

# **ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE LANDS ORDINANCE** **CITIZEN'S GUIDE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

North Scottsdale contains many natural assets that are treasured by the community. Natural washes, boulder features and lush desert vegetation are set against a dramatic mountain backdrop, creating a prime example of the beautiful Sonoran Desert. In addition to these unique environmental assets are environmental hazards that pose special development challenges. Extremely steep and unstable slopes, as well as unpredictable wash flooding are examples of hazards that require regulation to ensure the safety of residents and the protection of property.

The Environmentally Sensitive Land Ordinance (ESLO) was created to allow reasonable development while recognizing that the natural environment is an attraction in itself. In order to ensure that environmentally sensitive development takes place in North Scottsdale, the City Council established these environmental goals:

- Preserve the Mountains
- Maintain the Desert Character

The following basic concepts of ESLO are discussed in this guide:

- 1) What is ESLO?
- 2) Why is the ESLO district necessary?
- 3) Where is the ESLO district?
- 4) What steps are being taken to achieve the main goals of ESLO?
- 5) How do I use ESLO on my property?
- 6) Conclusion

## **WHAT IS ESLO?**

The Environmentally Sensitive Land Ordinance (ESLO) is a special set of zoning regulations which control development on fragile desert lands and mountains in North Scottsdale.

## **WHY IS THE ESLO DISTRICT NECESSARY?**

Because the existing zoning districts do not protect environmental features enough, an “overlay” of additional regulations is placed on the land so that future development will preserve the natural features whenever possible. If the ESLO overlay were not placed upon environmentally sensitive lands, then there would be no requirement for the



property to develop using sensitive environmental design. The ESLO district both protects the land and makes it more valuable for people who wish to live in the beautiful Sonoran Desert.

### **WHERE IS THE ESLO DISTRICT?**

The ESLO district is located on land that contains environmental features that the community is interested in protecting. It covers approximately 134 square miles in North Scottsdale.

### **SCOTTSDALE ESLO GUIDELINE SUMMARY**

The following is a summary of the Scottsdale ESLO Guidelines that relate to residential landscape guidelines.

- a. Planting programs for revegetated areas may include transplanted and seeded methods of application.
- b. Planting programs shall be consistent with the slope aspect of the surrounding natural vegetation and shall be consistent to the extent possible with the species and density of surrounding vegetation.
- c. All materials, design and construction techniques for revegetation shall be approved by the project review director. Decisions of the project review director may be appealed to the development review board as provided in Section 7.832.
- d. Continuity of open space within the development project and with adjacent developments.
- e. Preservation of the most significant features and vegetation, including rock outcroppings, natural watercourses and significant concentrations of native vegetation in relation to the surrounding development project.
- f. Distribution throughout the development area and avoidance of concentration in one (1) location.
- g. Location in areas where a buffer is desirable along the property boundary, or where it is contiguous with NAOS on adjacent property.
- h. Location in areas visible from streets or common areas.
- i. Avoidance of the use of walls or other visual obstructions that will limit the visibility of NAOS from streets or common areas.
- j. Materials used for exterior surfaces of all structures shall blend in color, hue and tone with the surrounding natural desert setting to avoid high contrast.
- k. Surface materials of walls, retaining walls or fences shall be similar to and compatible with those of the adjacent main buildings.
- l. Development design and construction techniques should blend scale, form and visual character into the natural landform and minimize exposed scars.
- m. Exterior lighting should be low scale and directed downward, recessed or shielded so that the light source is not visible from residential development in the area or from a public viewpoint.

- n. Reflective building materials are prohibited.
- o. No paint colors shall be used which have light reflecting value (LRV) greater than forty (40) percent. The LRV of a paint is available from paint manufacturers and it measures the amount of light reflected by a certain color.
- p. Plant materials that are not indigenous to the area shall be limited to enclosed yard areas and shall not exceed twenty (20) feet in height. A list of indigenous plants is available from the planning and zoning department. Outdoor community recreation facilities including parks and golf courses shall be allowed turf as specified in Section 7.854(E)(2)(e).
- q. Turf shall be limited to enclosed areas not visible offsite from lower elevation. Outdoor recreation facilities, including parks and golf courses, shall be exempt from this standard.
- r. Boulder Features: Development shall not be permitted on boulder features identified on the ESLO Special Features Maps, unless approved by the development review board. The development review board may permit development on identified outdoor features where the applicant demonstrates that the proposed construction will meet the appropriate criteria.