

Master Plan and Strategic Framework Plan for
D o w n t o w n F o u n t a i n H i l l s



Chamber of Commerce - Town of Fountain Hills

August 2009



**D o w n t o w n
F O U N T A I N H I L L S**

Master Plan

VISIONING EXERCISE



Swack Partners, pllc
Architecture, Planning & Interiors



Status Quo - Minimum Impact

Scale: 1"=100'



Main Street - Moderate Impact

Scale: 1"=100'



Cross Roads - Major Impact

Scale: 1"=100'

Avenue District: The Avenue District is envisioned as the core of Downtown with a wonderful and comfortable atmosphere for strolling, site seeing and shopping. This corridor is envisioned to evolve into Fountain Hill's premiere shopping destination for residents and a must-see magnet for visitors. A cast of unique eating experiences that reinforce the one-of-a-kind nature of Fountain Hills is intended to compliment the range of specialty shops and boutique stores. These restaurants will be of a quality that not only cater to local residents but also attracts the attention of visitors and guests. This District has been designed to accommodate a degree of other uses including second story office space, condominiums, small-scale businesses along with limited neighborhood services. If designed appropriately, a small percentage of brownstone style housing could be integrated on the Avenue. Traffic calming measures, such as cross walks, flared end sections, additional on-street parking and narrower travel lanes are planned to provide easy and safe access to all areas of the downtown for both vehicles and pedestrians.

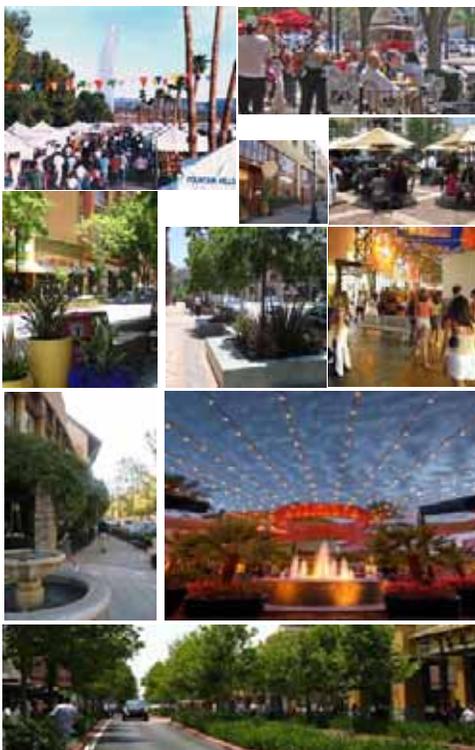
Special attention should be given to creating sidewalks with an abundance of shade. Sidewalk design should allow for generous space for seating as well as store front "presentations". Outdoor, sidewalk cafes and dining will be highly encouraged.

On-street parking needs to be convenient and balanced with the real focus being placed on pedestrian activity. Access to parking lots should be efficient for patrons. Pedestrian portals to "interior" parking lots will be enhanced with appropriate architecture and design treatments that are both attractive and safe.

Special attention should also be given to the architectural massing and specific treatment along all intersections. Appropriately designed street scenes at intersections will bring building mass and use closest to the street corners, placing parking behind the building frontage.

The Avenue District character and quality should be expanded to include both sides of Verde River Drive northeast of Avenue of the Fountains. This linkage and treatment may be anchored by a specialty entertainment and retail component if future economic conditions warrant greater density and intensity in the area. This entertainment component may take the form of a traditional multi-screen movie theatre, a specialty small-scale movie house, a performance venue or some other theatre use. These uses would likely require a parking structure be thoughtfully integrated into the overall design.

The central green mall will be enhanced with a better integration of updated fountain features and amenities (art walk) as well as specialty small-scale retail uses that may take the form of enclosed kiosks. Such features, along with improved sidewalk-crossing environments will result in a seamless transition from one side of the Avenue to the other. This connectivity is a most important consideration from the Avenue to the Lakeside District.



