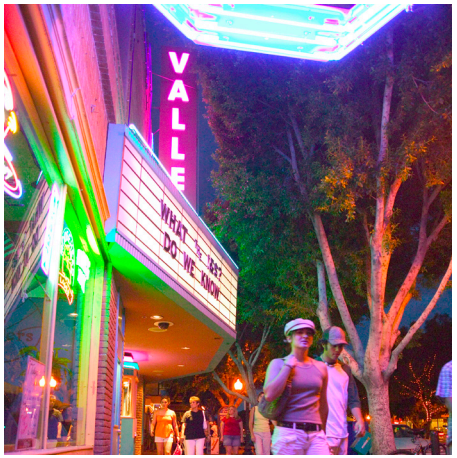
COMMUNITY DESIGN PRINCIPLES

DOWNTOWN / MILL AVENUE DISTRICT
AND VICINITY



CITY OF TEMPE ARIZONA
community development department

COMMUNITY DESIGN PRINCIPLES

DOWNTOWN / MILL AVENUE DISTRICT
AND VICINITY

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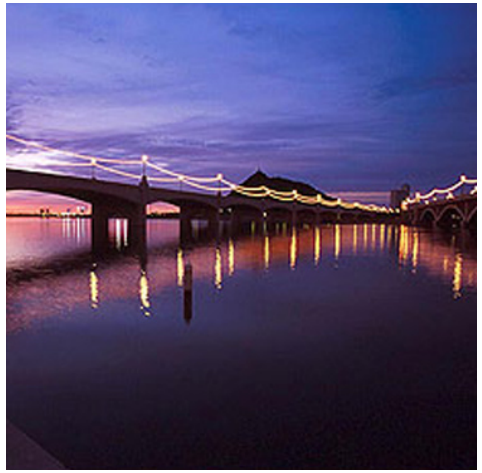
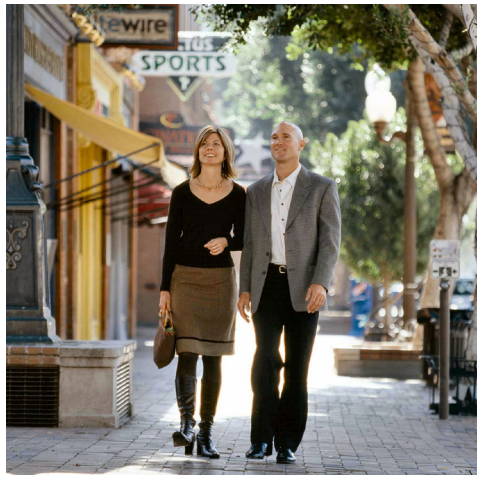




INTRODUCTION

"***It is the first obligation of all building to place itself in relationship to the city***." Voltaire

A central location, finite boundaries, multi-modal transportation access, economic opportunities, educational and cultural facilities, natural and man-made recreational amenities and an array of residential options combine to create, in Tempe, a setting for community design and development unique in the region and state. By establishing principles to guide elected and appointed officials, City staff, design professionals, developers and residents in the decision-making process, the City of Tempe strives to maintain and enhance the quality of its built environment, thereby enriching the lives of its citizens and guests.

Tempe exists as a forty-square-mile, land-locked anomaly within the ever-expanding Phoenix metropolitan area. The Downtown / Mill Avenue District and vicinity constitutes the historic and contemporary mixed-use, civic, educational and cultural heart of the community. The built form of this enclave has developed as an amalgam of styles, shapes, materials and details. Although this "community core" has already experienced a substantial transformation over the preceding three decades, it is on the cusp of an even greater magnitude of change. Just as surely as Hayden's Ferry [Tempe] and Tempe Normal School [Arizona State University] were born of humble origins in the latter part of the 1800's and experienced slow, modest growth from the turn-of-the-century until the end of World War II, followed by explosive expansion in the 1950's, 60's, 70's and 80's, they are now faced with intensive infill and redevelopment opportunities. In the near future, an expanding economy, introduction of the Light Rail line, Town Lake-related development and the transformation of ASU into the "New American University" will irreversibly alter the appearance and experience of the community's core area.

