

City Talk Column for Oct. 25, 2023  
Community Development Department  
Cynthia Lovely, Principal Planner

### **Community Plan Progress**

The city's 10-year update to the Community Plan is the time to think about Sedona's future over the next 10 years, because the plan is a roadmap that guides the city in making decisions on projects, programs, land and building development proposals. Looking towards 2033, we ask ourselves and the community: what could change and what do we want our community to be in 10 years? That's the question we've been answering the last 18 months through our extensive public outreach process. We began this conversation in 2022 and heard from many of you, whether in a survey, at a public forum, online, in discussions with the resident work group, during one-on-one conversation or at a workshop. The most recent was a series of well-attended workshops in August that focused on housing.

What have we heard through all of this outreach? No one will be surprised to hear that the top issues are again, as in 2013: traffic, resident quality of life, tourism and housing. But new concerns added to the list ten years later are short-term vacation rentals and off-highway vehicles. Since incorporation in 1988, our natural, scenic environment is the foundation of the city's vision. The 2013 plan summed up the city's challenges as a need to balance environment, tourism and community. What we are hearing is that now more than ever, the need for even more balance with tourism is apparent, so that it doesn't overwhelm both the community and environment.

Sedona has seen many significant changes since 2013, some were unforeseen and nearly all have had wide-reaching impacts on our community, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the state law allowing housing inventory to be used as vacation rentals, the rise of Instagram travel, and the increasing, albeit fluctuating number of tourists, trail use and traffic.

Sedona is not alone – places like Lake Tahoe, Calif. to Venice, Italy are struggling with the need to balance the tourism economy with resident quality of life. Learning from other cities is important as there are so many parallels, and yet each city, state and country has different laws that sometimes help and other times constrain what can and can't be done.

The plan update takes into consideration all these issues and at a high level, will outline action items of how to achieve the future we want for Sedona. I want to thank everyone who has taken the time to share their input with the planning team up to this point, and we look forward to another outreach effort with a first draft of the 2013 – 2023 Community Plan due around Thanksgiving. We're planning on holding a public forum to review the plan in early December and we hope to see you there. Details will be announced on the project website, listed below. There will also be many opportunities to weigh in online, in person or at a to-be scheduled Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council public hearing.

Learn more and sign up for updates at [www.plansedona.com](http://www.plansedona.com).