

## KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW RECAP FOR FOUNTAIN HILLS' STRATEGIC PLANNING

(Responses generally grouped in priority order. Some were edited for clarity & brevity.)

### 1. WHAT ATTRACTED YOU?

**Think back to when you first came to Fountain Hills. What attracted you? What were your initial excitements and impressions about the community?**

#### **BEAUTY AND VIEWS:**

- Beautiful location—rolling hills, green, openness, mountains, and wildlife.
- When I came over the “hill” – wow ...it was just amazing the views were incredible!
- Views and incredible scenery- the topography is unique.
- The incredible natural beauty and small town atmosphere attracted me.
- In 1979 moved here as an ASU grad looking for a job. Not much here, just vacant land.
- Drove East on Shea over the mountains and saw 4 Peaks-incredible!
- Beauty of the hills, high standards for residential construction and visual appeal
- **Beauty of the view from Shea and Palisades. Coming over the McDowell mountains after a long day is a relief, I sigh every time I do it!**

#### **UNIQUE SMALL TOWN ATMOSPHERE, METRO PROXIMITY & NEARBY “BIG TOWN” AMENITIES:**

- Attracted to FH small town atmosphere with separation from urban area.
- Being surrounded by mountains with open space in the town was a huge plus.
- Smallness and remoteness relative to the rest of the valley.
- The location: small community with proximity to the mountains, culture, outdoor activities, ASU (culture, education) plus the custom home community.
- Wanted small community but close to cultural activities. Only 3000 people at the time so it was a ground floor opportunity to get involved and make a difference.
- Proximity of good medical services nearby, especially Mayo.
- No tract subdivisions, no big box stores, corporate restaurants, big box stores.
- We sought a bedroom community . . . not looking for services
- Small town atmosphere – solid middle class appearance, no traffic, few streetlights.
- The fact we are a small town with big town conveniences within a short drive.
- Unique job opportunity brought me here. I've only been here less than a year. Small town on the edge of a major metropolitan area is very unique.

#### **THE PEOPLE:**

- Pioneering folks and strong volunteer spirit. Independent thinkers
- Impressed with the smart & intelligent people. Many talented, accomplished retirees

#### **EVENTS:**

- Attended the Great Fair, was struck by FH's uniqueness+beauty of the environment.
- White Castle events were also a draw. (many other event comments in other sections)

#### **CLIMATE:**

- The weather is fantastic! The climate was healthy. Left winter behind.
- Love the weather and range of outdoor activities that are available.

#### **MISCELLANEOUS:**

- Property values were excellent.
- Bought lot in '84, built in '94
- Affordable housing (1993)
- Lived in Phoenix, watched FH grow.
- Made a business purchase
- Living within the wildlife
- Not a retirement area

## **2. HIGH POINT:**

***During your entire time in the community, I am sure you have had some ups and downs, some peaks and valleys, some highs and lows. I would like you to reflect for a moment on a high-point experience, a time when you felt most proud of living in Fountain Hills. Tell the story. What happened? What was going on?***

### **INCORPORATION:**

- Incorporation made us far better off on our own than part of Scottsdale or the county.
- Incorporation gave ability to make our own decisions—responsible for our own destiny.
- **High point was when FH incorporated. It was a battle and when we were finally incorporated I had a sense of freedom. We could now control our own destiny rather than the developer. I felt more empowered in that moment of time.**

### **BUILDING COMMUNITY SERVICES:**

- Development of the Senior Center
- River of Time museum
- Support for the construction for the community center—provides a focal point for bringing the community together.
- **Community center fund raising was a success story because enough citizens had the vision and willingness to contribute.**

### **PRESERVATION:**

- The decision to preserve the mountains, even though it was a contentious one.
- The save the mountain efforts: Public support for the \$6MM bond to preserve the mountains and the sales tax increase so we could negotiate with MCO to purchase mountain property.
- The mountain preserve effort with a trailhead providing disabled accessibility.
- High point for me was getting involved in preservation at a time when many people were stepping up to curb growth, preserve our washes and mountain views. Focusing on preservation I believe was a signature moment for the town.
- **This was a great time for good people together and work together on a common interest. Citizens stepped up and made an important difference that will have a positive impact on this town for generations to come.**

### **STABILIZING THE TOWN GOVERNMENT:**

- Election of Mayor Nichols and new Council members
- Getting off of Moody's watch list
- Developing a 5 year financial plan
- Developing a debt policy
- Increasing our fund balance

### **BUILDING THE SCHOOL SYSTEM:**

- Community support of education, school bond elections, bonds for Middle school
- Our own school system.
- Recognition of community needs and approval for construction of the middle school
- Invention convention at Middle School. Lots of young people.

