

## 6.0 Revitalization and Redevelopment

The Revitalization and Redevelopment Element provides a foundation to maintain and enhance the viability of the City's mature, underutilized residential and employment areas. While general plans typically focus on providing guidance for the development of vacant land, Mesa must also dedicate extensive capital and human reinvestment resources to address its mature areas in order to maintain stable neighborhoods, viable economic clusters, and high quality municipal services.



### 6.1 Background

#### 6.1.1 Revitalization in Mesa

Revitalization efforts in Mesa seek to reverse the decline of urbanized areas in the community through reinvestments in human resources, economic potential, and improvements to the aging infrastructure. The City of Mesa conducts these efforts through a partnership among City departments, non-profit agencies, and residents. Federal funds administered by the City that support these programs include Community Development Block Grants, HOME Investment Partnerships, and Emergency Shelter Grant Programs. Subject to City Council authorization, the City actively seeks appropriate federal and state funds to implement the goals of this element.

The City also helps to maintain the vitality of neighborhoods through the following programs

- Opportunity Zone Program – This program focuses resources on mature neighborhoods where residents have expressed concern about decline. It combines commitments from residents, businesses, faith-based communities, and non-profit organizations with City resources to plan and implement neighborhood improvements.
- Neighborhood Registration Program – This program enhances communication and provides services to support neighborhood residents in their efforts toward improvements. These grass-roots neighborhood groups rely on contributions of time, talents, and materials from residents and local businesses. Registered neighborhoods range in size from several blocks to several square miles. They often are formed as outgrowths of block watches, newly developed neighborhoods, organizations in existing neighborhoods, and homeowners associations.

## 6.1.2 Redevelopment and Historic Preservation in Mesa

The City of Mesa is committed to the redevelopment of the original downtown and to the preservation of the historical assets in the Town Center Redevelopment Area. This area is defined by 6<sup>th</sup> Street on the north, Crescent Avenue on the south, the Hobson Street alignment on the east, and the Vineyard Street alignment on the west. Encompassing almost 1,300 acres, the Town Center Redevelopment Area contains a mix of residential, employment, public facility, cultural, and entertainment uses. The area includes the following four historic districts that are on the National Register of Historic Places: Evergreen; West 6<sup>th</sup> Street; Glenwood Wilbur; and Temple. In addition, the Robson Historic District is locally designated and is eligible for the National Register.

In December 1999, the City prepared and adopted the Town Center Concept Plan and Action Plan. This plan describes future land uses, densities, transportation facilities, and development design components for future growth. The City of Mesa promotes the location of new business in the downtown area in conjunction with the Mesa Town Center Corporation, the Office of Redevelopment, and the Office of Economic Development.

The Mesa Town Center Redevelopment Plan meets the requirements of Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS 36-1471 and 36-1479) and provides the mechanisms to coordinate the necessary public and private activities within the heart and historic center of the City.

The City of Mesa places great importance on its cultural and historic resources as the City grows and matures. Currently, Mesa has five National Register Historic Districts, as well as a dozen individual properties that enjoy such prestigious distinction. Two citizen advisory boards support the Redevelopment/Historic Preservation Office. The Downtown Development Committee is a nine-member board that guides the future development in the Town Center Redevelopment Area and reviews all redevelopment, planning, zoning, design review, and permitting issues. The Historic Preservation Committee is a seven-member board that seeks to identify and promote historic preservation and advises the City Council on those matters.

## 6.1.3 Neighborhood Planning in Mesa

A neighborhood plan is a guide that provides a framework for decisions that will affect the future of the neighborhood. It contains descriptions of desired future conditions and principles to be followed, as defined by the residents. Representing the consensus of the neighborhood, the plan also contains recommendations for strategies and actions that will enable the goals to be reached. Each neighborhood plan is tailored to the specific needs, issues, constraints, and opportunities of the neighborhood. Subjects commonly found in

a neighborhood plan include land use, housing, circulation, recreation, environmental concerns, and neighborhood character.

The City of Mesa initiated its neighborhood planning process in the summer of 2001. The process began with the identification of the Mesa Lutheran Neighborhood, which is located in northwest Mesa near the intersection of Country Club Drive and Brown Road, as an area that presented both a need and an opportunity to undertake a revitalization planning process. The area contains the Mesa Lutheran Medical Center, the Mesa Grande archaeological site, and several other medical and institutional uses. The residents and business leaders in the area spent several months in 2001 evaluating the potential for this neighborhood to become a more cohesive medical and institutional “campus”. The result was in completion in the winter of 2001-2001 of the Mesa Lutheran Revitalization Master Plan, which presents the findings of the process and describes implementation strategies to achieve the goals and objectives created by the planning team.

