

MEETING MINUTES

City of Mesa
Downtown Vision Committee Interactive Session
Visit Mesa Conference Room
120 N. Center Street
Mesa, AZ 85201

Date: March 10, 2015 **Time:** 3:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Jo Wilson, Chair
Marco Meraz
Charles Huellmantel
Steve Chucri
Debby Elliott

MEMBERS ABSENT

Lorenzo Perez
Rich Marchant

STAFF PRESENT

Natalie Lewis
Jeff McVay
Sara Sorensen

GUESTS

Doug Griffen
Carl Lundblad

Chair's Call to Order: Chair Wilson called the March 10, 2015 meeting of the Downtown Vision Committee to order at 3:13 P.M. at the Visit Mesa Conference Room, 120 N. Center Street, Mesa, AZ 85201.

Approval of Minutes from the February 24, 2015 Committee Meeting Minutes: Chair Wilson called for a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting held on February 24, 2015.

MOTION: Steve Chucri made a motion to approve the minutes.
SECOND: Charles Huellmantel
DECISION: Passed unanimously

Hear a presentation, review and discuss updated community dashboard: Natalie Lewis advised the Board Members that the dashboard, included in the board packet today for reference purposes, has been updated with the feedback from the February 24 meeting.

Hear a presentation, review and discuss survey results from February 26, 2015 community open house: Natalie Lewis noted the open house was well done, thanked and appreciated all the committee members and groups that attended. The Board and Staff were pleased with the cross section of demographics, new faces of the attendees and the good dialog that took place.

Natalie reviewed the summary of the survey from the open house that is included in the board members packets. There were 24 people that responded to the survey, 21 are residents of Mesa.

Three things the respondents ranked with an 80% and above that are good/ positive in Downtown Mesa:

- Love the expanded education opportunities
- Love the coming of the light rail
- Love the Mesa Arts Center

What is needed in the future, with the same 80% and above factor:

- Housing
- Active nightlife and additional entertainment venues (this item scored 100%)
- An Inclusive and respectful community
- Additional parks, plaza, pedestrian amenities
- An engaged and active community
- A signature gathering place

- Additional dining and restaurants
- A continued focus on arts and culture
- Improved walkability

What is the one thing that would keep you coming to Downtown Mesa time and time again:

- Restaurants
- Entertainment
- Destination oriented activities such as theaters, bowling allies
- Late night options
- Neighborhood services such as groceries stores

When asked the one word to describe their vision of Downtown Mesa, the same words were referenced that have been heard from the many groups previously engaged. A copy of the word cloud is also included in the board members packets.

Participate in facilitated electronic brainstorming session to identify key vision themes.

Doug Griffen, Director of Strategy and Facilitation of Advanced Strategy Lab, provided a background of the organization. Carl Lundblad, Director of Client Development, was also in attendance to facilitate the session. Mr. Griffen started the session by asking the Board Members to introduce and provide a background of themselves, then also to share a downtown, outside of Mesa, that they have found to be very compelling.

At this point the session began, please refer to the attached.

Confirm next meeting date, March 24, 2015, the Lower City Chambers

Items from citizens present

No items presented from citizens present.

Adjourn meeting

Chair adjourned the meeting at 5:20 P.M.

Submitted By:

Jo Wilson, Chair
(Prepared by Beth Ann Moore)

Attachment

Facilitated by:

Douglas S. Griffen

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As a warm-up for our session today, all of you have a strong interest in creating a vibrant downtown for Mesa and have been very involved in its planning and dialogue as part of the Mesa Downtown Vision Committee. Why is the development of Mesa's downtown so important for our future? Why is this such a strategic initiative and undertaking for our City? (multiple responses)

Ideas Results

No. Idea

- 1. The downtown area truly is the heart of the city and what defines it. The city center should reflect the values, traditions and future of the city for all of its citizens and guests to see. Downtown Mesa should set the standard for all of Mesa.**
- 2. Great bones - on the rail - urban potential - great arts base**
- 3. The downtown "brand" is a reflection of our entire city.**
- 4. The history, size and population make Mesa ripe for a vibrant downtown.**
- 5. Every city should have a heart or destination point that is symbolic of the city.**
- 6. I want Mesa to be one of the cities that everyone traveling to the valley say "we must visit Mesa".**
- 7. Downtown Mesa is part of our history that could be lost. I want to retain that history and vision that the settlers developed.**
- 8. Because it's "our" downtown, something we can be proud of, someplace where**

people can become inspired to just relax, be creative, dine, and feel like they belong. Downtown should be owned by a great many people.

