

Community Sustainability Plan: Summary of September 2024 Workshops

Introduction

The Scottsdale Community Sustainability Plan is an important part of the city’s commitment to a more sustainable future. The City Council included adoption of a sustainability plan as part of the city’s 2022 and 2024 organization strategic plans, and the plan was identified as part of the General Plan 2035 implementation.

Work on the plan began in June 2021, relying on input from the Scottsdale Environmental Advisory Commission (SEAC) and other community members. City Council feedback at five Work Study Sessions resulted in a sharp focus on the priorities, a push to develop baseline metrics and set numeric targets, and the need to include the costs and benefits of action.

The city has conducted a broad public input process to residents, boards and commissions and other stakeholders. Staff and subject matter experts have provided their guidance and ideas along the way. Two sets of community meetings were held in May and October 2022 in conjunction with a public questionnaire, to elicit feedback on an early draft and on overall priorities. As interim drafts were posted online and discussed at public meetings, additional input was gathered and incorporated.

Workshop Format

As a follow-up to City Council direction at the May 21, 2024, Regular Meeting, the city hosted two 90-minute interactive meetings on September 11 (SkySong) and September 16 (Florence Ely Nelson Park). The workshops were widely publicized on social media and via email and city newsletters. In total, almost 70 people attended.

After an introductory presentation on Scottsdale’s efforts to be a more sustainable and resilient city, workshop participants had an opportunity to share ideas for enhancing the city’s work. There were six stations for input – energy, water, waste, extreme heat, air quality and overall/general – with informational posters and subject matter experts to answer questions.



Input Received

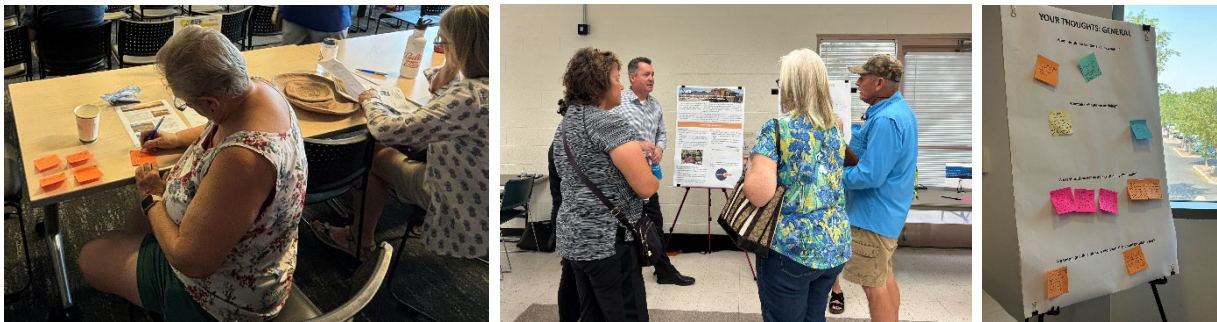
Participants were asked to share their thoughts either on a comment card or sticky notes. More than 200 comments were received in response to the four questions below, ranging from one-word responses to full paragraphs.

- What should be continued or expanded?
- What else should we be doing?
- What should we not be doing? Or doing differently?
- Are there specific actions or elements that could be addressed?

Overall, attendees shared positive and extremely helpful feedback. There was a strong overlap with the strategies and actions included in the May 2024 draft plan. Support was especially high for planting more trees, diverting more waste, adding solar and conserving water. In some instances, comments suggested more ambitious action than currently included in the plan.

Few directly raised questions about the cost of strategies being discussed, while others suggested adding new incentives for specific strategies. There were some concerns over zoning and land use, often making connections between the impact of development and environmental impacts. Interestingly, some attendees requested additional requirements or mandates.

Participants embraced the community focus of the plan, and most suggestions focused on individual or business action to be more sustainable. Finally, several shared suggestions on how to improve future community meetings, including requests for more detailed dialogues on the plan topics.



Below are some themes that emerged from the discussions, reflecting when the same or similar ideas were shared by more than one attendee. All comments received are in Attachment 1, sorted by topic and by question.