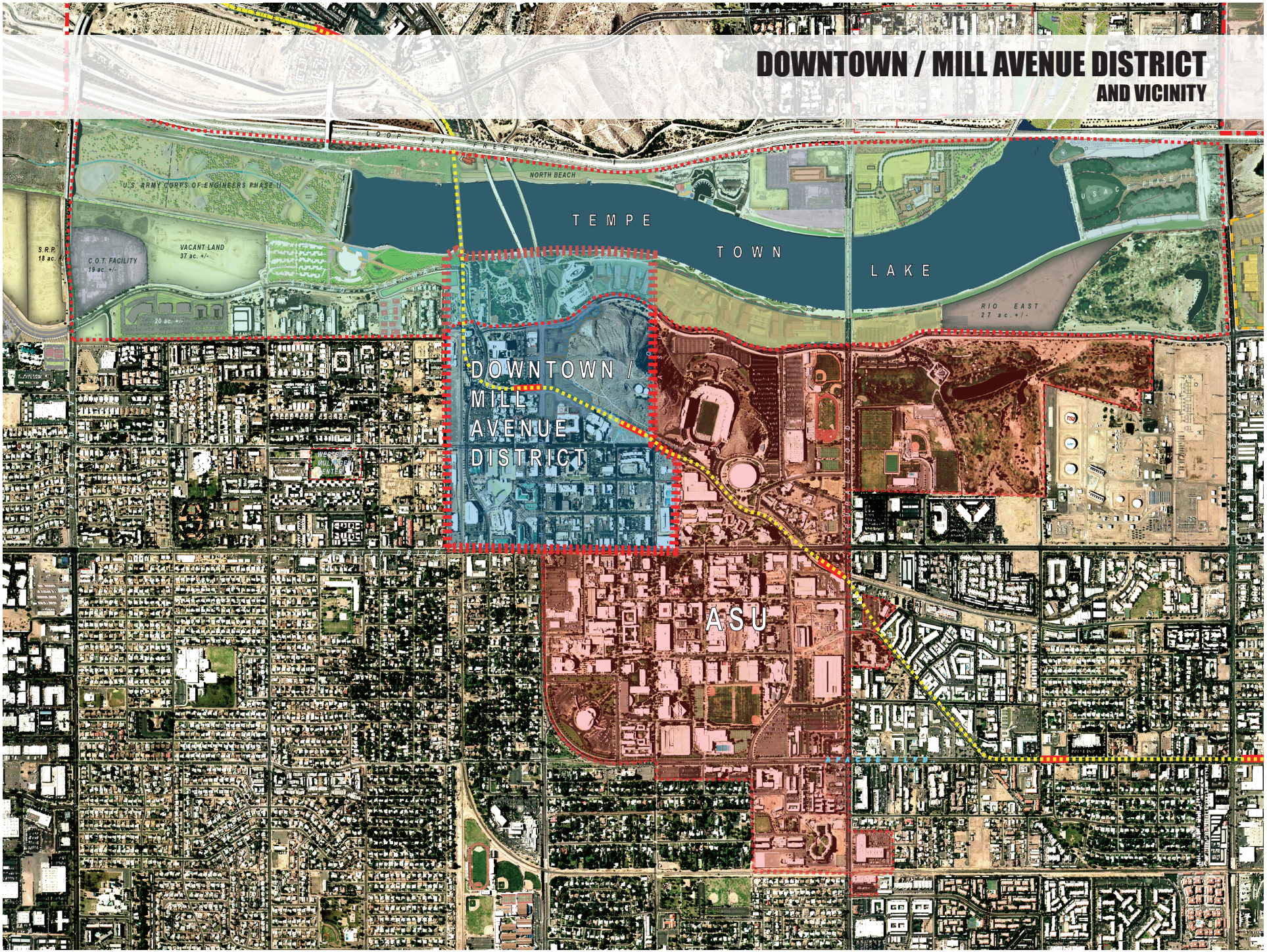
It is this critical juncture that design principles for the Downtown / Mill Avenue District [accepted 6 April 2006] have been developed as a point of reference to recognize the area's essential qualities, identify its distinctive characteristics and envision its physical development. Rather than attempting to fix the future with a set of static standards, these Principles are intended to inform the ongoing [re]development of this portion of the community, toward the achievement of a high-quality built environment with a special sense of place. Tempe's *General Plan 2030*, Zoning and Development Code, Historic Preservation Plan and Ordinance, Hayden Ferry South Development Guidelines,

Quality Initiative for Building, the 2003 International Building Code; Arizona State University's Comprehensive Development Plan and Design Guidelines; Federal Aviation Administration Guidelines and the Americans With Disabilities Act, among other documents and regulations, already exist to guide and regulate facets of development, while the Downtown Tempe Community's [DTC's] Design Vision, the Urban Open Space Plan and other references provide additional information. These Principles, then, are not intended to usurp or conflict with these adopted, accepted or developing regulations and references, but to complement and, where necessary, supplement, in order to facilitate the development of an exciting, memorable and sustainable built environment.

