DOWNTOWN VOICES:

Creating a Sustainable Downtown

Arizona Chain Reaction
Downtown Phoenix Arts Coalition (D-PAC)
Phoenix Coalition of Historic Neighborhoods
The Community Housing Partnership
Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)

PHOENIX, ARIZONA
August 2004

For more information or questions, visit www.downtownvoices.org
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE ~ Page 3

INTRODUCTION ~ Page 4

GUIDING PRINCIPLES ~ Page 4

MAJOR ISSUES ~ Page 5

A. Coordination of Planning ~ Page 6
   - The Need to Develop an Inclusive Planning Structure
   - Rome Was Not Built in a Day

B. Design Guidelines ~ Page 8
   - Individualized Design Guidelines
   - Current Zoning Codes
   - Sustainable Design
   - Support for Innovation
   - Need for Community Participation

C. Small Business ~ Page 11
   - Economic Assistance for Small Businesses
   - Promotion of Small Businesses
   - Zoning Regulations
   - Design Considerations
   - Keep in Mind…

D. Neighborhoods ~ Page 15
   - Prevention of Negative Impacts
   - Neighborhood Preservation
   - Public Services
   - Underemployment

E. Affordable Housing ~ Page 20
   - Financial Constraints
   - Development Constraints
   - Affordable Technology
   - Location
   - Preservation of Existing Affordable Housing
   - Advocacy

F. Historic Preservation ~ Page 24
   - Public Education
   - Historic Designation Process
   - Demolition of Historic Properties
   - Vintage Properties

G. Arts and Culture ~ Page 27
   - Inclusion in Downtown Planning Processes
   - Artists as Small Business Professionals
   - Marketing
   - Sustainability
   - Work and Performance Spaces

H. Public Spaces ~ Page 32
   - Civic Commitment
   - Maintenance
   - Design
   - Security
   - Linkages

I. Transportation ~ Page 35
   - Bicycle Routes
   - Pedestrian Traffic
   - Pedestrian Amenities
   - Parking
   - Noise

J. Diversity and Cultural Inclusion ~ Page 38
   - Lack of Diversity in Downtown Planning Process
   - Design Guidelines Should Reflect Diversity
   - More Minority Business Ownership
   - Sustain Residential Diversity in Downtown Neighborhoods
   - Preserve Properties and Neighborhoods
   - Associated with Phoenix’s Diverse Cultures
   - Create Climate for Diversity in Arts and Culture
   - Public Spaces Reflect Community Diversity
   - Public Transportation that Meets the Needs of All Downtown Residents
   - Role of Primary and Secondary Education

CONCLUSION ~ Page 44

APPENDIX: PARTICIPANT LIST ~ Page 45
PREFACE

On April 8, 2004, members of the Downtown Phoenix Arts Coalition (D-PAC) proposed forming a link with other downtown grassroots organizations to insure that future plans for downtown development would include the vision of all downtown stakeholders in the redevelopment of downtown Phoenix. D-PAC was soon joined by the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), Arizona Chain Reaction, the Phoenix Historic Neighborhoods Coalition, and The Community Housing Partnership.

Various members had been queried by the Phoenix Futures Group and Arizona State University (ASU) about what we would like to see incorporated into their plans. This led to the decision that, as downtown stakeholders, we needed to present our vision directly to the City of Phoenix, rather than simply allowing it to pass through the filter of others. We decided to sponsor a conference, entitled Downtown Voices, where downtown residents, small businesses, members of the arts community and other downtown stakeholders could work together to generate a collective vision for downtown. Information gathered at the meeting would form the basis of a report that would be presented formally to the Mayor, City Council, the City Manager’s Office and other public officials, to insure that future plans for downtown development would include our vision as well as our future participation.

The conference took place on May 22, 2004 at the historic Icehouse on Jackson Street. We wish to thank the following organizations that contributed to making the conference a success: Alwun House Foundation, Arizona Chain Reaction, Azteca Bakery, Coalition of Historic Neighborhoods, Community Housing Partnership, The Icehouse, That's A Wrap, LISC, Modified Arts, MonOrchid, No Festival Required, Ranch Market, the Trunk Space, and Watermill.

There were many volunteers who assisted in organizing the conference. We thank Leslie Barton, Jack Burke, Peter Conley, Susan Copeland, Cindy Dach, Greg Esser, Jeff Falk, Anita Fonte, Mark Grushka, Len Harris, Steve Jansen, Dana Johnson, Kimber Lanning, Ruth Ann Marston, Beatrice Moore, Kim Moody, Eileen O’Connell, Ruth Osuna, Louisa Stark, and Julio Zapata.

We also wish to thank the facilitators who volunteered their time and energy facilitating discussions and deliberations therefore making the process as inclusive as possible. They include: Laura Artusio, Anita Fonte, Roberto Frietz, Mark Grushka, Annie Lopez, Ruth Osuna, Beatrice Moore, Dennis Strahm, Kate Timmerman, Tony Zahn, and Julio Zapata.

The following report was prepared by: Laura Artusio, Susan Copeland, Kimber Lanning, Beatrice Moore, Christiana Moss, Ruth Osuna, Louisa Stark, and Kate Timmerman. Photographs were provided by Steve Weiss and Len Harris; editing by Beatrice Moore, Ruth Osuna, and Louisa Stark; layout by Michael 23 and Susan Copeland.
It’s not just stadiums. A thriving downtown needs small businesses and cultural and entertainment venues, retail and office businesses, students and government workers, artists and developers, high-income residential and affordable housing.

Richard de Uriarte, June 20, 2004

...hungry cities acting as the entertainer for suburban America don’t go far enough. A resident, in a thousand little ways, spins off economic activity unmatched by the casual visitor who visits your attraction, buys a T-shirt and a frozen yogurt, and heads home.

Ray Suarez, 1999:241

INTRODUCTION

The desire of those attending the Downtown Voices conference is for this document to be a catalyst for initiating a more inclusive planning process for downtown Phoenix. This document is not an exhaustive presentation of any of the topics that were discussed, but rather is the first step towards creating an organic planning document that can be progressively shaped with new ideas and supplemented with additional research and ongoing community input. There may be sections that are incomplete, or where more questions are raised than answered. It will be the function of all of us who were involved in this planning process, as well as those who wish to join us, to build on the framework that has been started here in order to insure that plans for downtown revitalization are the most comprehensive, inclusive and the best that they can be.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In order to understand the collective underlying values, beliefs and perceptions which would guide and influence the group’s thought process, stakeholders identified nine guiding principles by which all future discussion, decision-making and downtown development should abide.

These guiding principles include:

- **Community** - The community should be central to downtown development. Obtaining community buy-in or acceptance for a specific vision of downtown development is crucial and critical to any successful downtown revitalization effort. While obtaining consensus or acceptance to a specific vision may be difficult and challenging, it is critical to success.

- **Communication** - Positive change will require constant communication and connection with the downtown community and stakeholders. The public must be informed and have its voice heard to ensure a collaborative effort that will guarantee the success of downtown redevelopment.

- **Aesthetics** - Design of all aspects of a development project should take into consideration the history of Phoenix and its central position in the metropolitan valley. Design should be complimentary to our heritage, environment and community assets.

- **Preservation** - Preservation of Phoenix’s rich history and diversity should have an important place in the redevelopment of downtown.

- **Mobility/Accessibility** - Downtown should incorporate a multi-modal system that allows for easy access as well as various types of transportation methods beyond the automobile, including pedestrian friendly streets, bicycle lanes and paths, and bus and rail public transportation.
Diversity – Downtown should reflect a sensitivity to the diverse ethnic, socio-economic, and educational backgrounds, along with the variation in age groups and sexual preferences, that are an important characteristic of our downtown neighborhoods. Success of downtown redevelopment will embrace this diversity and incorporate it as a dynamic community asset.

Arts/Culture - Downtown should incorporate an already existing mainstream and growing grassroots art and cultural environment and support downtown Phoenix as a regional arts and culture center.

Economic Development - Market information of specific and current economic, social and physical conditions existing in downtown Phoenix should be utilized when discussing and planning the economic revitalization of the downtown core. An understanding of the downtown market place through the completion of market analyses, inventory of businesses, customer surveys and other market research will assist all stakeholders in decision-making. These efforts will lead to the development of realistic strategies for sustained economic growth.

Environment - Downtown revitalization efforts should take the environment into consideration. Institutional acceptance of environmentally friendly development is critical to the preservation of precious natural resources such as efficient use of water or landscaping suitable for the Sonoran Desert climate.

MAJOR ISSUES

After defining the principles that would guide decisions regarding downtown redevelopment, conference participants turned to a discussion of major issues that should be considered in such plans. Due to time constraints, the consensus of participants was to discuss in depth the following ten areas: Diversity/Cultural Inclusion, Coordination of Planning, Design Guidelines, Business/Economic Development, Neighborhoods, Affordable Housing, Historic Preservation, Arts and Culture, Public Spaces, and Transportation.

References Cited:
A. COORDINATION OF PLANNING

Master Planning: … that attribute of development in which many rigid controls are put into place, to defeat every imaginative future problem, that any possibility of life, spontaneity, or flexible response to unanticipated events is eliminated.

Joel Garreau 1991:453

The new emerging systems [of planning] are less paternalistic and condescending in their styles. They involve the various constituencies of the jurisdiction both in the initial visioning/goal-setting process, and the decision-making process when a plan is actually adopted. These participation systems often tacitly admit up front that planners or public officials don’t always have all the answers…


Introduction:

The Downtown Voices conference was convened to consider long-term, sustainable policies critical to healthy downtown expansion and regional growth. By their presence at the Downtown Voices conference, a unique and diverse group of over 90 people stated their keen interest in downtown development and their desire to participate in the planning process from the ground up. Many of the participants, community leaders in their own right, and movers and shakers in their areas of interest, bring a much needed passion, creativity and informed vision to the planning process. Attendees were aware that downtown development is a complex process, one that goes beyond the mere transformation of vacant land and underutilized properties into public space, a downtown university campus or new retail. They also understood, often first-hand, the effect those changes will have on long time residents, business owners, and nearby neighborhoods.

A.1. The Need to Develop an Inclusive Planning Structure

Challenge:

- Lack of inclusive planning structure.
- To date, the downtown planning process has been confusing, fragmented and, in some respects, threatening and divisive.

Solutions:

- The planning process should be transparent, inclusive and better coordinated. To ensure the planning process meets these requirements, a thoughtful, long-term approach should be implemented. It should include serious citizen participation, versus the old-style public hearings and “show-and-tell” presentations that have traditionally been the forum for public input.

- Establish a committee made up of representative downtown stakeholders (including, but not limited to: neighborhood groups, small businesses, non-profits, cultural institutions and grass-root organizations) that will oversee, inform and advise city officials on any major downtown project throughout the planning process, including decision-making on the viability, or necessity, of a project or planning approach.