The Lakeside District: The Lakeside District provides a dynamic vision for the transformation of a small portion of the Fountain Park into a unique amenity-oriented open space environment with a prominent performance venue and a range of potential uses including specialty retail shops, lakeside cafes and other appropriately sized businesses (parking will be thoughtfully integrated into the design of this district). The "garden terrace" amphitheater and "great lawn" envisioned for the venue will provide a beautiful setting that works well for both large and small groups. The vision also suggests a possible location for a future welcome center to greet visitors. The center's strategic location, close to the intersection of Saguro Boulevard and Avenue of the Fountains, will allow for easy accessibility to downtown maps and other information about Fountain Hills. The organization of the Lakeside District provides a framework for creating a key connection from the Avenue to the Park. Proposed improvements along Saguro Drive should consider on-street parking, improved and expanded sidewalks and a limited amount of street-front development to reinforce the pedestrian connectivity throughout the downtown.

The Lakeside District is conceived to offer an abundance of shade so that the area can be utilized year round. Building orientation and design, covered patios, shade structures and trees should all be carefully incorporated to provide comfort from the desert sun. The proposed "1000 Tree Program" for downtown should be incorporated in both the Lakeside District and the Park District. Other special features to consider in the future may include an "art park" component for sculpture, waterside dock for small boating access and other unique activities.



Park District: The majority of Fountain Park is anticipated to remain in its current form including the range of passive uses that already exist. In addition, more shade structures and tree planting (1000 Tree Program) should be incorporated to provide for relief from the harsh summer desert exposure. Additional future improvements to consider are; site lighting, signage, seating areas, park furnishings and the treatment of the lake.





South End District: The South End District is envisioned as a mixed-use downtown neighborhood with a predominance of residential living opportunities. These residential uses should be complimented by small-scale neighborhood oriented commercial, second story offices and other specialty shops and businesses. The vision plan calls for the South End District to be anchored by an iconic village square that will provide a civic presence for the downtown and a prominent park for neighboring residents.

Residential development is intended to incorporate an active street front with parking and garages strategically located to the rear of lots with access from alleys. The range of residential products may include single-family detached homes, town homes, brownstones, row homes and condominiums. The fabric of the neighborhood should be complimented with small streets, comfortable sidewalks, generous street trees for shade and on-street parking and pocket parks that provide strategic open space for adjacent development.



Business District: The Business District is envisioned as the center of commerce for Fountain Hills. The Business District is a place to promote entrepreneurship through a variety of commerce related opportunities. Business-oriented uses may range in size, shape and character from small-scale office suites to stand-alone office buildings. Service oriented commercial uses may also be a major component of the business district that can compliment the overall downtown. The Business District is also suitable for more traditional retail and service uses that may not be appropriate in the Avenue District. Specialty restaurants, stores and shops will be encouraged along the Avenue.



While generous shaded store front sidewalks will not be a mandate in this location; safe, attractive and functional pedestrian connections should be put in place in order to connect the Business District with all other parts of the downtown. It will be critical to provide clear and easily accessible parking for both on-street parking and off-street parking lots. Special attention should be given to the treatment of parking areas including attractive landscape buffers and covered parking where appropriate. Future consideration should also be given to the incorporation of a central parking structure that may serve both the Business District as well as other areas of downtown.



Creative opportunities for redevelopment of existing parcels should be considered with future mixed-use environments that may include live-work scenarios. Short-term initiatives should be considered for improving the visual character of vacant lots with landscape treatment.



West Side District: The west side district is envisioned as a true mixed-use environment that compliments the range of activities throughout the downtown. Residential in-fill as well as retail, business and service uses will be encouraged. Because of its location at the western "end" of the Avenue, a future possible consideration may be for an entertainment anchor.

Service District: The existing community/neighborhood-oriented service businesses found in the existing shopping center should be maintained as an important component serving downtown and the community. Better opportunities will be considered for providing safe and attractive pedestrian connectivity to the market. Special consideration needs to be given to appropriate buffering and access related to any future development opportunities at the adjacent West Side District.



Civic/ Cultural District: The existing character and quality of the Civic/ Cultural District should be enhanced with future infill development that expands overall quality of life opportunities for the residents of Fountain Hills. In addition, any opportunity to expand access and acclaim to the art circle and art collection in and around the District is highly recommended. The strategy for an art walk could be creatively connected with the Avenue District and the variety of planned design themes.