Waste

- Significant support for actions that increase recycling and composting
- Interest in actions that would expand recycling at commercial properties, apartment complexes and short-term rentals
- Suggestions about using pricing and fines to achieve goals

Water

- Widespread support for existing programs, with suggestions on expanding or improving educational and rebate/incentive efforts

Extreme Heat

- Overwhelming support for adding more trees and shade, with some suggestions related to code requirements and enforcement
- Very detailed suggestions on how to implement strategies

Air Quality

- Mostly support for expanding electric vehicle charging infrastructure and adding electric vehicles to the city fleet
- Interest in expanding trolley, bus, bike and carpool usage and restricting the impacts of fireworks

Energy

- Significant support for increasing solar installations, including calls for adding solar to all city buildings and for requiring solar in new residential buildings
- Support and opposition for building codes adopted in 2023

Attachment

1. All Input Received at September 2024 Community Meetings

ATTACHMENT 1: All Input Received at September 2024 Community Meetings

Participants in the September 2024 Community Meetings shared their ideas for enhancing the city’s work on sustainability, with six stations for input – energy, water, waste, extreme heat, air quality and overall/general. Attendees’ responses to four questions are all listed in the below tables.

WASTE

Waste: What should be continued or expanded?
September 11 meeting
Do commercial properties recycle? If not, why not?
Do you the apartment complexes recycle? If no, why not?
Make landscapers aware of the opportunity to compost waste instead of dumping.
September 16 meeting
Composting - broader recycling(more categories) - recycling and compost bins in restaurants, stores, schools, gyms
Recycling @ multi-family housing.
Keep curbside organics pickup and recycling/composting back in the plan
More education on proper recycling
Bulk pickup is fantastic & more people pickup my trash and it avoids the landfill
Agreed wonderful service.

Waste: What else should we be doing?
September 11 meeting
Charge residents for waste removal to encourage composting & recycling.
Pay as you throw!
Start fining short term rentals for noncompliance w/ recycling programs.
Easy recycle for apartments & townhomes.
Keeping edible food out of the landfill - mainly from businesses.
Mandate restaurants to donate leftover food.
Mandate residential & commercial composting.
September 16 meeting
Educating about long term cost of excess waste - more to discourage use of single use plastic or paper bags - more communication of what not to recycle

ATTACHMENT 1: All Input Received at September 2024 Community Meetings

Use of compost in landscapes. Mulch too.
Build a household waste facility like Mesa. State of the art.
Commercial composting & buy back.
Provide opportunities for residents to compost.
Be transparent about how much waste is recycled
Provide homeowners opportunity to drop off green waste for composting.
Free compost for residents from green waste.
Promote swap meets and community sales.

Waste: What should we not be doing or doing differently?

September 11 meeting
How can we be sustainable & control our excesses when we have approx 25k apts going in N. Scottsdale. How can you task the solid waste people who are already @ max & fulfill the percentage of reduction. With approx 25k multifamily apts how will it ffect house value and meet agendas. People visiting probably are not concious of waste as well as does not be part of their culture.
September 16 meeting
Recycling education and more creative ways to repurpose.
Compost & recycle at all city facilities & events
implement a single use plastic goal of for city facilities with a plan to get there

Waste: Are there specific actions or elements that could be addressed?

September 11 meeting
Address the amount of waste generated by a large amount of people in an air bnb - much more than a single family & not recycled usually.
Make airbnbs recycle. Airbnbs near me have refused recycling bins.
September 16 meeting
<none>