## **2. HIGH POINT continued:**

### **EVENTS:**

- The Great Fairs are always a high point for me. It's a time to be proud of what we have to offer to others inside and outside our community.
- Active small town: community/family events like "Nessie" and real eggs for the Easter egg hunt!
- Oktoberfest, White Castle Days, KMLE Country, 4<sup>th</sup> of July and Easter Eggstravaganza and the Auto Action are all gone.
- White Castle event in 1980. In 1985 ordered and sold 176,000 White Castles.

### **SERVING THE TOWN:**

- When I worked for the Town and had an opportunity to serve the public.
- Becoming an elected official was a real high point - opportunity to serve the public.
- Most recently being involved in the Pony Express event was a real high for me.
- Ongoing involvement and contribution to one of the volunteer committees.

### **MISCELLANEOUS:**

- I love to go to little league games and meet other families... connecting with my neighbors...these are high times for me in our town.
- My daughter graduating from High School. This was a time when we had a new High school for our children. My daughter was in the first graduating class for FH High School. This was a very proud time for me ... my high point.
- Participating in the Mayor's youth summit. Asked to be a facilitator. Being part of a community that actually cares what kids have to say and acts upon it, not just lip service.
- In the 70's during the gas crunch and development came to a screeching halt, everyone here pulled together and supported one another—old-fashioned hometown attitude.
- Assured water supply.
- Lots of wildlife in our yard. My kids experienced newborn javalina, rabbits, quail, coyotes, Gila monsters and tarantulas.
- How people came together in our town after 911- the sharing and caring.
- We are more inclusive than exclusive
- When MCO ran the water company.
- Boys and Girls Club.
- Art collection and public art.
- Fountain Park. Golden Eagle Park
- Bringing in Fire Rock and Copperwynd.
- Quality of the various developments within FH
- WHEN FH STUGO (student government) hosted the Arizona State High School convention; we had 1500 students and guest speakers and it all went off without a hitch. Many people have good memories of FH as a result (the Mayor made sure the Fountain was operating at its highest level). The 3 days was a great success with speakers like J.D. Hayworth and the Cardinals Cheerleaders and the D'Backs Bobcat.
- Better relations with Indian community.
- The start of the influx of more ambitious, well-placed people who were looking for more than "being far out".
- **I believe that right now is the high point; I see so many good things going on and so much progress being made that it's really encouraging.**

### **3. COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE**

**Like most companies, a community can consistently outperform other communities only if it can establish a strategic competitive advantage – a unique value proposition that it has that other communities do not.**

**As you look at our community from the perspective of our strengths, and as you think about opportunities, how do you define Fountain Hills' "strategic competitive advantage"? Define it: What is the strategic competitive advantage you want and believe we have the capability to create? Right now? In the moderate timeframe? Longer term?**

