Phoenix, AZ
Denver Peer Cities Analysis

Presented To:
Downtown Denver Partnership

By:

Matt Prosser

Jeanne Shaffer

Morgan Landers

November 27, 2006

Planning Methods 1

URP 5510

University of Colorado - Denver

PHOENIX, ARIZONA

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

One of youngest big United States cities, Phoenix is rapidly becoming a major urban region. The capital of Arizona, Phoenix is one of the fastest growing cities in the nation. Phoenix is now trying to deal with the realities of its massive growth as it shapes itself in the changing world. Traditionally a suburban, car oriented city, Phoenix is now trying to create an identity for a city which grew out of a nowhere. The young city is also trying to solve the problems that many other western cities have already begun to deal with. Although late in the game, Phoenix has the opportunity to learn from the mistakes and successes of other cities as it tries to create a connected regional area with a successful urban core and center in its downtown.

Primarily a day-time area, downtown Phoenix has just recently begun a major effort to revitalized its downtown area and turn it into the center of focus for the City and region. Although relatively large in size, downtown Phoenix is not nearly as dense as other downtowns and lacks any sort of unifying vernacular or identity. Lacking most uses other than big business, Phoenix looks to create a diverse mixed use downtown area. Major developments projects within in the downtown aim to create a diverse economic core and successful economic community, while using the successes of industry and business downtown to create a vibrant residential and entertainment community. Attracting major entertainment, education and high-tech industrial development projects has given downtown a new life and has allowed Phoenix to guide the redevelopment process to ultimately create their desired downtown.

The research done to create this report focused on the major elements of a downtown area such as its zoning, demographics, physical and social characteristics, retail, and parking to compare to downtown Denver. Due to the lack of a significant downtown in Phoenix, the report is focused more on the major development projects and policies created for downtown Phoenix. Phoenix's approach to redeveloping its downtown is not unique, but its focus on encouraging and creating major economic developments in growing fields and economically sustainable industries is admirable and could serve as an example for other downtown areas. Phoenix's vision for growth is what should be learned from and not necessarily its past successes or current situation.

SECTION 2: DOWNTOWN DEFINITION AND CHARACTERISTICS

Location

Phoenix, Arizona is very long from north to south, and is surrounded by many well known cities. Tempe and Mesa border Phoenix on the Southeast, while Avondale borders Phoenix on the Southwest. For the north end of Phoenix, it is bordered by Scottsdale on the Northeast and Peoria on the Northwest.

The two main interstates in Phoenix create a rectangle in the southern portion of the city which is where the downtown study area is located. Interstate 10 is on the North and east of the area and Interstate 17 is on the south and west. Within these boundaries, there are uses ranging from industrial and commercial to single and multi family housing. Many residential neighborhoods lie to the north of the downtown area, whereas the east, west, and south are mainly occupied by industrial and commercial uses.

The downtown area has played and will continue to play a major role in the region for years to come. There are three main aspects of the downtown that have encouraged the formation of a regional hub in this area. Downtown Phoenix plays a major role as the regions home for government, university, and industrial campuses.[1] These three areas bring around the clock activity important to the vibrant urban fabric

Through the support of its citizens, Phoenix has been able to attract numerous amounts of activity in the areas of development of these three categories. Between many fast growing cities, downtown Phoenix has optimized its central location by promoting and providing development opportunities that will create jobs, housing, and education opportunities drawing from all of the surrounding areas.

Development does not achieve this on its own. Without the growing populations of the surrounding cities, the development of downtown would not sustain itself. In recent years, there has been a shift in where people want to live. Previously, the populations were more concentrated in the suburban areas, downtown is now the preference. A new generation of

[1] Downtown Phoenix: A Strategic Vision and Blueprint for the Future

"innovative entrepreneurs" that thrive on the active downtown lifestyle, and an increased awareness of "sense of place" are playing a large roll in this shift.[2]

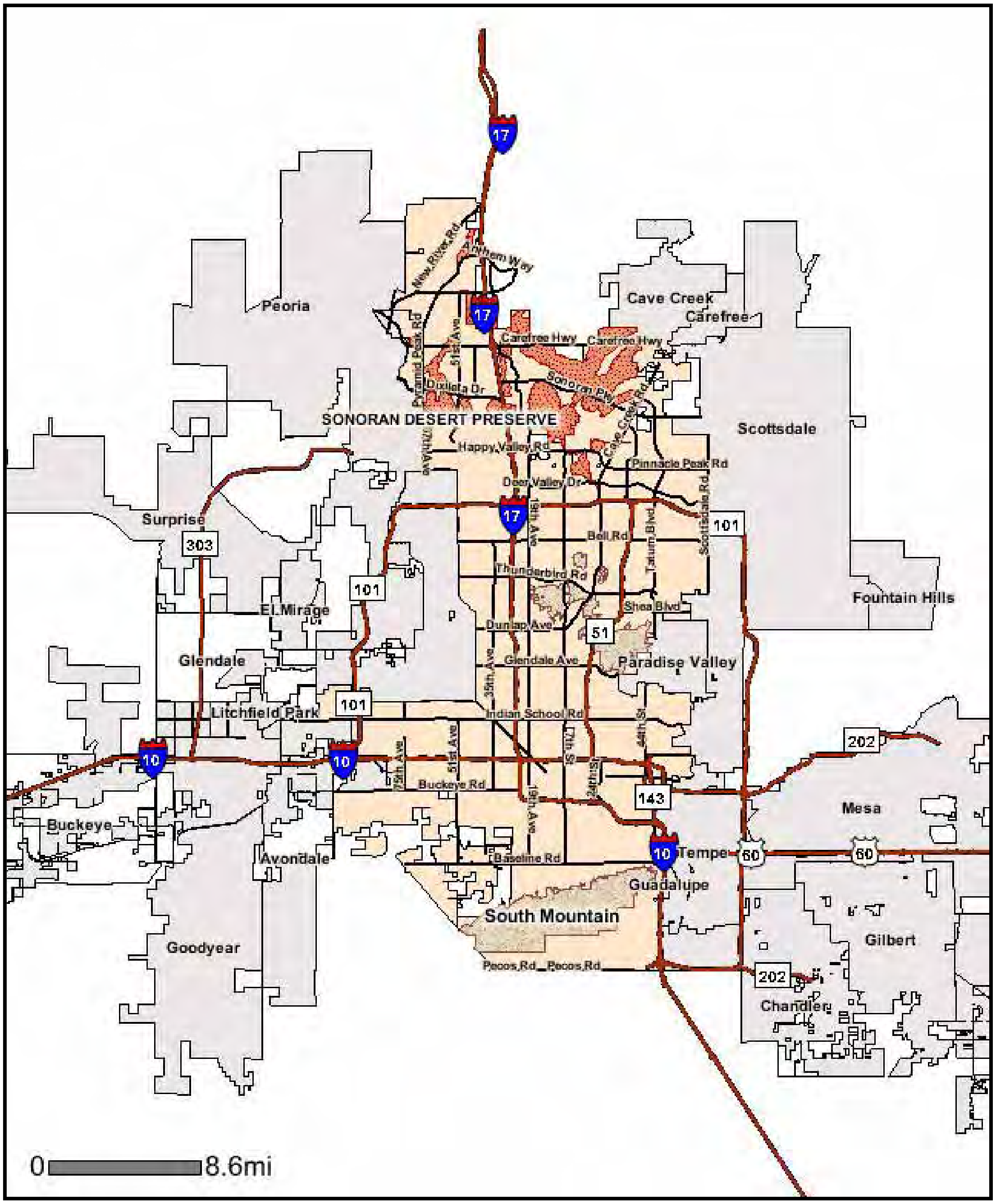

Figure 1: Regional Map of Phoenix Arizona.