9. Downtown Mesa's culture should be attractive to visitors, potential residents and corporations (revenue) looking to invest in any area of Mesa. Downtown Mesa should be an attractive, diverse, artistic and cultural selling point.

The Elements of a Compelling Downtown Mesa

Instructions: Much of work has been to focus on the potential elements of a vibrant downtown with dialogue and input from a number of key stakeholders. As you reflect on these discussions and certainly your own experiences and viewpoints, what do you feel are the critical elements of Mesa's Downtown? (multiple responses)

Ideas Results

No. Idea

1. Public space - shade
2. A Vibrant inviting downtown with a strong mix of traditional and modern designs. (upscale lighting, more public spaces, more connective pathways to and from Downtown, anchor attractions at each end of Main, mix of old and new (no stucco).
3. Housing, night life, more dining & expanded hours
4. Open spaces for gathering
5. Public space- art - shade - residential options - rail - walkability - food options
6. Presenting a sense of arrival for downtown. Make Downtown a destination. (Wayfinding and branded signage, brand marketing)
7. Housing, Housing, Housing.
8. Clean up the approaches to downtown so there is a perception of value and that it is not an island in the middle of decaying areas.
9. Activities for all ages and likes
10. Sense of arrival and place
11. Make visitors feel safe with some police presence-bike patrols?
12. People, more people
13. Create a true mixed use area with Hotels, Residences, Public spaces and Attractions, Employment, Education and Convention.
14. Known as a place to go to via light rail rather than light rail a means to get to other locations
15. High density upscale housing is needed close to Main
16. Expansion on art and culture -

17. **Varied building design**
18. **Enlarge Convention Space and make access to Main part of that development.**
19. **Pleasing visual fronts - revamp landscaping, store fronts**
20. **Use of old buildings and new life - provides great street character**
21. **Dining, nightlife, patio and sidewalk activity, cross-section of shopping from upscale to moderate, business hubs**
22. **Expanded nightlife. We need to find ways to keep downtown open later. You cannot expect restaurants and venues to stay open late without customers so should look at the attractions that get people downtown in the evening.**
23. **Fewer parking lots - more people places**
24. **Housing**
25. **More retail store fronts rather than halls, etc. Must look like there are many places to visit.**
26. **More landscaped locations**
27. **What is absolutely important to downtown is attention to historical buildings, easy access and easy parking, people living downtown, gathering spaces, shade, different activities, small places for different music experiences**
28. **Healthy lifestyle options**
29. **Entertainment. Destinations.**
30. **Diversity like the Miracle Mile in Chicago**
31. **Interesting architecture**
32. **Preservation of our history which infusing newness**
33. **Sense of authenticity**
34. **Walkability**
35. **People walking dog - other signs of daily living**
36. **Bars, Restaurants, Gathering places, Bike friendly, a small scale model of Sustainability, environmentally conscious. Shade. Back Alley friendly. Palo Verde Tree planters in all Back-alley parking lots, Especially on the south side of Main.**
37. **Branding to define the downtown**
38. **Diversity in activities, people, etc**
39. **Respectful and welcoming. Inclusive.**
40. **More public gather spaces**
41. **Again, housing. People who dwell in downtown Mesa are vital to a vibrant downtown.**
42. **Easy access to downtown**
43. **More art and murals in back alleys and walls throughout downtown Mesa.**

