



Retreat Notice & Agenda
Downtown Vision Ad-Hoc Committee
May 2, 2015
Mesa Arts Center—3rd Floor South Conference Room
8:30-11:30 a.m.

Jo Wilson, Chair
Debby Elliott, Member
Marco Meraz, Member
Lorenzo Perez, Member

Steve Chucri, Member
Charles Huellmantel, Member
Rich Marchant, Member

1. Chair's call to order
2. Review and take action to approve Downtown Vision Committee minutes from the March 24, 2015 meeting.
3. Chair to present purpose/mission of the Downtown Vision Committee for discussion and clarification.
4. Staff to review the process the Committee has undertaken to get prepared for creating a Shared Downtown Vision.
5. Review of Visuals and Photographs—Committee to identify what photos depict his/her vision of elements of great downtowns.
6. Chair to lead 'round robin' discussion—share one of your five ideas related to DT Mesa Vision or Key Priorities?
 - a. Once all ideas are presented, committee to prioritize/categorize ideas.

[15-MINUTE BREAK]

7. Chair to lead committee discussion related to:
 - a. Are there common themes here? Key words that jump out to us?
 - b. Is there anything missing?
 - c. Any key tasks/actions in the Central Main Plan that needs to be reflected?
 - d. Is there anything in those photographs that needs to be reflected here?

8. Next steps reviewed:

- a. Committee member(s) volunteer to draft Vision statement and priorities? (Volunteer to provide to Natalie Lewis by May 14. Staff to email draft to committee. (No “reply to all” emails—open meeting law reminder)
- b. Committee comments to staff only May 15-28
- c. Staff sends final draft shared with committee by June 1. Note: Final version to be posted June 4, 2015.
- d. June 15th Council presentation—Starts at 3:30 or 4 p.m. City Council Lower Chambers, 57 E. 1st Street
- e. Chair to lead committee discussion related to recommendation for checks and balances—maintain the momentum and collaboration.

9. Items from citizens present

10. Adjourn meeting

Committee members will attend either in person or by telephone conference call. City Council members may elect to attend the meeting for their own information, not for purposes of any legal action nor decision making by the Council. The City is committed to making its public meetings accessible to persons with disabilities. For special accommodations, please contact the City Manager’s Office at 480-644-3333 at least two business days before the meeting.

Agenda Item 2

MEETING MINUTES

City of Mesa
Downtown Vision Committee Interactive Session
Lower Level Council Chambers
57 E. 1st Street,
Mesa, AZ 85201

Date: March 24, 2015 **Time:** 3:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Jo Wilson, Chair
Marco Meraz
Charles Huellmantel
Debby Elliott
Lorenzo Perez
Rich Marchant

MEMBERS ABSENT

Steve Chucri

STAFF PRESENT

Natalie Lewis
Jeff McVay
Jim Smith
Lori Gary

1. Chair's Call to Order:

Chair Wilson called the March 24, 2015 meeting of the Downtown Vision Committee to order at 3:10 P.M. at the Mesa Lower Council Chambers, 57 E. First Street, Mesa, AZ 85201.

2. Approval of Minutes from the March 10, 2015 Committee Meeting Minutes:

Chair Wilson called for a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting held on March 10, 2015

MOTION: Charles Huellmantel made a motion to approve the minutes.

SECOND: Marco Meraz

DECISION: Passed unanimously

3. Committee review, sharing of ideas and dialogue regarding: What does the Committee want the end product of our work to be and include?

Chair Wilson asked each committee member to express in their own mind what they think this committee's finished product should look like when it is sent to the City Council. Chair Wilson would like to go forward in the direction to the end product all together with the same language and goals.

After the round table discussion the overall consensus from each member is that the City's Central Main Plan is comprehensive relative to specific tasks; no need to duplicate. Committee members also discussed need to clarify and define some commonly used terms, such as branding, urban or transit-oriented development. More specific feedback and thoughts by each committee member follows:

- Committee Member Marchant—Consider identifying a review mechanism to ensure the Central Main Plan is implemented. Identify guidelines that need to be priorities based on what the Vision Committee has heard and what Committee member's own experiences suggest, such as connections and gateways to and from downtown. Need some suggestion and guidance on downtown branding. Identify core things that must be part of a future downtown.
- Committee Member Huellmantel-- Focus on identifying priorities and actions on projects the City can have most impact on—publicly-owned land and spaces. Create action plans and lists of what Committee believes to be important.

