



## 10 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE FOUNTAIN HILLS AzTAP “Implementing the Downtown Plan – September 1, 2010”

- 1) RETAIL/DETAIL** It is essential to complete your market study to determine the scale/scope of existing businesses - not just future market capacity. This will require a more direct investigation of locations, types, sq. ft., and vitality. Map precisely the location of currently operating businesses by business area: Downtown, Saguaro, Shea East, and Shea West.
- 2) ACTIVATE THE WATER** The water and fountain are a visual spectacle. They could become even more so if activated by users. Continue to study the potential to generate recreation options on the lake including paddleboats, group events, and maybe even swimming in confined areas.
- 3) SHAPE THE “WHAT”** Develop a focused programming strategy that serves to identify Fountain Hills in a unique manner and leverages its existing and potential assets. Town stakeholders should clarify what tourism and entertainment could mean for Fountain Hills. A marketing/programming consultant would be useful in this effort including a SWOT analysis.
- 4) FROM “WHAT” TO BRAND** Branding can also be developed with the marketing/programming consultant. The panel strongly recommended turning the perceived distance issue into an asset i.e. Fountain Hills is a getaway; a local staycation closer than Sedona or Tucson. Embrace “green/eco” issues and your current strengths such as the visual arts and cycling. Actively seek businesses to locate in Downtown in support of these motivators.
- 5) TOOLBOX** The Town should demonstrate a commitment to development by providing tools to attract and assist developers in the Downtown area. PUDs and ease/timing to move through the regulation process was discussed. Create a one-sheet that spells out how to navigate the Downtown development process with the Town. Have a document that goes into detail about expectations and describes what you want to see happening in Downtown.





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- 6) STARTING POINT** Decide where to focus your efforts for maximum impact. As it is not possible to revitalize the entire Downtown area, insist on a first-rate model project to set the tone for future development. The panel recommended the intersection of Avenue of the Fountains and Saguaro as the obvious point of departure. Retail should start at the prescribed intersection but will, at best, only fill one block on both sides of the street. There should be a requirement to have retail front Avenue of the Fountains even though retail should and will not be the primary use. Current retail off the Avenue of the Fountains should be reused for other uses including being reserved as a possible public parking deck. High density residential and hospitality should be encouraged as a horizontal mixed use.
- 7) CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION** Create an advisory panel with developers to discuss what can be developed in more certain terms. Use this team to identify a list of developers able to plan, build, and secure financing for projects. This advisory panel could assist with alignment of municipal, private landowner, and business interests. Create a campaign to attract developers to Fountain Hills then meet the people your advisory panel recommends you approach.
- 8) AUTHENTICITY** One-of-a-kind food and beverage will drive the retail mix, at least initially. This type of use will require creativity and partnerships so that rents can remain low to create incubator space for entrepreneurs, and then allows a transition to a critical mass of retail and project development as soon as the market allows. Retail and food/beverage outlets that exude a sense of authenticity as evidenced by heavy local patronage will in turn require more local patrons. Thus the panel strongly recommends the inclusion of more housing in the Downtown core to develop a true and active “neighborhood.” This, in turn, may increase the expected total population of Fountain Hills at build out providing more successful business, more tax revenues, and a distinguished Downtown.
- 9) EDUCATION AS DRIVER** Based on the program focus for the Downtown districts, explore possibilities of an education partner for the Downtown area. Explore the needs of the community for educational opportunities that connote continual advancement. Options include general education, related medical topics, business entrepreneurship, all aspects of the arts, casino skills (dealer/bar/hospitality), and community development.
- 10) THE TIME IS NOW** While we are in an acknowledged economic down turn that will likely impact the region in a significant manner for the next five years, this is an opportunity to plan in a deliberate manner. Take the time. But don’t be limited in your thinking about the most obvious and/or conventional routes to the future. Be bold!