Source: City of Phoenix, AZ website GIS mapping

[2] Downtown Phoenix: A Strategic Vision and Blueprint for the Future

Boundaries

Downtown Phoenix, making up a portion of the interstate rectangle, is bordered by Interstate 10 on the North, 7th Avenue on the West, 7th Street on the East, and Lincoln St. on the South. The area is mostly delineated by minor and major arterial roads except for Margaret Hance Park to the North, which acts as a secondary boundary for the area.[3] The total land area for the downtown is approximately 960 acres which includes the 90 block section of downtown known as Copper Square. This is where most of the current development is happening.

The development of the downtown study area boundaries was collaboration between 4 main entities and many members of the community. The main players involved in the plan were Downtown Phoenix Partnership, Phoenix Community Alliance, Arizona State University, and the City of Phoenix.

In order to establish the boundaries for the downtown area, it had to be decided what the area should include. The Mayor of Phoenix held a town meeting to discuss with local residents and business owners their goals and visions for the area. Because of the large political involvement of Phoenix citizens, it was no surprise that 750 people attended the meeting.[4] This was not the only public participation that occurred. Members from all four organizations listed about attending many neighborhood meetings, smaller public meetings, and charettes to fully explore the opportunities and constraints of the area.

Ultimately, the downtown area shown in Figure 2 was decided on based on because it encompasses many of the important aspects of the downtown that people valued the most. The downtown area includes many knowledge centers such as the new Arizona State University downtown campus, and the University of Arizona's new medical campus. The downtown area also includes many of the activity centers such as the convention center, theatres and parks.

Another positive aspect of the area that will contribute to its success is the close proximity to vibrant and historical neighborhoods. Discussed further in the next section are the Roosevelt Neighborhood, Evans Churchill, Garfield, and Central City South. To the west of the area are also Oakland University Park, Story and Capitol Mall. All of these areas have a significant

[3] Downtown Phoenix: A Strategic Vision and Blueprint for the Future
[4] Downtown Phoenix: A Strategic Vision and Blueprint for the Future

history in relation to the downtown and new developments in downtown will no doubt attract residents from this area.

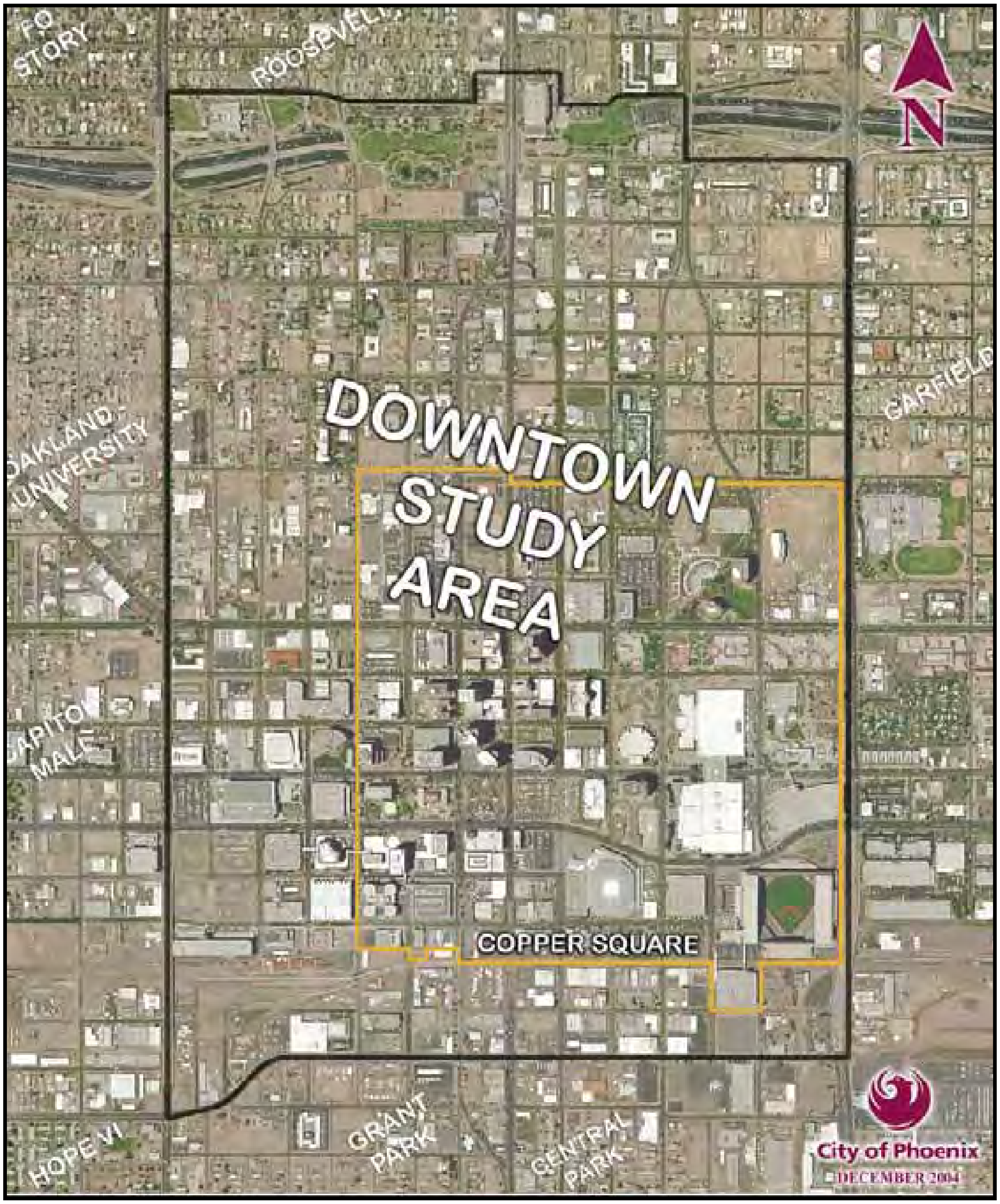

Figure 2: Downtown Phoenix Boundary Map including 90 Block Copper Square.
Source: *Downtown Phoenix: A Strategic Vision and Blueprint for the Future(pg. 5)*

Characteristics

Within the Downtown study area, Phoenix has laid out eight different planning areas that all contribute to the Downtown character as a whole. Each one of these areas has distinct characteristics that reflect historical character and new character to the area. These eight areas are: Roosevelt, Evans Churchill, Central Corridor, Commercial Mixed Use, Government/Cultural, Convention Sports and Cultural, Biomedical and Research Education, and Warehouse.

The Roosevelt Neighborhood area is a very important area in terms of historic significance. This area was the city's first historic district and it is the goal of the city to maintain its character.[5] The area is mainly medium density single family residential. This area is set to maintain this character with infill development matching the historic character and some small scale retail and commercial uses where appropriate. This area is said to accommodate for the housing needs of the incoming residents related to the ASU expansion, and the other larger developments in downtown.

The Evans Churchill planning area is another primarily residential area in Downtown Phoenix. However, because of its proximity to the Biomedical planning area, there is more potential for commercial development here than in the Roosevelt district. The main concentrations for this area are increased connections to downtown and the Central Corridor planning area and an increase potential for the arts to take root here.

The Central Corridor planning area is key to the integration of all the planning areas together. It represents the central core of the downtown and has been separated into three sub areas due to its length. Central Corridor South is to be a similar characteristic with the Warehouse district and includes many core businesses and many high rise commercial and residential uses. Mid Central Corridor also contains many residential opportunities along with mixed uses where appropriate. Its proximity to the ASU future campus and the light rail creates a great opportunity for this development. Central Corridor North also will mimic the mixed use potential along with enhanced pedestrian connections with Roosevelt and Evans Churchill.

[5] Downtown Phoenix: A Strategic Vision and Blueprint for the Future (pg 20)

Commercial Mixed Use is separated into two areas that flank the Central Corridor planning area. These two areas are focused on building off of adjacent planning areas and the opportunities of the current development within downtown. The Commercial Mixed Use East is said to build off of the Arizona Center and incorporate adaptive reuse of the historical buildings into mixed use commercial and residential. The Commercial Mixed Use West is focused on high intensity mixed use with enhanced pedestrian connections to the surrounding planning areas. The Governmental planning area is where the most amounts of government and cultural uses are located. Much of the plans for this area include increased pedestrian movement throughout the area as well as connections to adjacent planning areas.