#### **LOCATION, SMALL TOWN AMBIANCE BEAUTIFUL ENVIRONMENT, BIG CITY AMENITIES CLOSE BY:**

- Advantage is definitely the small town atmosphere in a big urban area, leaving the hustle and bustle of the city on the other side of the hill.
- Small town character – and topography - scenery and location.
- Views: unmatched beauty. Fountain and lake. Best 360 views in the valley.
- Our relative lack of development is likely a strength
- There is wildlife all around us and we are surrounded by nature.
- "Location, location, location..." The mountains, being landlocked and less congested.
- There is nowhere left in the east valley with views & available land like this.
- FH is a terrific base of operations for residents and tourists—we can easily take advantage of all the valley has to offer, then return to our beautiful town. 35 minutes to the airport!
- We are a *community*. That makes us different from other towns.
- A mountain community, attracting good housing where housing values are maintained.
- FH has "better hills" than other outlying cities like Cave Creek and Carefree.
- Like cultural events I see developing: concerts in the park as well as the farmers market.
- FH offers resort type living with proximity to casino, etc.
- FH is a well-balanced community with a mix of business, cultural and social activities. The mixture of housing is a benefit, attracting a diverse group.
- An identifiable downtown area, just not up to full potential yet.
- Compact community. Zoning protects small town feel.
- FH is stunningly beautiful: you can tell that people value protecting the Sonoran Desert.
- Being landlocked is a great advantage for FH, avoiding the urban sprawl and congestion that plagues much of the Valley.
- **The natural aesthetic beauty of FH is a great advantage; and that this beauty when combined with events such as the great fairs, can be a great draw for people.**

#### **FAIRS & EVENTS: PARTLY UNTAPPED COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE □**

- **Now on a scale of 1-10, I rate our competitive advantage as less than 5. I believe we have a great potential with our fairs and events, but need to hold more events to give people a reason to come here. We can trace business growth directly back to these events. I believe the planned Ave of the Fountains can be a great draw, similar to the Kierland complex in Scottsdale, but we seem to be doing it on a shoestring!**

#### **SPIRIT OF VOLUNTEERISM:**

- The level of community volunteerism is a competitive advantage.
- FH built on volunteerism—people want to participate.
- Spirit of volunteerism and helping others
- Our Town has a great sense of volunteerism...volunteers who take pride in volunteering. It holds our community together, makes progress without politics.
- Strategic planning can benefit by this!

### **3. COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE continued:**

#### **COLLABORATION WITH ADJOINING COMMUNITIES:**

- One of Fountain Hills' strategic competitive advantages is its ability to network with its neighbors and its adaptability to change.
- Example; while some may have viewed Ft. McDowell's opposition to the Orme dam as detrimental to forward progress, the Town of Fountain Hills has continued to be a source of support for the Nation's internal initiatives and sees the value added that the Nation can bring to the entire Fountain Hills community.
- The Town has adapted to the resulting change in economy and has worked with the Nation to develop the community to the benefit of both communities.
- Our relationship with Fort McDowell and the Yavapai Nation can provide tremendous opportunities. The schools are very competitive and people are looking at us compared to the larger districts in Scottsdale and other areas.

#### **NIMBLE TOWN GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE:**

- FH is politically able to act faster than a larger city because it is less bureaucratic.
- Citizens are more apt to get involved and respond to an issue in a small town—indifference not as great.
- Gov't of this size should have an advantage and be able to inform/involve the public.

#### **COMMENTS ON BEING "COMPETITIVE":**

- Never stop thinking competitively with Greater Phoenix.
- The Valley, in turn, must compete more effectively with San Diego, Seattle, Denver and Portland, all of whom have a far more developed urban economy.
- Some look down on Los Angeles but they have huge economic advantages (like corporate headquarters) that the Valley lacks.
- To compete, every town of any significance needs a vibrant downtown or urban core in addition to low-density desert lifestyle.
- We really don't need to compete- just to measure up. Need to focus on our original ideas.
- Don't need to compete; just be guardians of what is here "naturally".
- **How can we market our Town's unique advantages more effectively?**

#### **MISCELLANEOUS:**

- Size and quality of schools. Good schools, one district.
- There is an advantage with small sedate accommodations like the Southwest Inn; I think that more facilities like this will attract a population who want a quiet, sedate hotel and want to go horse riding or play golf close by.
- Infrastructure is vital to maintain.
- Good use of water. (highly filtered effluent for fountain, fountain lake, golf courses, etc)
- The friendliness of the people, especially to me as part of a minority group.
- Attractive appearance of the community is a decided competitive advantage over tract-based look-alike communities. This comes from custom housing and the standards which FH maintains

