

# A Real Plan To Revitalize South Scottsdale

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At one of the candidate forums during my 2010 campaign for re-election to the City Council, a voter complained to me that the city had “not done enough for south Scottsdale.” I replied the real problem was that the city had done **too** much, of the wrong things. In fact, for the past 20 years Scottsdale city government has been part of the problem for South Scottsdale not part of the solution.

The recent proposal to “rebrand” South Scottsdale (funded by a \$50,000 grant from the city’s Industrial Development Authority) is just the latest in a series of blunders, political favoritism and sometimes downright silliness that has marked the city’s attempts to “revitalize” South Scottsdale. For example, the City Council spent over a decade (over my objections) trying to find a way to help the developer of the Los Arcos site get a massive subsidy from the city. While they dithered, the retail businesses (and the sales tax revenues they generate) that should have been built on that site went instead to other cities. Then there was the ridiculous waste of taxpayer dollars when my council colleagues (again over my objections) paid a big subsidy to politically-favored auto dealers who then left McDowell Road anyway.

There are some positive, concrete steps city government could take which would actually help South Scottsdale. First, **get rid of the Los Arcos Redevelopment District**. The first thing we did when I was first elected to the City Council in 2002 to revitalize downtown was to get rid of the condemnation-based downtown “redevelopment” district, a bureaucratic boondoggle that actually discouraged private investment within its boundaries. We should do the same at McDowell and Scottsdale roads.

Next **do a better job at the basic jobs of city government**. Another thing we did to revitalize downtown was to increase police presence, code enforcement and garbage collection. Making downtown safer and cleaner was good for downtown, and we need to do the same for South Scottsdale.

Next, **stop throwing away taxpayer dollars on fluff and crony capitalism**. If the Industrial Development Authority really wanted to help South Scottsdale they could have spent the \$50,000 on a real-world project such as fixing up a dilapidated property, or making some infrastructure improvements. And imagine how much police and fire protection, code enforcement and infrastructure we could have paid for in South Scottsdale (and the entire city, for that matter) if we had not thrown away \$120 million taxpayer dollars on SkySong!

Next, **stop approving projects in South Scottsdale that we would never allow in North Scottsdale**. During the 12+ years I was on the City Council my colleagues approved (over my objections) projects in South Scottsdale that even their supporters

agreed were mediocre. We must insist on high quality standards for all parts of our city and stop allowing second-class development in South Scottsdale.

Finally, **pass a tough rental ordinance.** Many of south Scottsdale's problem properties are rentals. We need the legal tools to prevent them from contributing to blight and lowering property values.

No government at any level can create prosperity - except, of course for the recipients of any subsidies that they pass out! Private enterprise is the engine that provides prosperity. But city government can provide an environment that makes prosperity possible by doing a first-class job of providing the infrastructure, services and amenities that make people want to live and do business in our town. The steps I outlined above are not dramatic but they are proven to work. All we need is the political will to make them happen.