- Integrate downtown stakeholders, as officially designated committee members, for any project seeking public funding or support. The stakeholders must be involved throughout the process - from the initial visioning and goal setting of a project, to the actual adoption and implementation of the plan. Stakeholder members should represent a variety of grass-root and neighborhood interests, and should constitute a percentage of the membership on every pertinent planning committee.
(rather than being appointed as single token individuals). Stakeholder members should be selected to represent diverse organizations, rather than following the practice, often resorted to, of one or two representatives being repeatedly chosen to represent a particular area of expertise.

A.2. Rome was not Built in a Day

The truth is that while it is commercial development which shapes the city, it is in the hands of those who have no interest in using their powers for the long term future. The commercial developers are in business to respond to opportunities. They are not interested in, or equipped, for planning cities. Yet that is just what they are doing by default.

Deyen Sudjik, 1992:53

Challenge:

- During the past two decades, many large scale projects in downtown have been on a fast track, not leaving sufficient time for a thoughtful and well developed planning process.

Solutions:

- Any truly thoughtful planning process should take the necessary time to develop well-designed projects that will create and sustain, over the long-term. We should acknowledge, and learn from, the mistakes that have been made with the fast-track approach we have taken in designing many of our major, and not particularly successful, downtown developments. Our motto should be: “Plan Slowly; Build Quickly.”

References Cited:
B. DESIGN GUIDELINES

Our houses, commercial and civic buildings are constructed with the fully conscious certainty that they will disintegrate in a few decades. There is even a name for this condition: the "design life". … In especially bad buildings, like the average Wal-Mart, there may be no windows. Yet this process of disconnection from the past and the future, and from the organic patterns of weather and light, all done for the sake of expediency, ends up diminishing us spiritually, impoverishing us socially, and degrading the aggregate set of cultural patterns we call civilization.  

*James Howard Kunstler, 1996:89-90*

Introduction:

Design Guidelines should be developed for each neighborhood and district to establish a scale of development, street and Public Space identity and zoning development regulations without limiting creativity or homogenizing the Downtown.

B.1. Individualized Design Guidelines

Challenge:

- Lack of design guidelines tailored for individual areas.

Solutions:

- Establish the appropriate scale of development for each neighborhood to respond to human scale as well as density. Density may be more appropriate along busier streets, lower scaled developments along smaller neighborhood streets.

- Create zoning that supports the original 200’x200’ block size of Phoenix and discourages large, impenetrable “Super Blocks” like the Arizona Center. Super Blocks cut off access and circulation from adjacent neighborhoods and tend to focus energy internally, away from streets.

- The City should discontinue the practice of leveling buildings before plans have been approved by the appropriate neighborhoods. Many of the areas that have been leveled and scraped remain that way, becoming parking lots instead of areas that can be rejuvenated by small businesses.

- Identity can be established by landscape, paving, public art and lighting choices specific to each neighborhood and district.

- Setbacks and site plan requirements should be selected to encourage street use. Certain neighborhoods may elect to reduce setbacks to encourage a less suburban feeling and encourage multiuse development (storefronts and live/work developments).

- Work with neighborhoods and small businesses to create a zoning and Public Space plan for each neighborhood/district.

B.2. Current Zoning Codes

Challenge:

- Current zoning codes do not reflect the identity of neighborhoods or encourage small business and housing development.
Solutions:

- Form partnerships between small businesses, residents and the City to create programs that will support existing small businesses and neighborhoods as well as encourage new economic development. For example, the City of Portland, Oregon approaches small businesses and residents before city dollars are spent on improvements and often match local business and neighborhood funding initiatives for improvements.

- Develop Public Art programs that support and develop neighborhood identity.

- Coordinate the City of Phoenix’s transportation with rezoning efforts to respond to changing land use patterns.

B.3. Sustainable Design

Challenge:

- Not enough encouragement of sustainable design.

Solutions:

- As a desert city, Phoenix currently has one of the largest heat island effects in the Southwest. Zoning can establish the use of overhangs to shade streets, encourage the construction of shade structures and passive cooling to reduce the City’s heat island effect.

- The City should provide financial incentives to promote Green Building technologies and LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified buildings.

- City building projects could require LEED certification.

B.4. Support for Innovation

Challenge:

- Not enough support for unique and creative forms of building and development.

Solutions:

- The City should encourage zoning and planning standards but allow designers and artists freedom from over-arching aesthetic regulation of the kind that is found on Mill Avenue in Tempe. Regulations should help energize and lend individuality to a locale, not “generic-ize” it.

- The City of Phoenix should actively promote their Storefront Improvement Program which, currently, is not meeting the needs of small businesses in downtown Phoenix. The program needs to be tailored to make it more user-friendly and permit fees reduced to make it more financially viable for participants. The City's matching portion should be increased.

B.5. Need for Community Participation

Challenge:

- Lack of a downtown plan that involves the community in an active way.
Solutions:

- The development of a working framework plan that actively involves the community, the first step of which is the Downtown Voices report.

- A working framework plan developed by and for the Downtown Voices community which would provide ownership and a sense of shared responsibility for its success.

- City funding would be guided by this plan and shared by local businesses and communities.

References Cited:

C. SMALL BUSINESS

The Austin, Texas Independent Business Coalition sponsored a one-day event where people were encouraged to shop and dine only at locally owned businesses for that single day. The result was an added 7.2 million dollars into the local economy.

Cindy Dach, Marketing Manager for Changing Hands Bookstore, June 2004

We’ve discovered down here on Mill Avenue that the chain stores have homogenized the feel of our downtown, and actually worked to keep people away. Why would shoppers drive here and pay to park and walk around in the heat when they can go to any mall in any suburb in the valley and find the exact same shops? We had a unique and authentic downtown that was a destination point, but the city’s policies effectively sterilized it.

Michael Monti, owner of Monti’s la Casa Vieja Restaurant, Tempe, AZ, July 2004

Introduction:

The city of Phoenix is facing an unprecedented surge in growth, and city leaders are working hard to make a livable downtown that will sustain the addition of 15,000 new ASU students plus 1,800 faculty and staff, the employees of the TGen project, and massive additions to housing and retail space. In Phoenix, we still have the opportunity to keep our downtown unique and thriving, a combination vital to our quality of life and sense of place. Many people across the country are feeling a sense of loss in their communities due to the homogenization of their downtown corridors. The disappearance of local businesses is palpable and real. It is time to consider the real loss a community experiences when it loses its local business base, and choose instead to invest in our local economy, cultivate consumer choice, encourage cultural diversity and ensure that our hometown maintains its own unique character.

From Barnstable, Mass., to Austin, Texas, Salt Lake City, Utah, and Fullerton, California, communities are becoming politically active and rejecting the hollow promises the chain stores offer. Local business is a critical part of the social fabric of any community and helps to build tradition, pride and commitment.

We can move towards becoming another bland, commercialized, and divided town where gated communities, private security services, and chain stores are prominent features. Or we can remain unique, beautiful, and open to new cultural expressions through the encouragement and development of our local business community.

To conclude, big box development should be shunned. New Mexico is home to 8 empty Wal-Mart carcasses alone. Chain stores dilute local character - a Wal-Mart in Tuscaloosa is much the same as one in Carlsbad.

Definition of local business: A business that is owned by a person or family whose primary residence is in Arizona. The business cannot be publicly traded. Qualified businesses with multiple locations are included.

C.1. Economic Assistance for Small Businesses

Challenge:

- Developers are searching for chain stores to fill new retail space downtown because lenders don’t view local business as being as stable as chain stores. Chain stores are certainly not stable. In fact, because they have no ties to any particular community, they are more likely to pull up and move if the bottom line isn’t what they demand. The notion of big box stores delivering monumental economic benefits through tax revenues is yet another illusion perpetuated by the chains. An economic impact study conducted in Austin, Texas, by the economic consultant Civic Economics revealed that each dollar spent at two locally owned book and music stores, Book People and Waterloo Records, creates more than three times the local economic activity of dollars spent at a
typical Borders Books & Music Corp. The study showed that for every $100 spent at a locally owned store, the local economic impact is three times that of a chain store. Every $100 spent with a chain store instead of a locally owned business robs the local economy of $32.

Solutions:

- The City should partner with lenders who are committed to supporting small businesses.
- The City should effectively “co-sign” for any developer who is willing to place locally owned businesses in any new project.
- The City should offer incentives for developers to seek out local businesses for new development.

C.2. Promotion of Small Businesses

Challenge:

- Promotion of small businesses.

Solutions:

- The Civic Plaza expansion is an excellent opportunity for the City to showcase a new emphasis on, and support of, locally owned businesses. The ground floor of Phase I of the expansion will include retail space open to the public. The City should create a "Uniquely Phoenix" convention center by requiring that, at the very least, 50 percent of the retail spaces are owned and operated by local businesses. The City should actively recruit local businesses to fill these spaces.

Challenge:

- Belief in the fallacy that chain stores create huge returns for cities in terms of tax revenues and revitalization. Compared to chain stores, locally-owned businesses recycle a higher percentage of their revenues and profits back into the local economy. It’s been estimated that local businesses create 50 percent more jobs than national retailers, and the jobs created by local businesses tend to pay higher wages and give better benefits. Studies have shown that "in exchange for one new part-time job in a mega-discount chain, about 1 ½ full-time jobs were eliminated in smaller stores." And the jobs that they do create are generally non-union jobs with low wages and no benefits. Iowa State professor Ken Stone found that a new Wal-Mart in any area will displace 84 percent of sales that are simply shifted away from existing merchants. This does not equate to increased tax revenue.

- The Planning Board of New Paltz, New York, in considering a proposed Wal-Mart near their city, found that "the proposed plaza is inconsistent with the development goals set forth by the Comprehensive Plan... the introduction of a big box retailer to New Paltz would result in a shift in the location of businesses, a movement of trade away from the traditional downtown centers, a decline of other retail centers... large percentages of downtown businesses would be harmed, older buildings may become vacant... and any unique community character would be undermined and instead replaced by the lowest common denominator." (New Paltz, NY, Planning Board Decision, March 11, 1996, Economic and Community Impacts: Proposed Wal-Mart.)
Solutions:

Public Education

- Initiate a city sponsored study to show the various positive impacts locally owned businesses have on the economy.

- The city’s Department of Community and Economic Development should be encouraged to develop programs that will educate lenders with statistics that demonstrate the economic viability of small business development. For example, an economic impact study conducted in Barnstable, Mass., demonstrated that growth does not necessarily mean increased net revenue—in fact, many types of development actually drain local economies. Tischler & Associates studied various types of residential and commercial developments in Barnstable and compared the tax revenue they generated with the cost of providing additional required services. The findings? Big box retail, shopping centers, and fast-food restaurants cost taxpayers more than they produce. The biggest drain is fast-food restaurants with a net annual deficit of $5,168 per 1,000 square feet, with big box retail developments at a loss of $468 per 1,000 square feet, and shopping centers at $314 per 1,000 square feet. Smaller specialty retail (not big box "category killers") was found to generate positive returns, returning $326 per 1,000 square feet to the community. Other positive producers include business parks, offices, and hotels. So why the higher costs from big box and fast food development? The biggest expenses generated came from higher road maintenance costs and greater demand for public safety services—especially police calls for commercial crime.