#### **4. OBSTACLES AND CHALLENGES:**

**What about obstacles or challenges, FH may face in achieving a “strategic advantage”?**

##### **SECURE THE TOWN'S FUTURE REVENUE STREAM:**

- Revenue stream is major challenge; after buildout we lose 22% of our income.
- Financing future projects will be a real problem esp. if we don't annex the state land.
- Build a tax base. FH is landlocked and hasn't established a business base.
- We are less able to financially support the amenities that people say they want. Not having a property tax is the main challenge. The public has to be educated and the Town Council seems unwilling to take on the issue.
- A property tax should fund everything the town does and the sales tax should be lowered. Sales tax depresses business.
- **The town needs a property tax to fund the essentials (fire) as well as amenities (aquatic center, performing arts center) that people say they want.**

##### **ACCELERATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:**

- We need the capability to create opportunity for economic development while preserving our current quality of life and our small town atmosphere.
- We need to really build on tourism.
- Not much to sell in the way of tourism . .no downtown! We have enough stores already!
- Downtown area should be completed to bring in tourists—maybe with an artsy focus.
- There is a risk involved in not completing the Avenue of the Fountain improvement plan. Is there an overall design for the finished product?
- We seem to be on the right track with development taking place now.
- Long term: create/provide wide range of services so people would shop here.
- There is little money in retail shopping centers because there is too much competition in Scottsdale. It is highly doubtful that a movie theater will survive either.
- There is no economic development focus point or vision to incubate appropriate types of business and there is not a driving force or leadership pushing it forward.
- FH needs to work with neighboring communities, e.g., Ft McDowell, Rio Verde.
- Encourage right mix of businesses . . too many marginals or unsuited types
- We need to work harder to keep people in town for a while who visit our town... by offering more amenities in the downtown area.
- Vision: more cohesive business community. need more of the right kind of retail in the mix.
- **Need close collaboration with Ft. McDowell on marketing the area.**
- **Short term: create right now: improvements to the Ave. of the Fountain resulting in a vibrant downtown...with same small town friendly feeling.**

##### **MONITOR DETERIORATING CONDITIONS WITHIN THE VALLEY:**

- Because of problems with congestion, pollution, education, immigration, wage base and water, some fear that the Valley could be in a potential meltdown.
- Water is the backbone. CCWC (water co) merits monitoring.
- Either it addresses its ills and becomes a competitive knowledge-based economy or the valley continues to slide.
- Presently, too much power in the valley rests with the real estate/industrial complex; consequently the policy makers have relatively little influence.
- **FH needs to realize that it is neither isolated nor insulated from the effects of these issues and needs to be fully engaged with their state legislators and congressional delegations for guidance and support in addressing them.**

#### **4. OBSTACLES AND CHALLENGES continued:**

##### **COMPETE WITHIN THE VALLEY AND MARKET FH MORE EFFECTIVELY:**

- I believe that we can continue to compete effectively with Scottsdale. We are already seeing a lot of people coming into to Town to shop from 124<sup>th</sup> St. and up. Given the increasing infrastructure in FH this trend should continue.
- I think it will be hard to compete with Scottsdale because it's not a valid comparison; people don't come here for all the activities available elsewhere in the Valley- they come here for the quiet and the beauty.
- I am concerned about the leakage of people out of Town each day; if you stand on the intersection of Shea and Palisades at 6 in the morning and at 6 in the evening and count the cars, it's an indication of a missed opportunity.
- As Scottsdale traffic gets worse, our Town is looking better all the time!
- Development along the Fort McDowell corridor could take away from the Town.
- I am more concerned about our competing situation with The Fort. They (reportedly) have big plans, Wal-Mart, movie theater, resorts that will draw people away from FH.
- **The Town really doesn't do an effective job of marketing itself within the valley and remains a well-kept secret. Events are the key.**

##### **IMPROVE FH'S APPEAL TO YOUNGER PEOPLE:**

- Getting younger people involved in town issues and politics is a challenge.
- Older people should serve as mentors.
- There's a severe lack of programs and activities for young people.
- We have to continue to attract younger people to come and live here.
- I don't think that affordable housing is the answer.
- **I'm concerned that FH is becoming too expensive for working families with children- we have seen the High School numbers drop for 2 reasons- one for the expensive housing and secondly because people are choosing to send their kids to Scottsdale- we must reverse this trend and attract younger people to come and live here and have their kids go to school here.**

##### **BOLSTER SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE:**

- I am also concerned that we continue to keep our services, infrastructure up to date and avoid obsolescence; there's nothing worse than run down buildings and facilities to turn people off a town.
- The Town needs to spend more money on maintaining its roads; they are in poor shape compared to its neighboring communities.
- As FH ages the older structures become more of a concern.
- FH need to plan ahead better. There is a current need for 1-2 additional firehouses in town and they should have been planned for.