The Convention, Sports and Cultural planning area is where much of the large scale sports and cultural events occur. Much of this activity is related to the Arizona Convention Center, sports venues and hotels. This area's goal is to enhance the street life and create a 24/7 activity center that will include more residential, possibly some more hotels and other high energy uses.
The Biomedical, Research, and Education area includes the new IGC/TGen headquarters and the Phoenix Union Science High School. This area will be the hub for the biomedical industry in Phoenix and will increase the job market for Phoenix. It is also the location of the Arizona University System campus. Because of all this new development, the downtown area will have a demand for more housing and it will foster the creation of thousands of new jobs.

The Warehouse planning area is home of the more eclectic side of Phoenix. It will support the conversion of old warehouses into residential units and foster the home of many small locally owned retail businesses. The architectural character of this area will represent more industrial materials and give more freedom to eclectic design.

Copper Square is the core area of downtown and is overlapped by many of these planning areas. These areas are not meant to create boundaries between the districts but yet a smooth transition between the core downtown and these outlaying areas. There are also many neighborhoods that surround the Downtown district including a Hope VI project, the Garfield neighborhood, and Capitol Mall neighborhood.

With all of these integrated parts, it is thought that the Garfield neighborhood will prove to be the biggest challenge. It is located partly within the Evans Churchill planning area and is mostly residential. The neighborhood association is in the process of bringing most of the area into historic districts to preserve its unique character. This area is already classified as a revitalization area. There are many concerns that with the construction of the new ASU campus, the neighborhood will be largely affected by the student population. The area has also been separated from downtown due to the large traffic volumes and speed along its western boundary. The planning department has been working to create greater connectivity to the downtown and enable the area to accommodate more small scale commercial uses while still preserving its unique character.

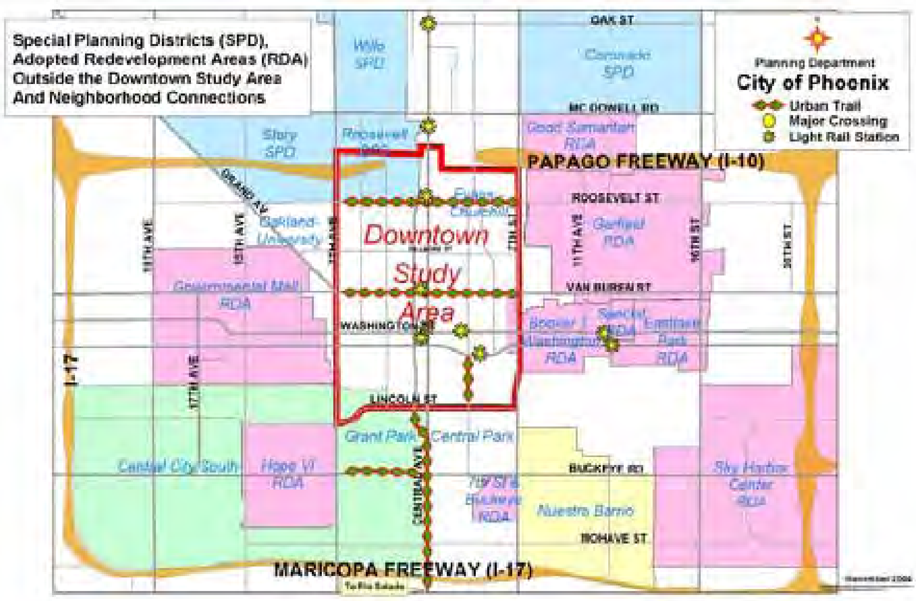

Figure 3: Downtown Study Area with surrounding neighborhoods
Source: *Downtown Phoenix: A Strategic Vision and Blueprint for the Future (pg 18)*

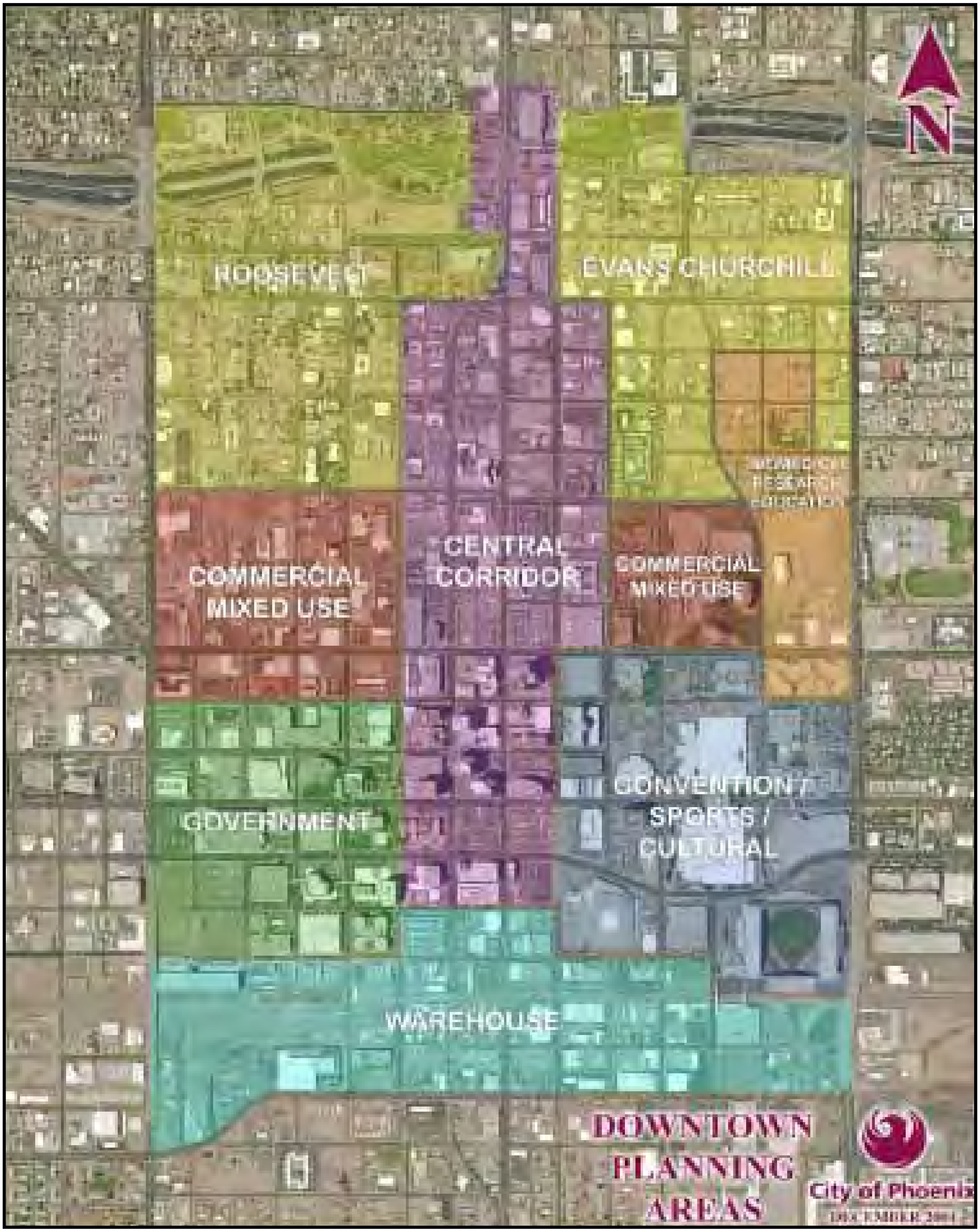

Figure 4: Downtown Study Area with internal Planning Areas.