- Use the results of city-sponsored studies on the advantages of small business development to inform policy makers.

Diversification of Economic Investments

- Diversify economic investments by fostering many small businesses instead of one giant business that will possibly leave a giant void if moved or closed.

- A city department, such as Community and Economic Development, should meet with and encourage successful small businesses in the surrounding cities to expand and/or relocate to downtown Phoenix.

- Meet with owners and find out what their needs are and ask whether or not the city can be of any assistance.

- Explain the programs that are available.

- Hold workshops and advertise them well.

- Solicit small business the same way you would big business.

C.3. Zoning Regulations

Challenge:

- Small business owners find it difficult to jump through the hoops of zoning regulations.
Solutions:

- Create a position in the mayor’s office that would act as a liaison between the city and small business.
- Relax and streamline zoning processes.
- Utilize “by right” zoning.

C.4. Design Considerations

Challenge:

- New development has often had bland architecture with a homogenized feel.

Solutions:

- Small business should be encouraged, through incentives, to restore existing buildings. A property tax credit for the renovation of existing buildings (for up to 10 years) against the county or municipal corporation property tax should be implemented;
- Provide tax incentives to property owners who convert buildings formerly used for industrial or commercial purposes into small retail spaces, including galleries;
- Encourage architecture that utilizes pedestrian friendly storefronts (and offers spaces with small square footage) through tax incentives.

C.5. Keep in Mind…

- We have more than 4,000 abandoned shopping malls in America.
- We have more shopping centers than high schools.
- We have 20 square feet of retail space for every man, woman and child in America, up from 14.7 square feet per person in 1986, compared with 2 square feet per person in Britain.
- Local business owners have a natural interest in the long-term health of our downtown community.
- Local businesses statistically stock more locally manufactured goods.
- More of the profits at locally owned businesses re-circulate in the community.
- Locally owned businesses use small manufacturers and a wide variety of service industries (accountants, insurance brokers, attorneys, computer consultants, architects, sign makers, cabinet makers, advertising agencies, etc.) that have a clear stake in the sustainability of our city.
- Locally owned businesses make a city unique.

Information for the Small Business section of this report was obtained from the following sources:

- http://www.sprawl-busters.com
- http://www.sprawlwatch.org
- http://www.austin-iba.org/about.html
- http://www.newrules.org
- http://www.walmartwatch.com

Other helpful sources:

- http://www.goodjobsfirst.org/research/resman.htm
- http://www.tradelocal.org/arts/wrongwal.htm
D. NEIGHBORHOODS

This is a wonderful place to live. There are many people who don’t know much else other than this neighborhood. Most people have roots here. Many people have lived and died here. Many people still wish to do the same if the area is not redeveloped in a way that will force them to leave. … We have always welcomed new residents to our community with the commitment that we always treat them as we do other members of our family. Shouldn’t we be guaranteed the right to stay in our neighborhood rather than being forced to watch our homes being demolished, and ourselves thrown to the winds?

David V. Montaño, 19 year resident, Evans Churchill Neighborhood, February 20, 2003

Affluent Creative Class people who move into racially, ethnically or economically diverse neighborhoods cannot simply assume that their presence automatically “revitalizes” these places.

Richard Florida, 2002:325

Introduction:

A Phoenix journalist is reported to have said to Richard Florida: “Our lack of…authentic urban neighborhoods puts us at a huge disadvantage in attracting top talent.” (Richard Florida, 2002:284.) Those of us who live in downtown Phoenix would surely disagree with the journalist’s observation. In reality, Phoenix has “authentic urban neighborhoods.” Located primarily downtown, they are home to a diversity of residents including, but not limited to, artists, laborers, Latino and African-American families, older long-term residents, affluent refugees from the suburbs, and everyone in between.

Downtown neighborhoods currently include historic single-family homes, small and large apartment buildings, new urban loft complexes, artists’ live/work spaces, work-force housing, and residential hotels which provide a diversity of housing.

Downtown neighborhoods are mostly mixed-use neighborhoods, generally with commercial uses at their boundaries. Residents can take advantage of neighborhood businesses such as nearby supermarkets and pharmacies, coffee-houses, restaurants, movie theatres, libraries, museums, the symphony, art galleries, music stores as well as sports venues.

The major problem facing downtown neighborhoods is their fragility in the face of rapid downtown development. Long-time downtown residents have watched with despair as whole residential neighborhoods and business areas have been demolished in the name of urban redevelopment. They have witnessed their favorite small businesses move out of downtown as taxes and leases become too expensive. Residents realize that without certain protections and incentives, the neighborhoods that downtown stakeholders have so valiantly attempted to sustain may easily disappear.

The following is a synopsis of some challenges and concerns, as well as some suggested solutions. These challenges are divided into three categories: prevention of negative impacts on surrounding areas, public services and employment.

D.1. Prevention of Negative Impacts of Development on Downtown Neighborhoods and Surrounding Areas

Challenge:

- Displacement. Displacement is the involuntary migration of poor residents out of downtown neighborhoods as a result of urban redevelopment. Proponents of urban redevelopment often explain displacement as a “natural” consequence of the dynamics of the housing market. Although displacement, at times, may be related to local and national housing markets, we do not believe that
displacement must be an inevitable consequence of urban redevelopment. Furthermore, we believe it to have a profoundly negative effect not only on those individuals being displaced, but on the neighborhoods from which they are dislocated. The removal of large numbers of long-term residents from any neighborhood has the effect of destabilizing that community. Conversely, according to Jane Jacobs (1992 [1961]:138), stable neighborhoods must always have the quantity of long term residents that can absorb those newcomers moving into the community. However, with the influx of newcomers predicted for downtown, and the potential for involuntary out-migration of many long term residents, the consequent destabilization of adjacent neighborhoods is inevitable.

- Participants in the Downtown Voices conference asserted repeatedly that, in reference to adjacent neighborhoods, downtown redevelopment should do no harm, and should nurture the diversity that is so characteristic of our urban communities. Many felt that the use of eminent domain is a divisive and negative tool which should be avoided. Eminent Domain, or the threat of its use, has forced residents to relocate against their will, severely disrupting older downtown neighborhoods. Private/Public partnerships have been over-used as ways to condemn properties. They are not only a drain on public coffers but have exhausted the public trust as well. There is enough vacant land in downtown Phoenix to preclude the need for eminent domain, which is costly both financially as well as in the suffering it causes to those who are displaced. (See also Section E.5)

- Increases in the cost of land will make it difficult to develop or to retain affordable multi-family units along with those long-term residents who must rely on this kind of housing. There is also the probability that many low-income homeowners will be overburdened by increasing property taxes. Attendees expressed concern that elderly and lower income individuals would be forced out of their neighborhoods, replaced by new residents who would not be as connected to their communities, losing the diverse mix of residents in the process.

Solutions:

- Preservation of affordable multi-family housing. Offer tax credits to owners of multi-family properties who agree to maintain affordable rents.

- Preservation of owner-occupied housing. With property values appreciating as a result of downtown development, property taxes will increase, causing potential loss of housing for homeowners living from paycheck to paycheck.

- Senior homeowners. For low-income individuals over the age of 65, Maricopa County has a “Valuation Protection Program” which offers senior homeowners the opportunity to freeze the valuation of their primary residence. As the value of their property increases, their property taxes are frozen starting at the time they applied to the program. However, many seniors do not access this program - some because they simply have never received information about it, others because they have been misinformed about its benefits. Develop an out-reach program that provides information about the County’s “Valuation Protection Program.”

- Other low-income homeowners. There are also many other low-income homeowners who may lose their homes because of a rise in property taxes. Many are recent first-time home-buyers who may be living from paycheck to paycheck and are unable to pay higher taxes on their homes. Develop some sort of property tax relief for younger, low-income homeowners, like the valuation protection program available to seniors, with a geographic focus on areas where there are rapid rises in property values and development-related displacement is expected.

- Mitigating displacement. At times there may be incidents of displacement. Traditionally, renters and owners who have been displaced from downtown have been offered housing far removed from
central Phoenix -- for example, in Ahwatukee, Maryvale, the far West Valley, or North Valley. Often such displacement has meant losing access to medical facilities, separation from family members living downtown and traditional places of worship, etc. We recommend that every low-income individual/family facing displacement because of downtown development be offered equal replacement housing within a two-mile radius of downtown.

D.2. Neighborhood Preservation

Challenge:

- Impact of speculation. Investors are lured by the vision of profits to be made from speculation on downtown real estate. Neighborhoods that have long struggled to turn older single family homes from rentals to home ownership are now facing the possibility that, as out-of-state investors buy out lower income homeowners, their houses will be turned into over-crowded lodging for students. Neighbors who for years have worked to attract responsible residents to their communities -- people who do not party all weekend, park vehicles in the yards, or dump trash on the streets -- are uncomfortable with the possibility that their neighborhoods, which may be located close to a University campus, will turn into the kind of student party neighborhoods that have caused problems in Tempe.

Solutions:

- Require that ASU, in its downtown plan, provide enough housing for its students as well as some of its staff.

Challenge:

- Empty land. Empty land in Phoenix is taxed at a much lower rate than land that has been developed. Thus it may be more economical for a developer to demolish a home in a downtown neighborhood, transforming the property into an empty lot which may stand empty for years while it is land-banked for future use. The result is devastating for downtown neighborhoods, often providing a place for transients to camp, trash to accumulate, and drug dealers to congregate.

Solutions:

- Raise the taxes on land in downtown neighborhoods that has been vacant for more than one year as an incentive for timelier infill development of housing and small businesses. This will also discourage owners from needlessly bulldozing structures.

Challenge:

- Abandoned and boarded-up buildings. Abandoned and boarded up buildings litter the landscape of many of our downtown neighborhoods. They attract crime and also serve as indicators of neighborhood blight.

Solutions:

- After one year raise the taxes on properties with boarded up/abandoned buildings and/or, after a specific amount of time, leverage significant fines or offer grants/loans (if a low-income individual), to rehabilitate the property.
Challenge:

- Inadequate zoning enforcement. In anticipation of substantial numbers of out-of-state investors purchasing property downtown, especially older buildings in adjacent neighborhoods, adequate zoning enforcement is essential.

Solutions:

- Neighborhood Services, the City department responsible for zoning enforcement, must have adequate staffing to deal with potential problems of neglect and deterioration associated with residential and commercial property speculation. Develop a better system for tracking down absentee landlords who may hide behind layers of ownership. The Criminal Abatement and Crime Free Multi-Housing Departments of the Phoenix Police Department are seriously understaffed; these departments need increased funding to serve even the current demand.