##### **ADDRESS STATE TRUST LAND:**

- We need to build on our strengths by retaining open space, protecting nature and promoting our uniqueness in these areas.
- If it is still at all possible, we should preserve the State Trust land—or at least find a way to control the development so there is open space.
- Work with the State now and with the developer as soon as one is identified.
- Seek 1-acre lots, especially for mountainside sites . . . folks willing to pay premiums.
- **Annexation will be a challenge—it won't happen until the developer requests that it happens, which significantly diminishes FH control over development.**

#### **4. OBSTACLES AND CHALLENGES continued:**

##### **SEEK ENHANCED FUTURE VISION AND CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT:**

- Small town mentality prevents thinking through different strategic approaches.
- FH residents seem unwilling to take responsibility. There is a great deal of apathy—as the population has increased the volunteerism has decreased.
- FH suffers from smallness. Too much short-term thinking by politicians.
- FH should position as a bedroom community with proximity to valley amenities.
- Personal interests/NIMBY attitude (vs. community interest) is what generates involvement.
- There still tends to be too much polarization with fighting about many issues.
- **Teamwork and compromise are in the best interest of the community. Isn't that what strategic planning is supposed to bring?**

##### **WORK FOR GREATER CONSISTENCY AND CONTINUITY OF LEADERSHIP:**

- Town government needs to be more open and honest with the citizens. While the council said there was not money available to invest in the state trust land (even for a small purchase), at the same time there was money to pay cash for a new Town Hall.
- Dysfunctional reputation of citizens vs. the town's administration is a big detriment.
- Since MCO stepped back, there has been a lack of "top down" leadership.
- MCO has been the community's driver and they're getting out with no one to fill the void.
- No focal point/vision from an economic or community vision standpoint.
- Fiscal responsibility: why such a big investment in a skate park for so few users?
- **There has been no consistent vision put forward about what the town wants to be . . . like an arts-oriented community, a retirement community or a tourist attraction.**

##### **ADDRESS CONGESTION AND EXPANSION:**

- Keep the Town population so it doesn't go beyond the 30,000 level. Cap the growth!
- Poor sight distances at intersections in developments.
- Poor land use decisions continue to degrade the natural hillsides and allows land uses and development that ruins the community view corridors. Fry's parking lot is the community's front door and has the best view.
- Who monitors and protects view corridors? Why is there no overall authority?
- Doing too many "valley things" like signage, street lights, traffic signals and commercial land uses other than in the downtown area.
- I believe we need to guard against over congestion and too much expansion.
- **Add another East-West thoroughfare into/out of FH. Homeland security issue too.**

##### **MISCELLANEOUS:**

- Must follow through with the citizen's strategic planning process
- Bulldoze downtown and start over!
- Develop Goldfield Ranch. Monitor their buildout.
- Annex property toward Rio Verde
- Need to focus on something- perhaps a community college.
- Need a plan to support our aging community & its people.
- Special interests vs. public good.
- Obstacles--- old people and old ideas
- Housing prices and changing demographics force out families and less wealthy retirees.
- **Water, sanitary, fire & police should have a strategy. Monitor the providers!**

**5. IMAGINING THE FUTURE + THREE WISHES: (combined because responses were duplicated) If everything imaginable were possible, if there were no constraints whatsoever, envision our ideal community. Describe things that are new, better, different. PLUS . . . If you had a magic wand and could change or develop anything you wanted about our community, what 3 things would you do to improve the community's quality of life and enhance our competitive advantage? Why did you identify those 3 things?**