Source: Downtown Phoenix: A Strategic Vision and Blueprint for the Future(pg41)

Zoning

The Phoenix Downtown area has a diversity of uses permitted. The downtown area has approximately eight different zone districts with sub districts applied to them depending on the location. Downtown zone districts include: three multi-family districts (R-4, R-5, R-4A), two commercial districts (C-2, C-3), and two industrial districts (A-1, A-2), and one parking district (P-1). [6]

The multi-family districts have a range of densities allowed. They all start with a density range of 5 to 6.5 dwelling units/acre. All of the zone districts offer density bonuses. The R-4 zone district can allow up to 34.8 dua, and R-5 can offer up to 52.2 dua. R-4A densities are dependent on the lot area and unit type.[7] The building heights for these zone districts are 30 ft for R-4 and R-5, however, R-4A allows for a 40ft height maximum.[8]

The commercial zone districts are fairly similar in the allowable uses including small scale retail to regional retail. Both of these zone districts are designed to allow for medium intensity use and both also allow multi-family residential. There is also a height requirement of 56 ft in all areas. In both cases however, an 80 ft height can be obtained with a special permit.

The industrial districts differ more than the commercial districts did. In the A-1 district, uses are limited to the less intense uses that would not be harmful to surrounding commercial and residential areas. In the A-2 district, more intense uses are allowed, such as, ones dealing with high levels of meat or the use of chemicals and so on. Both districts restrict to a 56 ft height limit but also allow at 80 ft limit with a special permit. Both districts can also apply to exceed that height limit with an application to the Board of Adjustments. The parking district is applied to areas with surface parking as its only permitted use. There are very few areas for this use in the downtown area.

The City of Phoenix has also set aside sub-districts that can be tacked on to the districts above that act as an overlay. These include: Residential Infill (RI), High-Rise and High Density (HR, HR1), High Rise Incentive (HRI), and Downtown Core (DC). These zone districts are designed

[6] City of Phoenix Planning Department
[7] City of Phoenix Planning Department
[8] City of Phoenix Zoning Code

to encourage higher density uses that will cater to the development of the downtown areas. These are strategically placed throughout the eight planning areas mentioned earlier to encourage housing and vibrant communities.

Downtown Phoenix also has five additional overlay districts that pertain to certain areas of the downtown area. These include: Transit Overlay District (TOD-1), Capitol Mall Overlay, Warehouse Overlay, Warehouse Parking Overlay, and Central City South Interim Overlay. Each one of these districts seeks to forward the goals of the Downtown Phoenix Vision Plan.
The Transit Overlay District is incorporated into downtown to provide areas of high activity around the rail stops for the new Light Rail in Downtown Phoenix; it also promotes the idea of a walk able community and will hopefully reduce the amount of auto dependency throughout the neighborhood. The City of Phoenix has laid out a list of prohibited uses that would take away from the character they are trying to project and have implemented a set of design standards that will help the activity of each area and have suggested alternative configurations of parking and setback requirements.

The Capitol Mall Overlay District is designed to protect existing residential and foster an environment between these residences and the large concentration of civic uses in the district. The district was created to eliminate certain uses that were felt to diminish the character of the area and that did not interface well with surrounding uses. Some of these include liquor stores, and pawn shops.

The Warehouse and Warehouse Parking Overlay Districts were created to “enhance the viability and utility of the unique, diverse area south of the Downtown Core”.[9] It allows for the adaptive reuse of warehouses and abandoned buildings into residential lofts and housing. It also allows for the mixed use commercial and residential uses that were not previously allowed in the industrial districts. The parking aspect of the district was designed to encourage people into the Warehouse district by providing parking in concentrated areas strategically placed where it would foster a comfortable movement into the key areas of the district.
The Central City South District is the interim step to the adoption of the Central City South area plan. It was implemented to protect residential land uses and reduce open land uses. Also it has

[9] City of Phoenix Zoning Code

eliminated some uses in the underlying zoning code that would be environmentally harmful to the proposed uses in the plan. This district is supposed to be evaluated upon the completion of the area plan.

Below is a map of the overlay districts that apply to the area and a map of the zone districts for the downtown area.