WATER

<i>Water: What should be continued or expanded?</i>
<i>September 11 meeting</i>
H2O conservation should continue to be priority.
Continue turf conversion program.
<i>September 16 meeting</i>
Smart water meters & leak detection
Continue and expand rebates for house upgrades, low flow toilets, grass removal, electric appliances, etc.
More community education about reducing water usage, identifying leaks/problem water usage
<i>Water: What else should we be doing?</i>
<i>September 11 meeting</i>
Provide more ideas on how important it is to save water & more ways to save water.
Turf & fountain removal
Rainwater catchment?
Make water rebates tax free.
<i>September 16 meeting</i>
Consider water rebate incentive for lowering water usage year over year
Incentivize turf removal like Las Vegas
Code compliance enforcement of water days
Incentivize pool removal
Incentivize fountain removal
Start driving around old town and look at commercial water lawn use. Circle k/ az fed cc on hayden/osborn are awful
Power generated is water consumed. But nobody wants to talk about that.
Continue to pursue introducing fully treated waste water back into the domestic supply
Set aside a water grant for replumbing older communities and homes where old cast iron pipes are used. Homeowner owned only.
Expand ARPW to hotels & resorts
Gray water initiatives. Laundry - to landscape.

ATTACHMENT 1: All Input Received at September 2024 Community Meetings

Water: What should we not be doing or doing differently?
September 11 meeting
More public education.
Incentivize rainwater harvesting.
Project.
Council allows everything to system size. More larger pools at resorts etc. Water needs better use assessment for each building.
September 16 meeting
Limit or eliminate open water lakes or decorative ponds in future development
How can tiered water pricing be balanced best against the need to vegetate and provide shade.
Stop bullying homeowners to use less water when apartments are being approved with rooftop pools.
Cover the ditches that bring in h20 from Colorado river

Water: Are there specific actions or elements that could be addressed?
September 11 meeting
Zoning: decrease approval of large, tall buildings.
Get more commercial involvement esp short term rentals.
September 16 meeting
<none>

EXTREME HEAT

<i>Extreme Heat: What should be continued or expanded?</i>
<i>September 11 meeting</i>
Adding more trees to parking lots.
<i>September 16 meeting</i>
Love the natural/native landscape in N Scottsdale. Expand
More tree in south Scottsdale and old town.
Misting outside venues. More trees.
Put a set of misters & canopy over all of Old Town.
More trees using wood mulch.
<i>Extreme Heat: What else should we be doing?</i>
<i>September 11 meeting</i>
Ask/Mandate business parking lots to provide/build shade. *bonus if they add solar.
Give us more trees. (SRP only provider)
More trees in parks and medians.
Trees
Plant more trees & build more shade.
More solar on parking structures and city buildings.
Structural shade.
<i>September 16 meeting</i>
More shade. Especially in old town walking areas.
Require or incentivize green scaping with all new building.
Consequences for tree butchers.
Enforce tree care ordinances for topping.
Expand shade through planting trees - offered to private landowners. Leverage volunteers.
Plant more trees - monitor trees throughout city & replace when we can.
White & green roofs on city buildings.
In commercial zones incentivize development that shades and extends building roof over public walkways.

ATTACHMENT 1: All Input Received at September 2024 Community Meetings

<i>Extreme Heat: What should we not be doing or doing differently?</i>
<i>September 11 meeting</i>
If homes are abandoned, demolish for green space in neighborhood; green landscape & neighborhood park & or/dog park
Put up solar in streets with shade for each house/car. More trees on major street.
Real shade for bus stops. More trees in the park, water features in park for cooling. Large trees encouraged for neighborhoods. Parking lots with w/ trees.
Stop using trees & grass.
<i>September 16 meeting</i>
More artificial shade structures everywhere.
Less density.
Pause upzoning degree
Require awnings @ every building.
Add paths in areas that are hot to promote transit & provide trees/shade along path

<i>Extreme Heat: Are there specific actions or elements that could be addressed?</i>
<i>September 11 meeting</i>
<none>
<i>September 16 meeting</i>
<none>

