

Continuity, Change, and Coming of Age:  
Redevelopment and Revitalization in Downtown Tempe, Arizona, 1960-2012

by

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## ABSTRACT

Tempe political and business leaders implemented a series of strategies, composed of interconnected economic, political, and cultural factors that contributed to the city's growth over time. Influenced by a new economic opportunities and challenges, changing ideas about redevelopment and the role of suburbs, and Tempe's own growth issues after 1960, Tempe leaders and citizens formed a distinct vision for downtown redevelopment. Modified over time, the redevelopment strategy depended on effective planning and financing, public-private collaboration, citizen participation, and a revised perception of growth. After 1980, the strategy gained momentum enabling leaders to expand their ambitions for downtown. Redevelopment manifested through riverfront redevelopment, art and culture, and historic preservation redirecting the city's growth, creating economic development, and revitalizing downtown as Tempe began flourishing as a mature supersuburb. The strategy showed considerable economic success by 2012 and the completion of the Rio Salado Project, the Tempe Center for the Arts, and the preservation of the Hayden Flour Mill made downtown an attractive and diverse urban destination.

## DEDICATION

To my parents, Arnold and Janet, for their lasting support and encouragement throughout  
my entire academic journey.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Tempe, Arizona developed from a series of strategies implemented by business, political, and civic leaders and citizens throughout its history. These strategies were formed from a mixture of economic, political, and cultural factors that depended on public and private action, and promoted physical and population growth throughout the Salt River Valley. Over time each strategy built upon the previous ones, guiding planning and development in Tempe.<sup>1</sup>

#### **The 1870s-1940: Making an Agricultural Town**

The first strategy shaped Tempe's economic, political, and cultural development from its inception in the 1870s until the beginning of World War II. Leaders and citizens, guided by social and cultural values brought from other places, set attainable goals for Tempe's modest growth throughout this period. They focused their efforts on transforming the natural environment making Tempe into a productive agricultural area, an agricultural service center, and commercial corridor.<sup>2</sup>

For the first seventy years, leaders and citizens worked to develop the Salt River Valley's economic base to include initially agriculture and commerce, and later tourism. Early settlers created Hayden's Ferry in 1871 on the south banks of the Salt River with this intention. The residents of this new settlement, later renamed Tempe, were eager to use the fertile Valley soil and favorable climate, and recognizing the ancient canals of the Hohokam civilization as showing them the way, they created an intricate irrigation system that supported agricultural

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<sup>1</sup> Philip VanderMeer, *Desert Visions and the Making of Phoenix, 1860-2009*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2010), 5.

<sup>2</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 6, 9, 361-362.



activity. One resident, Tucson freighter Charles Trumbell Hayden, realized the area's potential as a commercial center, and in part because the bedrock river crossing allowed for horses and wagons to ford the river. While Phoenix was started slightly earlier, was more centrally located, and grew more rapidly, Tempe benefited from being in the hinterland of its larger neighbor, and from the promotion of the Valley by Phoenician boosters. The expansion of the canal system and further settlement enabled Tempe to become a productive agricultural area, with farmers growing wheat, barley, alfalfa, fruit, and raising livestock.<sup>3</sup>

Tempe leaders realized improved transportation and regional water supply were necessary in order for the local economy to expand, and by employing their strategy, seized opportunities that would provide such growth. A ferry over the Salt River in Tempe facilitated commodity distribution until the arrival of two railroads, the Maricopa and Phoenix line in and the Southern Pacific line, providing a faster and cheaper way to transport goods. The 1911 construction of the Roosevelt Dam provided hydroelectric power, flood control, and eased the challenges of drought, while accelerating agricultural development and encouraging efficiency. The more reliable water source allowed for the growth of cotton by the 1910s, in addition to the initial crops raised in the area. By the 1910s, Tempe emerged as an agricultural service center providing goods and services to both town and rural residents. Similar to the railroad, the advent of the automobile generated infrastructure improvements and facilitated distribution of agricultural commodities. Warm weather, Phoenician boosterism, and the automobile contributed to the gradual rise of tourism and recreation in and around Tempe. Despite frequent

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<sup>3</sup> Victoria D. Vargas et al., *Hayden Flour Mill: Landscape, Economy, and Community Diversity in Tempe, Arizona*, Volume 1: *Introduction, Historical Research, and Historical Research*, (Tempe, AZ: Archaeological Consulting Services, 2008), 44, 59-61, 81-82; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 12-18.

economic crises such as the Great Depression of the 1930s, agriculture, commerce, and tourism supported the slow and steady growth of Tempe into the 1940s.<sup>4</sup>

Local government expansion between the 1870s and 1940 assisted in making Tempe into an agricultural service center and commercial corridor. Responding to economic and population growth, Tempe incorporated in 1894 and municipal leaders created a town council to support their larger vision of development. Municipal leaders adopted a city charter in 1929 allowing for more municipal authority and regulation to create the community and facilitate further growth. These changes enabled the local government to fund and accommodate the demand for municipal services, utilities, and improvements. In addition, emulating Phoenix, Tempe exerted authority over planning and development in the community by passing the first zoning ordinance in 1938. The rationale for this ordinance “was to avoid overcrowding, and facilitate the adequate provision of transportation, sewers, schools, and parks” while also regulating land use.<sup>5</sup>

The pursuit of the initial development strategy and the subsequent growth of agriculture, commerce, and tourism between the 1870s and 1940, as well as Tempe’s transportation connectivity shaped the community’s built environment. Prior to 1920, commercial and

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<sup>4</sup> Scott Solliday, Tempe Historic Preservation Commission, and National Park Service, *Post World War II Subdivisions, Tempe, Arizona: 1945-1960 Neighborhood and House-Type Context Development*, (Tempe, AZ: Historic Preservation Commission, 2001), 7, 9, 16; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 19.

<sup>5</sup> Susan R. Sargent, “Main Street Meets Megastrip: Suburban Downtown Revitalizing in Tempe, Arizona,” (Dissertation, Arizona State University, 2002), 102; Solliday, Tempe Historic Preservation Commission, and National Park Service, *Post World War II Subdivisions*, 9; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 27, 71-72; Vargas et al., *Hayden Flour Mill: Landscape, Economy, and Community Diversity in Tempe, Arizona*, Volume 1, 89-95; Robert Fishman, “The American Planning Tradition: An Introduction and Interpretation,” in Robert Fishman, ed., *The American Planning Tradition: Culture and Policy*, (Washington, DC: The Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2000), 15.

industrial development in Tempe was concentrated along Mill Avenue or near the two existing railroad lines. Beginning in the 1920s new major routes ran through Tempe and in the decades that followed U.S. Highways 60, 70, 80, and 89 converged to cross the Salt River at the Tempe Bridge crystalizing the town's function as a critical transportation corridor in the Valley. By 1940, a central business district formed along Mill Avenue between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> streets. It was composed of businesses in support of agricultural activity and those providing basic goods and services for local town and rural residents. By 1940, banks, automobile repair shops and service stations, drug stores, grocery stores, home appliance stores, city hall, agricultural service businesses, restaurants, and one movie theater, a flour mill populated the CBD making Tempe a self-sufficient farm town. Additionally, residential development, including Tempe's earliest subdivisions, appeared adjacent to or south of the central business district.<sup>6</sup>

The development of social and cultural activities in Tempe between the 1870s and 1940 reflected the initial vision of growth. The establishment and growth of agriculture and transportation allowed for development of new social and cultural institutions, and some entertainment and tourism. Though Phoenix acquired far superior institutions and entertainment, Tempeans lobbied for and gained the Territorial Normal School in 1885. The growth of the Territorial Normal School supported the development of large social institutions in Tempe, and it

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<sup>6</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 20, 173; Solliday, Tempe Historic Preservation Commission, and National Park Service, *Post World War II Subdivisions*, 9; Vargas et. al, *Hayden Flour Mill: Landscape, Economy, and Community Diversity in Tempe, Arizona*, Volume 1, 95; Gerald Stricklin, "Transition in Tempe, Arizona Central Business District: A Result of Changing Spatial and Socio-Economic Factors," (Master's Thesis, Arizona State University, 1975), 25-26; *Telephone Directory, Phoenix Vicinity, 1939-1940*, (Denver, CO: The Mountain States Telephone Company, 1939), 82-84; "College (Valley Art) Theater," *City of Tempe, Arizona*, accessed August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2013, <http://www.tempe.gov/index.aspx?page=1678>; Robert M Fogelson, *Downtown: Its Rise and Fall, 1880-1950*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 188.

remained an important generator of cultural activity in the postwar decades. Tempe also experienced cultural growth in the form of civic groups, bands, organizations and smaller institutions such as churches and schools as well as a library in the first seventy years.<sup>7</sup>

### **1940-1960: Tempe in Transition**

The second development strategy, modeled after Phoenix's decisions, influenced Tempe's economic, political, physical and cultural growth between 1940 and 1960. Public and private leaders and citizens formed this strategy by taking advantage of new relationships and harnessing new opportunities created by federal spending during and after World War II. Guided by a new set of goals and expectations, Tempeans worked to attract new industries and an educated workforce, offer desirable housing, and to create efficient city government and services that would facilitate further development. By implementing the strategy, leaders and citizens hoped Tempe would begin the transition from agricultural town and commercial corridor to high-tech suburb and educational center.<sup>8</sup>

Over the next twenty years, the second development strategy began to take shape as leaders and citizens worked to diversify Tempe's economy. During and immediately after the war Tempe's economy still relied largely on agriculture. Lettuce, grape, cantaloupe, and citrus packing as well as flour milling flourished in this period before giving way to the growth of tourism, retail, and manufacturing. Valley leaders embraced the pro-growth strategy in which economic planning became more aggressive and intentional. The establishment of public-private

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<sup>7</sup>Solliday, Tempe Historic Preservation Commission, and National Park Service, *Post World War II Subdivisions*, 9; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 29, 64; *Telephone Directory, Phoenix Vicinity, 1939-1940*, 82-84.

<sup>8</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 6, 93-95, 181, 363.

partnerships forged by political and business leaders in the Valley during the war encouraged the growth of several industries in the years that followed. At the same time, Valley business and political leaders worked to attract new industries and skilled workers. Tempe gained metal, garment, lumber, block, chemical, and electronics manufacturing companies in this period and in the decades that followed. In addition, favorable weather supported population increases and the expansion of tourism and retail after the war, presenting more opportunities for growth and development.<sup>9</sup>

The expansion of local government and the efficient delivery of services was another essential component of the second development strategy used to accelerate growth. Political leaders responded to population increases and facilitated development by creating new city departments, using zoning to control land use, annexing land to generate tax revenue, forming improvement districts, raising bond issues to fund infrastructure, and providing services and utilities to new residents. Political leaders also began to take physical planning more seriously by embracing new federal subsidies and economic policies set forth by the Federal Housing and Federal Highway Administrations. Thus, the federal government encouraged suburbanization and had a larger role in city planning in the postwar years.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Solliday, Tempe Historic Preservation Commission, and National Park Service, *Post World War II Subdivisions*, 11, 49-59; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 100-101, 115-117, 153-164, 222, 363.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 94, 141, 181,188-190; Solliday, Tempe Historic Preservation Commission, National Park Service, *Post World War II Subdivisions*, 25-27; Carol Heim, "Border Wars: Tax Revenues, Annexation, and Urban Growth in Phoenix," *International Journal of Urban Regional Research* 36, no. 4 (July 2012): 831-833, 837-839; Fishman, "The American Planning Tradition: An Introduction and Interpretation," 15; Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 3-11, 190-218, 241-245, 266-271, 284-303.

Reflecting the success of the second strategy, the growth of the economy and population, as well as transportation routes generated changes in Tempe's built environment between 1940 and 1960. Tempe began transitioning from an agricultural service center to a high-tech suburb and educational center in this period. But this change also included negative consequences for the central business district. This area, positioned between 1<sup>st</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Streets along Mill Avenue and in the nearby neighborhood, flourished in the 1940s and early 1950s but declined starting in the late 1950s. Department stores, electronic appliance stores, beauty shops, and new restaurants and hotels in the CBD started to replace agricultural businesses revealing larger shifts in the local economy. Suburban expansion and a rise automobile ownership fostered commercial decentralization. By the mid-1950s businesses began to appear along 8<sup>th</sup> Street or on Apache Boulevard, eventually reducing the importance Mill Avenue. The development of affordable single-family housing surged between 1945 and 1960 with new low-density neighborhoods such as Borden Homes and Hudson Manor appearing along Apache Boulevard, the Roosevelt Addition west of the CBD, and Cavalier Hills north of the Salt River, indicating expansion in all directions. Additionally, Tempe's population increased in this period reaching 24,894 by 1960, as it transitioned from an agricultural service center to a high-tech suburb and educational center.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> *Mesa, Tempe, Chandler, Gilbert (including Apache Junction, Chandler Heights, Higley and Queen Creek) Arizona Con Survey Directory, 1960*, Vol. 4, (Phoenix, AZ: Mullin-Kille Company), 53-184; Solliday, Tempe Historic Preservation Commission, and National Park Service, *Post World War II Subdivisions*, 21-25, 41, 46; Fogelson, *Downtown*, 247-248, 314, 396; Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, 3-11, 266-271; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Census of Population: 1960, Volume 1, Part 4, Characteristics of Population, Arizona*, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1963); U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940, Volume II, Characteristics of Population, Summary, Alabama-District of Columbia*, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1943); U.S. Bureau of the Census,

Table 1.1

Population growth in Tempe, 1940-1960

<b>Year</b>	<b>Population</b>
1940	2,906
1950	7,684
1960	24,894

The growth of social and cultural institutions in this period reflected the goals of the second development strategy. At the same time that public and private business leaders started forming new relationships and taking advantage of new opportunities, they began supporting art and cultural activity as a way to reinforce the economic growth, realizing the importance of creating a culturally sophisticated city that would attract new industries and skilled individuals. Similar to the prewar period, Phoenix enjoyed more cultural growth than Tempe through the development of fine arts, performing arts, and the creation of new cultural institutions like the Phoenix Art Museum. The expansion of Arizona State University (ASU) became the most visible example of this in Tempe. The university brought educated and cultured individuals to Tempe reinforcing its function as an educational center and fostering the development of more programs and institutions.