The Community Design Element of the *General Plan 2030* [adopted 4 December 2003] sets forth eleven Objectives toward realizing its goal of "developing standards that will enhance the community's quality of life for future generations." Numerous implementation Strategies are also identified. These Objectives, repeated below, may be considered the foundation for the Community Design Principles that follow.

- Create recognizable and usable places by enhancing enclosure, connections, permeability and transparency
- Provide focal points
- Achieve diverse continuity
- Encourage and enhance pedestrian movement
- Respond to climatic factors and human comfort
- Provide opportunities for interaction and observation
- Encourage mixed-use designs
- Encourage architecture that will withstand changes in style and economy, enabling adaptive re-uses in the future
- Promote sustainable concepts
- Maintain or reduce lighting impacts on night skies
- Recognize and celebrate geographic distinctions in architectural character

DOWNTOWN / MILL AVENUE DISTRICT
AND VICINITY



ISSUES AND OBSERVATIONS I

"***The city is organized complexity***." Jane Jacobs

Limited in horizontal expansion by finite municipal boundaries, the future of Tempe's built environment will be determined not by planned sprawl, but by principled infill, redevelopment, rehabilitation and preservation. These Community Design Principles are intended to stimulate, not limit, discussion on relevant issues and potential directions, which may include:

Image / Identity	What does the community as a whole, and this area in particular, think of itself; what differentiates it from others? *Determine + promote*.
Culture / Heritage	Key components of Image / Identity. *Preserve + celebrate*.
Building Heights	Pending location, increased height can be an objectionable addition or an essential ingredient in urban mixed-use growth. *Locate + concentrate*.
Views	Always desirable; corridors can be enhanced or blocked by building location and configuration. *Identify + delineate*.
Pedestrian Realm	Street-level activity, in which automobiles participate, but not dominate, is essential to an attractive, vital community. *Enable + energize*.
Human Interest	Communities are by, for and about people: their activities, impressions and interests. *Appeal + detail*.
Quality vs Quantity	Concentrated, high-quality development is ultimately more valuable than inferior mass quantities. *Focus + facilitate*.
Vitality / Sustainability	An ongoing diversity of forms, details, materials and uses contributes to a long and vibrant community lifespan. *Integrate + evolve*.
Creativity vs Conformity	Tempe has long valued its sense of community, as well as the creativity expressed in its buildings and by its residents. *Diverse continuity*.
Connections	Figurative and physical links from space-to-space and place-to-place, and the resulting patterns of development. *Enhance, create + maintain*.

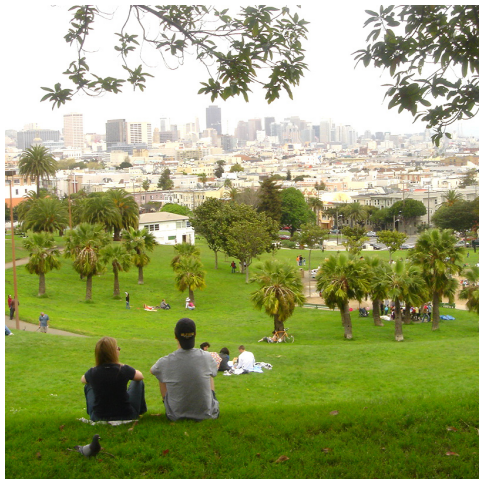
VISION II

"***One essential ingredient for being an original in the day of copies is courageous vision***."
Charles Swindoll

General Plan 2030 states: Tempe's vision in the year 2030 is livability – a community of vital neighborhoods, visually attractive, transit-sensitive, with resident participation in making crucial decisions about the future. In addition, Arizona State University's Comprehensive Development Plan calls for an integrated and embedded community and campus, with community and campus as civic space comprised of well-connected districts. The task, then, is translating the vision into reality and, in the case of these Principles, into built form.