The City is also working with the Wilbur historic neighborhood in the Town Center in preparing a neighborhood plan. Additionally, preservation neighborhood plans have been prepared for the West Second Street and Wilbur Historic Districts. Plans will be prepared for the other districts listed on the National Register.

#### 6.1.4 Causes of the Need for Revitalization and Redevelopment

Several factors contribute to the need to improve the viability of declining areas through redevelopment and/or revitalization activities. These factors are based in the manner in which the City has developed, the changing technology of the world, and the demographic and social variations that may alter the way in which we live, work, and play. These factors include:

##### Post World War II Developments

Mesa experienced a substantial population growth following World War II, especially during the 1950s. Consequently, many of Mesa’s subdivisions are over 50 years of age and in need of revitalization and/or redevelopment. The huge population growth in the 1970s and 1980s also created a large number of subdivisions that are now 20 to 30 years of age and beginning to experience decline. These neighborhoods present a variety of challenges caused by such things as absentee ownership, neglect, and inappropriate land uses.

##### Light Rail and Bus Transit

The easterly extension of the metropolitan transit system, including light rail on Main Street will provide enhanced access and visibility for land uses along its route.

Manufactured Homes-

The shift in retirement dynamics from the recreational vehicle park or manufactured home park to more active residential communities will continue to change the market demand for these types of products throughout Mesa.

Information and High Tech Employment Development

New technology in automation and computer related services have given rise to a new industry that is compatible in existing transitional areas. This type of employment is well suited for facilities in mature areas where a low initial investment may make redevelopment feasible by the private sector.

## 6.2 Goals, Objectives, and Policies

### Goal RR-1

Maintain an orderly, compatible, and aesthetic land use pattern in mature areas of the City.

- Objective RR-1.1** Promote a concentrated, cohesive relationship among compatible land uses.
- Policy RR-1.1a Encourage and assist in providing a mix of market rate, affordable and high-end housing within redevelopment and revitalization areas.
  - Policy RR-1.1b Carefully evaluate redevelopment area boundaries to maintain the social stability of existing neighborhoods.
  - Policy RR-1.1c Conserve the resources of mature residential neighborhoods.
  - Policy RR-1.1d Promote mid and high rise mixed residential (i.e. 40 du/ac) and office uses in the Town Center, reserving ground floor space for retail and other supportive uses in the Pedestrian Overlay Area.
  - Policy RR-1.1e Work with property owners to resolve physical constraints (such as land use conflicts and under-utilized structures) on major vacant or underutilized parcels to encourage redevelopment or infill development.
  - Policy RR-1.1f Continue to follow the creation of an Urban Village for the Town Center as identified in the Town Center Concept Plan.
- Objective RR-1.2** Increase functional and visual consistency by coordinating existing uses and different architectural types.
- Policy RR-1. 2a Eliminate unsightly, unsafe, substandard and obsolescent uses and buildings that detract from the aesthetic appearance and economic welfare. Develop programs to eliminate trash and graffiti throughout the City.
  - Policy RR-1. 2b Enhance and maintain the appearance of alleys and other public rights-of-way in the Town Center and other redevelopment areas.

- Objective RR-1.3** Develop and maintain amenities that reflect the character of the City's heritage.
- Policy RR-1. 3a Make all reasonable efforts to identify, document and preserve significant historic buildings and structures.
  - Policy RR-1. 3b Continue programs to increase public awareness and support for historic preservation activities as outlined in the City Council-approved Historic Preservation Plan.
  - Policy RR-1. 3c Revive and enhance the self-guided "Cultural Walk" in the Town Center.

**Goal RR-2**

Attract development to vacant areas within an urbanized community through the use of infill incentives and innovative design.

- Objective RR-2.1** Encourage private and public investment and development on vacant lands in the urbanized areas of the City.
- Policy RR-2.1a Create an infill incentive policy that provides procedural benefits for infill development projects and describes other incentives for development in mature areas of the City.
  - Policy RR-2.1b Provide technical support for infill development through innovative design concepts and land use techniques.
  - Policy RR-2.1c Assure that infill development is compatible with neighboring uses.
  - Policy RR-2.1d Assure that infill development can be supported by appropriate City services.
  - Policy RR-2.1e Encourage the adaptive reuse or rehabilitation of mature buildings that are structurally sound.