### **1960-1980: Replacing the Postwar Suburban Strategy**

Building on many of the key components of the second strategy, Tempeans formed the third development strategy which depended on desirable housing and community building, attracting high-tech industries, high paying jobs, cultural institutions, effective politics, and the efficient delivery of city services, but responding to a new set of circumstances were forced to

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*Census of Population: 1950, Volume 1, Number of Inhabitants, Arizona*, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1952); VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 184, 187-190, 221-222.

alter the strategy. After 1960, Tempe entered its most intense growth period, both in terms of population increase and physical development. Tempe's rapid suburban growth within the emerging decentralized multi-nodal metropolis endangered its distinctiveness in the Valley. These new circumstances changed how public and private leaders viewed their suburban development policies and pushing them to reconsider approaches to downtown. Using their central location, agricultural past, and their position as an educational center, Tempeans started pursuing the goal of making a unique downtown. By 1980, Tempe began developing its distinct character and identity, pursuing a discrete pattern of growth, and asserting its semi-independence as a supersuburb by depending less on Phoenix.<sup>12</sup>

The implementation of the third strategy required the same economic model that sustained growth in the early postwar decades, but it expanded and slightly diversified Tempe's economy outside of downtown during this period. By the 1970s, this model forged by Phoenix, indicated some new challenges making Tempe leaders more reluctant about the nature of the Valley's growth. Agriculture disappeared through the 1960s and 1970s, and the manufacturing, retail, and tourism sectors of Tempe's economy expanded providing jobs to many residents. Additionally responding to massive population influxes and opportunities for new physical development, the construction industry grew significantly. Economic growth in the southern part of the city was encouraging, but it had a negative impact on business activity in downtown.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 6, 167-171, 183-190, 221-229, 231, 248, 265-269, 279-289, 339, 341; For complete description of supersuburbs, see Carl Abbott, *How Cities Won the West: Four Centuries of Urban Change in Western North America*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008), 225-227; For supersuburbs in Phoenix, see VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 221-229.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 183-184, 196, 224, 228-229, 298-299, 304.



Reacting to increased economic and population growth and public demands between 1960 and 1980, leaders and citizens pursued the third strategy and created Tempe's first General Plan indicating the expansion of Tempe's government and increasing authority over planning and development. Population increases caused Tempe leaders to continue annexation to produce tax revenue and provide efficient services facilitating suburban growth, but problems associated with rapid, unrestrained postwar development forced them to reconsider this approach. The most prevalent of these concerns was downtown decline, but transportation, flooding and water supply, leapfrog development, and pollution were also important issues that helped to stimulate new notions about urban planning and the role of suburbs. Tempeans' request for public action to remedy these growth issues indicated the appearance of a new political culture by the 1960s. Prompted by concerned citizens, the Tempe City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, wanted to create a more efficient and rational process to regulate development and future growth. Introduced in 1967, the first *Tempe General Plan* created the Design Review Ordinance, the Subdivision Ordinance and amended the zoning ordinance. A series of objectives, policies, and regulations were created to implement the plan. This set the entire formalized planning process in motion and provided a new framework for future land use, economic and cultural development, public-private partnerships, downtown redevelopment, and the accomplishment of other community projects and goals.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 188-189, 276-289; Margaret Weir, "Planning, Environmentalism, and Urban Poverty: The Political Failure of National Land-Use Planning Legislation, 1970-1975," in Robert Fishman, ed., *The American Planning Tradition: Culture and Policy*, 195; Heim, "Border Wars," 831-833, 837-839; For political culture, see VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 224-225, 269; City of Tempe Community Development Department, *General Plan 2000*, (Tempe, AZ: City of Tempe Community Development Department, 1989), 19-20; City of Tempe Planning and Zoning Commission, Tempe City Council, and Van Cleve Associates, *General Plan*, (Tempe: City of Tempe Planning and Zoning Commission, 1967), 7-8, 34; City of Tempe

The request for a larger public voice in directing the city's growth reflected shifting citizen expectations of the government. The City of Tempe responded to population growth and diverse interests by making a deliberate effort to encourage citizen involvement and addressing public concerns. This occurred through the use of special interest groups, boards and commissions, along with "voter support of policies, legislation, tax rates and bond issues for public projects" as a way to affect planning and development decisions.<sup>15</sup>

Addressing downtown decline became a priority as Tempeans started city planning in the 1960s. Since the mid-1950s automobiles, freeway construction, and the emergence of commercial centers promoted the relocation of traditional businesses along arterial streets causing vacancies in downtown. The disappearance of key locally owned businesses accelerated degeneration and disinvestment in the central business district.<sup>16</sup>

The countercultural business community, later known as the Mill Avenue Merchant's Association (MAMA), gradually moved in and filled these vacancies. These new countercultural businesses appeared along Mill Avenue and were looked upon unfavorably by city leaders and

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Development Services Department, *General Plan 2030*, (Tempe: City of Tempe Development Services Department, 2003), 53.

<sup>15</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 184-185, 231, 265-269; City of Tempe Planning and Zoning Commission, Tempe City Council, and Van Cleve Associates, *General Plan*, 7, 70-73; Susan S. Fainstein, and Scott Campbell, ed., *Readings in Planning Theory*, (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 2.

<sup>16</sup> Fogelson, *Downtown*, 247-248; *General Plan*, 38; Sargent, "Main Street Meets Megastrip," 112-123; "Tempe—62,907 People, Downtown Ugliness and a Major University," *The Phoenix Gazette*, July 2, 1971.

residents. These new businesses and their clientele distressed city leader and some Tempe residents motivating them to try and improve downtown.<sup>17</sup>

The sharp decline of downtown generated a debate among public and private interests about its future inspiring them to reinvest and form a new downtown strategy. Tempe was the first East Valley city to consider redevelopment as a viable option, but determining an exact redevelopment strategy became significantly more complicated. MAMA, or the counter cultural business community, and the City of Tempe expressed conflicting plans for the fate of downtown. Both groups advocated economic development and image enhancement. The counter cultural community promoted cultural activities and establishing a historic district in downtown, while political leaders, hoping to emulate Scottsdale's Fifth Avenue district success, supported the creation of an upscale shopping district.<sup>18</sup>

Despite some opposition, the City of Tempe created a Redevelopment Agency and introduced the 1973 *University-Hayden Butte Redevelopment Plan* laying out the strategy for the revival of downtown. The redevelopment plan gradually replaced the suburban development strategy and was a very deliberate attempt to create a unique downtown. The city embraced this more systematic redevelopment strategy which indicated economic and political interests and

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid; Matthew F. Holochwist, "Changing Perceptions about the Role of the Central Business District. Downtown Tempe, 1968-1997," (Master's Thesis, Arizona State University, 1997), 22-49.

<sup>18</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 222, 269; Jerry Eaton, "Major Face-Lifting Urged for Tempe Acres," *Arizona Republic*, February 2, 1967; Bradford Luckingham, *Phoenix: The History of A Southwestern Metropolis*, (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1989), 261; Holochwist, "Changing Perceptions," iii, 23-28, 50-53; Alison Isenberg, *Downtown America: A History of the Place and the People Who Made It*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 6; Victor Linoff, interview by Ronald McCoy for Mill Avenue Oral History Project, April 27, 1988, transcript, Hayden Arizona Collection, Arizona State University Library.

included specific policies and programs, public-private cooperation, citizen participation, effective city planning and public and private financing, and an altered definition of growth in order to revitalize downtown. The strategy required a mixture of new construction and preservation to maintain an “old town” feel, and would recreate downtown into the commercial, residential, recreational, cultural, and entertainment hub of the Tempe. Three separate but related approaches for producing economic development, riverfront redevelopment, historic preservation, and art and culture, aided in transforming downtown.<sup>19</sup>

When Tempe became landlocked in 1974, it demonstrated shifting attitudes about growth and the manifestation of Tempe’s distinct political culture. Reflecting larger debates about downtown decline and suburban development, some leaders and citizens remained supportive of the postwar emphasis as an unquestioned good. Others, however, were hesitant about further annexation of present and future subdivisions to the south because it risked competition with north Tempe and downtown. Annexation critics feared that continued growth would generate a loss of community similar to the situation in Scottsdale. These disagreements symbolized a real departure from the city’s postwar suburban strategy, and the hesitation allowed Chandler City Council to annex six square miles of land between the two cities crystalizing Tempe’s

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<sup>19</sup> Bernard J. Frieden and Lynne B Sagalyn, *Downtown Inc: How America Rebuilds Cities*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989), 137, 156-159; Sargent, “Main Street Meets Megastrip,” 123-135; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 245-247; City of Tempe, *University-Hayden Butte Area I Redevelopment Plan*, (Tempe, AZ: City of Tempe Community Development Department, Redevelopment and Housing Division, 1983), 3-8, 22-23; Par 3 Planning, Architecture, and Research Studio, *Old Town Tempe – Mill Avenue Rehabilitation Feasibility Study*, (Tempe: City of Tempe, 1973), 6, 22; Holochwost, “Changing Perceptions,” 66-68; Michael J. Schmandt, “Local Government and Landscape Change. Downtown Tempe, 1972-1991,” (Master’s Thesis, Arizona State University, 1991), 15-19; Larry Ford, *America’s New Downtowns: Revitalization or Reinvention?* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2003), 17, 58-59.

boundaries at forty square miles. This transformed Tempe’s character, and shaped planning and development for future decades.<sup>20</sup>

The implementation of the third strategy fostered residential, commercial, and industrial development outside of downtown by 1980. Tempe continued to grow at an extraordinarily rapid rate reaching population of 106,743 by 1980. It became a centrally-located growth node in the metropolitan area or a semi-independent supersuburb because of its size. Tempe’s political independence, or its ability to provide municipal services and implement a distinct redevelopment agenda also earned it the title. As the population increased, it facilitated the growth of schools, parks, and civic facilities and these new amenities reinforced its status as a supersuburb as well.<sup>21</sup>

Table 1.2

Population growth in Tempe, 1980-2010

<b>Year</b>	<b>Population</b>
1980	106,743
1990	141,865
2010	161,719

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<sup>20</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 222, 265-293; Robert E. Lang and Jennifer B. LeFurgy, *Boomburbs: The Rise of America’s Accidental Cities*, (Washington, DC: Brookings Institute Press, 2007), 157-159; “Land Between 2 Cities, Chandler Annexation Angers Tempe Officials,” *Arizona Republic*, October 23, 1974; “Tempe to Probe Land Annexation,” *Phoenix Gazette*, October 23, 1974.

<sup>21</sup> Abbott, *How Cities Won the West*, 225-227; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 189, 221-225, 228-229; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Census of Population: 1980, Characteristics of Population, Number of Inhabitants, Arizona*, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1982); *U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census of Population, General Population Characteristics, Arizona*, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1992); *Arizona Department of Administration, “Arizona Counties and Incorporated Places, Population Change between 2000 and 2010,”* (accessed August 15, 2013), [http://www.workforce.az.gov/pubs/demography/AZ\\_ToplineTable1\\_CountiesAndPlaces.pdf](http://www.workforce.az.gov/pubs/demography/AZ_ToplineTable1_CountiesAndPlaces.pdf).

The pursuit of the redevelopment vision allowed for modest growth of culture in Tempe between 1960 and 1980. Arizona State University made Tempe unique and began reinforcing its identity in this period. ASU was the main catalyst for culture in Tempe, and the construction of the Grady Gammage Auditorium in 1964 solidified that role. This was the most impressive cultural facility in the Valley throughout the 1960s. In addition, the appearance of some cultural organizations, cultural facilities outside downtown, and arts festivals were indicative of some cultural development in Tempe as well.<sup>22</sup>

### **1980-2012: Redevelopment and Revitalization**

Over the next thirty years Tempe leaders and citizens, reacting to changing economic circumstances and new intellectual patterns, continued to implement and reconfigure the redevelopment strategy for downtown. Issues caused by rapid postwar growth and the decision to become landlocked produced new challenges for generating tax revenues, providing desirable housing, attract high-tech industries, high paying jobs and supplying city services at a reasonable cost as Tempe's role in the greater metropolitan area changed. Downtown redevelopment became critical to diversify the local economy and create economic development, as leaders and citizens struggled to produce a new definition of growth between the 1980s and the 2000s. Not long after the city created a redevelopment plan, they began creating additional redevelopment areas and providing more municipal support of strategies for the Salt River bed, art and cultural activities, and historic properties in downtown. These ideas were small components of the original 1973 plan and were largely realized in the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s. Using these strategies to expand the role and function of their city, Tempeans continued pursuing their new

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<sup>22</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 171.

goal of making Tempe “live-work-play” destination, a “tech oasis,” and educational center starting in the early 1990s.<sup>23</sup> Through this period, the redevelopment agenda and Tempe’s landlocked status influenced its economic, political, cultural development and changes to the urban form. It caused Tempe to grow in new ways transforming into a mature supersuburb with new amenities.<sup>24</sup>

Tempe faced new economic challenges after 1980, which shaped decisions about the direction of growth in downtown. The city’s landlocked status and the decline of manufacturing caused Tempeans and other Valley leaders searched for a new base for the local economy. By the late 1980s, economic vitality returned to downtown, caused in part by the growth of new sector of Tempe’s economy. Leaders tried to form a new economic plan by expanding the tourism, retail, high-tech business, and financial aspects of the economy specifically in the producing new opportunities downtown between 1980s and the 2000s.<sup>25</sup>

The growth of municipal support for new planning policies, and the demand for effective politics, as well as municipal program and services led to the creation of new city departments

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<sup>23</sup>City of Tempe Community Development Services Department, *General Plan 2020*, (Tempe: City of Tempe Development Services, Community Design & Development Division, 1997), 7; For more on Tempe as a destination, see City of Tempe Development Services Department, *General Plan 2030*, 125, 137, 143-144; “Tempe Can Teach Cities About Life After Build-Out,” *Arizona Republic*, July 20, 2005.

<sup>24</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 185-186, 231, 244-248, 295-298; City of Tempe Development Services Department, *General Plan 2030*, 119-120, 125; City of Tempe Community Development Services Department, *General Plan 2020*, 33; City of Tempe, *University-Hayden Butte Area 1 Redevelopment Plan*, 3-6, 16-18; City of Tempe, *University-Hayden Butte Amended Redevelopment Plan*, (Tempe, AZ: Community Development Department, 1994), 3-18; Isenberg, *Downtown America*, 311, 315; Abbott, *How Cities Won the West*, 225-227; Jon C. Teaford, *The Metropolitan Revolution: The Rise of Post-Urban America*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 190-204, 240-262.