Challenge:

- Inconsistency in design. Most downtown neighborhoods boast a certain amount of character and integrity in their streetscapes and architecture. Any new construction should complement the existing physical features of a neighborhood, whether historic or “vintage.”

Solutions:

- The design review process, as it relates to downtown neighborhoods, should be sensitive to, contribute to, and enhance the preservation of each community’s unique physical characteristics.

D.3. Public Services

Often it appears that large commercial or residential projects are developed downtown, or in the suburbs, with little or no thought of the increased need for public services. After development is completed, public services are often siphoned away from downtown neighborhoods for the benefit of the new enterprise, whether it’s a sports venue or a new suburb. Planning for expanded services needs to be an integral part of any downtown redevelopment proposal.

Challenge:

- Lack of traffic planning. With the large influx of new residents expected downtown, and in spite of the light rail, traffic problems that currently affect our neighborhoods negatively are bound to increase. Traffic associated with downtown sports events often cause terrible gridlock during afternoon rush hours, making it difficult for residents to enter or leave their own neighborhoods. Cut-through traffic is a perennial problem for downtown neighborhoods. Traffic problems affecting downtown neighborhoods are bound to increase.

Solutions:

- The City of Phoenix should develop a comprehensive traffic plan, with input from downtown neighborhoods, before plans for downtown development are solidified. Rather than waiting until downtown redevelopment plans are put into place, and dealing with traffic problems in a piecemeal fashion, there should be a general plan that will keep these problems to a minimum.
Challenge:

- Maintenance of open spaces. Every time Phoenix annexes more land, services diminish in older areas of the city, in order to service these new communities. Often park hours are shortened, and staff is laid off, while new programs and facilities are developed on the fringes of Phoenix.

Solutions:

- In the course of planning new parks and green spaces downtown, the City should consider how Parks and Recreation services will be maintained, or augmented, to ensure the use and maintenance of open areas in nearby neighborhoods.

Challenge:

- Sustainable law enforcement. The development of new downtown venues, as well as the scheduling of special events, often siphons law enforcement away from neighboring areas.

Solutions:

- The revitalization of downtown needs to include the assurance that local communities receive the level of law enforcement needed to secure their safety and protection.

D.4. Underemployment in Surrounding Neighborhoods

Challenge:

- Employment. Some downtown neighborhoods, home to predominately service workers, suffer from unemployment or underemployment.

Solutions:

- New businesses and academic venues should be persuaded to target downtown neighborhoods with jobs fairs and related employment outreach.

References Cited:

- Montaño, David. Letter to the Phoenix City Council, February 20, 2003
E. AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Urban renewal is to the [low income] housing problem as a crash reducing diet is to the problem of malnutrition. In the face of a problem that can only be solved by the massive construction of new low income housing, urban renewal keeps destroying low-income housing.

William Ryan, 1976

Introduction:

A recent study of housing in downtown Phoenix shows a striking dichotomy between demand for affordable residential units and the products that have been and are being developed. The study indicates that while the median price of a new attached home in Phoenix is $177,000, a similar property in downtown Phoenix would cost approximately $300,000 (Meyers Group, 2003, Executive Summary). Part of this dichotomy results from the destruction of affordable housing associated with the development of the city's downtown infrastructure, and part of the problem is based on the City of Phoenix's policy of providing incentives, including generous tax benefits, to developers who wish to build high-end housing. The result is that almost all new units developed in Phoenix during the past decade are affordable only to those with minimum salaries of $65,000, whereas the medium CMA (Consolidated Metropolitan Area) income is $20,352, a reflection of the fact that 41 percent of downtown residents are employed in the service sector, earning an average of $7.00 an hour. Beyond this, 93 percent of apartments in downtown Phoenix are one-bedroom units, whereas 39.1 percent of the population consists of low-income Latino families. Affordable housing units renting from $298 to $467 a month in downtown Phoenix are always 100 percent full, as compared to market-rate housing, where vacancy rates fluctuate between 10-13 percent.

If downtown Phoenix is to provide a home to the arts community, as well as the whole spectrum of blue collar workers needed by downtown service industries (in particular the tourist/convention sectors), and white-collar workers employed by the commercial sector, there must be more affordable housing. It must fit the requirements of the artist who needs an affordable live-work space, the young couple working at a downtown bookstore, the single mother with two children who cleans guest rooms at the Hyatt, the student attending ASU, or the disabled veteran who lives downtown to be closer to the medical attention he or she needs. All of these individuals, and many more, need affordable housing. We do not need to follow the example of other Western cities where low income residents commute to and from work, while only the wealthy live close to their jobs. Such a system results in the destruction of diversity -- the diversity critical to the establishment of a vibrant downtown.

Definition of Affordable Housing:

We define affordable housing as housing that is accessible to families and individuals whose income is 50-60 percent of medium, or less. In monetary terms this would signify units that would rent for $300 to $700 monthly, or the ownership of a home costing between $60,000 and $125,000. More specifically, as one workshop participant noted, the rule of thumb should be that the cost of housing "should not take all of one's budget." Or, as Mayor Gordon has stated, affordable housing should "allow any working family the opportunity to raise their children in a wholesome environment, while still meeting other family needs" (State of the City: 2004).

E.1. Financial Constraints

Challenge:

- The financing of affordable housing downtown will be very expensive, given the rising costs of construction and land.
Solutions:

- Pass Tax Increment Financing (TIF) bill that will serve as the key to much of downtown redevelopment, including the creation of affordable housing. (TIF can be used for buying land downtown, financing and infrastructure improvements, grants for improving low-income owner-occupied homes, etc.).
- Support a real-estate transfer fee to be used for the development of affordable housing.
- Create public-private (including non-profit) partnerships for the development of affordable housing.
- Provide City assistance in developing financing and tax reductions.
- Reduce infrastructure costs.
- Recycle development sites such as tax-delinquent, abandoned/surplus properties, and vacant lots.
- Recycle boarded-up and vacant homes for rehabilitation.

E.2. Development Constraints

Challenge:

- Insufficient regulatory relief. There is insufficient regulatory relief, particularly for streamlining and expediting development services, to develop the amount of affordable housing needed downtown.

Solutions:

- Create an incentive package for the development of affordable housing to include impact fee wavers, tax abatements, expedited permitting, one-stop permitting.
- Create fast-track permitting with 24 hour turn-around.
- Allow building permit self-certification for new construction based on approved prototype designs.

E.3. Affordable Technology

Challenge:

- Affordability of construction. There is not enough exploration or development of affordable/alternative techniques and materials for construction. Commonly used construction techniques make the cost of developing affordable housing prohibitive.

Solutions:

- Encourage housing demonstration projects that will showcase the use of alternative affordable construction materials, such as straw bale and passive solar. The City of Tucson has carried out several successful programs of this kind. Revise the City’s building code to include some of the more affordable and innovative technologies that have recently been developed.
- Work with Job Corps and other local and national non-profits to create affordable housing options.
E.4. Location of Affordable Housing

Challenge:

- Affordable housing is often relegated to low-income neighborhoods. The suggestion is often made by planners, (including those who prepared the recent study of downtown housing in Phoenix - Meyers Group, 2003), that affordable downtown housing should be relegated to low-income neighborhoods. On the contrary, communities should have diversity among their residents – age, ethnicity, income, education, etc. Otherwise our neighborhoods will stultify, becoming the equivalent of homogenized suburbs, rather than the vibrant, culturally diverse communities that have served as creative catalysts for some of our nation’s more interesting downtowns.

Solutions:

- Diversify downtown neighborhoods, following the lead of many of our nation’s cities, by mandating that a percentage of every market-rate housing development be targeted to low-income families and individuals. Should the project developer not wish to develop the affordable units, he/she would deposit the value of the units with the City of Phoenix to be used for the development of affordable housing elsewhere within the downtown area. Create affordable live/work space for artists in the form of rentals or owner occupied housing.

E.5. Preservation of Existing Affordable Housing

Challenge:

- Displacement. (See Section D.1)

Challenge:

- Eminent Domain. Hundreds of units of affordable housing have been lost in downtown Phoenix either by the threat of Eminent Domain, or by the process itself. Most have been demolished to make way for “high-end” projects, whether commercial, residential, or related to a sports venue. These actions not only further deplete the City’s stock of affordable housing, but generally cause a great deal of pain and suffering to their residents, whether renters or owners. No amount of relocation funds can compensate for the loss of one’s home.

Solutions:

- Eminent Domain should be avoided at all costs. It should never be used in connection with any private sector development. The amount of empty land in downtown Phoenix should preclude the need to use eminent domain for the acquisition of residential property. In the rare case that it might be necessary, the City, or ASU, should make sure that every unit of affordable housing destroyed be replaced by two units designated for low-income (non-student) residents.

E.6. Advocacy

Challenge:

- Leadership. Finally, and most importantly, who will advocate for affordable housing? Who will provide the necessary political leadership?
Solutions:

- The mayor of Phoenix should become the chief advocate for the development of affordable housing downtown (and elsewhere)! Of the cities that have been successful in developing downtown affordable housing -- Houston, Seattle, and Cincinnati -- the mayor has taken the lead in promoting downtown housing. Houston’s mayor led a campaign, in collaboration with home builders, to stimulate in-city housing construction; Cincinnati’s mayor created a homeownership campaign, again working with home builders, to stimulate in-city housing construction; the mayor of Seattle convened a housing summit to identify ways to increase affordable housing in the city. (Meyers Group, 2003)

References Cited:

- City of Phoenix, State of the City 2004, Phoenix, Arizona 2004
- Meyers Group, Market Assessment Facing the Potential Demand for Residential Housing in the Downtown Area of Phoenix, Arizona, Solana Beach, CA, 2003
F. HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Our lack of old buildings...puts us at a huge disadvantage in attracting top talent.
Anonymous Phoenix business journalist quoted by Richard Florida, 2002:284

Introduction:

As long-time downtown residents we have watched with despair as historic residences and commercial buildings, even whole residential neighborhoods and business areas, have been demolished in the name of urban redevelopment. As downtown redevelops, there will be pressure to demolish historic and vintage buildings to make way for new projects in both the target area and in nearby neighborhoods. Without certain protections and incentives, the historic areas that downtown stakeholders have valiantly attempted to sustain may disappear. Currently unprotected historic properties should be considered for historic designation. Properties that already have historic designation should be safeguarded from demolition. Several of the following recommendations were made in 2001 by the Ad Hoc Historic Preservation Advisory Committee -- thus far, no action has been taken on these issues by the Phoenix City Council.

F.1. Public Education

Challenge:

- Lack of public education in regards to historic preservation. The public needs to be educated better about the value of historic preservation. This is not only true for the owner of residential or commercial property, but for those who wish to play an active role in the redevelopment of downtown, whether Maricopa County, ASU, or the downtown business community.