- Committee Member Elliott-- Need simple, concise document that helps community understand a shared vision for downtown. Central Main Plan is comprehensive—but too detailed for the layperson. Helping ensure progress, focus and action makes sense. If the committee is going to recommend a brand for downtown, need to recommend that the ultimate brand doesn't create unnecessary boundaries or limits on what downtown is and can be to everyone.
- Committee Member Perez –This vision needs to speak to a very broad audience. There is beauty and power in simplicity. Action plans also important. Using visuals could be a good tool to show vision. Committee could summarize key actions and priorities—show what they look like through visuals—and then compliment with some simple and bold articulation. Vision is about the essence of a promise, about those catalysts that ignite people, emotion and development for downtown. Visuals evoke an emotional response.
- Committee Member Meraz-- Interviewed other downtown partners to ask them—what do they believe is needed? Recommend an advisory committee of some kind to monitor ongoing implementation. This advisory committee should include people and city staff who want to see downtown move forward and believe in its future. Vision Committee recommendations should include a combination of vision, priorities from Central Main Plan, and advisory committee to review and advocate for implementation.
- Chair Wilson—Overall agreement not to reinvent Central Main Plan. Agree that while the Central Main Plan is good, Vision Committee needs something in layman and simple terms, an elevator speech to quickly describe vision for the average person. Also described key challenge for purpose of Vision Committee is that Downtown has many groups implementing projects their own vision that is not comprehensive or owned by the community. Vision Committee outcome should have a global statement like "activating people and space," with corresponding actions that come from the Central Main Plan and that Vision Committee believes to be priorities. Need to recommend that implementation roles and responsibilities be clarified. Agree that some kind of accountability tool also needed.
- Committee Member Huellmantel -- Important to remember that what's going to happen for next two years is already underway. Visioning should be more focused on what we need to do five years from now and long-term priorities that will make a big difference downtown and that will create a regional identity. May need to consider a broader definition of downtown beyond square mile, i.e. the market surrounding and people close enough to bike and walk and access downtown. The political capital is here. The Vision Committee needs to help the City know how and what to invest that political capital on. Recommendations should focus on City assets and spaces.

Upon request by Committee, Natalie Lewis provided a broad review of the meeting that took place with the Downtown City Center economic development consultants last week. Chair Wilson and Committee Member Elliott also attended this session. Key messages: build on existing strengths at core of downtown, need for more housing, great parks can help increase redevelopment opportunities/raise values, start with a small central area (Main and Center is the right focus) and then grow outward. Look at the space not only a park but that also includes development opportunities to help pay for the ongoing operations and maintenance of the park.

Chair Wilson asked the committee to identify four, five or six things that they think are catalyst that would be critical to see change happen in downtown, and ignite downtown Mesa. As a starting point, what would they be?

- GATEWAYS and CONNECTIONS. Needs to be comfortable and attractive things for people to get to and from downtown. Pedestrians and vehicles tools and solutions. Pedestrian ways. Green linear parks.

- ALLEYS AS PASEOS. Linear paths. Activated alleys can become active paseos. Need shade in the alleys. Deliver the unexpected. Clean them up. Activate them with food service.
 - IDENTITY. Human scale, vintage, eclectic mix of uses. Historic character. Concentrated return on investment. Culture. Color. Keep doing the little things that begin to ignite excitement.
 - SAFETY, ACCESSIBILITY AND PARKING. Need parking that is findable, safe, and accessible. Today, it is hard to find. When you get there, feels unsafe. Change perceptions. Light rail will bring more homelessness. City needs to be prepared. Focus more on back alleys. Spruce them up.
 - GATHERING PLACES. Both programmed and informal parks, public gathering spaces.
 - ART and INNOVATION. Build on Downtown Mesa's strength and the creative community downtown. More or continued opportunities for murals, events/festivals.
4. **Review and discuss Committee homework assignments to be completed before the next meeting. Provide direction to staff on any additional information needed for next meeting.**

In conclusion to the discussions the committee felt this dialog and conversation was productive and appreciated. Chair Wilson asked for each committee member to think about the catalyst items and bring ideas, visions and images for the next meetings discussion.