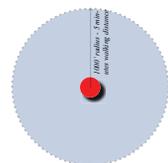
Districts

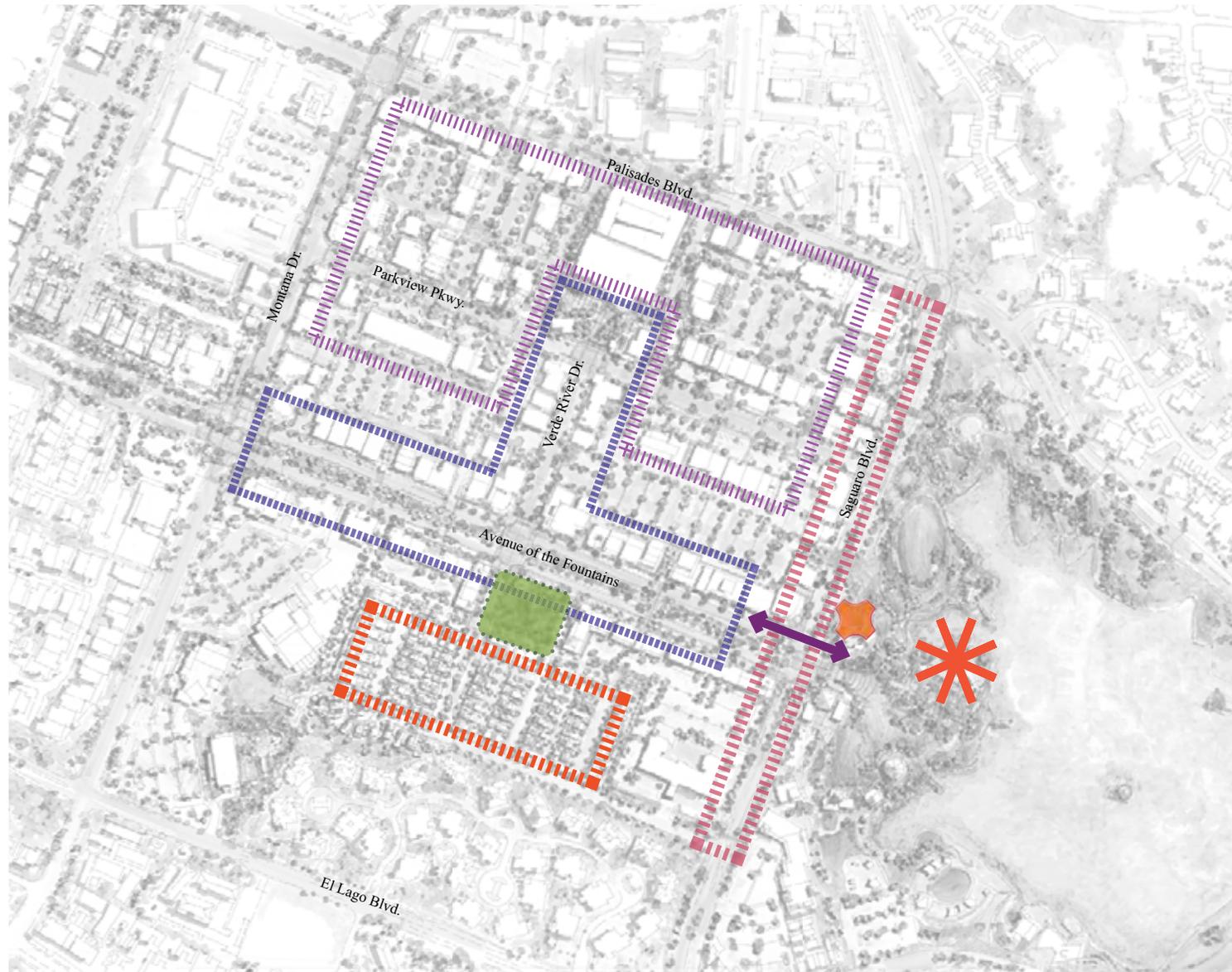
-  Business District
-  The Avenue District
-  South End District
-  Residential District
-  West Side District
-  Civic District
-  Service District
-  Lakeside District
-  Park District
-  Key Signage Nodes



