

# TOWN OF FOUNTAIN HILLS

## FAQ's For Sunridge Natural Park

### **Why should we build a new park?**

The Town staff and leaders have committed to following best practices and meeting national Parks and Recreation Management standards. The Town of Fountain Hills takes great pride in our park systems as it serves as a backbone for health, wellness, and leisure pursuits. Additionally, it is noted as one of the primary factors for resident and business attraction and retention. The town currently rates very low in parks to resident ratio. Adding parkland and amenities serves to keep our town within national standards, proactively preserve open space, and create a walkable respite for all residents.

### **Why was this location picked and not in another neighborhood?**

The expansion of our community is nearly complete, and very few land parcels are available for public acquisition. The town owns several properties throughout Fountain Hills, of which few are suitable for park improvements. Many of these parcels serve as washes and flood retention areas. The 5-acre parcel at the corner of Sunridge Canyon Drive and Desert Canyon Drive has been Town-owned for over 20 years originally planned to house a fire station and active pocket park. However, town build-out and density changes required an alternate fire station location. The original active pocket park concept was adjusted to reflect the Sunridge community's desire for a more natural, passive park.

### **Where will the money come from? Shouldn't we consider using this money somewhere else? Can this money be spent on roads instead?**

Like many communities, the town collects Development Fees from developers for new development projects. The fees are designed to help support the public amenities and improvements needed due to the development and growth. These fees, outlined per Town Code and by state statute, must be utilized for the purpose they are collected. In this case, Park Development fees must be expended on new park development. The funds are very restricted and cannot be used to replace, repair, or renovate existing parks or amenities. These funds cannot be transferred to defray

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other costs or supplement other areas such as capital projects, road improvements, etc. These funds expire and must be used within 10 years of collection or returned to the developers.

## **What were the survey findings?**

The survey was designed to understand the pros and cons of a potential park and what the residents would like to see. The survey results varied dramatically and ranged from many residents preferring no park to some residents requesting active amenities such as pickleball courts and playgrounds. Staff worked to take all feedback into account and developed several themes that have been implemented into the renderings. If the Sunridge Natural Park project moves forward, these are the community desires:

- Residents would like the park to have limited lighting and no evening access. Therefore, the hours of operation would be sunrise to sunset.
- Residents would like to see natural surfaces used for trails and parking area
- Preference is given to keeping the parking area small, minimizing visual impacts on the surrounding area.
- A restroom within the park is not preferred at this time.
- Trash cans and pet waste stations are desired. However, picnic tables and electrical outlets are not.
- The western side of the property and the peak ridgeline will remain undisturbed, preserving views and minimizing residential impact.

For information about Sunridge Natural Park you can review the page on the website at [www.fountainhillsaz.gov/SunridgeNaturalPark](http://www.fountainhillsaz.gov/SunridgeNaturalPark), or email [info@fountainhillsaz.gov](mailto:info@fountainhillsaz.gov).