Natalie Lewis asked to forward the identified catalyst list to each committee member for reference as soon as possible. Staff will also bring possible visuals/images to the next meeting to help with further discussions and progress.

5. **Confirm next meeting date, April 14, 2015, 3:00 P.M., Visit Mesa, 120 N. Center.**
6. **Items from citizens present**
7. **Adjourn meeting**

Chair Wilson made a **Motion** to adjourn the meeting at 5:20 P.M., seconded by Charles Huellmantel, all carried unanimously.

Submitted By:

Jo Wilson, Chair
(Prepared by Beth Ann Moore)

Agenda Item 3

Downtown Vision Committee

Purpose and Mission

Downtown is a fundamental component to Mesa's overall economic vitality. As such, the City continues to invest in key infrastructure improvements to encourage new opportunities. One such recent investment is light rail. Opening as early as the fall 2015, the light rail will bring direct regional exposure and access to and from Downtown Mesa. Light rail also attracts transit-oriented development, which in turn mobilizes new market opportunities.

As such, Mesa's Mayor and City Council is convening a committee of innovative thinkers to develop a shared community vision to help chart the future focus and growth of Downtown Mesa and to ensure that growth is in alignment with stakeholder and community interests. The Downtown Vision Committee will be asked to:

- Recommend a shared vision and broad goals to the Mesa Mayor and City Council that set a clear intention and direction for the long-term evolution of Downtown Mesa.
- Collaborate with key downtown partners and agencies that will contribute to the implementation of the shared downtown vision.
- Consider Downtown Mesa's future opportunities, untapped urban growth sectors, barriers to success, and its existing and future market potential.
- Review existing plans and strategies and how to build on, reaffirm and prioritize those outcomes.

The Vision Committee's work is expected to begin this fall 2014 and be concluded within approximately 6-8 months.

Appointed Members

Jo Wilson (Chair) - Ms. Wilson serves as Senior Administrator and Special Assistant to the Executive Vice President of Benedictine University at Mesa. She's been previously honored as Mesa Community College Woman of Distinction, Mesa Woman of the Year and serves on her wide array of community involvement efforts, including service on Mesa boards and commissions, the Mesa Chamber of Commerce Board, the Mesa Arts Center Foundation Board, Mesa Rotary (currently President-Elect), as well as several other community agencies and committees.

Steve Chucri - A Mesa native, Mr. Chucri currently serves as President and CEO of the Arizona Restaurant Association and as District 2 Maricopa County Supervisor where he focuses on policies focused on innovation, sustainability and in growing the business 'best of the best' cache in the County.

Debby Elliott - A Mesa native, Ms. Elliott and her husband Mike Elliott have been long-time advocates of arts and culture in Mesa, serving on the Mesa Arts Center Board, and are the namesake fundraising sponsors of the Nesbitt-Elliott Playhouse at the Mesa Arts Center. Most recently, Ms. Elliott serves on the MARC Center Community Resource Board, which serves those with cognitive, emotional and physical disabilities.

Charles Huellmantel - Mr. Huellmantel is a local attorney and partner of Mesa Housing Associates, the team that built “Encore on First Avenue,” providing important housing for seniors and allowing them to become part of Mesa’s burgeoning downtown.

Marco Meraz - Mr. Meraz is a Mesa native. In 2012, he and his family opened a Latin-inspired cuisine restaurant in downtown Mesa, called Republica Empanada. Mr. Meraz serves on the Mesa Urban Garden Advisory Board, the R.A.I.L. (Retail, Arts, Innovation and Livability) alliance, and also works with local merchants and agencies to improve and grow Downtown Mesa.

Rich Marchant - Mr. Marchant is the Executive Vice-President of Operations for Crescent Crown Distributing LLC, located in downtown Mesa. He has lived in Mesa since 1974. He’s been honored with the Arizona Public Service Company’s Wayne Farnsworth Award for service to the community, serves as an Executive Board member of The Greater Phoenix Economic Council and on the Mesa Chamber of Commerce Business Expansion Council.

Lorenzo Perez - Co-owner of the local Venue Projects, a design-centered, redevelopment, investment and construction real estate practice in the Valley, Mr. Perez works to transform urban and historical places and finding ways through design and architecture to promote community, serve and celebrate nature. He is Realtor and a member of the Urban Land Institute and the Arizona Multihousing Association.