**POLISH AND LEVERAGE THE TOWN'S TOURISM ADVANTAGES:**

- Create/maintain a modern small town "Mayberry" because that is what people like about FH... a friendly place with a small town atmosphere.
- Hold a well-planned series of events in Town to attract more people, short and long term.
- Mid/long term wish: to become a destination for tourists by establishing enhanced relationships with the Ft. McDowell community to market the area as an entity.
- I don't see going after tourism as a good strategy. People come into town, look at the fountain and after 10 minutes it is all over.
- Clean up the lake for use as a recreational amenity. Enlarge and connect to downtown.
- I'd like to see FH become more recreation-oriented by promoting events and activities.
- Spend the extra \$\$, make the fountain the highest in the world vs. #2. It's our calling card.
- Get the community activities back. Build a band shell at the park like El Pedregal.
- Capitalize on the great fairs by building on our arts focus.
- FH should develop its reputation for culture and the arts.
- I would like to see a self-contained community that encouraged visitors with more performing arts events and activities and good restaurants.
- FH could still be the "artist in residence" center of the Southwest, establish artists with studios, support young artists with annual grants and a place to live like studio apartment.
- Look at a community like Santa Cruz CA, with arts/crafts, health/fitness themes.
- FH Park should be a high quality asset, e.g., rest rooms in Fountain Park
- Vision: make Fountain Park world class-year round. Extend fountain time.
- **Have a game plan to bring this all together. Do a better job of marketing our town and figure out who is responsible for carrying the ball, the Town or the Chamber or both?**

**SOLIDIFY THE TOWN'S FINANCIAL STABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITY:**

- Strong reliance on community organizations and volunteerism to maintain small town atmosphere and reduce cost.
- Vision: to keep FH on a sound financial base, operations will be lean, esp. at build out.
- Vision: Town government will know residents' priorities and spend wisely.
- Look at FH's development fees . . . way below the Valley's average.
- Vision: there are revenue sources sufficient to support the strategic plan.
- Need to look at revenue mix because we are too dependent on sales tax and our sales tax is too high. It stifles business.
- We need a property tax for funding progress and reducing the sales tax.
- Have Town council leadership willing to support a property tax.
- FH should be financially responsible. Property tax is important.
- **Approve property tax and reduce sales tax.**
- You are not going to stop "development", so keep the fees high!
- LOOK TO THE FUTURE . . . be fiscally responsible, fix the infrastructure, revisit the 5-year financial plan to be sure it is in synch with the strategic plan.
- **Identify the amenities that people want and educate the public so they realize that property tax is the best and fairest way of funding.**

## 5. IMAGINING THE FUTURE + THREE WISHES continued:

### **DEVELOP/PROMOTE A BALANCED DOWNTOWN COMPLEX OF RETAIL, SERVICES AND EVENTS:**

- Accept that FH is a small town with easy reach of all the amenities that other larger communities in the valley offer; we don't need/can't support a full scale retail offering.
- I see the day when we can walk around a fully developed downtown (Ave. of Fountains) where there would be paths and benches where people would meet to socialize . . with restaurants, shops, arts, entertainment...filled with pedestrian traffic (residents and tourists)
- Shoppers spill over into the park for an event... spend the day or check into the hotel.
- A destination where we have monthly sponsored events/festivals.
- Recreation in town is more important than shopping, so the downtown is pedestrian friendly to include things like misters for summer time.
- Aggressively attract and support small business.
- Vision: our downtown brings people together vs. present fragmentation.
- Town owned parking facilities provide adequate space for retail & events.
- Enhanced Ave. of Fountains to bring in more business and sales tax \$\$
- Encourage the "right" mix of businesses: lots of marginal retail at present. □
- Provide cute trolley type transportation from resorts/hotels to FH.
- Encourage theme restaurants, and non-retail businesses that make sense.
- New business and existing business combine to bolster tax base.
- Vision: Our core has become "our small town – down town"
- Vision: The core of downtown goes from Safeway down Palisades around the Fountain Park and back up El Lago to Fountain Hill Blvd.
- Redevelop Saguario Blvd. Business area to make it more attractive.
- Special events feed retail activity . .but not big congested events.
- **The Town needs to focus on 2 or 3 economic visions, identifying the leadership to push these visions forward. Might need to develop a program like "Main Street". My 2-3 visions might be: recreation oriented community, specialty retail and quality schools.**