1. **A DISTINCTIVE BRAND:** Develop and promote a distinctive brand for Downtown Mesa, likely using an external firm with brand/communications expertise.
2. **PROMOTE DOWNTOWN:** Actively promote downtown Mesa and develop a communication campaign that encompasses our vision and the full breadth of activities that will be part of a well-developed downtown.
3. **MAIN STREET:** Revamp and revitalize Main Street with landscaping, fronts, etc. that highlights our Main Street as a proud centerpiece for Downtown Mesa.
4. **A COMMON THEME:** Carry a theme or element through downtown to define and distinguish the area, for example, Art and Culture as an integrating theme. This would be something similar to the MAC sails.
5. **BLENDING THE OLD AND NEW:** Preserve historic significance while infusing newness into downtown Mesa--the two can co-exist
6. **HOUSING MATTERS:** Expand housing with emphasis on market rate, student & artist housing. Affordable housing will help create a persistent downtown.
7. **ART AND CULTURE:** Expand on the art and culture presence in our vision of downtown Mesa.
8. **NIGHTLIFE:** Develop night life and entertainment venues such as theaters, sport and wine bars, bowling alley, etc., for all ages but with emphasis on college age students and young adults living in the area. Appropriate nightlife creates vibrancy.
9. **MERCHANTS MATTER:** Attract more shops and restaurants and of a variety of sizes and type, let these shopkeepers and establishments add their personalities and passions to our downtown.
10. **DOWNTOWN DESTINATIONS:** Develop destination spots that encourage folks to stay around such as city center, mini parks, etc. These become natural attractions that help create a critical and constant flow of citizens and visitors to downtown.
11. **LIGHT RAIL AS A NET ATTRACTOR:** Create an image that light rail is a means to bring people to Mesa not take people out of Mesa, that light rail is the direct line into downtown.
12. **EVERYBODY IS WELCOME:** Expand activities and special events that cater to a variety of ages and demographics. This is not a downtown that focuses on one background but rather a downtown that has something for everyone.
13. **A COMMON AND COMPELLING VISION:** Create a vision that all parties can buy into and identify their role in reactivating downtown.
14. **PUBLIC SPACES:** Open spaces, parks, gathering spots, walkable areas, shade, tables...things that allow people to gather and be comfortable in a downtown
15. **A SENSE OF PLACE:** That there is a clear destination/center point that helps define and draw people into downtown
16. **GENUINE INTEGRATION:** A truly mixed use area where hotels/housing/public

spaces/attractions/employment/education all coexist. Something for everyone.

17. **HEALTHY LIFESTYLE:** The downtown is active, energetic, and viewed as an exciting destination, not an old place to go.
18. **TRANSPORTATION VARIETY:** Multiple modalities to get into/out of Mesa. Light rail, bike in, adequate parking, easy to walk around.
19. **NO PREDETERMINED PATTERN:** in Mesa, you can create your own style and personality without any constraints of fitting into a certain pattern or hardwired idea.
20. **A NEW AND OWNABLE REPUTATION:** downtown will allow us to create a reputation/perspective that we seek moving forward representing our values, ideals. We are not tied to any stereotypes.

(1A) Assessment The Elements of a Compelling Downtown Mesa

Instructions: Now, please assess how important, well implemented, you feel each of the following elements in your vision of a vibrant downtown for Mesa. Use a scale of 1-10 where a '1' means not at all important and a '10' means extremely important:

Rank	Idea	High	Low	Std. Dev.	Avg.	Participation Ratio
Scale: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10						
1.	HOUSING MATTERS: Expand housing with emphasis on market rate, student & artist housing. Affordable housing will help create a persistent downtown.	10	8	0.8	9.5	6/6
2.	NIGHTLIFE: Develop night life and entertainment venues such as theaters, sport and wine bars, bowling alley, etc., for all ages but with emphasis on college age students and young adults living in the area. Appropriate nightlife creates vibrancy.	10	7	1.2	9.5	6/6
3.	BLENDING THE OLD AND NEW: Preserve historic significance while infusing newness into downtown Mesa-- the two can co-exist	10	8	0.9	9.0	6/6
4.	PUBLIC SPACES: Open spaces, parks, gathering spots, walkable areas, shade, tables...things that allow people to gather and be comfortable in a downtown	10	7	1.2	8.8	6/6