Beginning with the stone pueblos and canal network left by the Hohokam, the location of a river crossing and raising of indigenous adobe and timber enclosures by early Mexican-American and Anglo settlers, followed by the establishment of a townsite defined by a grid system of parcels and streets and the erection of brick and milled wood buildings by the territorial pioneers, to the contemporary architecture and infrastructure of the current era, Tempe's community core, the Downtown / Mill Avenue District, continues to evolve. Its patterns of development and architectural character are inspired by natural features, historic precedents and developing technologies, resulting in an eclectic urban oasis of culture, lifestyle and commerce, permeated by the shared concept of a "creative knowledge district."

This core area is a vibrant pedestrian realm with an authentic sense of place, defined by buildings and spaces with character and connections, punctuated by slender, elegant towers forming an interesting and dynamic skyline. This "eclectic urban oasis" is both a destination and home. Future [re]development contributes to its success through the well-considered, creative design of its structures and spaces.



PRECEDENTS AND PRINCIPLES III

"***We shape our buildings and, thereafter, our buildings shape us***." Winston Churchill

Buildings and structures, through their placement, arrangement of forms and expression of function and materials, convey ideas and attitudes, not only about their purpose, but also about the values of the community and the value of their users. It is essential, therefore, to identify particular precedents and delineate appropriate principles as determinants for their design.

PRECEDENTS [development should recognize and relate to these character-defining features]:

Downtown / Mill Avenue District *and Vicinity*

- *Tempe [Hayden] Butte*: Since prehistory, as peoples first traversed, then settled here, the butte has been a landmark; it is also valued as an archaeological site, recreational and educational amenity and habitat for indigenous plants and animals, in addition to its cultural significance for the Native American community; City-owned portions above the 1180' [roughly] contour line [above mean sea level] have been designated as a Preserve. Rising to a height of 333' [1495' amsl] above its surroundings, the butte remains a highly visible and revered element in the urban landscape.

- *Hayden Flour Mill*: Although constructed in utilitarian fashion and currently awaiting rehabilitation, the 4-5 story mill building [1918] and the 161' high silo/elevator structure [1951], are among Tempe's most recognizable built "icons."

- *Mill Avenue Streetscape*: Historic and compatible contemporary buildings form a nearly contiguous 4-block streetfront which varies in height up to nearly 50', beyond which any taller elements are set or stepped back or otherwise differentiated. Most storefronts reflect the traditional patterns of 25', 50' and 75' wide parcels and/or structural bays. Materials and detail elements are of human-scale and interest. Regularly-spaced street trees provide shade and, with the wide brick-paved sidewalks, visual continuity. Other amenities and accessories contribute to the street-level experience.

- *Parks and Plazas*: From the Butte Preserve and Tempe Beach Park to the more urban spaces at Hayden Square, Sixth Street Park and Centerpoint Plaza, easily-accessible, well-defined open space is an important component. The Urban Open Space Plan will further describe and envision the enhancement of these areas.

- *Architectural Continuum*: Beginning with the indigenous Sonoran, followed by Commercial Victorian, Egyptian Revival, Spanish Colonial Revival, Modern and PostModern, to NeoTraditional and NeoModern, the styles of many of the district's buildings are indicative of incremental change over time and reflective of the technology and/or aesthetic sentiments of their day. Structures nearer the historic core of the district [primarily encompassing an area ½ block east and west of Mill Avenue, from Fourth to Sixth Streets] tend to be more traditional or historically-inspired in forms, scale, materials and details, while those further out are more contemporary. If "variety is the spice of life," the Mill Avenue District is a savory stew of eclectic ingredients, fortified by a unified streetscape and an attention to human interest and detail.

- *Tempe Town Lake*: The "crown jewel" of Tempe's Rio Salado Project, the lake is a focal point to which visual and physical access must not be impeded. Rowing competitions and recreational boating suggest nautical references. Linear parks surround the lake, linking building sites, and provide a unifying element. Ground floor building uses relate to public spaces and are reinforced by forms and materials rich in detail and substantial in mass; views to the lake from upper levels are maximized and enhanced by expressive structure and technology. Pedestrian and retail linkages to the Downtown / Mill Avenue District are essential.