### **NEGOTIATE ANNEXATION OF STATE TRUST LAND:**

- DON'T GROW! Don't develop State Trust land! Watch the density!
- Vision: the Trust land will become available for seamless development, which fits the character and culture of our town. This will include large lots, parks, a mix of high and low density housing and open space with walking trails and at least 25 acres for a park.
- Vision: homes on the Trust land . . upscale and varied design vs. cookie cutter.
- Preserve State Trust Land or at least make a concerted effort to retain as much open space as possible, controlling careful development with goals beyond \$/profit.
- Plan for more open space that connects. Retain vistas. Create shady areas.
- Acquire a portion of state land to influence open space.
- **Vision; we will maintain our quality of life while integrating the state trust land into Fountain Hills via annexation.**

### **REVISIT COMMERCIAL ZONING:**

- The Town needs a better mix of residential and commercial areas.
- Fill up the open spaces in Town- many of them are commercial zoned.
- Use the MCO/Town complex for a school or other useful purpose.
- Short to mid term: enhance our current strategic advantage by finishing our infill.
- **The original concept for the Town was for 75,000 people and the Commercial zoning may have been appropriate for that. Now that it's a lot smaller maybe we should re-zone some commercial to residential.**

**5. IMAGINING THE FUTURE + THREE WISHES continued:**

**EXPAND AMENITIES WITH INTER GENERATIONAL APPEAL:**

- Vision: we will have determined and prioritized amenities for citizens (e.g., swimming pool, performing arts center, senior services center)
- Vision: I would like a Cultural Center established with its own building and set of events. This should attract all ages of people with different events.
- Build a performing arts center (greatest number of mentions)
- I see a community recreation center—with amenities like an aquatic center, racquetball, and volleyball—bringing people of all ages together.
- More recreational/social amenities for kids such as a pool, water park, skate park, sports activities
- Vision; developing facilities for both young/old folks like a movie theater.
- Recreation center with pool. (Many mentions for pool or aquatic center, some would combine it with the high school to max the appeal to youth)
- Vision; Consistent stress on quality, renewing the infrastructure. Maintain current stature by remaining selective in our choices of things to do and amenities to bring to the Town.
- Adopt the Parks and Rec master plan; reverse the wash decision.
- Multi use path system throughout fountain hills to promote walking from place to place in and around town. To become a pedestrian friendly community...to promote interaction and more socialization.
- Parks: Improve/add parks...trails and municipal pool for citizen use.
- I'd like to see the Town make more use of its natural amenities. One idea I had is to use (for example) Ashbrook Wash and make a nature trail out of it. We could use recycled water from the treatment plant as a water feature and put wood chips down to make a trail for people enjoy.
- Vision: our dog park is among best in the nation.
- I'd like to see more land set aside for Park areas for people to enjoy the natural beauty.

**WORK TOWARD A MORE DIVERSE DEMOGRAPHIC BASE:**

- We would be more ethnically diverse, with a low crime rate.
- I see "Norman Rockwell" as my vision for Fountain Hills.
- Vision: a healthy community with more cultural events+a growing younger population.
- We have a challenge in keeping a diverse community. If we can keep families and young people here it will be one of the best communities anywhere.
- At the Mayor's youth event, 90 percent of the kids expressed a desire to live here when they grew up. This is unprecedented as far as I know.
- Vision: we have affordable housing for families with children; now cost of living in FH means fewer young families. People who work here can't afford to live here.
- Neighbors young & old are aware, involved and interacting.
- The kids need more to do and I think the movie theater is a good idea.
- Vision: FH is held up as a model town that has achieved a fine balance of the various groups . . . business, retirees and young people.
- Work to enhance schools: there is room for improvement.
- Evaluate and upgrade the school system
- Get younger residents interested and active in the town.
- Working through kids to get younger parents involved.
- Emphasize the need to attract younger people to come and live here.
- Continue to sponsor events that are family oriented like "Party in the Park".
- Provide an active role for teenagers and kids in the community. Remain family-oriented.