5.	MERCHANTS MATTER: Attract more shops and restaurants and of a variety of sizes and type, let these shopkeepers and establishments add their personalities and passions to our downtown.	10	6	1.6	8.8	6/6
6.	EVERYBODY IS WELCOME: Expand activities and special events that cater to a variety of ages and demographics. This is not a downtown that focuses on one background but rather a downtown that has something for everyone.	10	6	1.6	8.7	6/6
7.	DOWNTOWN DESTINATIONS: Develop destination spots that encourage folks to stay around such as city center, mini parks, etc. These become natural attractions that help create a critical and constant flow of citizens and visitors to downtown.	10	7	1.4	8.5	6/6
8.	GENUINE INTEGRATION: A truly mixed use area where hotels/housing/public spaces/attractions/employment/education all coexist. Something for everyone.	10	7	1.4	8.5	6/6
9.	A NEW AND OWNABLE REPUTATION: downtown will allow us to create a reputation/perspective that we seek moving forward representing our values, ideals. We are not tied to any stereotypes.	10	2	3.2	8.5	6/6
10.	PROMOTE DOWNTOWN: Actively promote downtown Mesa and develop a communication campaign that encompasses our vision and the full breadth of activities that will be part of a well developed downtown.	10	2	3.1	8.3	6/6
11.	TRANSPORTATION VARIETY: Multiple modalities to get into/out of Mesa. Light rail, bike in, adequate parking, easy to walk around.	10	6	1.5	8.2	6/6
12.	LIGHT RAIL AS A NET ATTRACTOR: Create an image that light rail is a means to bring people to Mesa not take people out of Mesa, that	10	5	1.9	8.2	6/6

	light rail is the direct line into downtown.					
13.	ART AND CULTURE: Expand on the art and culture presence in our vision of downtown Mesa.	9	7	0.9	8.0	6/6
14.	MAIN STREET: Revamp and revitalize Main Street with landscaping, fronts, etc. that highlights our Main Street as a proud centerpiece for Downtown Mesa.	10	4	3.0	7.8	6/6
15.	HEALTHY LIFESTYLE: The downtown is active, energetic, and viewed as an exciting destination, not an old place to go.	9	6	1.4	7.7	6/6
16.	A SENSE OF PLACE: That there is a clear destination/center point that helps define and draw people into downtown	10	6	1.5	7.3	6/6
17.	NO PREDETERMINED PATTERN: in Mesa, you can create your own style and personality without any constraints of fitting into a certain pattern or hardwired idea.	10	2	3.0	7.3	6/6
18.	A COMMON AND COMPELLING VISION: Create a vision that all parties can buy into and identify their role in reactivating downtown.	10	2	3.0	7.0	6/6
19.	A DISTINCTIVE BRAND: Develop and promote a distinctive brand for Downtown Mesa, likely using an external firm with brand/communications expertise.	9	1	3.7	6.2	6/6
20.	A COMMON THEME: Carry a theme or element through downtown to define and distinguish the area, for example, Art and Culture as an integrating theme. This would be something similar to the MAC sails.	7	3	1.6	5.2	6/6

The Elements of a Compelling Downtown Mesa

Instructions: Now, please assess how important, well implemented, you feel each of the following elements in your vision of a vibrant downtown for Mesa. Use a scale of 1-10 where a '1' means not at all important and a '10' means extremely important:

Rating Criteria: Importance as an Element in Your Vision of Downtown Mesa

Rank	Idea											Top
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	2
Scale: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10												
1.	HOUSING MATTERS: Expand housing with emphasis on market rate, student & artist housing. Affordable housing will help create a persistent downtown.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	4	83%
2.	NIGHTLIFE: Develop night life and entertainment venues such as theaters, sport and wine bars, bowling alley, etc., for all ages but with emphasis on college age students and young adults living in the area. Appropriate nightlife creates vibrancy.	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	5	83%
3.	BLENDING THE OLD AND NEW: Preserve historic significance while infusing newness into downtown Mesa--the two can co-exist	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	67%
4.	PUBLIC SPACES: Open spaces, parks, gathering spots, walkable areas, shade, tables...things that allow people to gather and be comfortable in a downtown	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	67%
5.	MERCHANTS MATTER: Attract more shops and restaurants and of a variety of sizes and type, let these shopkeepers and establishments add their personalities and passions to our downtown.	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	3	67%
6.	EVERYBODY IS WELCOME: Expand activities and special events that cater to a variety of ages and demographics. This is not a downtown that focuses on one background but rather a downtown that has something for everyone.	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	3	50%
7.	DOWNTOWN DESTINATIONS: Develop destination spots that encourage folks to stay around such as city center, mini parks, etc. These become natural attractions that help create a critical and constant flow of citizens and visitors to downtown.	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	2	50%

