyclical development so can't go back to
 - Not going to be totality affordable. Not sure that we would go into subsidized housing. People have options and diversity of housing today– condos, larger homes and large lots; maintain compatibility to what we have now.
 - City fathers can encourage housing options. Developers can have 77 units and X% of those units have to be lower priced housing. So school teachers can live here.
 - This Country Doesn't Stand For Subsidies! Have school board pay stipend of \$3,000 – 4,000 to teachers who want to move here. Against any subsidies (as un-American).
 - How do we adjust the fear to who should live here? Do we want service people to live here? In NJ we put in lower income housing but there was no transportation? Columbia Maryland example a planned development community with planned needs for housing, transportation, no signage, etc...need planning.

From one of the participants in this group:

The hills are alive
With the sounds of
Culture and
With the sounds that come from
A strong, local economy
Let's take a look at a plan that will
Assure us of a long term strong economy.
Let's build on education, culture (arts, letters, sciences)
and the natural beauty that surrounds us.

**Let's also build on this premise:
That communities with quality
Education institutions tend to have
More stable economics.**

As part of a strategic plan, let's establish a
Cadre of AMBASSADORS and a set of guidelines
With the single purpose of
Establishing a satellite educational institution
In FH. By satellite, I mean buildings,
Not an antenna.

Two examples might be Julliard School of Music West
or Cranbrook Academy of Arts and Science West
Ambassadors would be residents
Who have ties with established
Educational institutions who would be
Authorized to represent FH
as liaisons.

With such a plan in place, we can
Look ahead to a greater degree of
LONG TERM economic stability.

**Communities with quality
Education institutions tend
To have more stable economies.**

Let's tie in with education, culture (arts,
Letters, sciences) and the natural beauty that
surrounds us.

We here in FH have so many
things working in our favor. But to take
Advantage of all of that, we should now be
Making this proposal a component of the
larger Strategic Plan.

Because it will take time, the sooner we
Plan and implement it, the sooner we can
See the benefits that will accrue.