Solutions:

- The City of Phoenix needs to acknowledge that the destruction of its history, in the form of its historic properties, is not negotiable; that the community and its elected and appointed officials have an inalienable responsibility to preserve the historic fabric of our City. This can, and should be, done by educating every developer or potential owner of an historic property about the obligations associated with owning a part of the city’s history. It will also mean standing up, at times, to other political entities as well as private developers, who wish to demolish any part of our City’s history. From the perspective of residential properties, the Historic Preservation Office should develop an educational outreach program using community volunteers. For example, when an historic home is purchased, the new owner will have an opportunity to learn through workshops, letters, and the internet about the responsibilities and opportunities associated with owning such a property.

F.2. Historic Designation Process

Challenge:

- The historic designation process is too slow. There is a real need to expedite the historic designation process. Owners with a property that is a candidate for historic designation should have their applications expedited as rapidly as possible. This is especially true for owners of commercial properties whose debt structuring and other expenses do not allow a lengthy wait for historic designation approval.
Solutions:

- Preservation advocates and private property owners are best served by expeditious action. Designation hearings conducted by the Historic Preservation Commission should occur within 120 days of an accepted application submitted to the Historic Preservation office. City Council should take action within 120 days of the designation recommended by the Historic Preservation Commission. Commercial properties should be expedited even faster. The designation of a property as Historic by the State, should serve as an incentive for the City’s Historic Preservation Office to expedite its own process.

F.3. Demolition of Historic Properties

Challenge:

- Demolition of historic properties. Every year hundreds of Phoenix’s historic buildings are demolished. Some owners are willing to conform with the one-year waiting period before tearing down an historic structure, others may intentionally neglect a building with the intent of applying for a demolition permit. Finally, there are those who will simply demolish an historic structure “in the dead of the night”, knowing that there is no substantial consequence to such an action.

Solutions:

- Revise Criteria for Granting Demolition Permits. Protection of buildings for demolition should be reviewed according to the classification of that structure, with a longer demolition stay depending on the property’s significance. Landmark buildings, owned by the City, cannot be demolished. Other City-owned historic structures should be subject to a five year stay after demonstrating no feasible alternative to demolition. For privately owned historic structures, landmark buildings should be subject to a ten year stay, other historic structures to a three year stay.

- Amend Ordinance to Discourage Demolition by Neglect. Evidence of deterioration by deliberate neglect or failure to maintain should prevent demolition approval. Authority should be established for citation, fines and the ability to seek court orders to require restoration or restriction of building permits for new construction. Neighborhood Services, the City department responsible for zoning enforcement, should be mandated to pay particular attention to problems of neglect and deterioration associated with historic residential and commercial properties, and have staff who are specifically trained to deal with preservation problems associated with historic properties.

- Provide for Additional Enforcement and Mandatory Fines. Provide severe mandatory fines for the unauthorized partial or total demolition of a historic structure. Additional City sanctions should include:
  
  o An application in Superior Court either requiring the owner to restore or reconstruct the structure, or Prohibit the issuance of building permits for new construction on the property for not less than two years.
  
  o Issuance of stop work orders, by Preservation staff, for failure to obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness for all alterations that require one.
F.4. Vintage Properties

Challenge:

- Preservation of vintage and other landmark properties. There are many vintage or landmark properties in Phoenix that are less than 50 years old, but that in a few years will be eligible for historic status. They may be representative of a certain architectural style, or have an important place in Phoenix’s history. Their demolition can be an irrevocable loss for the historic roots of Phoenix.

Solutions:

- Many of these buildings are ideal for arts uses, small retail, and non-profits. Financial incentives could assist in the restoration or adaptive re-use of vintage/landmark buildings (both under and over 50 years old) that do not, or will not, qualify for “pure” historic status because of age or significant prior alterations.

Reference Cited:

G. ARTS AND CULTURE

In a time of mindless homogenization, it is the arts that confer distinction on a community.

Ben Cameron, Director, Phoenix, 2004

The Valley’s arts and culture organizations cope with substantially less revenue than those in other cities. The consequence is that Valley arts and culture organizations face an increasingly tough reality. They must run faster just to stay in place.

Maricopa Regional Arts and Culture Task Force (MRACT), 2004:ii

Introduction:

At the recent Downtown Voices conference, support of the arts was defined as "providing the environment to sustain and grow the downtown arts community." The geographic focus was central Phoenix, specifically downtown. However, because no one felt that the arts should be limited to just this area, planning concepts were directed at growth outside this area as well, noting that the key challenges and opportunities are often the same for both. However, for the purposes of this report, we will speak in terms of the downtown arts community.

Downtown Phoenix has a wide spectrum of arts activities, from the larger non-profits like the Herberger Theater Center, Phoenix Art Museum, and the Phoenix Center for the Arts to the medium sized projects like Valley Youth Theater, the Black Theater Troupe, Museo Chicano, the Icehouse and the Great Arizona Puppet Theater to the multitude of small-scale, grass roots projects like Modified Arts, Thought Crime, Paulina Miller Gallery, The Trunk Space, Alwun House, and the Paper Heart Gallery. Within the context of these multiple spaces you have the official arts-related non-profit institution, the independent arts-related business, and the artists whose works are an integral part of the success of both. Many of these smaller entities are helping to create the dynamic, street level, pedestrian infill we so desperately need downtown.

"Years of almost unbelievable growth have created a sprawling metropolitan region with a diverse population and a bedeviling problem -- how to create and maintain a sense of community. Arts and culture is beginning to receive its due as a vehicle to bring residents together to create stronger community bonds. This is good news for an area still coping with the isolating effects of population "churn"... Participating in arts and culture is one of the best ways to bridge socioeconomic, ethnic, and generational differences, and discover common threads and identities." (MRACT)

Goal 5 of the City of Phoenix Planning Department’s draft Area Plan for Evans Churchill states: "Artists often live and work in undesirable locations if space is affordable. Artists are typically tenants. As artists aggregate in urban areas, they attract pedestrian traffic, resulting in a gradual gentrification of a previously blighted urban area. The increased activity eventually attracts restaurants, retail and additional residential development. As rents increase, artists are gradually forced to relocate. Downtown Phoenix is unique in that many artists have purchased property and have the opportunity to play a meaningful role in the development of their neighborhoods." However, since many artists downtown are still renters in areas that are prime for redevelopment, downtown is at risk of losing them as their fragile neighborhoods are disrupted. We need to identify creative solutions for keeping artists downtown.

The Wolf Organization conducted a Cultural Needs Assessment for the City of Phoenix in 1988, and in their 1989 report the consultants stated, "The creation of an active artists' studio district is an important need...and its creation will assist in efforts to revitalize the downtown area. Artists’ studios and the businesses which generally flourish around artists...contribute to the feeling of vitality so crucial to downtown development." They further noted, "But in order for the effort to be successful, there must be a commitment on the part of the City to provide the necessary incentives to building owners to make the rental of space to artists more attractive." Unfortunately, shortly after this report was completed, 17 artists were displaced as a direct result
of the America West Arena, which established a dangerous precedent that continues to this day. Over the past 15 years, many Landmark and vintage warehouses and commercial spaces in the downtown core have been demolished to make way for the Arena, the Arizona Center, Bank One Ballpark, the expanded jail facilities, the Dodge Theater, the Collier Center, the County Morgue, other County facilities and a myriad of ancillary parking uses. The really tragic part of this story is that most of these projects could have been located elsewhere, on existing empty lots or outside the downtown core altogether. How do jails, parking lots or morgues add vitality to the downtown core?

The success of downtown planning is dependent on the diversity of voices included in the planning process. This diversity must be an integral and on-going part of the planning processes downtown. These voices also need to be respected and heeded, since they bring a knowledgeable difference of opinion to the table. Both the City and its residents have much to gain from an open, ongoing and transparent dialogue. By working toward common goals and by meeting as equals, the mistrust of past planning experiences can be dispelled while creating a healthier, more productive connection between the public and City officials and staff.

G.1. Inclusion in the Downtown Planning Process

Challenge:

- Lack of communication with city officials and insufficient inclusion in planning processes downtown. The absence of communication between city officials and members of the arts community, along with inadequate inclusion in downtown planning processes, continues to threaten the longevity and well being of the downtown arts community.

Solutions:

- Initiate a permanent arts task force that would establish and keep track of communication opportunities with City officials (i.e. City Council sub-committee meetings), other City departments and downtown planning groups. This task force would also research additional opportunities regarding the nurturing and preservation of existing arts uses downtown. The Arts and Business Council of Greater Phoenix, D-PAC, the Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture, Arizonans for Cultural Development, The Arizona Commission on the Arts, and Artlink are examples of organizations that could take a leading role in establishing this task force. The task force would meet on a regular basis and discuss issues such as: creative funding sources, zoning issues, building codes, live/work space issues, etc. These ideas could then be communicated to City officials, and implemented with the assistance of City staff or other appropriate organizations.

G.2. Artists as Small Business Professionals

Challenge:

- Artists are not recognized as small business professionals.

Solutions:

- Establish a small business administration geared specifically towards arts businesses (or expand the SBA to include a component that specifically addresses artist's needs).

- From a County property tax perspective, artists working in their homes are recognized as small businesses while their property tax rate remains residential. The reverse should apply i.e. an artist who is living in their commercial space needs to be taxed at a residential, not commercial rate. And although some local artists have had success with the County in lowering their property taxes to a
mixed use rate in a warehouse live/work situation, a consistency needs to be brought to this issue, so the County thoroughly understands the rationale behind it so the point doesn't have to be argued anew by each artist, each tax year.

- Programs geared toward small businesses should be tailored to encourage the participation of artists and other arts related businesses as well.

- Exploration of ways to provide additional technical assistance to artists and arts organizations, i.e. grant writing or small business loans.

G.3. Marketing

Challenge:

- Insufficient marketing of the arts to the general public.

Solutions:

- Market downtown arts organizations and the local, unique artist community to the general public by increasing financing to organizations that already act as umbrella organizations in promoting multiple art venues, i.e. Artlink, Inc., who produces the monthly First Fridays and annual Art Detour events. This organization is primarily volunteer and is often strapped for cash; find a way for the City to underwrite all the transportation costs during First Friday and Art Detour, since the buses to spaces provide a huge service to the public (not to mention great marketing and advertising for the City of Phoenix) and is inclusive of so many downtown arts groups. Another obvious organization to target for additional funding would be the City of Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture. Additional funding could assist them in expanding their programming to include incentives for encouraging start-up projects that establish new work space for artists downtown or adaptive re-use of older buildings.

- The Percent for Art Program is an important reminder of how the arts can improve our quality of life and give our environment a distinctive sense of place. More neighborhood-based art projects should be encouraged through this program, fostering murals, community gardens, sidewalks, lighting, bicycle amenities, trash cans, tree guards, planters and pocket parks/sculpture.