AIR QUALITY

<i>Air Quality: What should be continued or expanded?</i>
<i>September 11 meeting</i>
Electric vehicles are still in baby stage. If you only go to the store in the neighborhood its ok. 300 miles is a target not actual. Trucks are bit good in electric.
We're kidding ourselves that there will be no gas engines in my lifetime. 78yo. They haven't even addressed the battery issues on resale cars.
Where are the used ones going. That's another type of waste there is no answer for. Which state will they bury them? Off - gases.
<i>September 16 meeting</i>
Expand Trolley
Thank you for charging stations. I drive an EV.
Expand bus system. Expand EV infrastructure.
Signs pointing to EV stations are needed.
Plant more trees.
Expand trolley. Close Scottsdale Rd in old town. Think 16th st mall in Denver

<i>Air Quality: What else should we be doing?</i>
<i>September 11 meeting</i>
Plant more trees!
More trees.
More trees.
Convert city vehicles to EV.
Ban smoke "bombs" at sporting events etc.
Outlaw fireworks.
Traffic signal synchronization to reduce idle time.
Not just more trees. But infrastructure design suitable to changing seasons.
<i>September 16 meeting</i>
Speaking to Maricopa County to reduce registration for Evs
Promoting how residents may avoid polluting or contribute to air quality

ATTACHMENT 1: All Input Received at September 2024 Community Meetings

Greater/ new incentives for carpooling. Meaningful & enforceable penalties for improper use of carpool lane
Get rid of fireworks. Are you kidding me with fireworks.
Every Scottsdale city vehicle should be an EV
Expand EV charging. Yes!
Transfer to EV for municipal vehicles.

Air Quality: What should we not be doing or doing differently?

<i>September 11 meeting</i>
Educate the public on mass transit use.
What information (data) is available regarding the impact of blowers? My thoughts are this should be looked at.
Expand electric charging infrastructure.
Decrease population density in south Scottsdale. Fewer apartments/condos.
Discontinue the use of fireworks.
Cars possibly discontinued.
Would the public transit system in Scottsdale be used more if there were more stops at eg grocery stores etc used in every day living. Also make a long term public announcement system to advertise it.
<i>September 16 meeting</i>
Minimize sprawl land thus decrease driving. Stop building the high rise condos/apartments. Keep northern Scottsdale with open space
Support carbon capture tech.
Add the mobility chapter back in the plan.
Add meaningful transit & alternatives to car based transport
Add bike lanes that connect - should not dead end.

Air Quality: Are there specific actions or elements that could be addressed?

<i>September 11 meeting</i>
<none>
<i>September 16 meeting</i>
<none>

ENERGY

Energy: What should be considered or expanded?
September 11 meeting
Solar ready design.
September 16 meeting
Great job on adopting the new building codes.
Greener/better codes for new construction.

Energy: What else should we be doing?
September 11 meeting
Offer incentives and education for rooftop solar.
Increase usage of nuclear power verese coal/natural gas.
Increase solar opps for biz and homeowners w/ incentives, rebates, etc. Partner w/ variety of businesses to promote & delivery
Solar for every school in town plus Skysong!
September 16 meeting
Work with P & Z and City council to ensure LEED optional loopholes are closed. Require IgCC reclamation!
Add solar panels to every city building and parking lot.
Greater or more education about peak & non peak times for lights and electricity.
Celebrate smaller super-efficient homes & workplaces.
Mountain view on Hayden just south of frank lloyd wright is beautiful now without that tall building. Reduce height.
Consider requiring new builds of residential to have full or partial solar.

Energy: What should we not be doing or doing differently?
September 11 meeting
The planning being pushed at us with no substantiation & with city council approving building that does always go over zoning height, land use council needs to be held accountable to --- the rules laid out, control staff & developer plans. The need to conform to zoning.

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September 16 meeting
Along with other cities/counties lobby energy regulators to increase required power buy back
Business buildings are not being stripped of valuable items before being torn down
Why are buildings that are going to be torn down if they are small enough could be jacked up & moved by crane.

