

MY TURN

Now is time for Phoenix to plan downtown of future

A close look at recent recommendations for downtown Phoenix demonstrates a widespread consensus about what is needed to create a livable and vibrant city.



NAN ELLIN

The visions of interested parties happily converge upon a series of core values (what we want) along with strategies (how to get what we want). These include:

- **Vitality and vibrancy:** Establish vital hubs of retail, offices and housing linked together to support a fine-grained "mixed-use" urban fabric.

- **Quality public space:** Create a "Connected Oasis," a network of open spaces that provide opportunities for outdoor gatherings, recreation and respite.

- **Eco-city:** Increase the presence of nature in the city for shade, beauty and well-being. Also, apply ecological design principles to building and the creation of urban outdoor spaces.

- **Authenti-city:** Bring distinction and a "sense of place" to our city by preserving and enhancing buildings



CHRISTINE KEITH/THE REPUBLIC

Hance Park is an underperforming downtown asset that has great potential.

and neighborhoods, supporting local independent businesses, introducing iconic design elements, and ensuring community involvement in matters regarding growth and development.

- **A city of/for (all) people:** Ensure the city is welcoming to people of all incomes, ages, races, ethnicities and abilities by offering a continuum of housing along with good schools, universal (accessible) design, safety and security and mass transit.

- **A city of/for knowledge, innovation, and creation:** Provide a rich cultural infrastructure for the arts, edu-

cation, research and development/application of new technologies.

- **Connectivity:** Ensure ease of movement, efficiency, convenience and communication through enhanced public space and vehicular networks, distributed municipal parking, multi-modal transportation and communication/virtual networks.

To achieve these goals, we might adopt the following guidelines:

- **Protect what we already value,** be it neighborhoods, buildings, businesses, cultural institutions, views, public spaces or nature.

- **Enhance what is underperforming,** for instance, Hance Park, Capitol Mall, the public school system and the retail and housing deficits.

- **Add what we don't have yet,** but would like.

- **Incorporate sustainability and urbanism standards and ensure all development meets these.**

- **Develop a plan for implementation,** maintenance and management of the public space network.

- **Monitor success/failure and adjust the goals and guidelines accordingly,** always striving to align with the core values.

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The build-out of our central city can be haphazard and opportunistic or it can be guided with forethought to make ours a most livable city.

Now is the time to mine these informed visions for downtown Phoenix and to leverage our abundant natural, economic and creative resources to assure that our city becomes a vibrant urban oasis and source of pride for the entire Valley, for us and future generations.

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