<sup>25</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 185-186; 300-309.

and projects, and the expansion of Tempe's government between the 1980s and the 2000s.

While downtown improved, Tempe earned a reputation for its quality planning and programs and its ability to deliver services to a growing population. The city started growing in new ways and leaders continued to pursue and expand the strategy outlined in the *1973 University-Hayden Butte Redevelopment Plan*. Responding to new circumstances, they started seriously considering programs and projects for cultural and recreational activities by the 1980s and 1990s.

Downtown improvement occurred through the reclamation of the Salt River bed, art and culture, and historic preservation with the help of public and private investment. New planning initiatives in the 1989 *General Plan 2000* and the 1997 *General Plan 2020* such as preservation, public art, alternative transportation, recreation, an emphasis on mixed-use development and infill demonstrated the altered vision of growth. Additionally new planning initiatives and a continued effort by the city to address diverse public concerns prompted the growth of Tempe's government in the form of new boards, commissions, interest groups, as well as city departments.<sup>26</sup>

By the late 1990s and 2000s growth became more openly contested. Revealing larger debates about growth control in the Valley, the approval of Arizona Smart Growth legislation in 1998 influenced Tempe's redevelopment strategy by giving the city more control over planning and development. It required leaders and staff to create ten-year plans to address issues with

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<sup>26</sup> Luckingham, *Phoenix*, 260-262; Fishman, "The American Planning Tradition: An Introduction and Interpretation," 20; Sargent, "Main Street Meets Megastrip," 123-133, 149; Teaford, *Metropolitan Revolution*, 167, 262; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 185-186, 265-298, 314-344, 357, 365; City of Tempe Development Services Department, *General Plan 2030*, 53-57, 137, 143; City of Tempe, *University-Hayden Butte Amended Redevelopment Plan*, 3-18; City of Tempe Community Development Department, *General Plan 2000*, 43-45, 49-68, 74-79, 102-103; City of Tempe Community Development Services Department, *General Plan 2020*, 6-7, 11-14, 18-27, 38, 41-45, 48-49, 54-56.



open space, sprawl, the environment, transportation, and other policies that Tempeans were already using for vertical growth, increased density, and tax revenues. In this regard, Smart Growth gave the landlocked city something of an advantage over other municipalities and supported downtown redevelopment. The new law also required more public participation and impact fees for developers.<sup>27</sup>

The redevelopment strategy influenced the changes in urban form in the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s. In this period, Tempe's landlocked form greatly altered its growth potential, and the city grew to 161,791 residents by 2010, a much slower rate of growth than in the 1960s and 1970s. Growth limitations made land re-use and redevelopment for generating tax revenues in north Tempe a necessary endeavor. New offices, stores, hotels, government facilities, the re-use of some historic buildings, and mixed use development occupied downtown indicating rising economic vitality starting in the late 1980s. By the 1990s and 2000s, the downtown strategy continued to evolve and leaders and citizens supported and advanced Tempe's riverfront redevelopment, art and cultural activities, and historic preservation efforts. This prompted the completion of Tempe Town Lake, the development of Tempe Center for the Arts, the preservation of the Hayden Flour Mill and several other projects in the downtown up until the economic crisis of 2008. More than simply a commercial district by 2012, downtown became a centralized urban destination within the growing metropolis, offering independent cultural, high-

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<sup>27</sup> City of Tempe Development Services Department, *General Plan 2030*, 51-54, 56, 125-126, 137, 143-144, Patricia Biggs, "Planners Tackle Growth Mandate," *Arizona Republic*, February 28, 2001; Tom Reade, "Tempe A Shining Example," *Arizona Republic*, November 23, 2002; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 351-352, 357-359; Jon C. Teaford, *The American Suburb: The Basics*, (New York: Routledge, 2008), 197-216.

tech industrial, recreational, housing, educational, employment, and entertainment opportunities to both residents and tourists.<sup>28</sup>

The development of art and cultural activities, organizations, and venues in Tempe between the 1980s and the 2000s demonstrated a more encompassing vision of growth for downtown. As Arizona State University continued to grow, and as downtown flourished, Tempe funded more sophisticated cultural institutions, organizations, and events in order to attract educated professionals and companies to the city. Additionally, the most recent cultural institution, the Tempe Center for the Arts strengthened downtown Tempe's new role as a cultural destination.<sup>29</sup>

### **Historiography**

Urban planning, downtown, Phoenix history, historic preservation, and suburban history, were the four main topics that emerged within the scholarship shaping this study. Studies in these areas, written between the 1980s and the 2000s, aided in contextualizing and understanding the factors influencing planning and development in Tempe, as well as redevelopment in the downtown area.

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<sup>28</sup> Arizona Department of Administration, "Arizona Counties and Incorporated Places"; City of Tempe Community Development Department, *General Plan 2000*, 75; Schmandt, "Local Government," 62-76; Sargent, "Main Street Meets Megastrip," 212-225; Teaford, *Metropolitan Revolution*, 167-181, 190-204, 240-262; City of Tempe, *University-Hayden Butte Amended Redevelopment Plan*, 5-6; City of Tempe Development Services Department, *General Plan 2030*, 125, 137, 143-144; Jan Schaefer, "Tempe Officials Mark Downtown Progress, Resisting the Tide of Sprawl," *Arizona Republic*, June 15, 2003; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 185-186, 221-225, 297, 311, 324-337, 351-352, 365-366; City of Tempe Development Services Department, *General Plan 2020*, 6, 29-32; Vera Feliciano, "Tempe's Leaders Show Vision," *Arizona Republic*, April 24, 2002; Ford, *America's New Downtowns*, 2, 62-63; Lang and LeFurgy, *Boomburbs*, Vii-ix, 1-21, 144-161, 173-174.

<sup>29</sup> City of Tempe Development Services Department, *General Plan 2030*, 137.

## **Urban Planning and Downtown**

My selection of the redevelopment strategies was shaped by the work of three scholars at Arizona State University focused primarily on the redevelopment of Mill Avenue and changes to the urban form in Tempe. Writing in 1991, Michael Schmandt focused on the way political decision making, technology, and the economy provoked changes in land use and building form during the early redevelopment of downtown. He explored the redevelopment process and the City of Tempe's attempt to reshape the landscape of downtown into an architecturally homogenous commercial area, replenish its tax base, and enhance the image of downtown.<sup>30</sup>

In 1997, Matthew Holochwost wrote a thesis on "Changing Perceptions about the Role of the Central Business District: Downtown Tempe, 1968-1997." Primarily focused on the Mill Avenue Merchants Association and counter cultural interests, he examined the disagreements between planners, politicians, and citizens involved in shaping central business district in Tempe during redevelopment. This study also illuminated some the changing approaches to historic preservation in downtown.<sup>31</sup>

In "Main Street Meets Megastrip: Suburban Downtown Revitalization in Tempe, Arizona", Susan Sargent applied a lifecycle framework to Mill Avenue explaining that the land use functions and the landscape changed with each stage. For Sargent, historic preservation, festival marketplaces and adaptive re-use, main street retailing, and urban entertainment centers

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<sup>30</sup> Schmandt, "Local Government," 2, 27, 3.

<sup>31</sup> Holochwost, "Changing Perceptions," iii-iv.

were the redevelopment strategies that came together to form a hybrid commercial landscape and a neo-traditional suburban downtown.<sup>32</sup>

Several other scholars wrote seminal works that focused on downtown planning strategies, revitalization, and the influence of interest groups on these processes. *Downtown, Inc.: How America Rebuilds Cities* (1989) by Bernard Frieden and Lynne Sagalyn, was an earlier interpretation of downtown commercial development and revitalization in the 1960s through the 1980s in cities across the country. The authors explored downtown redevelopment through the creation of town retail centers, and argued that downtowns became places for recreation as well as a various educational and cultural institutions.<sup>33</sup>

Written a decade later, Robert Fogelson's *Downtown: Its Rise and Fall, 1880-1950* examined the three phases of downtown through the rise and fall of the central business district, as well as subsequent commercial decentralization by the 1950s. It was, therefore, a critical work for discussing this process as it occurred in Tempe. Like Frieden and Sagalyn, Fogelson focused on spatial politics and the change in purpose and function of downtown by the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Fogelson argued that public policy and technology were most important in shaping downtown.<sup>34</sup>

Larry Ford's *America's New Downtowns: Revitalization or Reinvention?* Was another seminal work on downtown planning challenges and redevelopment. Ford uncovered some common myths about downtown, explored its evolution, and evaluated the success of his case

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<sup>32</sup> Sargent, "Main Street Meets Megastrip," 91, 212-213.

<sup>33</sup> Frieden and Sagalyn, *Downtown, Inc*, 16.

<sup>34</sup> Fogelson, *Downtown*, 397.

studies. For Ford, revitalized downtowns functioned as a destination for tourists, government officials, business leaders, and culture seekers. In addition, downtowns “give identity, meaning, and character to our increasingly urban regions.”<sup>35</sup>

The most recent historical study of downtowns was Alison Isenberg’s *Downtown America: A History of the People Who Made It*. Isenberg contributed to this scholarship by considering gender, class, and age in downtown planning. She examined the key participants as well as national economic and political forces that influenced the evolving ideal for downtown from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the 1970s. Influenced by Frieden and Sagalyn, and Fogelson, she believed downtown was a manifestation of cultural values.<sup>36</sup>

Two local studies were essential for this thesis. Scott Solliday’s *Post World War II Subdivisions, Tempe, Arizona: 1945-1960 Neighborhood and House-Type Context Development* and *Hayden Flour Mill: Landscape, Economy, and Community Diversity in Tempe, Arizona*, by Victoria D. Vargas, Thomas E. Jones, Scott Solliday, and Don W. Ryden aided in creating the historical context of planning in pre-war and the immediate postwar periods in Tempe. These studies also provided information on the residential, educational, industrial, and commercial development of the city.

Another seminal work of this historiography, *The American Planning Tradition: Culture and Policy* edited by Robert Fishman, was an excellent collection of essays that provided a broad context for American urban planning. Fishman organized American planning into three stages: the Urban Era between 1830 and 1930, the Crisis of the American Planning Tradition between

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<sup>35</sup> Ford, *America’s New Downtowns*, 1-3.

<sup>36</sup> Isenberg, *Downtown America*, 2-3, 314-315.

1930 and 1970, and the rise of New Urbanism between 1970 and 2000. He defined American planning “a collective action for the common good, particularly action that concentrates on building and shaping the shared physical infrastructure for present needs and future growth.”<sup>37</sup> He discussed individualism, localism, private capital investment and maximum profit, development through public-private partnerships, and recent challenges to planning.<sup>38</sup>

### **Phoenix History**

The first seminal work in this category of the historiography was Bradford Luckingham’s *Phoenix: The History of a Southwestern Metropolis* published in 1989. Luckingham wrote a biography of Phoenix providing a broad synthesis of many topics including suburban growth, redevelopment, and culture between the 1870s and the 1980s. He also stressed the importance of boosterism, the promotion of Phoenix as an “urban oasis,” and how each contributed to the growth of the postwar economy.<sup>39</sup>

*Desert Visions and the Making of Phoenix, 1860-2009* by Philip VanderMeer provided the most useful framework for my study with his discussion of planning strategies in the metropolitan area, cultural development, economic and political changes, and postwar suburban growth. VanderMeer expanded on Luckingham’s biography of Phoenix while reframing and reinterpreting the city’s development. He divided his work into three sections while exploring five major themes: the natural environment, the urban form, the economy, social and cultural values, as well as public leadership. He argued that Phoenicians had three visions for their city.

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<sup>37</sup> Fishman, “The American Planning Tradition: An Introduction and Interpretation,” 2.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 3-8.

<sup>39</sup> Luckingham, *Phoenix*, 1-10.

From the mid-nineteenth century through World War II, Phoenicians worked to create “an American Eden” in the desert. The war industry altered the city’s economy and encouraged Phoenicians to develop a new high-tech suburban vision that lasted between 1940 and 1960. Between 1960 and 1980, new challenges to the economy and the urban form compelled leaders to generate a third modified high-tech vision.<sup>40</sup>

### **Suburban History**

Written in 1985, Kenneth Jackson’s *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* was the first of the seminal works on suburbs. Rejecting earlier notions about suburbs, he used both international and American examples while chronicling the formation of suburbs from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century through 1985. He demonstrated that they are diverse, exclusive, affluent and middle class, foster a low population density, have high rates of homeownership, and provide function as strictly residential place which is separated from worked. For Jackson, suburbs embodied many aspects of American culture making them unique. He identified the suburban ideal and population growth as necessary conditions for suburban formation, and attributed racial prejudice, American prosperity, cheap land and housing, advancements in transportation technology, and plentiful energy as important causes for this phenomenon. He stressed federal government subsidies and tax policies that encouraged suburbanization and increased homeownership through the agencies like the Home Owners’ Loan Corporation and the Federal Housing Administration. In turn, these subsidies and polices

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<sup>40</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 1-10, 93-94, 183-186, 361-366.

supported the residential and commercial decentralization and decline of the urban core reinforcing racial and socioeconomic inequalities.<sup>41</sup>

Responding to Kenneth Jackson two years later, Robert Fishman produced another seminal work, *Bourgeois Utopias: The Rise and Fall of Suburbia*. His study traced the suburban development near five cities in Europe and the United States between 1750 and 1950. Fishman reinterpreted suburbanization and argued that suburbia was a “cultural creation, a conscious choice based on the economic and cultural values of the Anglo-American bourgeoisie.”<sup>42</sup> He used the examples of London, Manchester, Paris, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles to demonstrate how these exclusively white, Protestant suburbs served as the physical and spatial manifestations of the culture and economic structure supported by the first the English and later the American bourgeois. Most importantly, he saw Los Angeles between 1910 and 1950 as the culmination and fall of suburbia, giving way to what he calls the rise of the “new city” or “technoburb” resulting from technological advancements of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Characterized by its traditionally rural, urban, and suburban components, the new urban form contained residential, high-tech industrial, and commercial development as well as a diverse population. Technoburbs were independent from the urban core, lacked fixed boundaries, and were connected by freeways. Fishman concurred with Jackson by stating that federal policies, and financial and technical systems introduced in the 1930s encouraged Post-World War II American suburbs.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, 3-11, 190-218, 241-245, 266-271, 284-303.

