



Town of Fountains Hills Strategic Plan 2022

FOREWORD BY MAYOR GINNY DICKEY

I am pleased to introduce the Town of Fountain Hills Strategic Plan 2022, a ten-year roadmap that your Town Council, administrative staff and partner organizations will use in fulfilling the goals and supporting tasks necessary to preserve our distinctive, vibrant community. The Strategic Plan will be integrated into the Town's daily operations and collaborations.

It is the culmination of ongoing activity over the past eighteen months and was led by seven community volunteers on the Strategic Planning Advisory Commission. In keeping with the keynote theme of collaboration the Commission reached out to local stakeholders, businesses, Town staff and residents during the Plan's development to solicit feedback and support.

Strategic Plan 2022 is designed to remain viable, flexible, and relevant during its life cycle. Its priorities are set to align with the core responsibilities of Town Government while acknowledging the importance of building partnerships in this evolving age of technological advancements.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Section</u>	<u>Page</u>
Foreword	1
Table of Contents	2
Executive Summary	3
Strategic Plan	6

Executive Summary

Overview

The motto for the town of Fountain Hills is “All that is Arizona”. This is certainly an appropriate portrayal of a community that combines stunning natural beauty with a safe, up-scale, and in many ways, idyllic setting. In Fountain Hills, neighbors share a commitment to community that makes small town life so appealing, without losing big city advantages. The Town’s Strategic Planning Advisory Commission, consisting of seven volunteer citizens, sought to fashion a ten-year strategic plan that is aligned with the community’s priorities and expectations of principled and steady progress without putting at risk the things that make Fountain Hills such a special place to live.

Strategic Plan Focus

The Strategic Plan focuses on enhancing Fountain Hill's appeal as a small town in the orbit of a large urban environment by honoring traditional values, environmental uniqueness, stability, sustainability, and flexibility in preparing for the future. This is evident in Fountain Hill's Key Organizational Goals which aim to: improve public areas including infrastructure and Town facilities; enhance public safety and the overall quality of life, promote economic development, and ensure the Town’s financial stability.

Guiding Principles

The principles that guided the Commission through the creation of this plan included the understanding that the various tasks had to be **manageable** or attainable by the Town over a 10-year horizon. The progress by the Town in achieving success had to be **measurable** over time and lastly this Strategic Plan needed to be **impactful** and not merely a rehash of projects that the Town is already working towards.

Planning Acknowledgements

The Commission took into account realities that exist when planning for a small town. First, Fountain Hills has **limited resources** and undergoes an annual **economic seasonality** that creates **revenue variability**. The Town is blessed with a **strong and talented volunteer base** along with its **unmatched natural beauty**. Lastly, since the Town is essentially surrounded by land that is limited in its development potential, there is **minimal expectations for residential growth**.

Community and Stakeholder Input

In approaching the task of writing a strategic plan the Commission first sought to understand and give voice to the Fountain Hills citizens, local leaders, and historical documents. The Commission did this by engaging local business, civic, education and government leaders for input, observations, and experiences. Next the Commission reviewed and assessed the ongoing impact of the Town’s 2015 strategic plan that was

subsequently updated in 2017. Most importantly, the commission collaborated with the non-profit volunteer group named 'Vision Fountain Hills', to survey over 900 Fountain Hills residents on their thoughts and views of important past, and current issues. The results of the survey showed that respondents primary community interests were:

- Business Development
- Technology Services
- Town's Condition
- The Environment
- Town Finances
- Safety

Keynote Themes used in the Plan's Development

When developing the 2022 Fountain Hills Strategic Plan the Commission held to three important themes throughout the process. First was the emphasis on **collaborative partnering**. Wherever possible tasks were constructed in a way to allow collaboration and/or partnering between the Town and interested stakeholders. Second was the absolute need for **transparency and ownership** so that readers of the plan have confidence in the process used in developing relevant strategies and their effective implementation. Third was their unwavering understanding that **stewardship of our local environment** was paramount and must be addressed specifically and consistently throughout the strategic plan.