- *Crossings*: Since its earliest settlement, Tempe has been a river crossing point, due to the visual landmarks afforded by the buttes and the underlying geologic stratum which makes for a reliable crossing point. Over time, various bridges supplemented or replaced at-grade crossings. Together, these structures [the utilitarian, steel, Historic-eligible Union Pacific Railroad Bridge; the contemporary, art-enhanced Light Rail Bridge, the Historic Ash Avenue Bridge Abutment, the Historic/Spanish Colonial Revival Old and historic-inspired New Mill Avenue Bridges] create a sense of identity, connectivity and arrival for the area.

University Environs

- Arizona State University = New American University: Vision statements, such as "campus as civic space," and key action terms, such as "empowering," "extending," "connecting" and "rejuvenating," in the new ASU Comprehensive Development Plan [CDP] indicate that future university [re]development will be parallel to, if not synonymous with, that of the Downtown / Mill Avenue District. "Embedded" development is key to the development of the New American University as it co-mingles campus and community. A new zoning district [MUED], jointly administered by the City and University, promotes compatible development at the campus edges. In addition, ASU has established a presence within the Downtown / Mill Avenue District by occupying much of the Brickyard complex. The recently-completed Fulton Hall [Foundation Building], at the northeast corner of College Avenue and University Drive, exemplifies this concept. The bulk of the 6-story office component screens a large parking structure to the north, which is also faced on the west/College Avenue side by 2-story retail shops and offices. Building elevations respond to the differing determinants of each direction: glass curtain-wall to the south/Campus; brick with individual glazed openings to the west/Historic church. The entire composition is capped and unified by a metal brow which is illuminated from beneath. Streetscape elements relate to the adjoining district, yet convey a sense of transition.

NOTES:

- Unless noted otherwise, all heights given are as measured from top of curb at Fackler Square [Fifth Street and Mill Avenue; 1162'+ above mean sea level].

FOUR "CORNERSTONE" PRINCIPLES

[development should incorporate aspects of each of these elements in relation to the preceding precedents]:

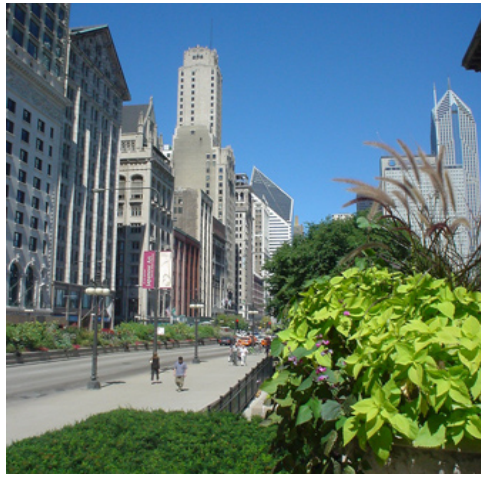
integration

A. ***INTEGRATION***

1. Community > Area/District > Subdistrict
   a. Streets, walks and paths, typically based on the street grid of the original townsite, make connections between spaces and places within and surrounding the District. These connections should be enhanced, rather than hindered, by development.
   b. Development at the perimeter is appropriately scaled and oriented in relation to the surrounding areas.
   c. Significant natural and human-built features are emphasized.
   d. Appropriate variations in character and scale are expected and encouraged within and among subdistricts.

2. Buildings > Streets/Spaces
   a. Interactive encroachments:
      * sidewalk dining and display areas
      * balconies, overhangs
      * windows and entries [transparency/permeability]
   b. Building heights are appropriate to their location
      * lower at streetfront, higher if stepped-back or otherwise declinated
      * lower at district edges and beyond [higher in mid-block within the community core]
   c. Allow for perception of an expansive sky canopy from streets and views from and of significant spaces and places; maintain perception of historic street grid
   d. On-street parking is used as a streetscape element, but structured parking is faced with building elements containing other interactive uses. On-site surface parking is rare and does not inhibit pedestrian-building interaction. Avoid isolated "malls."

3. Buildings > Function/Environment
   a. Forms, details, materials relate to surroundings by compatibility or well-considered contrast; compatible yet distinct and appropriately scaled/proportioned within or adjacent to conservation/heritage zones and designated Historic Properties
   b. Respond to environmental conditions and views, provide shading, minimize solar heat gain and heat island effect
   c. Respect parks, preserves and open spaces:
      * geography [base, form and height] of the Butte
      * access [visual and physical] to the Butte and Town Lake, as well as Tempe Beach Park, Sixth Street Park and ASU campus
      * interaction with other open spaces [plazas, courtyards, etc.]