<sup>42</sup> Robert Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias: The Rise and Fall of Suburbia*. (New York: Basic Books, Inc, 1987), 8-9.

<sup>43</sup> Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias*, x, 4-5, 155-156, 182-207.



In 1991 journalist Joel Garreau traced the conversion of suburbs into what he calls “edge cities” in his seminal work, *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier*. He identified Tempe as an emerging edge city or new urban center. Building on Fishman’s characterization of technoburbs, Garreau argued that edge cities are positioned on the edge near freeway intersections and physically on the periphery, occupied by detached single family homes, and lacked urban social institutions. Mature edge cities functioned as a retail, entertainment, employment, and residential destination, and grew rapidly since World War II.<sup>44</sup>

In 2003 Dolores Hayden introduced her synthesis *Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000*. Writing her work in the wake of the Smart Growth movement, she diverged from others scholars critiquing suburbia, the real estate industry, the federal policies that accelerated sprawl, and American consumption. She traced the evolution of the American dream while arguing that suburbs are ethnically, economically, and physically diverse. Exploring suburban development patterns, she shed light on auto dependent edge nodes characterized by corporate headquarters, residential neighborhoods, shopping malls. Additionally, she advocated the use of preservation and infill to revitalize declining suburban neighborhoods.<sup>45</sup>

Jon C. Teaford investigated the transformation and changing functions of both central cities and suburbs in the decades following World War II in *Metropolitan Revolution: The Rise of Post-Urban America*. Charting the metropolitan revolution, Teaford explored the political and

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<sup>44</sup> Joel Garreau, *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier*, (New York: Doubleday, 1991), xiv, 3-15, 425, 434.

<sup>45</sup> Dolores Hayden, *Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 2003), xi-18, 155, 175, 233-247.

cultural reactions that result from tremendous decentralization and fragmentation. Teaford identified postwar economic prosperity, racial tensions, and technological advancements as the major forces responsible for the revolution. These forces enabled affluent Americans to abandon the central city granting them the freedom and mobility to “pursue different lifestyles and carve spatial niches tailored to their individual preferences” in suburbia.<sup>46</sup> Some Americans were able to indulge in the American ideal, while others were forced to remain in depressed inner city neighborhoods creating new issues of inequality. By the 1980s, gentrification fundamentally transformed the function of the central city, while simultaneously, suburbs evolved into edge cities.<sup>47</sup>

In 2007, Robert Lang and Jennifer LeFurgy introduced the concept of “boomburbs” in *Boomburbs: The Rise of America’s Accidental Cities*. Evaluating these new cities on scale, rate of growth, and their non-centralized location, Lang and LeFurgy labeled Tempe as a boomburb arguing that these cities were older, diverse places, with populations greater than 100,000 that grew rapidly in recent decades, and embodied a hybrid urban form.<sup>48</sup>

In *When Cities Won the West: Four Centuries of Urban Change in Western North America* by Carl Abbott presented a strong anti-turnerian argument. This study was a broad synthesis of Western urban history with a thorough discussion of urban form, politics, the global economy, and suburbs. He maintained that Western cities were centralizing locations, ascending to the top of regional hierarchies by the mid-nineteenth century symbolizing their economic

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<sup>46</sup> Teaford, *The Metropolitan Revolution*, 6, 241.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 4, 6, 166-167, 198, 203-204, 240.

<sup>48</sup> Lang and LeFurgy, *Boomburbs*, Vii-ix, 1-21, 144-161, 173-174.

independence from the East. Abbott also argued by the end of the twentieth century, Western cities became economic and culturally independent from the cities in the East and Midwest. Abbott gave attention to Tempe, consistently identifying it as a growth center or “supersuburb” with its own development agenda, its own leaders, and both urban and suburban amenities. For Abbott, supersuburbs appeared between the 1960s and 1980s within larger decentralized metropolitan areas, had over 100,000 residents, depended on automobiles, competed with core business districts, and had industrial and commercial development for producing tax revenue.

These various scholars perceived Tempe in slightly different ways, emphasizing specific characteristics. Garreau’s “edge city” notion focused on the multi-nodal dimension of the Phoenix metropolitan area. His scope included not only distinct communities but also areas of leasable office and retail space, and number of jobs. Lang and LeFurgy’s “boomburb” concept stressed the “accidental” rapid growth of Western communities. While all of these were important ingredients for Tempe’s formation, they were not uniquely defining characteristics. Abbott’s “supersuburb” idea addressed the continuing importance of the changing relationship between suburb and the central city, and it was, therefore, the most appropriate term for understanding the distinct history and development of Tempe.<sup>49</sup>

### **Historic Preservation**

*Historic Preservation and the Imagined West: Albuquerque, Denver, and Seattle* by Judy Mattivi Morley was a seminal work in the historiography of historic preservation in the West. She examined Albuquerque, Denver, and Seattle in her study. Successful historic districts appeared in the late twentieth century as a result of urban planning and revitalization strategies.

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<sup>49</sup> Garreau, *Edge City*, 3-15; Abbott, *How Cities Won the West*, 1-10, 221-228; Lang and LeFurgy, *Boomburbs*, 4.

These historic districts were closely linked to the rise of tourism, mass consumption, and the formation of a new civic identity. In her discussion of shifting planning policies, she maintained that historic preservation ended up functioning like urban renewal because it stimulated private investment and fostered commercial activity.<sup>50</sup>

In 2007, Ian Patrick Johnson wrote “Historic Preservation in the Phoenix Metro Area: History, Current Challenges, and Ongoing Struggles.” This comparative study of historic preservation in Phoenix and Chandler illuminated the different approaches and impediments to preservation and revitalization in the Valley. Johnson employed many of Morley’s ideas and argued that rapid development and the population influxes after World War II contributed to the start of the preservation movement in the West, as individuals felt a sense of regionalism was slipping away.<sup>51</sup>

### **Methodology**

Extensive archival research went into the creation of this study including an investigation of Tempe general plans, and the specific project plans for the Rio Salado Project, art and culture, and the Hayden Flour Mill. City Council minutes, city commission minutes, oral histories, census records, city directories, and newspaper articles were also critical components to this study.

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<sup>50</sup> Judy Mattivi Morley, *Historic Preservation and the Imagined West: Albuquerque, Denver, and Seattle*, (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2006), 13,17,151-152.

<sup>51</sup> Ian Patrick Johnson, “Historic Preservation in the Phoenix Metro Area: History, Current Challenges, and Ongoing Struggles,”(Master’s Thesis, Arizona State University, 2007), 118, 127, 149.

## **Organization**

This thesis traces the formation and implementation of distinct redevelopment agenda used to revitalize downtown Tempe between the 1960s and 2012. It examines three case studies, the Rio Salado Project, the Tempe Center for the Arts, and the Hayden Flour Mill, to demonstrate how Tempe political leaders and citizens used riverfront revitalization, art and culture, and historic preservation to revive downtown. It is not complete history of Tempe's growth and development, nor is it meant to be a comprehensive history of downtown redevelopment. Rather, it explores three of the many ways downtown revitalization occurred.

The thesis is separated into five chapters, each organized chronologically. The nature of the source material and the use of case studies dictated the chronological organization. Chapter two includes the development of the Rio Salado Project, first as a Valley-wide effort, that was pursued solely by Tempe after 1987. It discusses both the construction the large-scale project that converted the dry Salt River bed into Tempe Town Lake, and the appearance of new lakeside development. Chapter three traces how cultural activity, which first began as a small component of the redevelopment strategy, gained support and was given more emphasis after 1980 as a way to expand the function of downtown. The use of art and culture in downtown concluded with creation of the Tempe Center for the Arts in 2007. Chapter four analyses the role historic preservation in the redevelopment strategy, which broadened after 1980, and the preservation of the Hayden Flour Mill between 1997 and 2012. The thesis concludes with a brief discussion of the nature of development in a supersuburb.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE RIO SALADO PROJECT

While Tempeans began pursuing a distinct path of growth, determining the city's character, and planning downtown redevelopment in the 1960s and 1970s, they also began looking to the empty Salt River bed and thinking about how to convert it into something that would complement downtown. Reconsidering their postwar emphasis on sprawl and responding to the issues of decline and flooding, Tempe leaders and citizens began crafting a development strategy for linking downtown and the Salt River bed. Between the 1966 and 1980, political, business, and civic leaders, developers, engineers, planners, citizens, interest groups, architects and other professionals created a vision that would change the nature of the city's development. These individuals worked to craft a feasible plan that would extend downtown redevelopment as well as transform the riverbed into a recreational amenity and area for economic development. The Rio Salado Project, as it became known, started as a controversial and ambitious idea for a Valley-wide enterprise at redeveloping and beautifying 40 miles of the Salt River bed spanning from Phoenix to Mesa. Tempe's downtown, located between the other municipalities, served as a focal point for the larger project. After 1987, Tempeans carried the project out alone building the much smaller Tempe Town Lake within the five and a half mile portion of the river. The riverfront redevelopment strategy reflected new and diverse ideas about development, culture, entertainment, recreation, historic preservation and the role of suburbs. By the 2000s, Tempe Town Lake was becoming an important Valley attraction.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Sargent, "Main Street Meets Megastrip," 2,123-135, 212-232; Ford, *America's New Downtowns*, 2, 17, 58-63; Daniel et al., *Rio Salado Phase 2 Planning Study*, (Phoenix, AZ: s.n., 1974), 3; Joshua K. Morris, "Reclaiming the Riverfront: Pittsburgh's Opportunity to Redefine Itself," (Master's Thesis, Tufts University, 2010), 1-10, 77-81; City of Tempe, *Rio Salado*

## **The 1960s-1980: Early Planning Efforts for a Regional Recreational Amenity**

From the 1960s to 1980, the Valley continued to expand physically and increase in population very rapidly, and as this occurred, debates about pollution, sprawl, and other metropolitan issues emerged motivating leaders to develop solutions. Valley political, civic, and business leaders worked to develop a riverfront redevelopment strategy which depended on public-private collaboration, citizen participation, successful planning and financing, and a new definition of growth to accomplish goals for stimulating economic and cultural development within the Rio Salado Project area. Tempe leaders were already making a new downtown strategy, and decided to incorporate it into their plan for improving downtown. Working to formulate the strategy before 1980, advocates, completed conceptual plans and studies, designated a project implementation agency, and located potential funding opportunities. Through the 1970s, the Valley Forward Association (VFA) and the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) managed the project, setting ambitious economic, political, and physical goals for transforming the riverbed.<sup>53</sup>

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*Preliminary Master Plan*, (Tempe, AZ: Planning Division, 1982), i-8, 21-35; City of Tempe, *University-Hayden Butte Amended Redevelopment Plan*, 3-18; City of Tempe Community Development Services, *General Plan 2020*, 8-11; Feliciano, “Tempe’s Leaders Show Vision”; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 6-7, 185-189, 221-225, 269-289, 324-339, 361-366; Lang and LeFurgy, *Boomburbs*, Vii-ix, 1-21, 144-161; City of Tempe Development Services Department, *General Plan 2030*, 125, 137, 143-144.

<sup>53</sup> City of Tempe Community Development Services, *General Plan 2020*, 8; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 265-293, 280, 288; Daniel et al., *Rio Salado Volume 1: Metropolitan Phoenix Area, Arizona, Phase 1, Study Design*, (Phoenix, AZ: Western Management Consultants, Inc., 1972), 1-3, 7,15, 57-61; Daniel, et al., *Rio Salado Phase 2 Planning Study*, 3; City of Tempe, *Rio Salado Preliminary Master Plan*, i-10; City of Tempe, *Tempe Rio Salado Project*, (Tempe, AZ: Community Development, Planning Division, 1979), 1-4.

Much like new strategies for downtown Tempe, concerns about flooding, water conservation, and leapfrog development inspired the original plan for the Rio Salado Project. Since the days of initial settlement, Valley residents had sought to control the river, to distribute water and protect against flooding. Completion of the Roosevelt Dam in 1911 had stopped the flow of the Salt River, and together with additional dams and an extensive canal system, had channeled water to Valley cities and farms. Because of this and relatively dry weather patterns, the river bed had remained dry since the 1930s. Encouraged by pro-growth policies in the immediate postwar years and the unattractive and seemingly undevelopable nature of the flood plain, development in Mesa, Tempe, and Phoenix occurred on the periphery and ignored the Salt River. Consequently, it existed as an ugly scar across the Valley, with few developments in the bed or flood plain, except for some sand and gravel businesses, sewage treatment plants, electric lines, landfills, junk yards, and a few homes. But the “water control” system was less secure than people had thought. The newly-established Flood Control District of Maricopa County (FCDMC), together with the Army Corps of Engineers had been working on a plan for removing obstructions from the channel and planning for the “unlikely” possibility of a flood, when, disaster struck. In December 1965 and January 1966 huge rainstorms overwhelmed the dam system and sent damaging floods down the Salt River bed, causing bridge closures, evacuations, damage to Sky Harbor Airport, harming numerous residences, businesses, roads, and utilities, and causing other destruction.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Andrew M. Honker, “A River Sometimes Runs Through It: A History of Salt River Flooding and Phoenix,” (Dissertation, Arizona State University, 2002), 117-118, 121, 125, 129, 137-138, 179; Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, 3-11, 190-218, 284-303; City of Tempe, *Rio Salado Preliminary Master Plan*, 1; Carr et al., *Rio Salado Master Plan: Final Draft*, (Cambridge: Carr, Lynch Associates, 1985), 78; Earl Zarbin, “Roosevelt Dam Spills: Flood Will Top Previous Week,” *Arizona Republic*, December 31, 1965; Earl Zarbin, “Flood Smashes Valley;



The destructive flooding awakened Valley leaders and residents, including those from Tempe, to the presence of the river, forcing them to examine flood control options, encouraging them to reconsider development patterns and policies, and it also prompted others to imagine new uses for the Salt River bed. In the fall of 1966, Arizona State University School of Architecture students studied the regional urban scar contemplating issues of periodic flooding and other environmental concerns. Under the supervision of Dean James Elmore, students developed a plan that united flood control with environmental design for 40 miles of the riverbed from the Granite Reef Dam to the Gila River eventually connecting the project to the Gulf of California through a series of locks. The concept consisted of a linear park and greenbelt providing new recreational, cultural, and economic opportunities that would aid in reversing development patterns and preventing sprawl at the Valley's periphery. Students continued to develop the plan until 1969 when Elmore, who was heavily involved in the Valley Forward Association, helped the project get noticed by business, civic, and political leaders.<sup>55</sup>

Valley leaders and citizens adopted and produced the redevelopment strategy for the Salt River bed, and as the Rio Salado idea gained recognition during the late 1960s, the Valley Forward Association (VFA) and the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) shared responsibility and influenced the early vision. The VFA was a non-profit association of various Valley organizations that used social, environmental, cultural, civic, and economic projects like

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8,000 Flee Worst Over: Damage to be \$1 Million Plus," *Arizona Republic*, January 1, 1966; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 265-289.