Strategic Priorities

The four Strategic Priorities identified and expanded upon in this plan, represent the overriding areas of focus:

- ***Targeted Collaborative Economic Development***
- ***Promote the Long-Term Financial Sustainability of Town Infrastructure, Environmental and Social Resources***
- ***Continue to Improve the Public Health, Well-Being, and Safety of our Town***
- ***Maintain Current Infrastructure while Preparing the Town for Emerging Trends that Increase Public Safety and Quality of Life***

Strategic Plan Structure

Underneath the **four Strategic Priorities (SP)** there are **11 Signature Strategies (SS)** and under the Signature Strategies there are **23 Supporting Tasks (ST)**. Thus, the structure of this plan is built to flow from a Strategic Priority to a Signature Strategy to a specific Supporting Task. In this way we can show bi-directionally, both how a Strategic

Priority results in a set of Supporting Tasks and how a specific Supporting Task ties back to a larger Strategic Priority.

Each Supporting Task is further delineated with an expected **timeline** to implementation (in years), estimated **complexity** (scale of 1-5 with 5 being most complex), and an annotation of the potential for **collaboration** (y/n) between the Town of Fountain Hills and a stakeholder or interested party.

Moving Forward

The success of The Town of Fountain Hills Strategic Plan 2022 depends on an effective communications (internal and external) plan and monitoring process that supports its implementation. Thus, the Strategic Planning Advisory Commission has included a Communication and Monitoring Plan, (located in the appendices) that lays out avenues of communication between the Mayor, Town Council, Town Staff, and the Citizens of Fountain Hills concerning the implementation of this Plan.

Strategic Planning Advisory Commission of Fountain Hills

Commissioners:

Chair: John Craft **Vice Chair:** Patrick Garman
Chad Bernick, Gerard Bisceglia, Mary Edman
Bernie Hoenle, Cynthia Magazine

TOWN OF FOUNTAIN HILLS STRATEGIC PLAN 2022

Strategic Priority (SP):

Targeted Collaborative Economic Development

Preamble:

An essential element of a thriving community is its economy. Fountain Hills is a small, active community whose long-term sustainability requires an effective targeted economic development plan. Economic development has become a hotly debated topic and a much sought-after goal in towns across America. Industrial recruitment and reliance on outside funding are giving way to locally based finance and entrepreneurial activity. Fountain Hills needs to take advantage of its unique local resources and leadership to advance its own successful local economy in a way that continues to appeal to its residents and business community. Presently, the local chamber of commerce and the Town actively work to support new and existing business growth. The following strategies and their supporting tasks attempt to address the opportunity of establishing a more unified and focused business development effort. Our commission interviewed Town leadership, Chamber of Commerce, Fountain Hills Sanitary District and Fountain Hills Cultural and Civic Association. We noted a recurring theme that ‘strength-in-numbers’ was important when pursuing opportunities. Hence, this strategic priority focuses on the need for local, ongoing collaboration.

1. Signature Strategy (SS) – Retain existing businesses and attract new ones.

Rationale: Existing businesses are the foundation of any economic growth strategy. By building on what already exists, cities can support current businesses and create a strong foundation. Attracting new businesses is often most effective when the effort is tailored to the industries compatible with local economic, space, environmental, and demographic characteristics.

A) Supporting Task (ST) – Develop and promote an effective brand image to prospective businesses and residents.

Timeline: <3yrs

Complexity: 2

Collaboration potential: Yes

B) Supporting Task (ST) - Develop strategies for retaining existing businesses and attracting new ones from the following sectors: 1) Health and wellness, 2) Professional services, and 3) S.T.E.M.

Timeline: <2yrs

Complexity: 5

Collaboration potential: Yes

C) Supporting Task (ST) – Continue to maintain an economic development webpage and add a business metrics database. Rationale: The creation of an economic development webpage would function as a one stop shop to help new and existing business owners with business startup, or expansion. This webpage would include a step-by-step guide to starting, or expanding a business in Fountain Hills, links

to important contacts, forms, and resources from outside of the community; such as loan programs from the U.S. Small Business Administration or community development financial institutions or technical assistance from a regional small business development center such as the Maricopa Small Business Development Center as well as the BizHub incubator. A business metrics database would track the overall business health of the community and monitor the effectiveness of economic development initiatives.

Timeline: <2yrs

Complexity: 3

Collaboration potential: Yes

D) Supporting Task (ST) – Identify ways to streamline the building permitting process.

Timeline: <2yrs

Complexity: 5

Collaboration potential: Yes

2. Signature Strategy (SS) – Lead the formation of collaborative economic development groups. **Rationale:** The Commission believes that synergy can be achieved if like-minded groups collaborate to strengthen our economic progress. The groups can draw members from municipal governments, regional economic development organizations, nonprofit organizations seeking to help communities, and other stakeholders.