- Foster on-site workshops, particularly for children, in neighborhoods. For instance, BICAS, a Tucson based non-profit that works with bicycles, conducted a bicycle workshop two years ago with children in the Capitol Mall Weed & Seed Area in downtown Phoenix. In addition, they fabricated their own chairs and sculpture from recycled bicycle parts; the sculpture was used to beautify the local community garden (Jardin de la Gente) as part of a summer art/work program for inner city youth.

G.4. Sustainability

Challenge:

- Lack of sustainable funding for downtown arts efforts, including individual artists and non-profits.
Solutions:

- Look at creative funding sources such as: (1) Parking meter fees in a particular district would fund creative projects specifically in that area and (2) Establishing merchants' associations that would become self-sufficient organizations that would help support, nurture and promote the arts-related and other small business activities in a particular neighborhood (the 4th Avenue Merchant's Association in Tucson funds their $700,000 annual budget primarily from two major street fairs each year).

- Research programs in other places and see how they achieved similar goals (Artspace, a non-profit organization based in Minneapolis, is a good resource).

G.5. Work and Performance Spaces

Challenge:

- Maintaining existing, and establishing additional, work and performance spaces for artists in and around downtown.

Solutions:

- Rhode Island has populated its DownCity Arts and Entertainment District by sales and income tax exemptions. Artists and artisans in DownCity are exempt from state and local sales taxes, and resident artists are exempt from personal state income tax. The program has been deemed so successful that the Rhode Island General Assembly recently passed legislation to establish similar districts in two other Rhode Island cities, Westerly, and Pawtucket.

- Artspace Projects, Inc. based in Minneapolis, Minnesota has redeveloped several buildings for artists in St. Paul and nationwide, using dedicated Low-Income Housing Credits (LIHTC); other cities such as Salt Lake, Detroit, and Philadelphia have also had success with this program. This approach can be augmented with historic tax credits to redevelop existing buildings within a historic district. Contact Ann Florie at 205.326.1100.

- Find ways to partner with existing property owners downtown to encourage the integration of artist work space in their buildings. For example, ADOT (Arizona Department of Transportation) has worked successfully with artists in Tucson, making available older, unused buildings for adaptive re-use as art spaces, charging a minimal annual rent.

- Partner with projects in the planning stages (e.g. ASU expanded campus) to assure a percentage of space will be dedicated to arts uses (could range from window display space to a musician's practice space).

- Look at City-owned buildings to see if there is any availability of potential studio space, performance/practice space.

- Find ways to protect existing uses through tax incentives, tax abatement, etc.

- Identify existing art spaces in jeopardy and find ways to assist them (i.e. The Icehouse needs upgrades to make it a fully functioning space).

- Identify a pilot project for developing additional studio space for artists in downtown.
Establish a program akin to a first time homebuyers program tailored to assist the first time art studio buyer or small arts related business owner. This could include forgivable micro-loans for down payments. Look to other cities as models (e.g., Tucson has assisted several arts groups in purchasing their spaces and has actively developed a downtown warehouse into artist work space).

A revised building code that comprehends the difference between traditional uses and the more non-traditional adaptive re-use of structures for art spaces.

The City should create a groundbreaking pilot project by sending out an RFP for a live/work project that would be available for purchase by artist residents.

References Cited:

- Cameron, Ben. Speech to the Southwest Arts Conference, Phoenix, 2004
- City Council, City of Phoenix, “Report on Downtown Arts Community and Related Issues,” Item 6, March 10, 2004. (Includes observations by Phil Jones, Director, City of Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture.)
- Maricopa County Regional Arts and Culture Task Force. Vibrant Culture - Thriving Economy: Arts, Culture, and Prosperity in Arizona’s Valley of the Sun, Phoenix. May, 2004
H. PUBLIC PLACES: SPACES AND IDENTITY

"A town needs public squares; they are the largest, most public rooms that the town has. But when they are too large, they look and feel deserted."

Alexander, et al. 1977:311

Introduction:

Public places and spaces should reflect different characteristics suited to community needs. Identity is informed by the physical form of a particular space and by the purpose of each space. A few examples:

- A concentration of natural beauty and shade that serves as an attractive place of refuge and reflection would not include a playground;

- Public spaces with less attention to natural beauty, but with an adequate amount of shade, can be used for special events, celebrations, public speaking opportunities, performances, temporary and permanent art installations;

- Less formal smaller spaces can connect neighborhoods, such as pocket parks, slices of nature, urban trails;

- Community gardens can be designed and maintained by neighborhood residents;

- Recreational open spaces can be designed for all ages, including skate and skateboard parks for adolescents.

- Design elements that are recommended for inclusion in the development, or redevelopment, of public spaces downtown include, but are not limited to: natural settings (less formal design), landscaping that suits the Sonoran Desert climate, efficient use of water, SHADE, restrooms, sustainable architecture (where appropriate), bicycle racks, and easy accessibility for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers (accessible parking).

- Creating accessible, adaptable public spaces encourages a sense of community and raises the quality of life for downtown residents.

H.1. Civic Commitment

Challenge:

- Civic commitment is necessary to develop the public spaces needed to guarantee a vibrant downtown. With the high-dollar value of property downtown, the purchase of land for the creation of open spaces, whether large or small, may be viewed as an unrealistic and uneconomical use of very expensive land.

Solutions:

- Support a tax or fee on new development that will support the development of public spaces downtown.

- Mandate that downtown developers be responsible for the development of open, public spaces on the properties they develop. Such stipulations are in force in cities such as New York and Chicago.
H.2. Maintenance

Challenge:

- Maintenance of public spaces. The City of Phoenix Parks and Recreation Department consistently receives the brunt of annual budget cuts. More alarming is the fact that expanding services into newly annexed areas result in cuts in maintenance and services in older parts of the city. The result is the deterioration of public spaces, such as the waterway at Encanto Park. Programs are cut back or eliminated, such as summer youth programs in inner-city neighborhoods.

Solutions:

- In the course of planning for new parks and green spaces downtown, the City of Phoenix should consider augmenting the Parks and Recreation Department’s budget to insure an adequate level of programming and maintenance in open areas already located in the downtown corridor, as well as in nearby neighborhoods.

- Parks and Recreation should consider recruiting civic and youth groups, and local non-profits, to assist in the maintenance of downtown parks and other open spaces,

- Since nearby open spaces are generally recognized as adding value to adjacent properties, business and residential properties adjacent to parks and other open spaces might be asked to contribute to their upkeep.

- Public spaces could be designed to require less maintenance such as: landscaping with native desert plants and trees or defining urban spaces by paving, benches, sculpture, and minimal landscaping (rows of trees and structures).

H.3. Design

Challenge:

- The design of public spaces; the need for excellence in design.

Solutions:

- Strive for design excellence through the recruitment and selection of the best possible designers of public spaces, whether local, national or international.

- Conduct a national or international competition to select architect(s) conversant with the design of public spaces to design Phoenix’s new “Patriot’s Park,” as well as other open spaces downtown.

- The City should require that appropriate public spaces be included in proposals for housing, civic projects and the development of ASU’s downtown campus. (See also Section C: Design Guidelines).

- Public Art funding and selection should be coordinated with the development of these projects.
H.4. Security

Challenge:

- Provide adequate security and lighting in public spaces downtown. Since redevelopment plans are based on Phoenix having a 24/7 downtown, public spaces need to be accessible 24 hours a day. Currently, our public spaces do not encourage 24 hour usage.

Solutions:

- Any design of open space should integrate lighting and other security elements. Resting amenities can be combined with improved lighting and security to allow benches and seating areas to be re-incorporated into neighborhoods. Promoting gathering places and providing seating and shading will encourage streets to be used more frequently, reducing crime and improving the use of streets for businesses. With the help of the City, businesses and homeowners can organize to reduce inappropriate use of public spaces. Transportation stops can be incorporated into plazas and smaller public spaces to energize these spaces. Bicycle racks should also be provided to encourage alternative transportation.

- Promote housing adjacent to parks and other public spaces so that residents can act as “eyes on the street,” thereby discouraging vandalism and other criminal activities. (Jane Jacobs 1992 (1961): 95-98).

H.5. Linkages

Challenge:

- Lack of innovative spaces that link areas within the Central Corridor, as well as with adjacent neighborhoods.

Solutions:

- Create an Urban Oasis through the cultivation of nature and art projects that knit together empty, unimproved spaces throughout downtown Phoenix. As conceived by The Downtown Phoenix Conservancy, the Urban Oasis will result in a more cohesive, attractive and inviting downtown.

- An example of a project that would create a link between downtown and the surrounding community is the Panoliztli (the Bridge, El Puente). As designed by Tonatierra, it would create both a practical and symbolic portal uniting the downtown with the Garfield neighborhood, as well as the earth with the sky. It would also function as a seasonal sun clock marking the equinox. Tonatierra envisions a multi-level bridge that will include shops and a pedestrian walkway. (For more information contact Tonatierra at: chantlaca@aol.com)

References Cited:

I. TRANSPORTATION

Cars give people wonderful freedom and increase their opportunities. But they also destroy the environment, to an extent so drastic, that they kill all social life.

Alexander et al, 1977:64

Introduction:

Residents, workers, and visitors to downtown Phoenix will become less dependent on the car as alternative forms of transportation increase. If this does not occur, downtown will become more polluted and gridlocked as Phoenix attempts to accommodate a rapidly growing population. The central core cannot be an exciting and dynamic place if large areas are covered with parking structures. In order to break our dependence on motorized transportation, we recommend:

- Encouragement of all forms of mobility (walking, bicycling, skateboarding, carpooling, light rail, buses, etc.) to expedite getting from place to place quickly, affordably, and safely, using environment-friendly technology.

- Increased transit, using light rail, rapid bus lines and designated safe bicycle routes. Currently transportation plans focus on bringing people from suburban areas (park and ride) to the Downtown. Missing from current plans are better transportation offerings for localized neighborhoods such as Coronado, Willo, and those immediately north, east, and west of downtown.

- Connection of downtown Phoenix to the network of multi-modal recreational trails and paths being planned, both in the City of Phoenix and regionally, including the Papago Salado Trail and the Maricopa County Trail system.

- Reduction of speeds along secondary streets and through neighborhoods (i.e. Roosevelt, Fillmore Street, 2nd Street) by directing traffic to major streets and avenues. Along the major streets and avenues (ex. Central Avenue, Seventh Street, McDowell Road) increase sidewalk widths to add landscape buffers, protected bicycle lanes (with the use of bollards) and landscaped medians to help shade streets and make both walking and biking feasible and enjoyable.

- Reintroduce parallel parking in areas where you want to encourage more retail and pedestrian traffic i.e. along Roosevelt Street and Grand Avenue. This will also serve to slow down traffic in areas that have a high accident rate due to speeding.

I.1. Bicycle Routes

Challenge:

- Bicycle routes are often placed adjacent to fast-moving traffic or parked cars. They are intermittent and not found often in the downtown area.