<sup>55</sup> College of Architecture et al., *Rio Salado Brochure*, (Phoenix, AZ: s.n., 1972?); VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 288; Honker, "A River Sometimes Runs Through It," 178-180; Daniel et al., *Rio Salado Volume 1*, 6-7; Daniel et al., *Rio Salado Phase 2 Planning Study*, 1; City of Tempe, *Rio Salado Preliminary Master Plan*, 6.

Rio Salado to help beautify and enhance the Valley. Recognizing the need for regional urban planning with a project of such tremendous scale, MAG also showed their support for the idea and assisted the VFA in the early formation of the strategy.<sup>56</sup>

The growing attractiveness of the Rio Salado Project in the early years depended on new development, effective financing, job creation, and increased tax revenues to revitalize the area. As the VFA and MAG leaders endorsed a larger vision for economic development, their plans reflected the Valley's new economic challenges. The Rio Salado Steering Committee, a subgroup of the VFA, produced the original economic goals to convert the unused river bed. Partly motivated by the Valley's changing economy in the 1970s, they hoped to draw commercial and industrial development to the project area. This would increase the tax base and aid in creating employment opportunities reinforcing infill and further growth. A desire to build on the expansion of tourism in the Valley inspired leaders to make the riverbed an amenity as another source of revenue. Generating funding proposals for the land acquisition and initial improvements to the riverbed became other important goals. With the exception of funding allocated for further studies and plans, funding proposals which included a range of federal, state, local, and private sources remained largely conceptual in this early period.<sup>57</sup>

When the City of Tempe joined the project in the 1970s public and private leaders began supporting these economic goals for the project to reimagining downtown and revitalize the riverbed. Faced with downtown decline and a landlocked form, and realizing the advantages of the city's central location, Tempe municipal, civic, and business leaders eager to develop their

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<sup>56</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 285-288, 355; College of Architecture et al., *Rio Salado Brochure*; Daniel et al., *Rio Salado Volume 1*, 6.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 1, 12, 57-61; Daniel et al., *Rio Salado Phase 2 Planning Study*, inside cover, 9, 52-53; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 183-184, 304; Morris, "Reclaiming the Riverfront," 56.

section of the riverbed, began following a distinct redevelopment agenda. Tempe, like other Valley cities, had followed a vision of growth that relied on annexation to increase population and eventually tax revenues. Emulating the strategy pioneered by Phoenix, Tempe leaders used this model in the immediate postwar decades by rapidly annexing land to generate sales tax, property tax, and other revenues. By the 1970s, Tempe leaders began employing this tactic within the reclaimed floodplain in the hopes of producing the same result. While some leaders began changing their attitudes about growth, these economic goals brought the city closer to transforming its only remaining developable land into an economically viable area.<sup>58</sup>

The leaders of the VFA and MAG, the original implementation organizations, relied on effective planning, public-private collaboration, creating a formal implementation organization and facilitating citizen input necessary to make the project work. The lack of a implementation agency became a major impediment to the project. Several local, county, tribal, state, and federal governmental agencies had jurisdictional authority within the large project area, thus requiring an overall implementation agency to coordinate the project for several decades. Through the 1970s, MAG and VFA worked to find an agency capable of managing such a complex undertaking.<sup>59</sup>

Prior to 1980, Valley business, political, and civic leaders started to reconsider the unintended consequences of growth, and reacted with effective planning to carry out the Rio

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<sup>58</sup> Honker, "A River Sometimes Runs Through It," 180; Mary A. M. Gindhart and Betty Beard, "Tempe to Proceed with Riverbed Work Despite Defeat," *Arizona Republic*, November 5, 1987; City of Tempe, *Tempe Rio Salado Project*, 3; City of Tempe, *General Plan 1978*, (Tempe, AZ: Planning Department, 1978), 24-25, 38-39; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 185-186, 265, 276-293; Heim, "Border Wars," 831-833, 837-839.

<sup>59</sup> Daniel et al., *Rio Salado Volume 1*, 6-7, 39, 63, 65; Daniel et al., *Rio Salado Phase 2 Planning Study*, 3.

Salado Project. During the 1970s, these leaders participated together to form the 1972 *Rio Salado Volume 1: Metropolitan Phoenix Area, Arizona, Phase I* plan, and the 1974 *Rio Salado Phase 2 Planning Study*. These plans laid out the early strategy and provided a framework for the reclamation of the riverbed.<sup>60</sup>

When the City of Tempe became involved in the project in the 1970s, leaders began creating a vision for city's riverfront and adopted many of these same political goals already essential to Tempe's General Planning process including public-private collaboration, effective planning, and citizen input. The city's emerging vision for redevelopment resulted in no small part from its possibilities within a rapidly expanding multi-nodal metropolitan area. Reflecting its status as a mature and semi-independent supersuburb, the city's early participation in Rio Salado indicated the Tempeans struggle to carve out a distinct character and identity.<sup>61</sup>

Although riverbed redevelopment was a regional effort, Tempe leaders and citizens began pursuing a revised development agenda as they coordinated with the Rio Salado Steering Committee, the VFA and MAG in the early years. Tempe continued to expand during its most intense growth period, and leaders and citizens began conducting studies and developing the vision for Tempe's portion of the project spanning from 48<sup>th</sup> Street to the Mesa border. In the 1970s, as Tempe leaders started considering how to fund, build, and maintain the Rio Salado in order to transform the river bed into a recreational area. The riverbed redevelopment presented new possibilities for their city even though it was located outside the University-

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<sup>60</sup>Jeff Dean, "Rio Salado," (Seminar Paper, Arizona State University, n.d.), 4-5; Daniel et al., *Rio Salado Volume 1*, 1-3.

<sup>61</sup>Morris, "Reclaiming the Riverfront," 61; Abbott, *How Cities Won the West*, 225-227; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 221-225, 287-298.

Hayden Butte Project area at the time, and hoping to eventually unite the project areas, the riverfront gradually became an extension of downtown. Reflecting emerging ideas about environmental conservation, the 1978 Moderate Water Development concept was vital to the city's early efforts. It included "200 acres of multi-use lakes, ponds, and interconnecting streams fed by existing water sources and delivery systems in the Project Area."<sup>62</sup> Additional water features coupled with industry, housing, commercial development, and open space were planned to occupy Tempe's reclaimed floodplain.<sup>63</sup>

Demonstrating Tempe's new political culture, the city responded to increasing demands for public input and guaranteed citizen involvement in 1979 by creating the Rio Salado Advisory Commission. Composed of public and quasi-public agencies, interest groups, and citizens, the commission provided the public a vehicle for advising the Tempe Mayor and City Council on the project. The RSAC played an important role in the Rio Salado planning process.<sup>64</sup>

By 1980, an implementation agency capable of managing the Rio Salado Project had emerged. The project required creating an entity with supra-municipal authority. That same year, state and private interests started supporting the project and the Arizona State Legislature created the Valley-wide Rio Salado Development District (RSDD) as political subdivision of the state equipped with a nine member Board of Directors to maintain jurisdiction, develop a master

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<sup>62</sup> City of Tempe, *Tempe Rio Salado Project*, 13; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 281-285; City of Tempe, *Rio Salado Preliminary Master Plan*, 8-10, 21-36.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 24-36; City of Tempe, *Tempe Rio Salado Project*, 1-3, 15.

<sup>64</sup> Morris, "Reclaiming the Riverfront," 79; City of Tempe Community Development Services Department, *General Plan 2020*, 8-10; City of Tempe Community Development Department, *Rio Salado Development Plan*, (Tempe: City of Tempe Community Development Department, 1995), 6.

plan, and negotiate with diverse interest groups. The RSDD stretched for 40 miles covering parts of Mesa, Tempe, Phoenix, Maricopa County, and the Salt River Pima-Maricopa and Gila River Indian Communities.<sup>65</sup>

Additionally, as Valley citizens became more concerned about the unintended consequences of growth and expected more representation and influence in public processes, which pushed the VFA and MAG to guarantee citizen involvement in planning the Rio Salado Project. The new emphasis on diverse public participation drove the creation of citizen commissions and committees for riverbed redevelopment. Appearing after the creation of the RSDD in 1980, the governor-appointed State Rio Salado Commission became another conduit for citizen participation.<sup>66</sup>

Employing new ideas about redevelopment, and reacting to growth issues and changing economic circumstances, Valley and Tempe leaders were able to envision, plan, and create a model for the physical transformation of the riverbed. A series of ten destructive floods revealed the uncontrollable nature of the Salt River presenting new obstacles for Valley residents between the late 1960s and 1980. These new realizations shifted how residents viewed the river giving the project momentum, and motivated leaders to develop a plan to address issues of flooding and sprawl by converting the riverbed. By 1980, the idea was to channelize the river allowing water to flow naturally in a Valley-wide greenbelt through a system of dams, lakes, and

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<sup>65</sup>Rio Salado Development District Board of Directors, *Concept Description of the Rio Salado Project: A Statement of Current Policy*, (Phoenix, AZ: The Rio Salado Development District, 1982), 1-4; City of Tempe, *Rio Salado Preliminary Master Plan*, 1; Carr et al., *Rio Salado Master Plan: Final Draft*, 1; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 265, 297; Dean, “Rio Salado” 5; City of Tempe Community Development Department, *Rio Salado Development Plan*, 6.

<sup>66</sup>VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 184-185, 265-293; Daniel et al., *Rio Salado Volume 1*, 2, 10, 29; City of Tempe Community Development Services Department, *General Plan 2020*, 9.

canals providing flood protection, enabling floodplain reclamation, and designing a regional recreational system and amenity with new opportunities for mixed-use development. Operating within the larger design, Tempe produced a concept modeled after the San Antonio Riverwalk for their section of the project prior to 1980 as well.<sup>67</sup>

Thus, by 1980, Tempe became landlocked restricting its growth potential and leaders reacted to this new circumstance by expanding the overall downtown redevelopment strategy to incorporate a strategy for the city's portion of the project. The strategy would generate improvements to the natural and built environment that were largely synonymous with those advocated by VFA, MAG, and the RSDD. Combining flood control and environmental design were necessary to reclaim the riverbed and plan for mixed land use and development.

Downtown Tempe's central location near Papago Park, Arizona State University, and downtown Phoenix made it a focal point within the larger Valley-wide project. Leaders hoped the plan would turn the urban scar into an amenity and tourist attraction.<sup>68</sup>

### **The 1980s: State Support and the Demise of the Regional Rio Salado Project**

The Rio Salado project emerged from planning and development concerns of the 1970s, and to a large extent it continued to reflect that perspective. Yet rapid growth in the Valley helped encourage new ideas and concerns about transportation, infill, environmental issues,

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<sup>67</sup> Zarbin, "Flood Smashes Valley"; Edna Fleishman, "Rio Salado Plan Answer to Flood," *Arizona Republic*, March 14, 1978; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 281-285; Ford, *America's New Downtowns*, 2, 17, 58-63; Daniel et al., *Rio Salado Volume 1*, 7, 9, 13, 33-35; Daniel et al., *Rio Salado Phase 2 Planning Study*, 1-4; John Dougherty, "Tempe's Shore Thing: The City is Dammed Determined to Have Waterfront Development," *Phoenix News Times*, April, 14, 1993.

<sup>68</sup> City of Tempe, *Rio Salado Preliminary Master Plan*, 5-6, 12; City of Tempe, *Tempe Rio Salado Project*, 3-8, 12; Ford, *America's New Downtowns*, 58-62, 126; Sargent, "Main Street Meets Megastrip," 133.

increased land and construction costs, flooding, water conservation, rehabilitation of old neighborhoods, and sprawl – generating a new urban vision. Between 1980 and 1987, Valley leaders and citizens were motivated by many of the same aspirations, and responding to a demand for participation from diverse interest groups that both supported and opposed the Rio Salado Project, they continued to respond and modify the riverfront redevelopment strategy that included a new design and financial plan. As result, the Rio Salado Project gained both support and opposition. Tempe’s participation was crucial to the development of the project, and the early progress demonstrated by Tempe leaders and citizens helped to strengthen Valley and State interest in the project. After 1987, Tempe leaders pursued the project alone and immediately began reconceptualizing the plan for their city.<sup>69</sup>

Building on the work of other business, civic, and political leaders after 1980, the RSDD Board of Directors worked to generate support for the Rio Salado Project, facilitate public input, and began creating a project master plan with a more refined set of goals. Adhering to diverse public demand for a role in the project, the RSDD Board of Directors were tasked with new responsibilities for maintaining wide public participation and producing a workable plan. Incorporating suggestions and revisions from different private and public interests as well as the Tempe Rio Salado Project Advisory Committee, the Phoenix Ad Hoc Advisory Committee, and the Mesa Rio Salado Advisory Board, Maricopa County officials, and other planners in the early 1980s the RSDD produced the 1985 *Rio Salado Master Plan*. Like previous plans, the 1985 *Rio Salado Master Plan* described the need for additional upstream flood control enabling the

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<sup>69</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 184-186, 228, 265-297, 324, 344; City of Tempe Community Development Services Department, *General Plan 2020*, 8-9; City of Tempe Community Development Department, *General Plan 2000*, 76-79.



reclamation of a smaller 17 mile stretch of the river within the RSDD. This would require the relocation of some deteriorating residential neighborhoods displacing homeowners, and the removal of landfills, junk yards, sewage treatment plants, and sand and gravel companies operating in the riverbed. If successful, the regional park would allow for new development and infill that would redirect growth inward, increased property values, tax revenues, an estimated 74,000 jobs, and opportunities for tourism and recreation.<sup>70</sup>

Continuing to reject postwar development patterns and sprawl, planners formed a slightly different concept from the 1970s. Merging ideas for the Rio Salado from several other water-related amenities across the country including the Town Lake in Austin, Texas, the Riverwalk in San Antonio, and the Mission Bay in San Diego, the revised and more elaborate plans featured an island at Central Avenue which would be the heart of the project to promote revitalization of downtown Phoenix. They also planned to build a hotel and conference center and other new development in Tempe to help prompt downtown revitalization near ASU. Additionally, revealing larger concerns about water conservation in the desert by the 1980s, the plan relied on combined use of domestic water, groundwater, surface water, and effluent to create a system of interconnected lakes, streams, islands, parks, and vegetated banks “connected with drops and brief rapids.”<sup>71</sup>

Following the creation of the 1985 plan, Rio Salado Development District Board of Directors, continued gathering support for the project. Using the plan to promote the project and

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<sup>70</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 297, 314; Carr et al., *Rio Salado Master Plan: Final Draft*, preface , 1-10, 55-67, 78-86, 87-96.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid, 1-10, 36, 45-67, 78-86, 87-96; Dean, “Rio Salado,” 8, 10; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 324-337.

raise funds, the RSDD's Board of Directors gained support from citizens, business leaders, local and state political leaders, interest groups like the Citizens for Rio Salado, and Tempe and Phoenix city officials. Some proponents of the project advocated it for its potential economic impact through job creation, attracting businesses, and ability to generate millions in public revenues. Other supporters hoped it would aid in improving aesthetic appeal of the river, removing the landfills and dumps to create a unique amenity.<sup>72</sup>

However, supporters faced growing resistance to key aspects of the plan. Through the 1980s, home and business owners, environmentalists, and other affected citizens organized in opposition to project. Reflecting conflicting ideas about the appropriateness of riverfront redevelopment in the desert and different uses for the riverbed, those in opposition rejected key elements of the plan, or the entire project. Some resisted residential relocation, or the proposed new development that would occupy the riverbed and floodplain. Others felt that the project lacked sufficient flood control. The Arizona Rock Product Association (ARPA) and the Maricopa County Audubon Society (MCAS), the two most powerful interest groups trying to shape the plan, vehemently opposed the project. Representing the sand and gravel operating companies, the ARPA was eager to avoid displacement of mining operations in the riverbed to the Valley's periphery increasing distribution costs as well as land acquisition by developers.