B. ***INNOVATION*** innovation

1. Planning
   a. Allow for multiple uses at the outset and anticipate new uses and technology in the future.
   b. Respect the street grid and urban context, yet creatively accommodate access and express functions.

2. Urban Design
   a. Enhance human comfort, interaction and wayfinding:
      * entries and windows address the street and engage passers-by, regardless of building use or appearance
      * signage and other mnemonic elements
      * public art as an integral component
      * landscape and hardscape which relate to context and convey established themes, yet contribute to a special sense of place and extend the architectural experience of the building
      * other amenities such as seating, sidewalk dining, balconies
   b. Encourage development that provides or allows for a “sense of discovery”; enhance “the journey.”

3. Architecture
   a. Building design is about having style, whether or not a particular style is expressed.
   b. Incorporate and express new ideas and technologies, yet retain timeless principles of “commodity, firmness, and delight.”
   c. Creatively combine new and traditional materials and forms.
   d. Strive for sustainability by incorporating passive and active strategies, utilizing durable, energy-efficient materials and designing to accommodate a variety of uses and tenants over time.

4. Visualization
   a. While there are various methods and processes to develop a design concept, a virtual rendition of the proposed product, executed in a current, standard “3D” format, will assist decision-makers in evaluating the proposals’ suitability for its location. Additional sketches, vignettes and models will enhance the design process and make the concept “accessible” to a wider audience.

DEFINITION

C. ***DEFINITION***

1. District within Community
   a. Differentiate, yet relate
   b. Concentration of tall buildings, resulting in an identifiable skyline and Community Core
   c. Consider gateway “statements,” where appropriate

2. Spaces, Places and Streets
   a. Establish edges and contribute character; “traditional” street fronts [interactive street “wall”], regardless of style or use
      * building façades and architectural elements
      * utilize landscape/hardscape for continuity and rhythm
      * urban accessories [signage, lighting, furnishings, etc.] contribute to overall experience and assist in wayfinding
   b. Accentuate natural and human-made landmarks by defining view “corridors”
   c. Maintain or extend contiguous streetfronts

3. Buildings
   a. Accentuate entries [to buildings and districts]
   b. Express uses and functions with materials and forms

articulation

D. ***ARTICULATION***

1. Lower Building Façades [streetfronts]
   a. Combine materials and details at a human scale, while maintaining openness and accessibility [permeability]
   b. Relate to the traditional or appropriate building front widths
   c. Relate to the traditional or appropriate building façade height at the streetfront.

2. Upper Building Façades
   a. Shafts of tall buildings are occasionally and appropriately interrupted by horizontal elements and step-backs or other such devices.
   b. Shafts of tall buildings are slender and elegant, rather than bulky and massive

3. Building Tops [skyline]
   a. Buildings, especially taller ones, culminate in interesting rooflines derived from the building's geometry, use or surroundings

4. General
   a. Not unlike a classical column, taller buildings may consist of a base [streetfront], shaft [upper floors] and capital [top]. While subject to abstraction and interpretation, this tripartite principle remains a valid basis for design.

CONCEPTUAL SUMMARY IV

"***A sketch is better than a long speech***." Napoleon Bonaparte

These twenty "word sketches" succinctly summarize the intent of these Community Design Principles:

▪ accentuate art	public; experiential / functional
▪ acknowledge environment	respond to solar conditions / extreme heat
▪ anticipate evolution	styles, uses change [but principles remain]
▪ announce arrival	gateways / doorways / portals / signage / banners
▪ articulate height	appropriately located, elegantly slender and well-rendered building towers which punctuate, rather than block, views
▪ celebrate diversity	people / architecture / uses
▪ consider context	participate in place-making; diverse continuity; compatible yet distinct
▪ create connections	building-street, area-area, district-district
▪ define spaces	character / enclosure; streets / plazas / courts / parks
▪ embrace eccentricity	creative / distinctive; styles / signage / art
▪ experience architecture	buildings which engage the passer-by and relate to their environment, rather than exist as isolated objects in a landscape
▪ express materials	honest / durable / traditional / contemporary
▪ focus energy	concentrate activities, density and height in appropriate areas; reduce or restrict in buffer zones, heritage areas and surrounding neighborhoods
▪ identify icons	heroes / sites / features / structures
▪ infuse character	design / details / textures / signage / art
▪ invite interaction	person-person, building-street
▪ maximize streets	not in terms of the traffic they carry, but the uses they accommodate [driving / walking / parking / bicycling / events]
▪ promote preservation	significant structures, primary patterns [buildings, street grid, circulation routes, view corridors]
▪ provide amenities	human comfort; shade / seating / information / delight
▪ utilize technology	lighting / energy conservation / visual art and communications