Energy: Are there specific actions or elements that could be addressed?
September 11 meeting
<none>
September 16 meeting
Reevaluate LEED for commercial and enforce IgCC energy and sustainability

GENERAL COMMENTS

What should be continued or expanded?
<i>Comment Cards + Overall/General: September 11 meeting</i>
Encourage water conservation, xeriscaping. Encourage carpooling, biking, walkability. Better PR - get ahead of the "anti-woke" activists and councilors.
Energy: Use solar can be expanded for public areas/bldgs to add charging stations. Water: continue recharging, reclamation, and filtration/capture of wastewater. Waste: Continue recycling efforts. Air Quality: plant more desert plants throughout public spaces and encouraging roof top/canopy/ balcony gardens. These can be used for shade, air quality, and heat mitigation. This sustainable concept is already being championed across the globe in urban environments.
Please work cross- functionally on your plan so items support each other rather than contradict.
We need a sustainability plan as a city. Many other cities have had one for a decade or longer. The world of business is now adopting sustainability mindset en masse, renewable energy water efficiency, etc. We should not be a lagger, we should be a leader.
More/more widely publicized community recycling days.
More trees. SRP has an incentive program - maybe help promote it.
If it costs taxpayers, none of it! If it restricts our lives, none of it!
I am interested in saving water by collecting it off my roof. I have been seeking knowledge or someone/group who promotes this. I found one on nextdoor but its been inactive for a longtime. So I'd like help with that. What can my HOA do to stop me collecting water?
Education at all levels - make children, business people, homeowners, council members and other government officials about the importance of resource conservation, decarbonization.
The city has many beautiful areas between the Greenbelt & the McDowells. We need to keep up the good work! So glad we now have a sustainability manager. Thank you!
More drought resistant trees.
Increase solar installation opportunities rebates & partnerships
<i>Comment Cards + Overall/General: September 16 meeting</i>
Expand more shade in walkable areas. Continue recycling program. Expand trolley routes, especially for special events in old town (canal convergence) westworld- or popular routes (up & down Shea, Scottsdale, Pima and Old Town)
Notify advocates of council agendas with sustainable council actions.
The original plan doesn't go far enough
Expand fire prevention in Sonoran Preserve

GENERAL COMMENTS

What else should we be doing?
Comment Cards + Overall/General: September 11 meeting
Clear goals that can be "defended" against the propaganda on the far right. Encourage solar, consults & audits for green behavior.
We should be balancing cost of initiatives with the actual returns generated. Sustainability needs to balance cost/returns. Please spend more effort on communicating the plans & getting feedback before sending the plan to council/residents for approval.
Recycling receptacles 1 to 1 with trash cans in all public spaces. Transition away from plastics in food/beverage services in all city building & event spaces. Curbside compost collection.
Encourage/ incentivize participation by multi-family housing residents. Green waste collection.
Encourage deploying solar collectors on extensive covered parking developments to add to solar energy.
Reliable public transportation - drivers performance to be evaluated per everyone's feedback & complaints. - public transit can lower air pollution, improve air quality.
<p>Extreme Heat: (1) Higher % of tree canopy -> more shade; Install more trees! (Desert trees) along all sidewalks & parking lots, & walking paths in parks.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">*This should be especially included in any new construction projects, but also in any renovation projects by developers.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">* Improve services that trim city trees -- to use best practices. Too many city trees are being over-pruned & cannot survive due to poor pruning by crews.</p> <p>(2) Explore ways to cool hard surfaces (concrete, road surfaces). Paint road surfaces w/reflective paints (City of Phoenix is experimenting w/this) (ASU is involved in designing products to be considered -- School of Sustainability).</p>
Have these sust "sessions" more often in sept - nov. "we" City goes to elementary schools high schools, & voting age gens
Incentivize businesses to implement sustainability initiatives ex. Reduce edible food waste / install solar panels, etc.
Plant more trees in so Scottsdale
Comment Cards + Overall/General: September 16 meeting
Promote grass removal program. Promote native landscaping.
Run the economics of sustainability to silence the nah sayers
Work with P & Z and city council to enact requirements and close LEED loophole for commercial development. Reclamation and repurposing existing buildings.
Volunteer opportunities for tree planting, park assistance should be available and promoted.
Make the hard choices fun, fashionable, or popular