**Goal RR-3**

Promote the active participation of citizens and local business leaders in addressing the needs of their neighborhoods

- Objective RR-3.1** Promote and facilitate the creation of neighborhood revitalization land use plans that reflect the interests of the residents and business leaders in the City's neighborhoods.
- Policy RR-3.1a Develop a formalized neighborhood planning process that facilitates the creation of smaller area plans.
  - Policy RR-3.1b Create a system of quantitative indicators that reflect the function of Mesa's neighborhoods and assist in the evaluation of the neighborhood planning process.
  - Policy RR-3.1c Maintain a database of all applicable neighborhood features that are evaluated during the neighborhood planning process.

Policy RR-3.1d Utilize all available electronic and Internet resources to provide information pertaining to specific neighborhood plans.

**Goal RR-4**

Create a safe, efficient transportation system and parking facilities in redevelopment and revitalization areas that conform to the citywide Transportation Master Plan.

**Objective RR-4.1** Provide adequate parking to meet the demands of existing and future development.

Policy RR-4.1a Partner with the private sector to provide conveniently located, landscaped, and lighted parking facilities.

Policy RR-4.1b Develop a shared parking program for the Town Center and other future appropriate locations, including parking structures where appropriate.

**Objective RR-4.2** Provide features for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users that are consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies of the transportation element.

Policy RR-2. 4a Integrate future bicycle routes and paths within redevelopment and revitalization areas as identified in the Transportation Master Plan.

Policy RR-2. 4b Coordinate with Valley Connections to identify a selected alignment for light rail transit in the Town Center.

Policy RR-2. 4c Develop and implement streetscapes that provide an identity for redevelopment areas.

Policy RR-2. 4d Develop a pedestrian network for the Town Center Redevelopment Area as identified in the Town Center Concept Plan.

Policy RR-2. 4e Provide safe and accessible pedestrian environments.

**Goal RR-5**

Create a system of recreational, open space, and public facilities in redevelopment and revitalization areas that is consistent with the citywide parks and recreation and public facilities plans.

**Objective RR-5.1** Ensure that, where appropriate, redevelopment projects or revitalization areas contain appropriate parks, recreation facilities, connections to open space and other supportive uses.

Policy RR-5.1a Ensure that all projects achieve the park/open space and public facility level of service standards.

Policy RR-5.1b Encourage the location of family-oriented recreation uses in redevelopment areas, where appropriate.

**Goal RR-6**

Continue to develop and maintain excellent arts and cultural facilities and opportunities for fine arts appreciation for citizens of all ages in the Town Center Redevelopment Area.

- Objective RR-6.1** Ensure that the Town Center Redevelopment Area includes appropriate public art, entertainment facilities, and other arts and cultural uses.
- Policy RR-6.1a Establish the Town Center as the primary arts and cultural district in the City through continued development of the Arizona Museum for Youth, Mesa Southwest Museum, Mesa Arts Center, and other related and supportive uses.
- Policy RR-6.1b Encourage the location of art galleries and artist live/work spaces throughout the Town Center Arts and Cultural District.

**Goal RR-7**

Encourage a cost effective mix of uses through public and private investment that maximizes revenue generation.

- Objective RR-7.1** Stabilize land values and provide attractive investment and opportunities.
- Policy RR-7.1a Where appropriate, assemble land within adopted redevelopment areas as functional parcels that maximize revenue, disposition, and adjacent land use compatibility.
- Policy RR-7.1b Consider the establishment of a revolving loan program for business retention and expansion.
- Policy RR-7.1c Assist neighborhood groups to foster pride through clean up campaigns, community gardens, tool co-op or other appropriate projects.
- Policy RR-7.1d Coordinate and leverage public investments (e.g. storm water and lighting) through the annual budgeting and five-year Capital Improvements Program processes.
- Policy RR-7.1e Evaluate utilities in the Town Center and future redevelopment and revitalization areas for possible relocation and underground placement.
- Objective RR-7.2** Encourage private investment and development within established and mature areas of the City.
- Policy RR-7.2a Provide technical assistance to existing businesses and investors/developers proposing projects consistent with the Mesa Town Center Concept Plan and other redevelopment plans.
- Policy RR-7.2b Consider the adoption of a Rehabilitation Code for mature and historic buildings.
- Policy RR-7.2c Publicize the availability of and access to public parking through signage, brochures and promotions with existing businesses.