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<sup>72</sup> Mary A. M. Gindhart, Susan Leonard, and Betty Beard, "Rio Salado Project Loses by 2-1 Ratio: Voters Reject Tax Bonds: Plan Dead for 1-2 Decades," *Arizona Republic*, November 4, 1987; "Rio Salado: Leadership...Riverfronts...Pollution...Maintenance," *Arizona Republic*, October 31, 1987; Betty Beard, "County Voters Decide on Tax Bond for Rio Salado Today," *Arizona Republic*, November 3, 1987; Lois Boyles, "Rio Salado Would Generate Billions, Economists Say," *Phoenix Gazette*, January 16, 1987; "Officials Air Views on Beautification Plan," *Phoenix Gazette*, January 16, 1987; Dean, "Rio Salado," 13.

The MCAS challenged the project because of the potential ecological impact to the natural environment.<sup>73</sup>

The RSDD attempted to respond to concerns and opposition for the project by participating in intense negotiations with different interest groups, specifically the ARPA and the MCAS. Attempting to placate these groups, the RSDD worked to modify its plan. By the mid-1980s, the RSDD was unable to convince either group to support the project.<sup>74</sup>

A solid financial plan was needed for the project to succeed. This presented another impediment as the RSDD lacked the legislative authority to levy taxes forcing leaders to modify the strategy. With a more realistic idea of cost by the mid-1980s, they decided to use a county-wide property tax levy and a bond issue in addition to land sale and leasing revenues, as well as other private, state, and federal funding. Consequently in 1986, the Arizona State Legislature passed a referendum allowing county voters to decide on whether to adopt the county-wide tax levy and bond issue.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 184-186, 297, 304, 314; Dean, "Rio Salado," 11-18; Mary A. M. Perry, "Businesses, Residents Voice Concern About Planned Rio Salado Relocations," *Arizona Republic*, January 25, 1984; Pat Flannery, "Heated Board Meeting Signals Opposition to Rio Salado," *Phoenix Gazette*, August 14, 1987; Carr et al., *Rio Salado Master Plan: Final Draft*, 63-67; Beard, "County Voters Decide on Tax Bond"; Gindhart, Leonard, and Beard, "Rio Salado Project loses by 2-1 Ratio"; Lois Boyles, "Rio Salado Foes Question Motives, Higher Taxes," *Arizona Republic*, January 16, 1987.

<sup>74</sup> Flannery, "Heated Board Meeting Signals Opposition"; Carr et al., *Rio Salado Master Plan: Final Draft*, 63-67; Beard, "County Voters Decide on Tax Bond"; Gindhart, Leonard, and Beard, "Rio Salado Project loses by 2-1 Ratio"; Lois Boyles, "Rio Salado Foes Question Motives, Higher"; Dean, "Rio Salado," 18.

<sup>75</sup> Carr et al., *Rio Salado Master Plan: Final Draft*, 6, 105-133, 145; City of Tempe Community Development Department, *Rio Salado Development Plan*, 6; Beard, "County Voters Decide on Tax Bond".

In November of 1987 the idea was put to a vote and Maricopa County residents were asked to consider the proposed property tax increase and bond. It was anticipated that the bond issue and the proposed property tax increase would fund the project for twenty five years. County residents overwhelmingly rejected both proposals on November 3, 1987 ending the Rio Salado as a Valley-wide effort. This became a major turning point for the project.<sup>76</sup>

The Rio Salado Project was defeated in 1987 for several reasons. The approval of a freeway expansion the same year deterred Valley residents from taxing themselves for the Rio Salado Project. Additionally, residents in communities that located far from the river opposed it because they failed to see the incentive to reclaim the floodplain, while others were leery about cost, and the benefit the project provided to the development industry.<sup>77</sup>

This electoral defeat ended the effort to create a Valley-wide project which would combine economic development, recreation, and flood control. But the minority of county residents who supported the project included a majority of Tempeans. They had seen riverbed development as offering clear benefits to their city, and the Tempe City Council with the help of the Rio Salado Advisory Commission decided to carry the project forward. Defeat of the Rio

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<sup>76</sup> “What “Yes,” “No” Means for Rio Salado Project,” *Arizona Republic*, November 3, 1987; Gindhart, Leonard, and Beard, “Rio Salado Project loses by 2-1 Ratio”; Beard, “County Voters Decide on Tax Bond”; David Downey, “Voters Dump Rio Salado: Measures Rejected by 2-1 Margin,” *Tempe Daily News*, November 4, 1987.

<sup>77</sup> Beard, “County Voters Decide on Tax Bond”; John Lankford, “Rio Salado Doesn’t Float in Western Part of the County,” November 4, 1987; “Rio Salado: Leadership”; Lois Boyles, “Rio Salado Foes Question Motives”; “Rio Salado: The People Speak,” *Phoenix Gazette*, November 4, 1987; Jay Mark, “Time Flies When You are Creating a Town Lake,” *Arizona Republic*, July 10, 2009.

Salado Project ended one option, but city leaders now turned to creating a new plan to convert the city's portion of the river to revitalize the area.<sup>78</sup>

After approving the project, municipal leaders worked together with the Rio Salado Advisory Committee and other boards and commissions to reconceptualize the plan and produce a new design for the riverbed. Modeled after the 1985 Valley-wide concept, the new 1989 plan included flood control and the reclamation of 800 acres of the city's five and a half mile stretch of the river for recreation, open space, mixed-use development, and an opportunity to generate sales and property tax revenues. Streams and lakes would fill the channel with one larger, Town Lake positioned between Hardy Drive and the Indian Bend Wash. The new design reflected changing spatial realities, the city's realization of new possibilities as a centrally located supersuburb, and also the attempt to alter the city's character.<sup>79</sup>

### **The 1990s: Building the “Sparkling Jewel”**

Encouraged by the early success of the Tempe Rio Salado Project, Tempe leaders continued forming the redevelopment strategy for the riverbed composed of many of the same goals from previous decades as well as new ambitions by the 1990s. Building on more than a decade of downtown redevelopment and the economic rejuvenation of Mill Avenue, leaders, architects, planners, developers, and citizens executed the most elaborate of Tempe's

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<sup>78</sup> Gindhart and Beard, “Tempe to Proceed”; Honker, “A River Sometimes Runs Through It,” 256; Dave Downey, “Small-Scale Rio Salado Plan May Surface,” *Arizona Republic*, November 5, 1987; City of Tempe Development Department, *Rio Salado Development Plan*, 6; Morris, “Reclaiming the Riverfront,” 61; “Timeline,” *City of Tempe, Arizona*, accessed February 7, 2014, <http://www.tempe.gov/index.aspx?page=1734>.

<sup>79</sup> City of Tempe Community Development Department, *General Plan 2000*, 76-79; City of Tempe Community Development Department, *Rio Salado Development Plan*, 9-11, 54; Abbott, *How Cities Won the West*, 225-227.

redevelopment plans, the Rio Salado Project which represented the expansion of the initial commercial goals for downtown. Responding to a changing economy, local growth issues, and new ideas about redevelopment, leaders molded the strategy to accomplish their goals, revitalize the riverbed, and create Tempe Town Lake.<sup>80</sup>

The Tempe Rio Salado Project depended on accomplishing several economic goals as Tempe leaders responded to new economic circumstances partly shaped by decisions made in previous decades. They implemented the riverfront redevelopment strategy by creating economic development through new development, effective financing, public-private cooperation, job creation, and increased tax revenues to revitalize the area. Tempe's landlocked condition changed its financial position, since housing construction from sprawl had proved valuable revenues, which the city needed to replace. The decline of manufacturing posed another economic challenge for the city. Tempe's population increased at a much slower rate than other Valley cities and as its position in the regional hierarchy shifted, the city received less federal funding and state tax revenues driving leaders to find alternative sources of income. To restore this revenue over the next few decades, Tempe leaders adapted and worked to stabilize and diversify downtown and the city's overall economy by expanding construction, tourism, retail, high-tech industrial, and financial to provide a basis for future growth. In doing so, Tempeans

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<sup>80</sup> John Dougherty, "Wanna Buy a \$70 Million Lake? Sales-Tax Backed Bonds Will Jump-Start Tempe's Stalled Rio Salado Project," *Phoenix News Times*, April 27, 1995; Amy Pedotto, "Rio Salado: Tempe's Rio Salado Project is an Example of What Can Happen when Taxpayers Just Say No," *Arizona Business Magazine*, Spring 1994; City of Tempe, *University-Hayden Butte Amended Redevelopment Plan*, 3-18.

produced opportunities, particularly for commercial and industrial development, within the Rio Salado project area.<sup>81</sup>

Increasing tax revenues remained an important economic component of the Rio Salado strategy. Like the use of annexation to increase the city's population and tax revenues in the immediate postwar decades, Tempe leaders and citizens used the same tactic to produce sales tax, property tax, and other income. Attracting new development and new industries would help to provide an increased sales and property tax base in the Rio Salado Project area.<sup>82</sup>

With the economic goals solidified, Tempe leaders relied on public-public and public-private partnerships to finance Tempe Town Lake and make it a reality. The Tempe Rio Salado Project required substantial investment in the dry riverbed and several site improvements in the early 1990s to accomplish the goal of creating a regional recreational amenity. The proposed construction of the Red Mountain Freeway, planned since the mid-1980s to run through south Scottsdale, presented Tempe leaders with a golden opportunity. Tempe leaders persuaded Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) officials to re-route the freeway along the Salt River floodplain. To ensure flood protection for the new freeway, Tempe's bridges, and Rio

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<sup>81</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 183-186, 295, 299-309; City of Tempe Community Development Department, *General Plan 2000*, 45, 75-79; Morris, "Reclaiming the Riverfront," 45; City of Tempe, *Tempe Town Lake on the Rio Salado*, (Tempe, AZ: Rio Salado Office, 2000), 2; Lang and LeFurgy, *Boomburbs*, 146; Abbott, *How Cities Won the West*, 225-227.

<sup>82</sup> Heim, "Border Wars," 831-833, 837-839; City of Tempe Community Development Department, *General Plan 2000*, 45, 75.

Salado Parkway, ADOT and the Flood Control District of Maricopa County shared the \$30 million cost to channel the river in Tempe. This made the entire project more feasible.<sup>83</sup>

By January of 1995, Tempe leaders, and members of the Tempe Rio Salado Advisory Commission collaborated to produce the *Tempe Rio Salado Development Plan*. This plan updated other Tempe Rio Salado plans and indicated the goals, vision, and scope of the project for moving forward. It articulated the Town Lake concept and potential water sources for the project. This plan directed commercial, industrial, cultural, residential, and mixed-use development, as well as open space for recreation within the Rio Salado Overlay District to enhance the area.<sup>84</sup>

At the same time that they slowly began transforming the project area and planning, Tempe leaders, demonstrating their commitment to the project, continued forming public-private partnerships and grappled with generating a financial plan for the lake. Like the earlier disputes over the Rio Salado project, leaders considered and debated several financial options. Since property tax funding was not an option, Tempe leaders needed to produce an innovative solution. Financial debates escalated as leaders contemplated whether to pursue lakeside development or build the lake first. Failure to produce a feasible plan postponed the project into the mid-1990s until private developers began to showing serious interest in building on the lake. Motivated by this interest in 1995, the Tempe City Council approved the financial plan that would provide funding for the lake. Three planned developments, Papago Park Center, Hayden Ferry Lakeside,

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<sup>83</sup> City of Tempe, *Tempe Town Lake on the Rio Salado*, 3, 11; Dougherty, “Tempe’s Shore Thing”; Morris, “Reclaiming the Riverfront,” 30; Pedotto, “Rio Salado”; City of Tempe Community Development Department, *Rio Salado Development Plan*, 42-49.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid*, 3-5, 9, 10-18, 42-52.



and especially the main trigger, the Peabody Hotel, a luxury hotel with two golf course, restaurants, and shops, gave Tempe leaders the confidence to proceed with Tempe Town Lake.<sup>85</sup>

Encouraged by the interest from private developers, and demonstrating their commitment to the Rio Salado vision, Tempe leaders modified the strategy and proceeded with funding the lake. The Tempe City Council approved a \$45 million bond issue to fund the infrastructure improvements and the lake first. Under Mayor Neil Guiliano's vision for Rio Salado, the bond issue paid for the creation of the lake. Tempeans anticipated the \$45 million would be paid in future sales tax revenue.<sup>86</sup>

As Tempe leaders and citizens worked to improve the riverbed and finance the lake, effective planning, public-private collaboration, and citizen participation remained essential political objectives for completing the project. Effective planning reinforced growth and revitalization. Tempe leaders, city staff, and citizens continued pursuing new growth initiatives and responding to increased demand for programs and services as part of their larger redevelopment agenda. By the mid-1990s they transformed downtown using infill and land reuse, protecting open space, planning for alternative transportation, and encouraging mixed use

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<sup>85</sup> Mike Fimea, "Rio Salado Lake Groundbreaking Set for August," *Arizona Business Gazette*, July 10, 1997; City of Tempe Community Development Department, *Rio Salado Development Plan*, 39-52; City of Tempe Rio Salado Division, *Corrientes* 7, no. 1, Summer 1998, file 398 Tempe Town Lake, Tempe History Files, Tempe History Museum; Morris, "Reclaiming the Riverfront," 77-78; Pedotto, "Rio Salado"; Lou Hirsh and Eileen Brill, "Lake of Dreams: Tempe Banks on the Future, as Rio Salado Project Sets Sail," *Jewish News of Greater Phoenix*, August 29, 1987; Laura Laughlin, "Tempe is All Wet: Rio Salado Splashes Down," *Arizona Business Magazine*, May 1997.