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COMMUNITY DESIGN PRINCIPLES

CITY OF TEMPE

Hugh Hallman, Mayor
Mark Mitchell, Vice-Mayor

Ben Arredondo, Councilmember
Barbara Carter, Councilmember
Len Copple, Councilmember
Pam Goronkin, Councilmember
Hut Hutson, Councilmember

Will Manley, City Manager
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Planner / Graphic Design

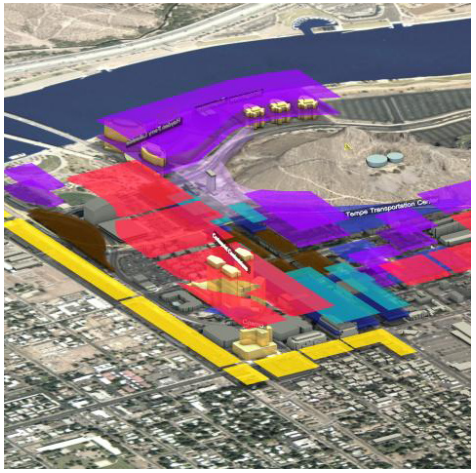
CITY OF TEMPE ARIZONA
community development department

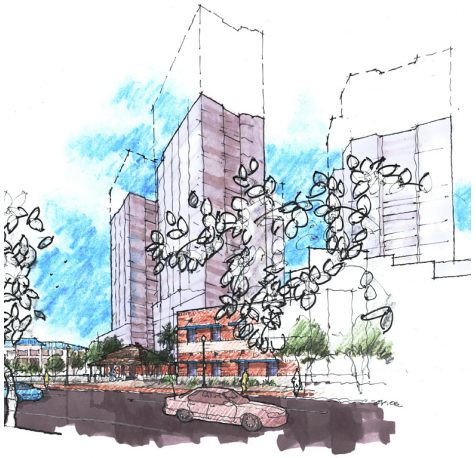
spring 2006

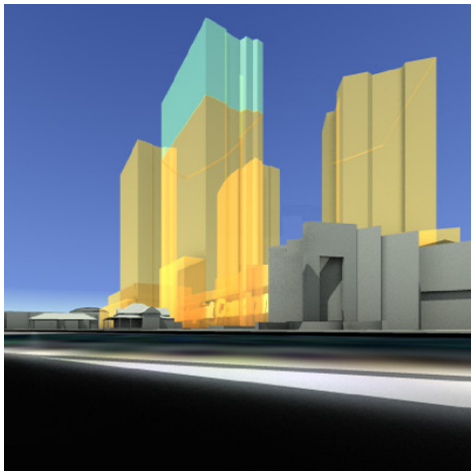
APPENDIX: Building Heights

The following guidelines, as expressed in overlay areas with accompanying stepback illustrations, have been developed as an extension of the Community Design Principles: Downtown/Mill Avenue District and vicinity. The preceding Principles, together with these illustrative guidelines, have been accepted by the City Council's Central City Development Committee of the Whole as a reference in the consideration of future individual development proposals.

April 2006







legend

symbol	*area*	*height*
	NEIGHBORHOOD BUFFER	**50' max.**
	HERITAGE CORE	**75' max.** (15' stpbk. @50' height)
	CIVIC/CULTURAL	**75' max.**
	MILL AVENUE CORRIDOR	**150' max.** (15' stpbk. @50' height; 10' stpbk. @ 75' height)
	URBAN- PARK TRANSITION	**200' max.** (20' stpbk. @75' height)
	URBAN CENTER	**300' max.**
	HAYDEN FERRY SOUTH SPECIAL STUDY AREA	**See specific guidelines***
	PARK/PRESERVE	

* "Hayden Ferry South Development Guidlines" were accepted by the Rio Salado Advisory Commission in March 2000, accepted by the Tempe City Council in August 2000 and amended by development agreement in April 2001.