A) Supporting Task (ST) – Coordinate periodic meetings between the Town of Fountain Hills, Fountain Hills Chamber of Commerce, Ft. McDowell Yavapai Nation, Salt River Maricopa Pima Indian Community, to discuss the local expansion of business and tourism opportunities.

Timeline: <3yrs

Complexity: 3

Collaboration potential: Yes

B) Supporting Task (ST) – Form a business professional advisory group. **Rationale:** Ongoing collaboration between the public and private sectors is an important component of economic development. To encourage collaboration, form a business professional advisory group with volunteers from the public and private sectors to discuss how the town could better facilitate economic development. Volunteers from the community could include property owners, developers, school system representatives, and retired governmental or business executives with particular experience in health, professional, and technical services.

Timeline: <1yrs

Complexity: 2

Collaboration potential: Yes

Strategic Priority (SP):

***Promote the Long-Term Financial Sustainability of Town
infrastructure, Environmental and Social Resources***

Preamble:

The Commission recommends the following five guiding principles for fiduciary responsibility that should be embraced by the Town of Fountain Hills: 1) Live within your means 2) Employ cost recovery when setting fees for "individualized" services 3) Use reserves only for one-time expenditures or temporary stop-gap measures 4) Study contracting out services before attempting to do in-house. 5) Emphasize transparency.

1. Signature Strategy (SS) – Maintain transparency by communicating the Town's finances to the public. Rationale: Transparency leads to trust and trust leads to a community that is confident in providing resources to the Town government to solve short and long term public issues on their behalf.

A) Supporting Task (ST) - Hold public meetings twice a year, separate from council meetings, to present the Town's finances.

Timeline: <1yrs Complexity: 2 Collaboration potential: N/A

B) Supporting Task (ST) – Conduct a regularly occurring community survey in order to track satisfaction levels with Town services.

Timeline: <2yrs Complexity: 2 Collaboration potential: Yes

2. Signature Strategy (SS) – Promote the long-term financial health and stability of the Town. Rationale: The annual budget serves as the Town's financial plan. The budget is a policy document that provides direction and priorities for the resources needed to deliver community services.

A) Supporting Task (ST) - Produce and publish a five-year financial plan with revenue and expenditure forecasts.

Timeline: <2yrs Complexity: 3 Collaboration potential: N/A

B) Supporting Task (ST) – Update the current Facilities Reserve Study to identify lifecycle replacement and repair of facilities and infrastructure.

Timeline: <3yrs Complexity: 3 Collaboration potential: N/A

C) Supporting Task (ST) – Utilize the services of an experienced grant researcher and writer.

Timeline: <2yrs Complexity: 2 Collaboration potential: N/A

3. Signature Strategy (SS) – Periodically review Town services to identify opportunities for improving efficiency and effectiveness. **Rationale:** Balancing the Town's use of government provided services and contracted services promotes both stability and flexibility.

A) Supporting Task (ST) - Conduct a feasibility analysis of government services provided by the Town.

Timeline: <2yrs Complexity: 4 Collaboration potential: N/A

B) Supporting Task (ST) - Promote e-government and electronic transactions to improve customer convenience and operational efficiencies. Examples include kiosks and online services that improve organization, accommodation, payment options, accessibility, and security.

Timeline: <2yrs Complexity: 3 Collaboration potential: Yes

Strategic Priority (SP):

Continue to Improve the Public Health, Well-Being, and Safety of our Town

Preamble:

We focused on identifying Signature Strategies and Supportive Tasks that were most likely to help Fountain Hills leaders continue to improve the public health, well-being, and safety of our community. In doing so, we took into consideration: the Town's economic realities; community input from a variety of sources; the timeline covered by the new strategic plan; relevant trends and future projections; and the need for tasks that are manageable, attainable and measurable.

1. Signature Strategy (SS) - Promote the natural and built environment of Fountain Hills to improve the public health, well-being, and safety of the community. Rationale: While this strategy is broad in scope, it can be easily supported by a number of specific, high priority tasks that fit within the Town's current constraints regarding both human and financial resources.

A) Supporting Task (ST) – Continue to expand and connect open space and recreational facilities to create opportunities for physical activities.

Timeline: <3yrs Complexity: 3 Collaboration potential: Yes

B) Supporting Task (ST) - Work with local environmental organizations in strengthening our community's connection with its natural surroundings.