- Policy RR-7.2d Consider the creation of business improvement districts within redevelopment areas to provide enhanced municipal and management services.
- Policy RR-7.2e Continue to maintain a database of available land and non-residential structures within adopted redevelopment and revitalization areas.

## 6.3 Plan Components

Areas that are currently the focus of revitalization and redevelopment activities include the Town Center Redevelopment Area, Community Development Block Grant areas, historic neighborhoods, and opportunity zones. In the future, the City may wish to evaluate other areas for eligibility as revitalization and/or redevelopment areas. Factors involved in the evaluation of these potential improvement regions within the City are summarized below.

### 6.3.1 Redevelopment Area Powers

From the municipal standpoint, the designation of redevelopment areas should include utilization of the following powers, pursuant to ARS 36-1471:

- To enter into contracts with governmental agencies and private entities
- To transact in real and personal property
- To borrow money
- To assist in relocating displaced families or persons
- To utilize federal and state grants and loans, and
- To issue bonds to finance improvements

### 6.3.2 Redevelopment Area Assessment

For an area to be designated a redevelopment area, state law requires that the City Council make a finding that the area is in need of redevelopment. To make this finding, a number of factors must be considered. These factors include the following:

- Unsafe Conditions - These factors can be imposed by environmental (i.e. subsidence, floodplain) and man-made (i.e. existing uses, presence of crime, lack of public safety services) characteristics.
- Unhealthful Conditions - These factors can be imposed by the water, air, and land of the area as well as existing uses.
- Obsolete Layout of Lots, Blocks, and Streets - Previous lot layouts or platting may not match existing market conditions for development.
- Land Ownership - Extensive private ownership, as well as the number of absentee owners, may make assemblage difficult.
- Incompatible Land Uses - The existing pattern of development has created negative impacts on the health, safety, and welfare of the public.

- Structural Deterioration - The existing exterior and interior building conditions require significant levels of major rehabilitation or clearance.

The City could also utilize the factors identified above to evaluate the potential for revitalization planning if the area does not exhibit substantial deterioration. Revitalization may also be appropriate if the area in question is substantially deteriorated but requires time and resources to build a planning foundation for the future.

### 6.3.3 Redevelopment Plan Preparation

For those areas that exhibit the characteristics described in the assessment, and based on the support of the area businesses, residents and property owners, a redevelopment plan should then be prepared. According to state law, the redevelopment plan must contain the following components:

- A Land Use Plan
- A Statement of Boundaries of the Project
- An Existing Land Use/Property Conditions Map
- Standards of Population Densities, Land Coverage, and Building Intensities
- A Statement of the Proposed Changes, if any, in Zoning Ordinances or Maps, Street Layouts, Street Levels or Grades, Building Codes, and Ordinances
- Kind and Number of Site Improvements and Public Utilities Required to Support New Land Uses
- Method, Cost of Acquisition and Preparation for Redevelopment and Disposition Value for Land Reuse
- Method of Financing Redevelopment Projects
- Method of Relocating Displaced Persons, and Businesses

### 6.3.4 Infill Incentive Districts

The passage of Arizona Growing Smarter legislation in 1998 (amended in 2000) authorized the use of infill incentive districts as a mechanism to attract development to vacant areas within an urbanized community. Vacant parcels within the City could potentially be served by nearby infrastructure, parks, and public safety services. Infill incentive districts, for those communities who desire them, would provide some inducements that make infill development a reality. These include the following:

- Expedited entitlements processing (zoning/rezoning/development review)
- Development fee reductions or waivers
- Extended infrastructure improvement payback schedules/reduced rates

- Below market City utility service for a set period of time
- The creation of the infill incentive district is based on the quantification of specific criteria for the geographic area to be proposed. The criteria for the designation must satisfy at least three of the following:
  - A large number of vacant older or dilapidated buildings exist
  - A large number of vacant or underused parcels of property exist
  - A large number of buildings or other places where nuisances exist
  - An absence of development and investment activity exists
  - A high occurrence of crime exists, and
  - A continuing decline in population exists