Solutions:

- Incorporate a continuous network of bicycle paths along secondary streets with slower moving traffic.

- Create bicycle routes along busier streets by “layering” circulation, providing bollards and landscape buffers to make bicycling and walking safer.
• Provide designated bicycle routes that lead to other transportation destinations, i.e., light rail stations, rapid transit stations. Additionally, these destinations can be incorporated into public spaces. (See also Section I.)

• Encourage on-street parking and parking lanes to slow traffic.

I.2. Pedestrian Traffic

Challenge:

• Walking downtown is not desirable due to the speed of traffic and the lack of shaded, pedestrian scaled streetscapes, lighting and paving surface treatment, and visual interest.

Solutions:

• Redesign roads and streets by thinking of them not as car and traffic feeders, but for walking and enjoyment. Integrate more art into the streetscape program.

• Create safer crossings of major intersections by redesigning roads that are pedestrian- versus car-focused. In the case where road redesign is not possible, pedestrian bridges are a minimal solution to crossing “car-focused” traffic feeder streets.

• Encourage landscaped zones between sidewalks and streets to shade people and buffer traffic.

• Develop a system of Urban Trails throughout downtown Phoenix. This plan, designed by a group of downtown residents from the Roosevelt neighborhood, would establish urban pathways that would be inviting for pedestrians, complete with oases and rest stops. (Contact catrina@amrush.com for more information.)

I.3. Pedestrian Amenities

Challenge:

• Public, pedestrian friendly amenities are few and far between in the downtown.

Solutions:

• Link open public spaces, including green zones, and art activities with pedestrian and bicycle-friendly streets.

• Promote more diverse and interesting smaller blocks versus ‘super blocks’ that make streets homogenous and impenetrable.

• Focus outward-looking building development along smaller streets versus internalized commercial activity.

I.4. Parking

Challenge:

• Parking demands currently occupy too much street real estate in downtown.
Solutions:

- Create financial incentives for providing more underground parking in commercial and residential developments.
- Raise property taxes on empty lots to discourage speculation.
- Reduce parking requirements for developments to promote the use of light rail, buses, and carpooling.
- Allow more curb-side parking.
- Provide accessible shuttle transport from parking areas to downtown points of interest.

I.5. Noise

Challenge:

- Noise levels from trucks and airplanes discourage the use of streets by residents, restaurants, and other businesses.

Solutions:

- Prohibit large trucks from using small, secondary streets.
- Control constant flight of helicopters over downtown (with the exception of police and hospitals).

Reference Cited:

J. DIVERSITY AND CULTURAL INCLUSION

My neighborhood is the microcosm we all want. Different races, different incomes, different points of view. But commonalities are what’s truly important. We have a sense of caring and compassion for one another. We help each other feel safe. About a year ago somebody threw a brick through the window of my truck. The next morning several of my neighbors knocked on my door to offer condolences and to see if there was anything they could do. There wasn’t, but I appreciated it. My next door neighbors are Catholic Worker volunteers. They feel that the way to salvation is to perform acts of selfless compassion. It’s obvious that my neighbors feel the same way. My neighborhood is a distillation of the world we all want.

Len Harris, photographer, Oakland-University Park Neighborhood, June 24, 2004

Introduction:

Downtown should reflect a sensitivity to the diverse socio-economic, ethnic, and generational diversity that is a vital part of our downtown neighborhoods. Downtown redevelopment will be successful if it embraces this diversity and incorporates it as a dynamic community asset in all aspects of planning. Diversity and Cultural Inclusion permeate all of the issues presented in this report.

J.1. Lack of Diversity in the Downtown Planning Process

Challenge:

- Insufficient direct participation in the planning process. Although Phoenix Futures and ASU have invited some individuals and groups to comment on their plans, there has been little integral involvement by members of downtown communities who will be most affected by their plans. For instance, thus far redevelopment plans are being drawn up without any apparent reference to the cultural diversity of Phoenix.

Solutions:

- Invite representatives that reflect our diverse downtown population to serve as members of the committees and panels that will guide and determine downtown development.

Challenge:

- Inadequate linkage with adjoining neighborhoods. Many downtown neighborhoods (e.g., Garfield, Eastlake, Oakland-University Park, Grant Park, Buckeye) have not been contacted about how they can be involved with downtown planning.

Solutions:

- Establish a dialogue with these neighborhoods to explore existing or potential opportunities to include them in the planning process. Include physical and symbolic links to these neighborhoods via pedestrian bridges, bicycle paths, sidewalks, and complementary development.

J.2. Design Guidelines Should Encourage and Reflect Diversity

Challenge:

- Lack of cultural diversity in design guidelines. Design guidelines for downtown Phoenix lack any reference to the area’s history or cultural diversity. For example, our connection to the ancient history of Phoenix is being lost. Phoenix is built on the ancient ruins of the Hohokam and other
Indigenous Peoples, yet there is little evidence of their existence in the cultural infrastructure of the area.

Solutions:

- Design guidelines for the redevelopment of downtown should encourage and acknowledge the history and diversity of Phoenix. Phoenix is built upon the remains of a great society; this history needs to be explored and re-integrated into the symbology of our downtown. Creating an identity for Phoenix means embracing the past. Indigenous Peoples should be encouraged to participate in the design of downtown projects. By embracing and understanding the past, we will be able to create a more meaningful identity for the future.

- In addition, design guidelines should be sensitive to the cultural traditions of different ethnic groups. For example, Latinos tend to use their front yards as extensions of their homes. The enclosed front yard acts as a room without a ceiling and is therefore used as a place for socializing (Rojas 1993:48). The front yard as living room brings residents outside where they serve as the eyes and ears of the neighborhood. This design element should be encouraged in new construction projects, as opposed to building housing that abuts the sidewalk.

J.3. More Minority Business Ownership in Downtown Phoenix

Challenge:

- Lack of minority-owned businesses in the Downtown Phoenix Redevelopment Area. Although some encouragement has been given to minority proprietors of small businesses in downtown Phoenix (The Mercado and Bank One Ballpark parking structure, for example), minority owners need additional assistance in order to succeed, and for their numbers to increase.

Solutions:

- Minority owners of small businesses should be actively recruited to locate downtown. They should also be provided with the necessary assistance to help them succeed. (See Section C.)

Challenge:

- Small businesses owned by minorities in adjacent neighborhoods could be vulnerable to displacement.

Solutions:

- Inclusion should be the goal, not displacement. A muffler shop, bar, or taco stand may not fit into a preconceived plan. However, the longevity, function, and relationship to the existing community needs to be taken into consideration.

Challenge:

- Lack of a place for indigenous peoples to market their goods and services. Tonatierra, a resident downtown organization preserving the living culture of the indigenous people of Arizona, is in the process of creating an Urban Culture Center. The Center will include a Tiankizco (Indigenous People's Fair Trade Zone) and will also provide educational materials and services that address concerns of Indigenous People.
Solutions:

- Private and public sector support for this program will not only benefit Indigenous People, but will provide a unique market place for residents and visitors to Phoenix.

J.4. Sustain Residential Diversity in Downtown Neighborhoods

Challenge:

- Loss of affordable housing in downtown neighborhoods. The impact of downtown development may result in the displacement of low-income individuals, minority families, as well as older residents, from adjacent neighborhoods. The result may be homogenized neighborhoods populated by mostly upwardly mobile families and individuals. If we do not maintain, or increase, the stock of affordable housing downtown, we will lose residents who are crucial to making the downtown community function. These are the individuals who hold lower-paying jobs with the nearby health and hospitality industries, as well as with City and County governments.

Solutions:

- Downtown development should do no harm, and should nurture the diversity that is so characteristic of our downtown neighborhoods. (See Sections D and E for more details.)

- Preserve housing for the elderly and physically disabled. The Westward Ho is a vital part of the diversity of downtown Phoenix. The elderly and physically challenged people who reside there add to the cultural mix that diversifies and stabilizes our community. The Westward Ho exists as it is, and where it is, because it is serving a vital need. The same can be said for The Salvation Army’s Silver Crest, also located in the downtown corridor. Both facilities are located in the area that ASU proposes to redevelop. We believe that it is incumbent on ASU, in its development plans, to see to it that neighboring development is compatible with Senior Housing. In other words, placing an undergraduate dorm next to Westward Ho would not ensure the tranquility needed by a senior population. Removing or retrofitting the Post Office would remove an important lifeline for seniors living nearby, as well as a vital service for all downtown residents.

- Develop additional housing for seniors, minorities, and low income individuals and families. Even if every unit of low-income housing in downtown Phoenix were to be preserved, there would still not be enough units to accommodate the current need. For example, in 2003, The Community Housing Partnership received close to 2,700 calls for the 63 units in their inventory available for that year.

J.5. Preserve Properties and Neighborhoods Associated with Phoenix’s Minority Populations

Challenge:

- Phoenix has done an admirable job preserving properties that once belonged to “notable” residents. However, there are many buildings, historic and vintage, that do not fit this category, yet are an important part of the City’s minority history. Although schools such as George Washington Carver and Booker T. Washington have been preserved, there are other buildings that are important as well, yet are not recognized. Examples would include, among others: Small Chinese markets that served mostly downtown neighborhoods and farm worker housing, vestiges of which can be found in many of our downtown neighborhoods.
Solutions:

- A process should be developed so that properties associated with the history of the City’s minority communities are recognized as being of historic value. The Historic Preservation Office, working in close conjunction with the minority community, needs to identify and establish a list of properties and neighborhoods that fulfill this criteria and ways to maintain and preserve them.

J.6. Create a Climate for Diversity in Arts and Culture

Studies have shown that arts and culture promote tolerance through shared experiences. As the Maricopa Regional Arts and Culture Task Force (MRACTF) has noted: “Considering the Valley’s rapid growth, it is more important than ever to create the common experience and bonds that lead to the ‘social capital’ and sense of community needed to solve problems and maintain quality of life. Participating in arts and culture is one of the best ways to bridge socioeconomic, ethnic, and generational differences, and discover common threads and identities.” (MRACTF 2004:8).

Challenge:

- Lack of programs that support diverse cultural activities.

Solutions:

- Museums and other organizations associated with Valley ethnic groups need to have an important role in the downtown planning process. In fact, the MRACTF report suggests that such groups be integrated into community revitalization and economic development initiatives. The George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center, Heard Museum, Museo Chicano and the Phoenix Family Museum, among others, should be integrated into all aspects of the planning process.

- The City has a good track record in the sponsorship of festivals for different ethnic groups. We hope that they continue! We would also like to recommend there be an annual Celebration of Cultures, or perhaps a Folk Fair (like the one in Tucson), where area residents would have the opportunity to learn about a variety of cultures, including small groups that may not have the resources to sponsor a festival on their own.

J.7. Create Public Spaces That Reflect Community Diversity

Challenge:

- Lack of diversity in public spaces including overall design, public art, and accessibility.