Timeline: <3yrs Complexity: 3 Collaboration potential: Yes

C) Supporting Task (ST) - Incorporate public health, well-being, and safety in Fountain Hills policies when relevant.

Timeline: <1yrs to review current policies, then ongoing for any policy changes or new policies. Complexity: 2 Collaboration potential: N/A

D) Supporting Task (ST) - Create and publicize an Environmental Plan for Fountain Hills.

Timeline: <1yrs Complexity: 4 Collaboration potential: Yes

2. Signature Strategy (SS) – Promote Fountain Hills as a community focused on public health, well-being, and safety. Rationale: While this strategy is broad in scope, it can be easily supported by specific, high priority tasks that fit within the Town's current constraints regarding both human and financial resources.

A) Supporting Task (ST) - Support the expansion of preventive health and wellness access within the Fountain Hills community.

Timeline: <1yrs to assess, then ongoing as opportunities are addressed.
Complexity: 2 Collaboration potential: Yes

Strategic Priority (SP):

Maintain Current Infrastructure while Preparing the Town for Emerging Trends that Increase Public Safety and Quality of Life

Preamble:

Fountain Hills infrastructure plays a vital role in the quality of life for our citizens. We must continue to maintain and prepare it for the future. Fountain Hills infrastructure must be capable of supporting our town's economy, while holding public safety and quality of life as priorities. There are generally many categories of infrastructure to consider, but focusing solely on Fountain Hills, we identified four that are of particular interest to our town's residents and elected leadership. This iteration of the Fountain Hills strategic plan will deal with **Broadband, Public Parks, Roads** infrastructure areas.

1. Signature Strategy (SS) – Develop an investment plan and schedule to maintain/bring FH's streets, medians, buildings, and parks to established standards.

Rationale: Infrastructure planning, funding, and execution information should be available, clearly articulated, and transparently handled by Fountain Hills public agencies.

A) Supporting Task (ST) - Develop a detailed Infrastructure Condition Report with a scoring mechanism for evaluating and reporting the functionality, appearance, and upkeep of the Town's fixed assets. The report will be reviewed by the Town Council, and available to Town Citizens.

Timeline: <3yrs Complexity: 5 Collaboration potential: N/A

2. Signature Strategy (SS) – Support local Broadband strategic buildouts and deployment efforts while ensuring the preservation of conduit and right of way for future technologies.

Rationale: Broadband, a generic term for high-speed internet access, enables students of all ages to learn online and businesses to reach customers and co-workers; facilitates electronic and verbal communications; provides access to healthcare and job openings; and can be the deciding factor of where a company chooses to expand.

A) Supporting Task (ST) – Make co-location of broadband a requirement with existing infrastructure planning as a condition of permit use or where public funding is provided. This includes above-ground infrastructure and the codification of "dig once" policies where service providers install broadband conduit as other infrastructure is installed.

Timeline: <2yrs Complexity: 3 Collaboration potential: N/A

3. Signature Strategy (SS) – Increase the ease and safety of multi-use aspects of Fountain Hills roads. **Rationale:** A forward looking road strategy is essential to everyday living in Fountain Hills, providing access to jobs, schools, shopping, healthcare, wellness, and other services while enabling sustainable mobility options such as pedestrian and biking access.

A) Supporting Task (ST) - The Fountain Hills Town Council Subcommittee on Pedestrian and Traffic Safety will continue to identify roads where lack of an interconnected sidewalk system increases risk to pedestrians and will continue to update and schedule to remedy.

Timeline: <2yrs Complexity: 3 Collaboration potential: Yes

B) Supporting Task (ST) - Develop a comprehensive bicycle master plan. A successful plan will focus on developing a seamless cycling network that emphasizes short trip distances, multi-modal trips, and is complemented by encouragement, education, and enforcement programs to increase usage.

Timeline: <2yrs Complexity: 3 Collaboration potential: Yes

4. Signature Strategy (SS) – Utilize services provided by other government agencies and outside entities e.g. private companies, non-profit organizations, and volunteer groups in evaluating and supporting the health of Fountain Hills parks. **Rationale:** Parks support economic prosperity and build thriving, healthy, resilient communities. Besides providing recreational opportunities and green space for all ages, parks provide a suite of ancillary benefits such as higher property values, protection, and improvements to drinking water sources, fewer urban heat islands, and stormwater management.

A) Supporting Task (ST) – Utilize nationally recognized standards for maintenance of the Town's park system.

Timeline: <2yrs Complexity: 3 Collaboration potential: Yes

END