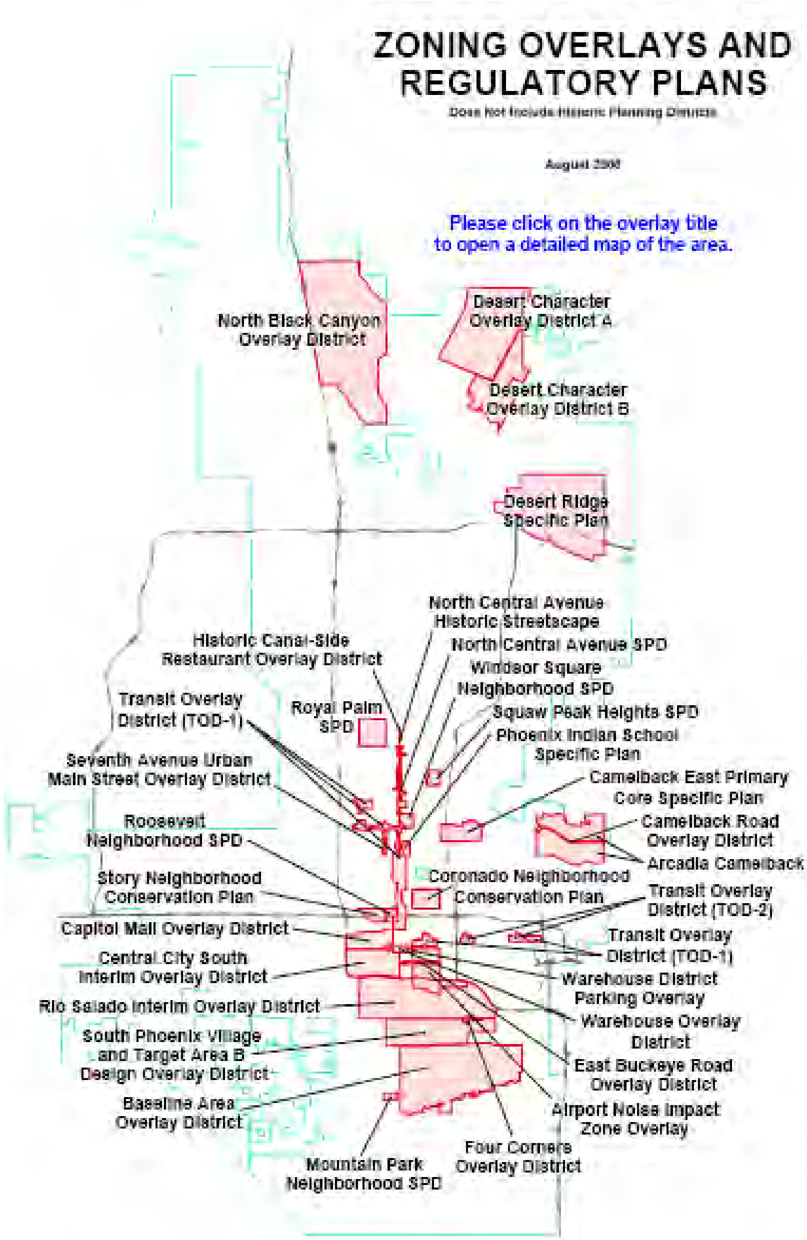

Figure 5: Zoning Overlay Districts
Source: City of Phoenix website

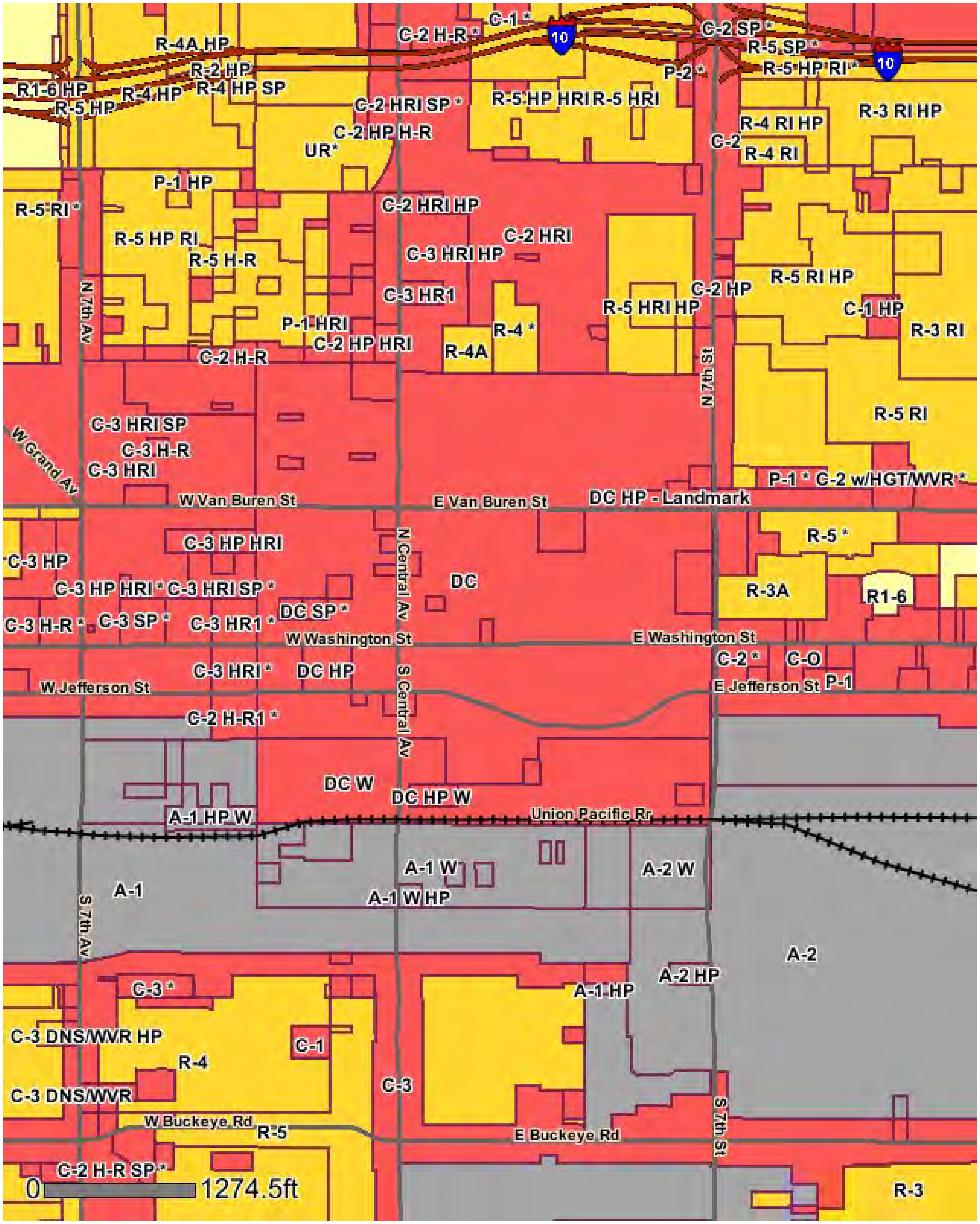

Figure 6: Zone District Map *Source: City of Phoenix Website GIS mapping*

SECTION 3: POPULATION

The downtown Phoenix area is emerging as an attractive place for urban living. With the completion of many attractions, such as a new performing arts center, retail development, convention center, and many entertainment establishments, more and more people desire to live in a vibrant urban center.

DOWNTOWN PHOENIX RESIDENT DEMOGRAPHICS			
	2000	2005	2010
Population	7,799	8,549	9,460
Households	2,968	3,368	3,860
Families	823	916	1034
Median Age	35.5	36.3	37.3
Average Household Size	1.79	1.8	1.8

Source: Copper Square Census 2000 Summary Profile

The downtown demographic trend for this decade reveals that a little fewer than 2,000 people will move into the downtown area by 2010. This is quite a large number of people who will come to live in an area a little over one square mile.

The contributing factors to this trend are not doubt due to the increased focus on development in the downtown. There are many new attractions that are appealing to people, such as the US Airways Center featuring indoor sports, the Arizona Center featuring restaurants, shops, and entertainment, Symphony Hall and Orpheum Hall, as well as the history museum and Heritage Square. All these attractions serve to renew interest in downtown living.

Also contributing to the population increase are changes in policy, specifically regulations that promote more mixed use, office, retail, and residential, to entice people to live, work, and play in downtown phoenix. More regulations for the establishment of live-work units have been made. Also in policy are the provisions for affordable housing to try and accommodate the student and lower income populations.

Also interesting are the changes in the population that are expected to occur this decade. As seen in the table above the population is expected to increase dramatically in a small area over the next five years, following the trend seen in the past five years. What is interesting is how the expected population will evolve in that time period. The table below reveals household incomes for this decade, the interpretation of this data offers insight to the type of demographic who will live in the downtown this decade.

HOUSEHOLDS BY INCOME						
	2000		2005		2010	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
< $15,000	1,238	42.70%	1,208	35.80%	1,100	28.50%
$15,000 - $24,999	426	14.70%	511	15.20%	574	14.90%
$25,000 - $34,999	356	12.30%	365	10.80%	365	9.50%
$35,000 - $49,999	301	10.40%	384	11.40%	488	12.60%
$50,000 - $74,999	322	11.10%	427	12.70%	464	12.00%
$75,000 - $99,999	110	3.80%	207	6.10%	338	8.80%
$100,000 - $149,999	104	3.60%	172	5.10%	274	7.10%
$150,000 - $199,999	29	1.00%	56	1.70%	154	4.00%
$200,000+	10	0.30%	40	1.20%	103	2.70%

Source: Copper Square Demographic and Income Profile

The household incomes from 2000 to 2010 reveal an interesting shift over the next five years. In 2000 the majority of the downtown population made under $35,000 a year, signaling that many of the downtown residents were a mix of students, young professionals, and other lower income employees. This is also reflected in the median age of the downtown demographic, which is around 36 years old.

In 2005 the percentage of people making less than $15,000 decreased, with a good majority of people making between $15,000 and $75,000 a year. This same trend is realized in 2010. This trend may be due to downtown Phoenix's goal to attract and provide for the bio-sciences, which result in higher paying jobs to attract more people to the downtown. The presence of these jobs is also a pull for students and young professionals. The expansion of the Arizona State University complex, to a campus, will attract more students, especially with the great job potential offered in the same area.

Also important to note is the tourism industry which downtown Phoenix is working hard to boost by expanding their convention center and providing ample hotel space for conventioneers. Along with the convention center and hotel expansion is the improved nightlife and entertainments areas, offering more cultural and performing arts options, as well as shopping. Downtown Phoenix has done well planning for the future and accommodating different demographics, offering a wide array of attractions for many types of people.

SECTION 4: DEVELOPMENT

For the past two decades downtown Phoenix has seen a dynamic mix of development, very different from the development seen prior to the early 1980's. Historically Phoenix has experienced rapid low density development. Not until the 1970's, at the height of urban renewal, did Phoenix experience a change in its urban landscape. High rise buildings began to go up, eliminating much of the historic housing stock of downtown Phoenix. In addition to urban renewal zoning regulations restricting building height resulted in office development locating outside of the city. Downtown Phoenix seriously lacked the definition of many other downtowns of similar size, and in recent years it finally living up to its potential. Recent events in urban development are fostered by the visions and long term goals defined by the Downtown Phoenix Partnership.