Solutions:

- Design several small plazas downtown, of different sizes, so that a variety of activities can take place at the same time. For example, an impromptu concert by a group of Mariachis could occupy a small plaza at the same time a large festival takes place in Patriots’ Park.

- Use public art to decorate parks and other open spaces. Some works should include a focus on the history and cultural diversity of our city.

- Public spaces need to be physically accessible to all residents and visitors, including the visually and hearing impaired and the handicapped.
• In general, Phoenix lacks kid-friendly public spaces. As James Howard Kunstler has noted: “Americans are convinced that suburbia is great for kids. The truth is, kids older than seven need more from their environment than a safe place to ride their bikes. They need at least the same things adults need. Dignified places to hang out. Shops. Eating establishments. Libraries, museums, and theaters. They need a public realm worthy of respect . . . . In suburbia, as things generally stand, children have access only to television. That’s their public realm.” (1996:55). All of downtown needs to be more kid-friendly. The teen room at the Burton Barr Central Library is a good example of how niche targeting can work to engage, entertain, and educate our youthful residents.

J.8. Public Transportation that Meets the Needs of All Downtown Residents

In spite of interest in a new Light Rail System, existing Public Transit does not adequately serve many downtown residents. The current Public Transit system appears to have been developed to move people to their jobs in the central corridor. But it does not function well for the diverse population that lives downtown.

Challenge:

• With the exception of the Central Core, bus stops located in downtown neighborhoods are few and far between. Many have no shade or benches.

Solutions:

• The City needs to increase the number of artist-designed shelters, offering refuge from the heat as well as an attractive environment for bus riders and passersby.

Challenge:

• Bus schedules are not sufficiently flexible for those who work outside a nine-to-five schedule. Bus schedules during the evenings do not allow the flexibility needed to commute in a timely manner.

Solutions:

• Bus schedules need to be extended, with less waiting time between stops.

Challenge:

• For those who are older or disabled, the city offers a Dial-A-Ride service. These older neighbors should be assured of secure transportation that will get them to appointments on time, and not leave them waiting hours for a return home.

Solutions:

• Work on fixing the Dial-A-Ride program so it is state-of-the-art, and a service that seniors look forward to using.

J.9. The Role of Primary and Secondary Education, and Job Training Programs

Primary and secondary education, along with job training programs, must be an important factor in the redevelopment of downtown Phoenix. Studies have shown that arts and culture promote tolerance of diversity through shared experiences. This is particularly true in the schools. A study in Tucson found that
students receiving an arts education had better scores in every academic area when compared with students not participating in an arts program.

**Challenge:**

- Art education programs have been, or are being, deleted from the curriculum of many area schools.

**Solutions:**

- The City, County, and State need to guarantee the inclusion of art classes in our schools, even if it means a referendum or increased sales tax.
- Utilize the talents of local artists and arts institutions (museums especially) in the development of art programs in the schools.

**Challenge:**

- Phoenix is a multicultural city, yet we have not embraced this fact as part of our urban identity.

**Solutions:**

- One way Phoenix could embrace its cultural diversity is to strive to create a bilingual society -- with both Spanish and English taught at all levels of education. Phoenix could become the first bilingual city in America. This would be a tremendous step forward in making Phoenix a progressive, inclusive and international society.

**Challenge:**

- The Phoenix Job Corps, located at 3rd Street and Lincoln, is situated on prime downtown real estate. Because of its location, there are developers who would like the center to relocate elsewhere.

**Solutions:**

- Job Corps provides a great service to the City of Phoenix through its training and service programs. They have an on-going impact on our downtown neighborhoods, assisting local youth-at-risk. Redevelopment plans for downtown should recognize the value of Job Corps remaining at its current location, and any redevelopment around the site should be compatible with their mission of advocating and assisting youth-at-risk.

**References Cited:**

- *Maricopa Regional Arts and Culture Task Force (MRACTF), Vibrant Culture – Thriving Economy (Phoenix)* 2004
CONCLUSION

Most often it’s planning done to or for neighborhoods, not by them. The commissioning client is typically a self-interested institution – a hospital, say, or a university – or the powers that be at city hall. … Washington has required cities to do local planning before tapping the spigot. This usually means a survey or two and some public hearings, although the plan itself gets drawn by the pros downtown.

McCarron 2004:10

As much as attendees at the Downtown Voices conference were in favor of downtown redevelopment, they were also very concerned about the effect the process and its results would have on their neighbors, co-workers, and themselves. Almost every conference participant had in some way been negatively impacted by one or more of the “master plans” that have emerged over the years in Phoenix. They have seen how these plans seldom show a sensitivity to the human element in neighborhoods and other downtown areas subjected to the planning process. Such plans consider the human suffering that often results as merely the “unexpected consequences” of project development.

An alternative to traditional project planning presumes that in every redevelopment area there are assets in place to be revitalized and built upon, and that these assets can be strengthened or changed rather than being destroyed (Gratz and Mintz 1998:61-62). Planning should be based on problem solving, relying on the experience and wisdom of the community. Change should be incremental, providing the opportunity to learn from each step. This kind of revitalization involves many entrepreneurs of various sizes, rather than the “just one developer” tradition that is so prevalent in Master Planning.

Although much of the discussion at the Downtown Voices conference emphasized problems and solutions, there was also a focus on existing downtown resources -- the vibrancy of downtown neighborhoods, the strength of the arts community, the uniqueness of our historic properties, and the wonderful small businesses that dot downtown -- art galleries, music venues, restaurants, dry cleaners, auto repair shops -- to name a few. All of these assets should be stepping stones to be built upon, rather than demolished in the wake of master-planned projects.

If urban redevelopment is to be successful, the experience of stakeholders must play an important and active role on every level of the planning process, from the visioning of a project to its final implementation. This means a complete integration of stakeholders as active decision makers, rather than the continuation of their traditional role as passive participants at sporadic public hearings.

The basis of this report is derived from the principles and issues related to urban redevelopment that were identified by stakeholders who attended the Downtown Voices conference on May 22, 2004. The purpose of this document is to provide a vision that will enrich, modify or change some of the traditional approaches to planning in downtown Phoenix. Financially, our ideas are modest in relation to the millions spent by the City of Phoenix on large-scale developments (both in dollars and in-kind contributions). Finally, we strongly advocate a substantive role for local stakeholders in the planning process. As long-term downtown stakeholders, we will continue to advocate for a diverse and inclusive downtown. Whether an integral part of the planning process, or relegated to the sidelines, our voices will continue to advocate for a downtown that is built upon authenticity, creativity, and diversity in a city we can all call our own.

References Cited:
- Gratz, Roberta Brandes and Norman Mintz, Cities Back from the Edge, John Wiley and Sons (New York) 1998
APPENDIX: PARTICIPANT LIST

The following is a list of participants, presenters, and visitors who attended the Downtown Voices symposium on May 22, 2004:

- Maria Enrique Acosta, Tonatierra
- Chris Andres, City of Phoenix, Community and Economic Development
- Laura Artusio
- Gary Avey, Native Peoples Magazine & Arizona Arts Commission
- Erick Baer, Downtown Watchdogs
- Karen Baer, Downtown Watchdogs
- Matt Baker, Metro Arts
- Leslie Barton, Modified Arts
- Jamie Beatty, Coronado Neighborhood
- Jack Burke, Icehouse
- Reid Butler, Butler Housing
- Bill Callaway, AABA
- Stephanie Carrico, The Trunk Space
- Angela Cazel-Jahn, Phoenix Family Museum
- Peter Conley, Icehouse
- Susan Copeland, Artist & D-PAC
- Princess Crump, Carver Museum & Cultural Center
- Cindy Dach, Arizona Chain Reaction
- Shannon Dubasik, CMA
- George Diggs, National Action Network
- Margie Diggs, National Action Network
- Ed Domingez
- Steve Dreiseszun, FQ Story Historic District
- Tim Eigo, Capitol Mall Weed & Seed Coalition
- Po-pe Enrique, Tonatierra
- Tupac Enrique, Tonatierra
- Greg Esser
- Jeff Falk, Artist
- Anita Fonte
- Norman Fox
- Roberto Frietz, City of Phoenix, Neighborhood Services
- Armando Gandarilla, Grant Park & Fight Back
- Phil Gordon, City of Phoenix, Mayor
- Mark Grushka
- Luis Gutierrez, Artist
- Alicia Guilleo, Tonatierra
- Sam Gutierrez, Balance The Yoga Room
- Rick Handel
- Len Harris, Harris Tenacity: The Studio
- Kenja Hassan, ASU
- Heidi Hesse, Artist & City of Phoenix, Office of Arts and Culture
- Helen Hestenes, Icehouse
- Wendy Hicks, AABA
- Sarah Hines
- Chris Ibarra, Resident
- Steve Jansen
- Dana Johnson, Alwun House Organization
- Alan Jones, Hazelton-Jones Studio
- Phil Jones, City of Phoenix, Office of Arts and Culture
- Nancy Jordan, ASU/City of Phoenix, Mayor’s Office
- JRC, The Trunk Space
- Brian Kearney, Downtown Phoenix Partnership
- Joan Kelchner
- Don Keuth, Phoenix Community Alliance
- Catrina Kroebl, Adrenaline Management
- Kimber Lanning, Arizona Chain Reaction
- Annie Lopez, Artist
- Ruth Ann Marston, Phoenix Historic Neighborhoods Coalition
- Jon Massey
- Jarrett B. Maupin, National Action Network
- Jarrett B. Maupin II, National Action Network
- Marissa Maupin, National Action Network
- Gerry McCue, Fairview Place Historic District
- Marge McCue, Fairview Place Historic District
- Jim McPherson, Arizona Preservation Foundation
- Kim Moody, Garfield Organization
- Beatrice Moore, Grandevelt, LLC
- Christiana Moss, Studio MA, Inc.
- Kerry Moss, Medlock Place Historic District
- Eileen O’Connell
- Ruth Osuna, Local Initiatives Support Corp.
- Michael Pierce, MAG
- Wayne Rainey, MonOrchid & SHADE
- Amir Ran, Property Owner
- Rafael Reyes, Tonatierra
- Mark Ryan, Mark Ryan Studio
- John Saccoman, Capitol Mall Association
- Luis Salazar, Salazar Assoc. Architects, LTD
- Bill Scheel, City of Phoenix, Mayor’s Office
- G. Schoneberger
- Manuel Simo, Chicanos Por La Causa
- Andrew Smigielski, Encanto Village PC
- Louisa Stark, Community Housing Partnership
- Dennis Strahm, Resident
- Barbara Stocklin, City of Phoenix, Historic Preservation
- Matthew Taunton
- Sheryl Taylor, City of Phoenix, Community and Economic Development
- Yasmin Tesch, ASU
- Kate Timmerman, Artist
- Steve Weiss, No Festival Required
- Tony Zahn, Grandevelt, LLC
- Julio Zapata