GENERAL COMMENTS

What should we not be doing? Or doing differently?
Comment Cards + Overall/General: September 11 meeting
Energy - Promotion for solar is great, but should also look at battery storage.
Lobby with SRP to raise solar buy back pricing to encourage more homes to convert.
Plastic grass. It's toxic and creates more heat. Plant more trees, etc? Nice, but uses more water. Contradicts plastic grass!
I feel like if the City promoted this, people might get interested & HOA boards would hesitate before stopping people.
Ignore the problem. Local government officials should support sustainability efforts. Being conservative is not going to help drought or heat.
Extreme Heat: (3) Install more heat-tolerant plants (xeriscaping) long sidewalks (in urban areas & Indian Bend Wash). (4) Bring 'MaRTy' to Scottsdale! (from ASU) [drawing included] Hot spots need to be identified throughout the city -- where are these 'hots spots'? Identify locations & remediate with plantings, paint, misters, maybe develop structures to provide shade at hottest time of day. Maybe these structures can move & shift with sun direction change. (5) Playgrounds and vulnerable spaces for children. Infrared images show these hot spots. Materials used in play spaces need to be assessed -- slides, swings, etc. Important for childhood development: shade within playspaces, pollinator gardens, land contours (used for directional shade & privacy)
Too many people in too small a place is removing the exclusivity of Scottsdale and we will be no longer a town but a city with city issues
Too many people increase roads and the heat island concept. We need to spread out not compact & working against ourselves
Change the zoning for south Scottsdale to decrease the building of multifamily unit housing developments - (up arrow) the space from buildings and the street traffic created by population density decreases the appeal of Scottsdale for tourism
Slow down the new building in so Scottsdale. If not change the parameters. More shade and more undeveloped space further from street.
More buildings, businesses, houses = more heat continue
Why we are fine economically, keep adding, gets hotter, then you ruin the desert
Comment Cards + Overall/General: September 16 meeting
Going in front of council without your community supporters
"Walk around easels" is the weakest form of outreach, and missed opp for explain benefits

GENERAL COMMENTS

Are there specific actions or elements that could be addressed?
Comment Cards + Overall/General: September 11 meeting
Change minds and don't let MAGA extremist define the issues. Outreach tools to target younger and 30-40's citizens, webinars, online etc. so younger generations are heard. Environmentalism is a core value for them.
This meeting was not as helpful as it could have been. I was hoping to learn what is being done & what the goals or the changes are - no one presented that across the 5 areas of sustainability. Its hard to give helpful feedback if residents aren't informed. Disappointing format. Didnt lend itself to informed dialog. Hope there will be another meeting - I want to be involved in the feedback. Thanks
Enforce speeding ordinances on multi-use paths - becoming dangerous and discouraging use by some populations.
Increase / mandate solar "covers" for all parking / parking structures. (See the ASU Tempe campus.)
New building codes are restrictive and expensive. Please stop! Electric cars use energy. Why do we have less energy?
If there were a group devoted to this I would join it.
Make waste management and recycling more available to all: apartment complexes, offices, not only homeowners. 20 yrs ago Gently Strength (similar to sprouts now) used to have recycling bins in the parking lot. Anyone could drop off glass, cardboard, paper, clothing etc.
Extreme Heat: (6) Consider shade structures over canal paths. Work with APS and SRP -- share cost. (These areas are highly used by pedestrians & bicyclists.) (7) When creating new streets & intersections & new buildings create gathering spaces/green spaces with shade & seating connected with paths in neighborhoods. *Add shade trees (desert trees & shrubs) * Add seating, artwork (culture counsel) * Add water sources. Developers should be required to provide these respite locations in perimeters of their projects connecting to the existing neighborhoods.
Concentrate more on the educating the population from primary school level & follows it through their whole life
Organize volunteers squads to educate!
Increase designated neighborhood solar parking lots open to the public.
What is cost & return
Comment Cards + Overall/General: September 16 meeting
Please keep bulk pickup (it diverts trash - my neighbors pick up my things and take them home)
Lower density = less heat, why are we not continuing the low growth around?