Key Ingredients

- 1 Compact Development**
 - How can we right-size downtown.
 - Connection to civic center
- 2 Integrated Mixed-Use**
 - How can we find the right mix of uses
 - No more auto uses
 - Bring visitors in
- 3 Green Streets**
 - Widen sidewalks
 - More landscaping
 - Outdoor activities
 - Boulevards
 - Places to sit
 - Appropriate trees
- 4 Friendly sidewalks**
 - Meandering sidewalks
 - Shorter blocks
 - Misters/Shade
 - Intriguing side areas
 - Places to seat
 - More artwork
- 5 Brand Identity**
 - Subtle place-making
 - More fountains
 - Subtle views of water
 - More art work
 - Fountain Replicas
 - Don't pretend
- 6 Destination Program**
 - Strategic Implementation
 - Funding
 - Public/Private phasing





Key Catalysts

-  *Venue*
-  *Park Link*
-  *South End*
-  *Avenue of the Fountains*
-  *Business District Framework*
-  *Visitor Center*
-  *Town Square*
-  *1000 Trees*
-  *Saguaro*

Key Ingredients of Streets as Places:

1 The Avenue Corridor
Avenue of the Fountains & Verde River Dr.

- Wide sidewalks
- Mature vegetation
- Seating Areas
- Gardens
- Water Fountains
- Shade Structures
- Enhanced Signage and Lighting
- Special Paving
- On-Street Parking
- Colorful environment
- Signalized cross walks



2 The Park Lake Corridor
Saguaro Boulevard

- Narrow Boulevard
- Mature vegetation on Median
- Signalized Entrance to Businesses / Housing
- Adaptable Street for Festivals
- Streets Signal on intersection with Av. of the Fountains
- Green Environment
- Opening views to the Lake
- Traffic Calming
- Angled Parking along Boulevard
- Iconic Street
- Sidewalks and Bike paths
- Minimum Impact Lighting



3 The Business Corridor
Palisades Blvd, Parkview Pkwy & Montana Dr.

- Narrow Sidewalks
- Signalized Entrance to Retail / Office / Housing
- Parallel parking
- Native Plant material along sidewalks
- Shade Structures / Trellis
- Enhanced signage
- Access to public parking behind buildings
- Accent street furniture
- Mixed uses



4 The Residential Corridor
Verde River Dr. & Paul Nordin Pkwy

- Sidewalks
- Shared Parking / Private driveways
- Pocket Gardens
- Shade Structures and Seating areas
- Village Square
- Paving Accents at Crossings
- Calm lighting along streets
- Signalized Entrance to Retail and Neighborhood



Round-A-Bouts:

Consider future opportunities to incorporate Round-A-Bouts at less pedestrian intensive intersections.



While the Vision Framework Plan provides a snapshot in time of a single preferred scenario for development, it is important that flexibility remains within the context of any future initiatives. No one has a crystal ball with all the answers to future economic factors, conditions and direction; the Town needs to be able to react to possible alternations in the Vision direction that may impact the physical organization of downtown without negatively impacting the desired outcome. Two specific examples of areas that need to be carefully considered in the future relative to flexibility are the potential for a downtown theatre and a downtown parking structure.

Theatre

The Vision plan suggests one potential location for a theatre for the downtown. This suggestion would work very well with the overall design and planning direction for downtown. There are however, certainly other options and opportunities for the exact location of the theatre. The Flexibility Diagram identifies several other potential locations for the theatre in downtown. Any of these defined locations could have a positive impact on the downtown development.

Structured Parking

Based on future development in downtown, a parking structure would most likely be necessary at some point in the future. The vision plan identifies a proposed parking structure adjacent to the planned theatre complex. While this recommendation makes a great deal of sense, there are other potential locations for a parking structure as identified on the Flexibility Diagram. In most cases, a parking structure would most likely be associated with the theatre, but organized to allow use for all of downtown. The key for any preferred eventual location for a parking structure is to maximize its accessibility for all who come downtown.

-  Possible Location for Structured Parking
-  Possible Location for Theater



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Reference
 Existing Buildings