north
scale: 1"=400±

Accepted 6 April 2006 (Central City Development Committee of the Whole)

community development department

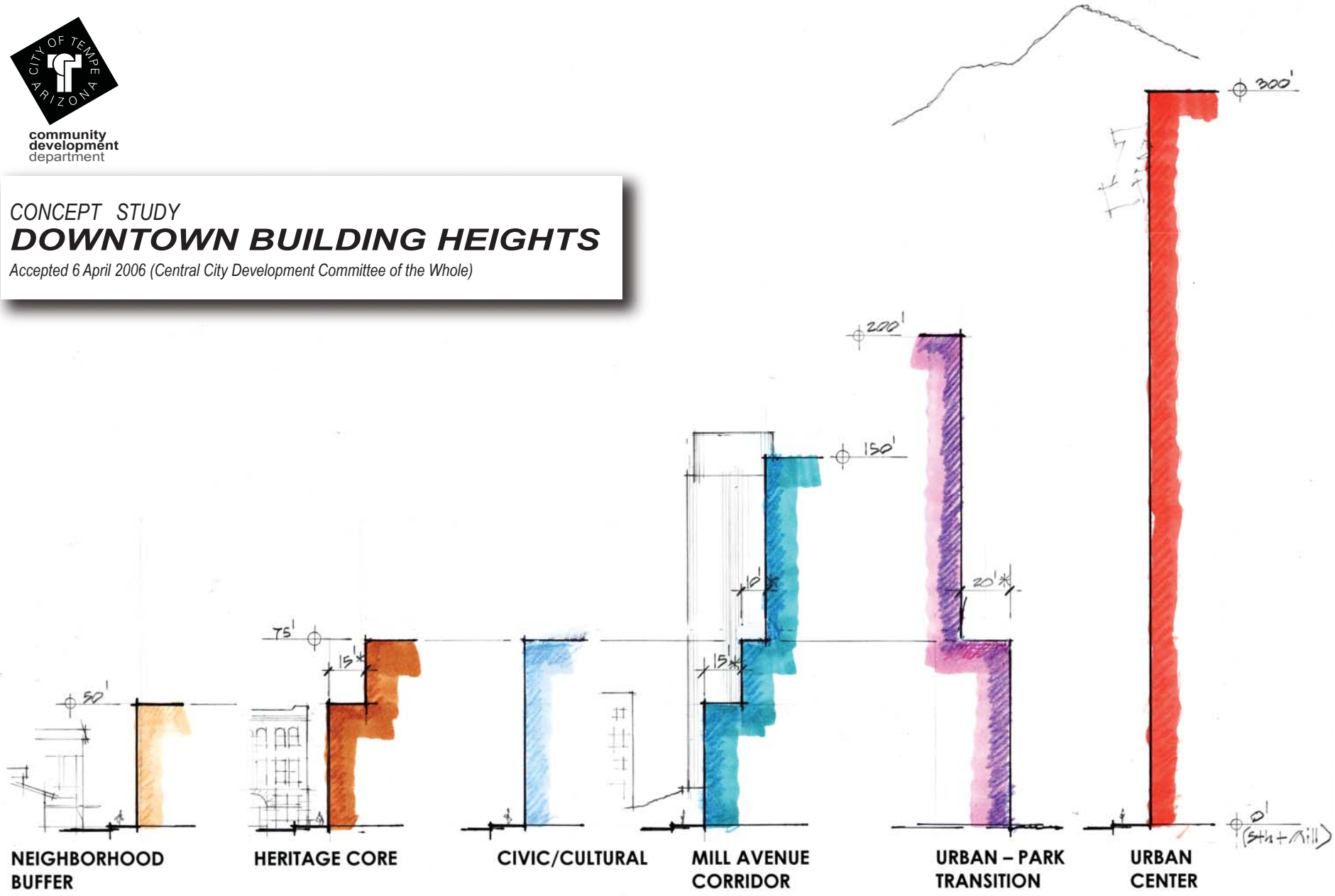
CONCEPT STUDY
DOWNTOWN BUILDING HEIGHTS

community development department

CONCEPT STUDY

DOWNTOWN BUILDING HEIGHTS

Accepted 6 April 2006 (Central City Development Committee of the Whole)



* STEPBACKS are calculated as an average from street and/or park frontages, and pertain to primary building mass (additional articulation, utilizing balconies, canopies, etc., is not only encouraged, but expected).

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