<sup>86</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 311; Elvia Diaz, "Peabody Developer Scrambles for Time, Tempe Town Lake's Hotel Still Not Yet Funded," *Arizona Republic*, October 12, 1999; Laughlin, "Tempe is All Wet"; Tempe leaders suffered criticism for this risky financial decision in the late 1990s and 2000s as lakeside development was delayed following the completion of the lake.

development creating new opportunities for recreation, art and cultural facilities, and entertainment. Elaborate redevelopment projects like the Rio Salado caused new departments to appear facilitating the expansion of local government. Encouraged by economic revival of downtown, leaders were able to put into action several more ideas outlined in the 1973 *University-Hayden Butte Redevelopment Plan*.<sup>87</sup>

Citizen participation in the Rio Salado Project was an remained an important element of the strategy, as plans for the lake moved forward. Concerns about the city's nature of growth motivated citizens to request a larger role in the planning process. Exhibiting Tempe's unique political culture, the city responded by continuing to include citizens in planning the lake. The Rio Salado Advisory Commission (RSAC) as well as other boards and commissions advised the Tempe City Council and were critical in facilitating public participation in planning the project. This gave the Tempe residents, business leaders, and developers an opportunity to influence decisions about land use, the conservation of open space, and the types of amenities and facilities within the Rio Salado Overlay District. Additionally, the Friends of the Rio Salado (FRS), created in the late 1990s, briefly aided with fundraising, public education and outreach before being replaced by the Rio Salado Foundation. The RSAC and FRS had a role in advocating the project and educating the public. In preparation for the Tempe's moment in the national

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<sup>87</sup>VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 183-186, 295-297, Morris, "Reclaiming the Riverfront," 80; City of Tempe Community Development Services Department, *General Plan 2020*, 48-49; City of Tempe Community Development Department, *General Plan 2000*, 35-39, 44-45, 51-52, 57-59, 62-63, 68, 102; City of Tempe, *University-Hayden Butte Area 1 Redevelopment Plan*, 3-6, 16-18; City of Tempe, *University-Hayden Butte Amended Redevelopment Plan*, 3-18; Dianna Nanez, "Reflecting on Town Lake: 10 Years Since Tempe Vision Became Reality, Urban Destination Called Resounding Success," *Arizona Republic*, November 15, 2009.

spotlight during the 1996 Super Bowl XXX the RSAC promoted and marketed Rio Salado, hoping the project would gain national recognition and attract development in the late 1990s.<sup>88</sup>

The implementation of the redevelopment strategy in the 1990s caused many of the changes in the urban form within the Rio Salado Project area and all of downtown. The first step was to use the \$45 million bond issue to build the lake. A deeper flood channel and special rubber inflatable dam technology provided flood protection allowing the city to construct the lake within the larger five and a half mile project area that stretched through Tempe from the Mesa border to the Phoenix border. Constructed between 1997 and 1999, the lake was two mile long, one mile wide. The lake was controlled by a system of inflatable dams that could be deflated to release flood water when necessary that were located at various points throughout the channel. Indicating larger concerns about water conservation and debates potential water sources for the lake, it was filled with Central Arizona Project water purchased by the city and replenished with reclaimed water from a recovery system. Promoted as the “sparkling jewel” of the Rio Salado Project, the lake opened to the public in November 1999.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup>City of Tempe Community Development Services Department, *General Plan 2020*, 11; City of Tempe Community Development Department, *Rio Salado Development Plan*, 29, 54; Morris, “Reclaiming the Riverfront,” 64-64, 79; “Residents Discuss Rio Salado Plan,” *Tempe Daily News Tribune*, April 20, 1995; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 221-225, 269, 314; Victor Linoff, “Rio Salado: Visionary Risk Worth Taking,” *East Valley Tribune*, July 25, 1997; City of Tempe Rio Salado Division, *Corrientes* 7, no. 1, Summer 1998, file 398 Tempe Town Lake, Tempe History Files, Tempe History Museum; Le Templar, “Friends of Lake in Hot Water with City,” *East Valley Tribune*, June 25, 2001; Cynthia Scanlon, “Rio Salado: Tempe’s Dream Becomes a Reality,” *Arizona Business Magazine*, Fall 1995.

<sup>89</sup> City of Tempe, *Tempe Town Lake on the Rio Salado*, 3, 6-10, 12; Dougherty, “Tempe’s Shore Thing”; Honker, “A River Sometimes Runs Through It,” 269-274; Morris, “Reclaiming the Riverfront,” 1-10; City of Tempe Community Development Department, *General Plan 2000*, 77-79; City of Tempe Community Development Department, *Rio Salado Development Plan*, 9, 42,48; Scanlon, “Rio Salado”; Nanez, “Reflecting on Town Lake”.

Thus, through the 1990s, Tempe political leaders and citizens responded to new economic circumstances, new ideas about riverfront redevelopment, and local growth challenges while planning and financing the Rio Salado Project. They took advantage of new opportunities to continue to revitalize riverbed and link it with downtown. These efforts culminated in the creation of Tempe Town Lake.

### **The 2000s: Realizing the Tempe Rio Salado Project**

Encouraged by the success of the 1990s, Tempeans continued to expand the Rio Salado vision in the 2000s and focusing their efforts on stimulating lakeside development. Striving to carve out a distinct character and identity and to make downtown and the Rio Salado a centralized urban destination that set Tempe apart from other Valley cities, residents transformed the five and a half mile stretch of the riverbed. Through public and private action they created new opportunities for mixed land use and development centered around the lake within the city's "last frontier of growth."<sup>90</sup>

After the completion of the lake, Tempe leaders continually modified the strategy as they pursued lakeside development demonstrating their political culture and commitment to the new growth vision. The construction boom of the late 1990s and the early 2000s propelled development on Mill Avenue and leaders hoped to replicate the success with lakeside development, but several issues delayed that success. Depending on the planned Peabody Hotel

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<sup>90</sup> City of Tempe Development Services Department, *General Plan 2030*, 143-144, 209-212, 215-218, 221-225; City of Tempe, *University-Hayden Butte Amended Redevelopment Plan*, 3-18; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 183-186, 289, 221-225, 324; Morris, "Reclaiming the Riverfront," 1-10, 29-31, 77-79. Sargent, "Main Street Meets Megastrip," 2, 129-135, 212-232; Lang and LeFurgy, *Boomburbs*, 1-19; City of Tempe, *Tempe Town Lake on the Rio Salado*, 2; Ford, *America's New Downtowns*, 2, 17, 58-63; City of Tempe Community Development Department, *General Plan 2000*, 77-79.

trigger development, leaders invested in and constructed the lake with the anticipation that the hotel and conference center would be built by the late 1990s. Municipal leaders negotiated with the Peabody developers for four years as they struggled to finance the project. In the midst of the economic recession of the early 2000s, the developers were unable to secure funding causing the project to fail. Lacking a trigger development to replace it, city leaders were faced with new challenges to create economic development.<sup>91</sup>

After the Peabody failure, Tempe leaders responded by looking to the smaller and less impressive Hayden Ferry Lakeside development as the anchor for the lake. Benton-Robb Development Associates and Bays State Milling Company planned to create a mixed-use development built between Mill Avenue and Rural Road on the south bank of the lake. This development, which would become Hayden Ferry Lakeside, was delayed as well causing concern among leaders and citizens about the fate of Tempe Town Lake. Despite this setback, Tempe leaders supported Hayden Ferry Lakeside continued working to ensure its development. The first commercial major commercial development was finally complete in 2002.<sup>92</sup>

Despite these difficulties with lakeside development in the 2000s, alternatives were found and developers gradually began building along the lake continuing to transform the built and natural environments. The project showed considerable success through new development and

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<sup>91</sup>Hirsh and Brill, “Lake of Dreams”; Diaz, “Peabody Developer Scrambles for Time”; Bob Petrie, “Peabody Hotel Has Tempe Council by the Ears,” *Arizona Republic*, June 27, 1998; Nanez, “Reflecting on Town Lake”.

<sup>92</sup> Mike Fimea, “Rio Salado Lake Groundbreaking Set for August”; Elvia Diaz, “Council Gives Ok to Hayden Ferry Lakeside Project,” *Arizona Republic*, September 16, 2000; Kerry Fehr-Snyder, “Hayden’s Ferry on the Waterfront,” *Arizona Republic*, August 3, 1997; City of Tempe, *3 Decades: Tempe Downtown Redevelopment Guide*. (Tempe: City of Tempe, 2003), 10.

events by 2012. The lake was essential for revitalizing downtown, attracting businesses, visitors and an educated workers because it offered new recreational, entertainment, cultural, and commercial opportunities. Learning from the challenges of previous decades and continuing to pursue an altered vision of growth for Tempe Town Lake, by 2012, the city attracted luxury condos, retail, office and hotel development, industry, and constructed Tempe Marketplace and the Tempe Center for the Arts along the lake.<sup>93</sup>

By 2012, lakeside development was mostly concentrated on the south side of the lake near Mill Avenue and Rio Salado Parkway, in Papago Park Center on the north side of the lake between Priest Drive and 56<sup>th</sup> Street, and also on the north side of the lake on either side of Rural Road. Hayden Ferry Lakeside, for example, attracted technological and financial businesses to occupy its high-rise towers indicating the growth of those two sectors of the economy in downtown. By attracting new development and targeting new industries, leaders cultivated the city's image as a "tech oasis" and lured skilled workers while revitalizing the economy. Seen as an extension of downtown redevelopment, lakeside construction provided some of the incentive for building the light rail. Part of the larger vision for downtown since the mid-1990s, the light rail was completed in 2008 providing a new mode of transportation for the increasingly dense downtown. The diverse appeal made the lake an attractive and unique urban destination. Tempe Town Lake also became a venue for all types of urban recreation and entertainment including marathons, concerts, festivals, and other events drawing both Tempe residents and visitors to its

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<sup>93</sup>City of Tempe Development Services Department, *General Plan 2030*, 119-120, 125, 137, 143; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 300-309, 311, 324-325; "Tempe Town Lake by the Numbers 2012," *City of Tempe, Arizona*, accessed November 21, 2013, <http://www.tempe.gov/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=12989>.

shores. By 2012, the lake produced high visitation and considerable economic impact indicating the success of the project and economic growth.<sup>94</sup>

After 1960, Tempe leaders and citizens reacted to changes in the economy, a changing intellectual climate, and Tempe's unique circumstances, and modified a redevelopment strategy to reclaim Salt River bed and expand downtown. Through the use of effective planning and financing, public-private collaboration, citizen participation, and a revised definition of growth Tempe leaders worked to commercially redevelop downtown while molding an ambitious and controversial plan for converting the city's only remaining developable land into an economically viable area. Over the years, the redevelopment strategy reflected new ideas about redevelopment, culture, entertainment, and recreation. After 1987, Tempeans' commitment to this strategy and persistence in accomplishing goals indicated the evolution of Tempe's unique political culture. By the 2000s, Tempe Town Lake became an impressive tourist and recreational attraction defining the city's character and identity, helping to diversify its economic base, and giving it a competitive edge with cities in the Valley. The appearance of new parks, golf

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<sup>94</sup>City of Tempe Community Development Department, *General Plan 2000*, 77-79; Dougherty, "Tempe's Shore Thing"; City of Tempe, *Tempe Town Lake on the Rio Salado*, 11; City of Tempe Community Development Services Department, *General Plan 2020*, 10, 33, 54-55; City of Tempe Development Services Department, *General Plan 2030*, 119-120; 125-126, 143-144, 209-212, 215-218, 221-225; City of Tempe Community Development Department, *Rio Salado Development Plan*, 15-17, 23-31, 67-68; "Tempe Town Lake by the Numbers 2012"; VanderMeer, 221-225, 311, 324; Abbott, *How Cities Won the West*, 225-227; City of Tempe, *Tempe Town Lake on the Rio Salado*, 2, 11; Morris, "Reclaiming the Riverfront," 30-31; "RSF Projects," *Rio Salado Foundation*, accessed July 25, 2013, <http://www.supportriosalado.org>; Hirsh and Brill, "Lake of Dreams"; Honker, "A River Sometimes Runs Through It," 270; "10-Year Old Town Lake a Rewarding Risk," *Arizona Republic*, December 9, 2009; Pam Gorokin, "Town Lake: Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On," *Wrangler News*, December 16, 2003; "Tempe Rio Salado/Town Lake Timeline" *Arizona Republic*, November 9, 2009; ;Dianna Nanez, "Tempe Residents Weigh Town Lake Cost, Potential" *Arizona Republic*, November 9, 2012; Dianna Nanez, "Tempe Landmark's Appeal Spans Valley" *Arizona Republic*, August 22, 2010.

courses, offices, cultural facilities, businesses, industry, and other development suggested a major shift in attitudes about the floodplain and downtown since the immediate postwar years. By 2012, the lake generated economic development and became an urban regional amenity and event venue.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Morris, “Reclaiming the Riverfront,” 58-59; Ford, *America’s New Downtowns*, 2, 17, 61-63 ;VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 6, 183-186, 221-225, 231, 245-247, 324-330, 335, 361-366;City of Tempe, *University-Hayden Butte Amended Redevelopment Plan*, 3-18; City of Tempe Community Development Services Department, *General Plan 2020*, 8-11; City of Tempe Development Services Department, *General Plan 2030*, 53, 97-99, 119-120, 124, 125-126, 137, 143-144, 209-212, 215-218, 221-225; “Tempe Rio Salado/Town Lake Timeline”; Tempe Town Lake by the Numbers 2012”.