Park Venues and Festivals



Special Activities



Gardens and Sculpture



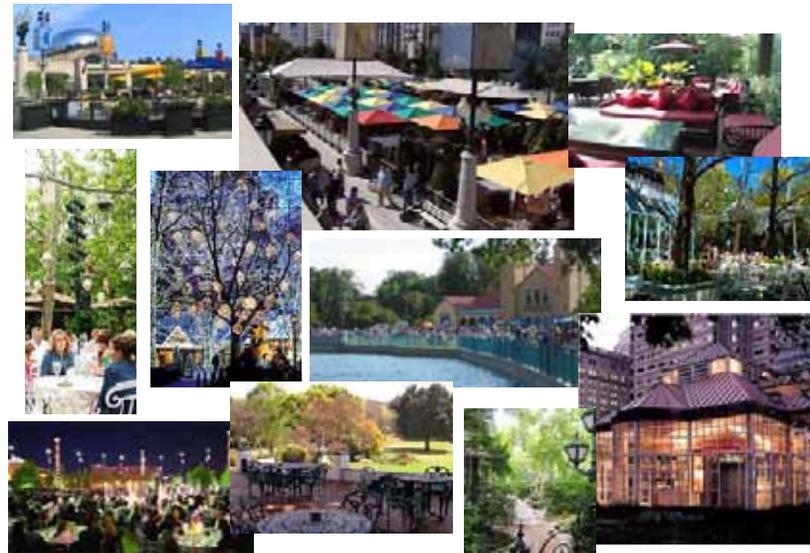
Water Features



Art in the Park



Restaurants in the Park



Visitor's Center



*Of all that has been suggested...***What three things have the most magnetism for attraction for citizens or visitors?**

- *StreetScape*
- *Improvements*
- *Shade*
- *Walking*
- *Avenue*
- *Movie Theatre*
- *Performing Art*
- *Lakeside District*
- *Lake Park Activities*
- *The Park Venue*
- *“Destination at Park”*
- *More Fountains*
- *Filling Vacant Space*
- *District Brand ID*
- *Public Art*
- *Youth Entertainment*
- *Educational Component*
- *Drive Youth Activities*
- *Pedestrian Environment*
- *Connectivity*
- *Unique Destination*
- *Extension of Retail*
- *Closing Saguario @ Main intersection*

What would be the most likely two things to happen and why?

- *Connectivity*
- *b/c ave property will increase*
- *Venue/Park Attractions*
- *b/c it is a catalyst*
- *b/c multi-purpose/wide appeal*
- *b/c funding sources*
- *Crossing/Pedestrian*
- Access*
- *Planting Trees*
- *Residential*
- *Public Art Collection*
- *Already Started*
- *Create Brand ID*
- *Development of South Side of Avenue*
- *Saguario Retail*
- *Inviting Streets*
- *Closing Saguario*
- *b/c enhances walkability*
- *Saguario needs to be redeveloped*
- *Control from Municipality*

What would be the least likely two things to happen and why?

- *Movie Theatre*
- *Demographics in question*
- *Commercial in Park*
- *Community Pool*
- *b/c everyone already has a pool*
- *Too expensive*
- *Residential*
- *b/c it's not the right time*
- *Political Challenge*
- *Parking Structure*
- *Too much commercial*

What two ideas could act as a catalyst for change?

- *Districts*
- *Anchor Store*
- *Park District/Venue*
- *Residential*
- *Key Developers*
- *Concept of Fountains*
- *Connectivity*
- *Final Vision*
- *Land Ownership*

What do you regard to be the most important that we have not asked?

- *Community Involvement*
- *Implementation*
- *Sell to Developers*
- *Sell Vision to people*
- *Why other plans fail*
- *What we like/dislike about plan*
- *Details about districts*
- *How to fund/make it happen?*

How can this process be best manifested into the future beyond the Swaback contract?

- *Sell plan to Developers*
- *Sell plan to people*
- *“Vision Champions”*
- *Implementation Process*
- to keep it alive*
- *Relationship to the strategic plan*
- *Speakers Bureau*
- *Visible makers of progress to vision*
- *Create design manual for downtown*





Existing Marked Parking (3,056 Marked Parking Stalls)



Parallel Parking (3,360 Marked Parallel Stalls +10% | Minor Road Improvements Req.)



Angled Parking (Up to 4,292 Angled Parking Stalls +40% | Major Road Improvements Req.)

Envisioning the Future of Downtown

A New Beginning

Existing

Opportunity

Visioning

Strategies

Downtown FOUNTAIN HILLS

THOMAS PARTNERS LLP

"A visioning quest has many milestones along the way, but it has no finish line. It is fully dependent on strong, caring individuals - but the only source that can make it happen is called 'we'. It is the community and power of its itself, recognizing its own clear goals, the very people, proposals and performance needed to create the new reality."

- Robert D. Swoback