8.	GENUINE INTEGRATION: A truly mixed use area where hotels/housing/public spaces/attractions/employment/education all coexist. Something for everyone.	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	2	50%
9.	A NEW AND OWNABLE REPUTATION: downtown will allow us to create a reputation/perspective that we seek moving forward representing our values, ideals. We are not tied to any stereotypes.	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	83%
10.	PROMOTE DOWNTOWN: Actively promote downtown Mesa and develop a communication campaign that encompasses our vision and the full breadth of activities that will be part of a well developed downtown.	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	83%
11.	TRANSPORTATION VARIETY: Multiple modalities to get into/out of Mesa. Light rail, bike in, adequate parking, easy to walk around.	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	1	50%
12.	LIGHT RAIL AS A NET ATTRACTOR: Create an image that light rail is a means to bring people to Mesa not take people out of Mesa, that light rail is the direct line into downtown.	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	2	50%
13.	ART AND CULTURE: Expand on the art and culture presence in our vision of downtown Mesa.	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	33%
14.	MAIN STREET: Revamp and revitalize Main Street with landscaping, fronts, etc. that highlights our Main Street as a proud centerpiece for Downtown Mesa.	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	3	67%
15.	HEALTHY LIFESTYLE: The downtown is active, energetic, and viewed as an exciting destination, not an old place to go.	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	2	0	33%
16.	A SENSE OF PLACE: That there is a clear destination/center point that helps define and draw people into downtown	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	0	1	17%
17.	NO PREDETERMINED PATTERN: in Mesa, you can create your own style and	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	2	33%

personality without any constraints of fitting into a certain pattern or hardwired idea.

- | | | | |
|-----|--|---------------------|-----|
| 18. | A COMMON AND COMPELLING VISION: Create a vision that all parties can buy into and identify their role in reactivating downtown. | 0 1 0 0 1 0 0 2 1 1 | 33% |
| 19. | A DISTINCTIVE BRAND: Develop and promote a distinctive brand for Downtown Mesa, likely using an external firm with brand/communications expertise. | 1 1 0 0 0 0 1 0 3 0 | 50% |
| 20. | A COMMON THEME: Carry a theme or element through downtown to define and distinguish the area, for example, Art and Culture as an integrating theme. This would be something similar to the MAC sails. | 0 0 1 1 2 0 2 0 0 0 | 0% |

Your Vision of Downtown Mesa

1. Now, take some quiet time and articulate your vision of Mesa's Downtown in the future. Be as persuasive as you can about the vision and why it will be compelling. Add your name at the end, we'd like to have you comment on it verbally once we have collected all of the visions:

No. Idea

1. **RICH:** A Vibrant and inviting downtown with a strong mix of traditional and modern designs. A downtown that presents a sense of arrival and is a destination. A downtown that is well connected through public sidewalks and greenbelts to connect surrounding areas to and from downtown. And a downtown with true mixed use area with hotels, residences, public spaces and attractions, arts, employment, education and convention.
2. **JO:** Downtown Mesa is vibrant, alive and reflective of the culture and history of Mesa. There is something for everyone.....shopping, dining, nightlight, gathering spaces, walking paths, etc. It is a location that entices all segments of the population to stay and play. It is a destination that is on the planning schedule for folks visiting the valley. It is alive!!!
3. **MARCO:** A place where families raise children in an urban setting. A place where student housing is numerous. A destination for education. An environment that promotes and encourages knowledge, art, music, higher education. A livable neighborhood where retail shopping, restaurants, bars, post office, schools, colleges, grocery stores, theatres and a variety of entertainment options are within close proximity and even a walkable distance.

4. **STEVE: I vision a Mesa downtown that is inviting and makes an individual want to stay for hours without even thinking or wanting to go to another destination. One that is unique enough and diverse enough to meet the expectations of the average person but distinct enough for whatever walk of life or level of affluence one may come. It might be dinner and a movie one night and the ballet and wine the next.....regardless people will continue to come back or be glad they reside in or near downtown.**
5. **CHARLES: We have an opportunity to create great, organic and unique community place. If we put an action plan in place and fund it, we will have a place where people who live or work in the downtown have the most walkable downtown in Arizona with the best properly scaled public parks and spaces. Where the neighborhoods around the downtown feel connected to and part of the downtown. This will help bring new businesses and residents.**
6. **DEBBY: My vision of downtown Mesa is a place where people desire to live, work, and play--because Mesa stimulates the senses, provides creative, educational and leisurely activities.**

There was group discussion relative to use of an acronym HEART. Majority of the committee wanted to further explore and define other ways to community its vision and recommendations.