## **5. IMAGINING THE FUTURE + THREE WISHES: continued**

### **INCREASE COLLABORATION WITH NEIGHBORS & OTHER SOURCES OF POWER:**

- Focus on working in concert . . . engaging with other sources of power, knowledge and influence like state legislature, neighboring communities, other Valley municipalities and communities in US with similar niches.
- Fountain Hills might invite outside parties such as Fort McDowell membership to participate on key planning boards.
- While there are a variety of outcomes relative to planning, participation would give the Nation access to the process to influence decision-making. As an example, the Nation solicits membership on community boards and jury panels from its employees and community members even if they are not tribal members. This gives participants a stake in the process and it brings legitimacy to government decision-making.
- Continue to develop our excellent relationship with The Fort, seeking areas of retail development that won't damage FH businesses.
- Consider how to involve those communities in the Town decision-making process. *(Fountain Hills was developed on traditional Yavapai lands)*
- Consider mutually beneficial political advocacy at the state legislature, supporting each other's issues and candidates for office.
- A more collaborative work relationship would greatly enhance the infusion of state financing to our community projects.
- Some believe that the benefits of collaboration for our communities are untapped and yet "positively unimaginable".
- Understand that by engaging with the valley and state, FH can leverage its influence because it is an upscale and relatively affluent community.
- Develop mutual & respectful relationship with Yavapai Nation to better both communities
- Tune into what's happening in the Valley to consider how it impacts FH.
- Work on developing a Best Practices cafeteria list from towns around the US (like Santa Cruz, CA) with similar niches, issues and values.
- **The Valley's problems can bleed back to FH, acting as a drag on future property values. Examples: the Valley has a population with low incomes and relatively few college graduates and 400,000 foreign born immigrants who must be educated and developed, It is also plagued by growing congestion, pollution and long term water issues. Don't believe the vested interests that downplay the impact of these factors.**

### **ACHIEVE A MORE INCLUSIVE APPROACH TO TOWN GOVERNMENT:**

- Vision: Town governance will take on an approach where people are empowered and everyone has an opportunity to provide input and feel a sense of ownership in our town. Clearly this does not interfere with the government decision-making, but it gives stakeholders an opportunity to influence the process and to take ownership of the outcome. Participants also see the government process in action and gain a better understanding of the issues that are addressed.
- Increase communication (Town Halls/Website/Newsletter?) to get more people involved.

**5. IMAGINING THE FUTURE + THREE WISHES continued:**

**PUT STRATEGIC PLANNING TO WORK:**

- Find consensus about what FH wants to be, and then make it happen!
- **Vision: strategic process/implementation in place with future Councils and staff.**
- Identify long-range problems. Water, sanitary, fire & police should have a strategy.
- Have a plan to deal with obsolescence- lest things begin to look run down.
- The Town needs to focus on 2-3 economic visions (e.g. recreation-oriented community, specialty retail and quality schools) for the community and identify the leadership to push these visions forward. Might need to develop a program like Main Street or identify a person to spearhead efforts.
- **We must complete the strategic planning process and put in place a Strategic Planning Advisory Commission (SPAC) to keep things moving forward.**

**MISCELLANEOUS:**

- Need a plan to support our aging community & its people.
- Our own Police & Fire. Our own recycling.
- Better medical facilities.
- More community involvement by the new people moving in.
- Vision: our infrastructure (roads, parks, retail facilities) are constantly refreshed and updated to keep them modern. Includes underground power lines.
- Look at neo traditional elements like streetscapes and school bus stops/shelters, traffic calming within neighborhoods.
- Vision: clean up Ashbrook wash and develop it into a pilot project demonstrating co-existence of wildlife, water recharge and recreational paths linking neighborhoods, schools, parks and the community.
- Vision: a community-oriented approach to police coverage where law enforcement is more connected to the town "Beat cops" police on bikes.
- Recognize our Town's unique hiking potential. Reactivate the Parks and Rec master plan for walking trails in the washes. This would keep kids off the street. Would necessitate reversing the wash initiative.
- Make FH Blvd. more of a showcase as people drive into town; now looks deserted.
- Do more to maintain the openness of the community; the additions in Fountain Park are "closing it in"- we need more natural features that people can enjoy.
- Don't go for the "affordable housing" because that just downgrades our town. We already have an abundance of apartments and condos.
- **Why not position FH as an upscale arts-oriented community, increase development fees and take full marketing advantage of our uniquely beautiful mountain community?**