The Downtown Phoenix Strategic Vision Report lays out the long terms goals, visions, and factors for change for Downtown Phoenix. The factors for change identified are largely related to the hi-end/hi-tech medical science jobs. Downtown seeks to attract the bio-science industries engaging in cancer therapy, neurological science, and bio-engineering. The ability for downtown Phoenix to focus on the specialized area can be largely realized by the presence of Arizona State University. ASU has proposed to spend over 20 billion dollars over the next 20 years to expand their operations on all campuses, including their downtown campus.[10] The expansion of the campus and the provisions for the biomedical sciences alone are driving forces for development, as they create job growth and stability, allowing people to learn and work in a concentrated area, creating a "knowledge center".

Along with the development of a "knowledge center" which serves as the basis for drawing in a new and vibrant population, comes the need for other types of supportive development such as housing and entertainment venues within close proximity. A study done by the Meyers Group

[10] Downtown Phoenix: A Strategic Vision and Blueprint for the Future

found that since 2000 the housing stock has increased from 4400 to 6400 units with at least 40% affordable.[11] Downtown Phoenix realizes the diverse demographic that desires to live downtown and seeks to provide housing for families, retirees, and students alike.

As a result of the desire to live downtown vacancy rates have seen a decrease. Central downtown home prices are up 50%, starting at $200,000 and up for new housing units. In the

past 5 years downtown Phoenix has seen consistent housing prices and has recently seen a jump in the price of housing with rental prices consistently around $700. Currently the downtown can stand to absorb 3,800 more units, 10,000 units by 2014.[12] In 2002 and 2003 vacancy rates were at 8.8% and 9.7% respectively. Vacancy rates are typically seen between 10%-13%, indicating that there is more room in the market, however these numbers indicate that the market can absorb housing that is more attainably priced, and is not as pliable for higher end housing units.

Along with housing units came the need for entertainment and service venues. The downtown vision report also identifies the need to create a sense of place, and seeks to focus on creating great downtown living by providing, distinctive shopping, arts, cultural, and sports activities, mixed use which preserve the historic quality of downtown, and creating a sense of place through a 'connected oasis' focusing on pedestrian connection, landscaping, and transportation. In addition to providing amenities for downtown residents Phoenix seeks to attract tourists by improving the convention center, performing arts establishments, and commercial space for attractive retail, restaurant and office space. Retail and office space rental prices and vacancy rates differ slightly. Office space in Phoenix has experienced a minimal

[11] Market Assessment Facing the Potential Demand for Residential Units in the Downtown Area of Phoenix
[12] Market Assessment Facing the Potential Demand for Residential Units in the Downtown Area of Phoenix

fluctuation in rent and vacancy rate, in the past ten years with a vacancy rate currently at about 16% and rents averaging $20 per square foot, this may be due to office park development occurring outside of the downtown area. Retail vacancy is slightly less at about 14% with rental space ranging from $15 to $20 per square foot. In 2005-2006 more space will be absorbed than built, by the market will not completely recover until 2008.

Development in the downtown area is also affected by the new light rail system slated to open in 2006. This system is planned to be a 20 mile stretch connecting Phoenix with Tempe and Mesa, Arizona. Downtown Phoenix has done much in the past two decades to develop a foundation from which the city can be built and strengthened. The same development that has

occurred over the past decade will continue, with more provisions focusing on the bio-sciences occupations. More housing developments will occur as the town develops a better sense of place through improved public amenities and attractions. For downtown it is about fine tuning and adding to the existing structure of the city.

Also helpful for future development are new provisions in regulations, such as lesser parking requirements that attempt to entice office development back into the downtown as underground and structured parking can be very expensive and mean the difference between and city center development site and a suburban development site. Improved regulations also take into consideration the demand for live-work units, as well as higher density development.

SECTION 5: RETAIL

The development of the surrounding downtown Phoenix area is largely suburban in nature and automobile-oriented, resulting in a sprawling land use pattern. This type of development was typical for many American cities. From about the 1940's and 1950's there was a mass decentralization as cheaper ways of transportation and construction methods were utilized, Phoenix was no exception to this. This pattern of development fosters retail development in the form of regional malls, lifestyle centers, and power centers located along a major roadway.[13] As the population moved out to suburbia so did the retail establishments. As retail followed the population it developed around the automobile and became larger in scale, this is where the regional shopping malls, big box stores, and strip malls made their appearance. This move of retail left the city center lacking, no residential population meant no retail establishments, no entertainment venues, and people then came to the city work not to live or play. Phoenix was no exception to this; it did not avoid the decentralization and the pull of suburbia.

Population growth is a strong driving force in the location of retail development as seen throughout suburbia. Because of this effect the retail market in downtown Phoenix was severely diminished. With the housing supply accumulating on the outer edges there was little chance for retail development in downtown, as retail follows residential development. In the past ten years downtown Phoenix has seen more residential development within the downtown, bringing a new vibrant population demanding retail establishments as well as entertainment venues. With new residential development coming into the downtown the relatively untouched retail market is ripe for street-oriented retail development. Retail development is the trigger that can change a downtown from a 9 to 5 office center to a 'round the clock' community.[14]

[13] Downtown Phoenix Retail Opportunity Assessment
[14] Downtown Phoenix Retail Opportunity Assessment

Recognizing the planned additions to Downtown, such as ASU, Phoenix Civic Plaza expansion, new hotel facilities and multi-family residential units, total retail floor area demand for Downtown is projected to grow to 1.37 million sq ft by 2015. The recommended breakdown by component categories is 49% Comparison Retail, 22% Convenience Retail and 29% Leisure (i.e. restaurants/food & beverage and entertainment).[15] As seen in the above projection there is much retail development to be realized in the coming years. This retail development also means that there will be the residential housing stock to support the retail, as well as entertainment, culture, performing arts, and enhanced community elements to match.

There are a couple entities that help manage retail and other development within the downtown. The Phoenix Community Alliance is in charge of guiding and managing development within the downtown. The public and private sector has invested over $3.3 billion in Phoenix's urban core since 1984. The investment is one that the Phoenix Community Alliance continues to protect, nurture and grow.[16] The Community Alliance seeks to accomplish the following goals:

- Facilitates, assists and promotes planning, design, and implementation of quality development for the public and private benefit
- Focuses public attention and awareness on critical development and planning issues
- Stimulates discussion and cooperation among the public and private sectors
- Provides coordination and assistance to the City of Phoenix and other government agencies and private enterprise for central city development
- Induces greater commitment of public and private resources to community planning and development
- Expands opportunities to increase the economic vitality of the urban core and the Phoenix community
- Supports, promotes and catalyzes the renovation of neighborhoods and improvements in housing, services and amenities in central Phoenix

[15] Downtown Phoenix Retail Opportunity Assessment
[16] Phoenix Community Alliance

- Promotes, facilitates and catalyzes development of cultural and educational resources for the benefit of all the residents of the Phoenix metropolitan area; and, enhances the quality of life and lifestyle in central Phoenix

In addition to the Phoenix Community Alliance Copper Square has Ambassadors that act as the concierges for Copper Square, answering questions, giving information, and directing people to the attractions Downtown Phoenix has to offer. This is a great service not only for tourists and residents but for the local businesses as well.

The Downtown Phoenix Partnership is another entity involved in the enhancement and welfare of downtown. They are in charge of managing the business improvement district, the Copper Square Retail Council and the Community Development Corporation.[17]

[17] Copper Square and Downtown Phoenix: On the Move

SECTION 6: PARKING

The current parking situation in Downtown Phoenix could best be described as adequate. At peak times parking is available and accessible, however in down times the parking is in excess. This type of disparity between peak times and non-peak times is not atypical for downtown areas. The situation is encouraging for Phoenix and its prospects for providing parking as major development occurs in the downtown area is possible. As development occurs in downtown, especially in the diverse manor in which the City would like, non-peak parking surplus will help buffer parking secondary uses. Creating a balance between creating enough parking during peak times and not having a massive surplus during non-peak times can be remedied with the way parking is provided and planned for. Goals and policies for downtown are described below, but a better understanding of the current situation is needed before review of policies, goals and strategies.

Figure 7: Supply and Demand Analysis
Source: Copper Square Parking Study

The majority of the parking figures used in this report are based off a study on the Copper Square area and not the entire downtown. Therefore the parking needs described are for the Copper Square area, but serve as a good sample of the conditions present in the entire downtown area. Parking demands and future needs in the Copper Square area are/will be higher than the entire downtown. However the ideas being considered for the Copper Square area will serve as a good example for how the rest of the Downtown should deal with parking. According to a parking study done for the Copper Square area there are currently some 29,000 parking spots[18]. The vast majority of the parking spots are both off-street and open to the public. A good description of amount of off-street parking

[18] Copper Square Parking Study

was in garages or surface parking was not given. However, it seems as though there is a large amount of surface and stand alone garage parking present. Analysis showed at that the peak use times for parking in Downtown, in mostly all of the study areas, parking was above adequate supply level. Only the government oriented area of Copper Square was at or above adequate capacity during peak day time hours. This area, in contrast to the rest of the study area, has mostly private/restricted parking and parking was above capacity for users who are restricted from the private spots. The rest of the study areas were around half of adequate capacity during peak hours. About 9,000 of the nearly 15,000 used parking spots during peak hours were taken up by office and retail workers. Only 1, 300 and 2,300 were used by office visitors and retail users, respectively[19]. The number of parking spots used during night time hours decreased greatly in all areas except the sports and entertainment area. This is indicative of who is in downtown Phoenix and when they are there. While there is a surplus in parking, the effectiveness of the parking system is not nearly as successful. Lack of parking exists in areas close to high demand areas and the way parking is provided is not supporting a viable, diverse downtown. Parking structures and surface lots usually serve single uses and not placed evenly through downtown. Also the really low amount of on-street parking spots in Phoenix greatly discourages shorter term trips downtown, which are usually for retail and entertainment purposes. The lack of on-street parking hampers the pedestrian friendly environment that Phoenix needs to create its desired diversity and life.

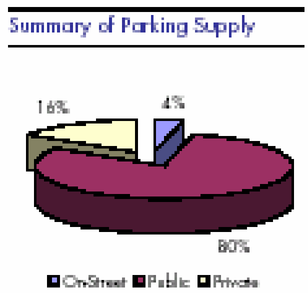

Figure 8: Summary of Parking Supply.
Source: Copper Square Parking Study

Despite the surplus of parking present in downtown Phoenix, the planned future developments will greatly increase the amount of needed parking spots well above the current supply. The Copper Square Parking Study estimated that about 4,500 spots would be eliminated as part of the new developments planned, the majority of which are surface parking spots. Estimated parking needs in 2015 are almost double the current amount of parking spots with an estimated 50,000 parking spot needed[20]. The area needing the greatest increase is the area where the

[19] Copper Square Parking Study
[20] Copper Square Parking Study

New Downtown Arizona State Campus facilities will be located, which is not surprising considering the expected 7,500 new students. Even with this large increase in parking needed, Phoenix has a great opportunity to shape the way parking is provided.

The future goals and strategies for parking in the Downtown area are part of the City's Strategic Downtown Visioning Plan. The points of emphasis for parking and transit for Downtown are, in part, related to the findings and suggestions presented in the Copper Square Parking Study. However, it does not appear that the suggestions given were strongly considered, nor was the dramatic increase of parking that is needed. These are the objectives described in the City's Visioning plan[21];

- Maintain no-parking requirement in Downtown Core Zoning District and Warehouse Overlay District
- Examine parking requirements in areas north and west of Copper Square
- Any new accessory small surface parking lots should be located behind buildings and be accessed by alleys if possible
- Prohibit free-standing parking structures
- Require ground-level uses in accessory parking structures
- Prohibit new freestanding surface parking lots
- Minimize new accessory surface parking lots with new development
- Encourage metered shared district parking lots behind buildings
- Maximize new locations for on-street metered parking to replace those lost due to light rail construction

A surprising aspect to these parking guidelines is the resistance to parking requirements by the City. It seems to want to rely on parking to be provided by developers themselves or privately owned pay lots. However in contrast to their desire for parking to be provided this way is the prohibition of single standing surface and garage parking. The incentive to provide parking by developers is no created and the barriers to developing parking are increased. The City is seemingly refusing to take an active role in parking, which could greatly hamper the success of the redevelopment going on in the City, especially with the large amount of parking need that is expected. With the lack of strong guidance and involvement in parking by the City, this could potentially become a larger issue for the City and also could become a very costly mistake.

[21] Downtown Phoenix: A Strategic Vision and Blueprint for the Future

SECTION 7: POLICIES AND POLITICS

Downtown Phoenix has only recently become a major focus of development in the region. The historic growth of Phoenix has developed in a way which has hampered the success of a downtown area. Major development in Phoenix did not start to occur until the later part of the 20th century. Development patterns prevalent at that time are seen in Phoenix. Phoenix is a shining example of the western city, but unlike cities like Denver, it lacks a historical center or identity. A massive, sprawling metropolitan region has been created in the middle of a desert. The lack of historically viable areas or a historic vernacular has left Phoenix without an identity, which is evident in its current situation. Large suburban areas have been developed around Phoenix, which has created alternatives to Downtown Phoenix for both residential and commercial development. Downtown Phoenix is mainly an area for daytime office use. The majority of the people who work or travel downtown do not live there or stay there for reasons other than work. Retail and entertainment districts have had to compete with the suburban cities, which offer alternatives to downtown, which are closer to where people live. As well, these areas also are in competition for industry and commerce with downtown. There is no presence of a metropolitan organization or attempts at regional planning. Only recently have development trends nation wide began to have an affect on Phoenix.

The City of Phoenix has began to focus and locate major economic development projects in the downtown area in an attempt to attract growth inwards and bolster the economic viability of Phoenix. Major developments within the Downtown recently have included the development of the stadium for the Arizona Diamondbacks, Chase Field. Chase Field is located close to the US Airways Center. The two are major sport and entertainment facilities which have bolstered the area. The City is trying to grow the area surrounding these two facilities as the entertainment area of the City. This area has the largest amount of night time activity in the Downtown area, due mainly to these facilities. The locating these facilities Downtown is similar to other attempts Phoenix has made to allow for or locate major developments downtown. However, the City and its downtown are still in competition with the suburbs for similar uses, a new stadium for the NFL's Arizona Cardinals has been recently built in a neighboring suburb. The Cardinals new stadium will also host the NCAA Football National Championship game, but the downtown area is unlikely to see much of a boost from this event. This competition is indicative of the challenge that downtown Phoenix and the City is facing due to the factors mentioned above. The suburban areas have the similar abilities to offer the things that downtown Phoenix can offer, which is not the case in many other downtown areas in the Country. Phoenix has also recently built a light rail system which serves the downtown Phoenix area and connects Phoenix to Tempe and Mesa. The system is only 20 miles long, but is a start to regional planning and future regional connections. The success of these major development projects has created the need for a planning document to help guide future growth and create goals and objectives, which the City has recently developed and adopted.

The Downtown Strategic Vision and Blueprint for the Future report lays out the City's strategy for the success for the Downtown area. As mentioned before, this report lays out the City's desire to attract biomedical/high tech industries to attract not only business to the downtown but also residential and retail uses and users. Unlike other big city downtown areas, Phoenix has been focusing on bringing large academic and high tech industry users as a way to bolster residential demand, as opposed to encouraging residential growth by only providing entertainment and arts opportunities. The vision plan is based on three "Big Bets" as the City describes them[22].

- Big Bet No. 1 Arizona State University: Proposition 301, which citizens approved in 2000, earmarks $1 billion over 20 years distributed among the state's three universities to expand funding for university research, technology transfer, and new business development. Citizens have recognized that top-tier universities are a critical infrastructure for the 21st century.
- Big Bet No. 2 Genomics: $90 million was raised in 2002 to "jump-start" the bioscience industry.
- Big Bet No. 3 Industry Clusters: The region's new strategy targets five technology-oriented, knowledge-intensive clusters to build regional strengths in: high technology, software, biomedical, aerospace, and advanced business services.

The focus of the development associated with these three "Big Bets" is Downtown Phoenix. The "Big Bets" are shaping the development in downtown and the Vision Plan attempts to create a guideline with how to use the associated development to bolster the Downtown area. The Vision Plan focuses on seven priority themes for development to be a major part of the policies to direct this new growth[23].

[22] Downtown Phoenix: A Strategic Vision and Blueprint for the Future
[23] Downtown Phoenix: A Strategic Vision and Blueprint for the Future

- Knowledge Anchors: The biotech, educational and Industry Clusters planned as part of the Big Bets.
- Downtown Living: Encouragement of Downtown residential growth to support the new ASU campus and other industry clusters
- Great Neighborhoods
- Arts and Entertainment Hub:
- Distinctive Shopping
- Great Places/ Great Spaces
- The Connected Oasis: The parks and open space planned for Downtown.

These seven themes are probably not dissimilar to the goals and objectives of most downtowns, but create a good framework for how to guide future development. The major focus on new industries and education will serve well to ensure the economic success of Phoenix. The challenge for Phoenix will be its ability to create a viable residential population, as well as, an entertainment and cultural hub with the lack of existing infrastructure or sense of place. The Vision Plan has began to make its way into the land use code for the area but it remains to be seen how much influence the Vision Plan will have without major strategies and policies presented in the Vision Plan.

SECTION 8: COMPARE/CONTRAST TO DOWNTOWN DENVER

Denver and Phoenix are similar in many ways. They share the same arid climate and warm weather while located just next mountain areas. Both regions and cities face the same growth issues focused around suburban sprawl and water. The cities grew up in the late 20th century during the time of massive suburban growth and urban renewal. The growth patterns of both cities have been in the sprawling, gridilinar form which was shaped mainly by automobile transportation. Both downtown areas became large business commercial areas which served as the regional hub for the prevalent industries. Both enjoyed economic growth resulting from national industrial shifts and movement of US industry and populations from the Northeast to the Sun Belt. Both Downtowns also faced major economic issues from resulting from economic downturns in the 1980's and competition from growing, thriving suburban areas surrounding the urban core. Approaches to revitalize the downtown are have included building major sports facilities, bolstering entertainments districts, the concentration of education areas downtown and building convention centers to attract business.

What difference between the two downtown areas are a result of two factors; Phoenix's lack of a preserved and defined historic vernacular and infrastructure and Denver being five to ten or more years ahead creating a framework for redeveloping their downtown area. In many ways Phoenix is mimicking the approaches and strategies taken by Denver to redevelop its downtown. Denver has benefited greatly from its past compared to Phoenix. Denver became a regional center and big city far before Phoenix. As well, many parts of Denver were developed in the early 1900's and a large amount of that infrastructure and architectural vernacular remains today. Efforts by citizen in Denver during the height of Urban Renewal have preserved areas like Larimer Square. Areas like this were not preserved or ever created in Phoenix. Denver was far ahead in its creation of policies and strategies for growth downtown. Denver is benefiting from this with a large, regional transit network approved and partly constructed, large entertainment districts, which are thriving from City spearheaded projects. Secondary uses and development is now thriving as part of these large investments. Phoenix is just now encouraging and creating these large investment projects. Despite being behind Denver in its redevelopment, Phoenix may have the opportunity to match Denver's success if not exceed it because of its approach to redevelopment.

Phoenix's approach has been focused more around encouraging and attracting high-tech industries, as well as, bringing more job and business development to the downtown area. Denver's approach seems to be more geared towards the creating the entertainment and cultural areas which is attracting the massive residential growth, which Denver has been encouraging. Denver, however, has not attempted to attract more development related to growing industries and businesses. This lack of jobs and industry downtown could potentially be a large factor in the sustainability of Denver's downtown. It is an interesting difference in the development strategies. Denver's approach to the seven themes that Phoenix is now focusing on has been successful and Phoenix may never attain the entertainment, cultural, open space, and retail success Denver has. Denver has not attempted to create new industries in its core, or at least in the large scale way Phoenix is. Denver has had similar opportunities but has lost industries to suburban areas, including a large university medical facility to Aurora. This facility is much like the one Phoenix is creating.

It appears as though both of these cities can learn from each other, in Phoenix's case it has been learning from Denver. In many of its planning documents, Denver is referenced as a model for many of the objectives it is trying to achieve. Denver needs to try and learn from Phoenix's attempts to attract new, high-tech industries to its urban core. Regionally Denver is doing well at this, but the Downtown area has not. The economic success of Downtown Denver will be affected greatly by its ability to compete economically. Banking the downtown area's success on residential, service, entertainment and arts is far sited in its approach and this may not be realized due to the success Downtown Denver is currently enjoying. Denver has and will continue to benefit somewhat from its surround suburbs for bolstering its entertainment and cultural developments. However, it is not evident if effects of losing industrial growth in the future to the suburbs will have the same effect it did in the 1980's, even though the downtown is now and will be more connected to its suburbs and is beginning to offer amenities that can not be found in the suburbs. The suburbs are in competition with the Downtown, with the lack of any regional planning controls or growth plans. The ability of these areas to morph to mimic the downtown area in its amenities while offering a smaller scale alternative is obtainable. Phoenix has seemingly created or has began to try and create a framework and foundation to sustainable economic growth and vitality in its downtown.

SECTION 9: SUMMARY

While conducting the research for this report, it has become evident that Phoenix is behind in its efforts to revitalize its downtown, at least when compared to Denver. In many cases, Phoenix is using the strategies or lessons learned by Denver to help shape their effort. Phoenix's downtown is a lacking a sense of identity and will have to try and create an identity to ensure the success of its downtown as a vibrant and diverse area. Or downtown Phoenix will remain primarily a day-time, business and industry oriented area. Phoenix has taken major steps towards creating an economically viable downtown by encouraging a diverse range of new and high-tech industries, while trying to anchor the area with a brand new educational and research campus by partnering with Arizona State University. Phoenix's model for attracting business and industrial growth in its downtown serves as the main lesson that Denver can learn from Phoenix. The success of the entertainment, cultural, retail and residential goals for Phoenix remains to be seen and Phoenix's vision for these goals may not be detailed enough to create the desired connected, urban oasis that the City of Phoenix wants for its downtown.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. *Copper Square Census 2000 Summary Profile* http://www.coppersquare.com/business/infocenter/

2. *Copper Square Demographic and Income Profile* http://www.coppersquare.com/business/infocenter/

3. *Downtown Phoenix Retail Opportunity Assessment*, Thomas Consultants, August 2004, http://www.coppersquare.com/business/downloads/Retail_Market_Analysis-summary.pdf

4. McAbee, Adam, *Market Assessment Facing the Potential Demand for Residential Units in the Downtown Area of Phoenix*, Meyers Group, Inc., November 2003, http://www.coppersquare.com/business/downloads/Housing_Demand-full.pdf

5. *Downtown Phoenix: A Strategic Vision and Blueprint for the Future*, City of Phoenix, December 2004, http://www.coppersquare.com/business/downloads/Vision_Maps.pdf

6. *Copper Square and Downtown Phoenix: On the Move*, City of Phoenix, http://www.coppersquare.com/business/downloads/CS_PHX_onthemove.pdf

7. Phoenix Community Alliance, http://www.phoenixcommunityalliance.com/index.asp

8. Klatt, Richard, *Copper Square Parking Study*, Walker Parking Consultants, June 2006, http://www.coppersquare.com/business/downloads/RPT_Copper_Square_063006.pdf

9. City of Phoenix Planning Department, http://phoenix.gov/PLANNING/index.html

10. City of Phoenix Zoning Code, http://www.municode.com/Resources/gateway.asp?pid=13534&sid=3