## CHAPTER 3

### ART, CULTURE, AND THE TEMPE CENTER FOR THE ARTS

As Tempeans formulated an approach for redeveloping the riverbed, they also began working to revitalize downtown in the 1960s and 1970s. Shifting away from their postwar suburban growth policies and redirecting their efforts on downtown, they were primarily focused on the commercial revitalization. But as they responded to shifts in the economy, they worked to expand the function of downtown beyond its commercial use and began incorporating culture into the strategy. After 1980, there was a larger emphasis placed on cultural promotion in downtown. By expanding the art and culture strategy between the 1980s and the 2000s, Tempe leaders and citizens deliberately invested in cultural programs and facilities, public art, and festivals to generate cultural activity while attracting educating workers and high-tech businesses to downtown. This reinforced Tempe's new role as a semi-independent supersuburb with a unique set of cultural amenities and a distinct identity. Planned as part of the Rio Salado Project, the construction of the Tempe Center for the Arts (TCA) in 2007 on the south shore of Tempe Town Lake, represented the culmination of more than forty years of support for the arts and indicated Tempe's increasing cultural vibrancy.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 1-7, 183-186, 221-225, 229, 314-336, 363-366; City of Tempe, *University-Hayden Butte Amended Redevelopment Plan*, 3-4; City of Tempe Planning and Zoning Commission, Tempe City Council, and Van Cleve Associates, *General Plan*, 50-51, 62-66; City of Tempe Planning Department, *General Plan 1978*, 13-15, 24-25, 33, 48; City of Tempe Community Development Services, *General Plan 2000*, 58, 102; City of Tempe Community Development Services Department, *General Plan 2020*, 5-7, 23, 25, 33; City of Tempe Community Development Services Department, *General Plan 2030*, 119-120, 125, 137, 125, 137, 143-144, 224-225.

## **The 1960s-1980: The Early Days**

In the two decades after 1960, Tempe's art and culture strategy and the growth of Arizona State University began influencing downtown redevelopment. During this period, Tempe experienced rapid economic and population growth leading to the physical expansion of Arizona State University and the city. ASU continued to shape Tempe's development, and it became an important institution for spreading culture in downtown after 1960. Despite all the growth in outlying areas, downtown declined, inspiring leaders and citizens to create a plan for stimulating economic and cultural activity to revive the central business district. Tempe's art and culture strategy enabled the city's culture to start flourishing. Prior to 1980, city leaders and officials worked with the countercultural business owners, building from ASU's cultural growth, and holding art and craft festivals to generate retail sales and draw Tempeans back downtown. The city also supported the construction of new cultural facilities outside of downtown providing a home for emerging cultural groups. Early art and culture supporters combined economic, political, and cultural goals to mold a vision for physically transforming and revitalizing downtown.<sup>97</sup>

Explosive residential and commercial growth in Tempe, automobile usage and freeway construction caused the rapid decline of downtown by the 1960s and commercial decentralization stimulating changes in the composition of the central business district. Tempe's downtown struggled like nearly all other central business districts across the country. Enticed by

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<sup>97</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 171; City of Tempe Planning and Zoning Commission, Tempe City Council, and Van Cleve Associates, *General Plan*, 50-51, 62-66; City of Tempe Planning Department, *General Plan 1978*, 13-15, 25, 33, 48; City of Tempe, *University-Hayden Butte Amended Redevelopment Plan*, 3-4; "Tempe—62,907 People, Downtown Ugliness and a Major University"; Mitchell, interview by Ronald McCoy for Mill Avenue Oral History Project, May 18, 1988, transcript, Hayden Arizona Collection, Arizona State University Library.

new, stylish and planned commercial centers, shoppers deserted downtown causing business relocations, and store vacancies. This pattern of disinvestment contributed to decreasing retail sales and property values in downtown. Discussed more explicitly in Chapter 4, the decline of the built environment undermined downtown's significance as a central hub.<sup>98</sup>

Attracted by inexpensive rent, the countercultural business owners moved into the area by the 1960s, organizing themselves as the Mill Avenue Merchant's Association (MAMA). MAMA opened head shops, art and crafts businesses, and other specialty stores drawing in new clientele and giving them a larger presence in downtown. Increased crime and drug usage accompanied these new business owners as they settled into downtown. The new countercultural activities deterred many of Tempe's residents from entering downtown. City officials and some Tempe citizens concerned about the appeal of downtown, the departure of traditional businesses, and the appearance of these new businesses and activities pushing them to act.<sup>99</sup>

Some of the uneasiness about downtown decline stemmed from its close proximity of Arizona State University (ASU). Transitioning from a state college to a university in 1958, ASU offered new and diverse programs ranging from engineering to fine arts solidifying Tempe's role as an educational center. In wake of this larger change, ASU president Grady Gammage, desired an impressive cultural facility for the university. The facility was originally designed by Frank Lloyd Wright as an opera house and cultural center in Baghdad, but the plans

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<sup>98</sup> Eaton, "Major Face-Lifting Urged for Tempe Acres"; Fogelson, *Downtown*, 4-6, 246-248, 315-316; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 269-276; Teaford, *The Metropolitan Revolution*, 90-139; Dave Fackler, interview by Ronald McCoy for Mill Avenue Oral History Project, March 31, 1988, Hayden Arizona Collection, Arizona State University Library.

<sup>99</sup> Holochwost, "Changing Perceptions," iii-iv, 19-45; Sargent, "Main Street Meets Megastrip," 117-123; Eaton, "Major Face-Lifting Urged for Tempe Acres"; Tempe—62,907 People, Downtown Ugliness And a Major University"; Teaford, *The Metropolitan Revolution*, 125-139.

were never carried out. Instead Wright used the design for Grady Gammage Auditorium. Positioned at the Southwest corner of the campus along U.S. Highway 60, the newly constructed auditorium, labeled “ASU’s monumental facility for the arts,” generated new cultural opportunities for Tempe.<sup>100</sup> Completed in 1964, the auditorium seated 3,000 people, functioned as multi-purpose performing arts facility, and became a symbolic cultural attraction in Arizona. The facility housed the Phoenix Symphony for almost a decade, and as it gained distinction, the attractiveness of Tempe’s downtown became critical. Visitors accessing Gammage Auditorium from the north were forced to drive through downtown to reach the campus, thus exposing them to the conditions of downtown. This provided one incentive for Tempe leaders to revitalize downtown.<sup>101</sup>

The retreat of traditional businesses, a decrease in retail sales, downtown decline, ASU’s location, and the emergence of countercultural businesses in the late 1960s and early 1970s pushed Tempe leaders to begin forming a vision for downtown. The Tempe Planning and Zoning Commission began studying downtown in 1967, determining the problems, and providing the Tempe City Council with proposed solutions. The commission emphasized retail losses and downtown’s image, and stressed the need for a redevelopment program. In 1970 the City Council created a redevelopment program and began using federal funds to reinvest in

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<sup>100</sup> Mary Leonhard, “Gammage Rites Warm, Touching,” *Arizona Republic*, September 17, 1964.

<sup>101</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 167-171, 221-229; “New Grady Gammage Auditorium Glows in Dark,” *Phoenix Gazette*, June 18, 1964; “ASU Dedicates New Auditorium,” *Phoenix Gazette*, September 16, 1964; “History,” *ASU Gammage*, accessed February 7, 2014, <http://www.asugammage.com/about/history>; Sargent, “Main Street Meets Megastrip,” 121; Michelle L. Bickert, “The Role of Performing Arts in Postwar Phoenix, Arizona,” (Master’s Thesis, Arizona State University, 2013), 34-37, 63-65; “Tempe—62,907 People, Downtown Ugliness And a Major University”.

downtown. The redevelopment program was an important step for city leaders, but it would take a few years before the City of Tempe, business leaders, and citizens would determine the new vision for downtown.<sup>102</sup>

While Tempeans were forming the new redevelopment vision, a new city hall was completed in downtown. Instead of positioning the new city hall at the corner of Southern Avenue and Rural Road and abandoning downtown, Tempe leaders decided to build the new facility in downtown in the exact location of the first city hall on Fifth Street. The new Tempe Municipal Building, a unique inverted pyramid made of solar-bronzed glass and steel, was designed by local architects Michael and Kemper Goodwin. This new “futuristic” city hall indicated a public recommitment to downtown redevelopment and it also crystalized downtown’s role as a government and civic center.<sup>103</sup>

The city started providing some municipal support for cultural facilities while they formed the exact vision for downtown. In 1971 the city funded cultural institutions outside of downtown. The construction of the Tempe Cultural Center which included a new library, an auditorium, and the Tempe History Museum at Southern Avenue and Rural Road indicated the growing cultural needs of the community and the new development opportunities as the city

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<sup>102</sup> Eaton, “Major Face-Lifting Urged for Tempe Acres”; City of Tempe, *University-Hayden Butte Amended Redevelopment Plan*, 3-4.

<sup>103</sup> Sargent, “Main Street Meets Megastrip,” 121-123; City of Tempe, *3 Decades: Tempe Downtown Redevelopment Guide*, 3; “City Hall Move Through Eye of Camera,” *Tempe Daily News*, July 24, 1971; “Many Watched as City Hall Went Up,” *Tempe Daily News*, October 1, 1971.

expanded south. It was also an important step for Tempe in the early period showing the city's dedication to art and cultural growth outside of downtown.<sup>104</sup>

Following the completion of the new city hall and cultural center, Tempe leaders and citizens continued determining the vision for the commercial revitalization of downtown. In 1973 they introduced the *University-Hayden Butte Redevelopment Plan* that outlined the problems plaguing downtown and solutions for redevelopment. The primary focus of the early strategy was to continue the redevelopment program and use Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) to revive downtown as the economic hub of the city. The plan required the redevelopment and rehabilitation of decaying buildings and the removal of blighting influences to stimulate private development. Other goals included encouraging small business to restore retail sales, and enhancing the image of downtown. However, the new vision also discouraged countercultural activity and city leaders hoped to remove the owners from downtown. This led to a conflict of interest among downtown stakeholders over the appropriateness of certain activities in downtown.<sup>105</sup>

This conflict surfaced when MAMA started holding art and culture festivals in downtown. Attempting to boost their businesses, MAMA began the fairs in hopes of by drawing Tempeans and other Valley residents to downtown. The city initially resisted these festivals, but the countercultural business owners, determined to make them happen, successfully lobbied city leaders for a small space to hold the events at the corner of Fourth Street and Mill Avenue. The

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<sup>104</sup> City of Tempe Planning Department, *General Plan 1978*, 13-15, 48; "Library – Community Center Project Starts with Groundbreaking Today," *Tempe Daily News*, March 26, 1970; "Library "Active" in City," *Tempe Daily News*, October 1, 1971; "Museum to Record Past," *Tempe Daily News*, October 1, 1971; "Timeline".

<sup>105</sup> City of Tempe, *University-Hayden Butte Amended Redevelopment Plan*, 3-6.

Hayden's Ferry Arts and Crafts Festivals, as they became known, grew steadily through the 1970s. These annual fall and spring events offered food, music, and entertainment and attracted small crowds composed primarily of artists and craftspeople to downtown.<sup>106</sup>

While MAMA started sponsoring the arts and crafts festivals, a few cultural organizations appeared in Tempe. These organizations, namely the Tempe Little Theater, an amateur theater company, and Childsplay, a children's theater company, emerged as a result of private effort. Both groups were started by local residents and demonstrated the existence of some culture in the city.<sup>107</sup>

The use of effective financing, a shift away from countercultural businesses, and to a small extent MAMA's art and culture festivals started stabilizing downtown, expanded the economic base, and revitalized the area. When city leaders began using CDBG funds to improve downtown and increase sales tax and retail revenues, they discouraged the countercultural businesses that moved in. At the same time that the composition of downtown's economic base changed, tourism and retail were becoming a larger part of the Valley's economy presenting new opportunities for downtown. Thus the growth of tourism and retail motivated leaders to try and build on these emerging strengths. The city also slowly embraced MAMA's art festivals as a

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<sup>106</sup> Jay Mark, "Fall Festival had Humble Birth But Grew Steadily," *Arizona Republic*, December 5, 2008, Holochwost, "Changing Perceptions," 23-24, 30, 35-36; Mitchell, interview; City of Tempe Planning and Zoning Commission, Tempe City Council, and Van Cleve Associates, *General Plan*, 18-21, 50-51, 62-66; "Hayden's Ferry's Fair Days Set," *Tempe Daily News*, December 1, 1975; "Festivals On Mill Still On," *Tempe Daily News*, December 2, 1978; "Keeps Mill Traffic Flowing, Festivities Draw Crowds," *Tempe Daily News*, December 4, 1978; "Hayden's Ferry Days, Outdoor Fair Very Successful," *Tempe Daily News*, December 3, 1979.

<sup>107</sup> Kerry Lengel, "39-Year-Old Community Theater Closes its Doors," *Arizona Republic*, August 23, 2011; "History," *Childsplay AZ*, accessed February 7, 2014, <http://www.childsplayaz.org/index.php/about/history>; Robin LaVoie, "Research Design: History of Tempe Little Theater," (Seminar Paper, Arizona State University, Spring 2001); The Tempe Little Theater began in 1972 and Childsplay started in 1977.

way to generate revenue in downtown and as this occurred, cultural activity become one way to create economic development in downtown. This demonstrated the city's commitment to making downtown not only a commercial center, but also a center of cultural activity.<sup>108</sup>

Before 1980, effective planning, public participation, and public-private collaboration were necessary for fostering cultural development in downtown Tempe. An increasing awareness of pollution, sprawl, and downtown decline worried Tempeans, causing them to request a voice in the planning process. The city tried to respond to this request by providing more access for citizens, especially MAMA, and other downtown stakeholders. As MAMA's art festivals became increasingly successful through the 1970s, city officials supported their efforts. The city's reaction to citizen demand and its acceptance of a more grassroots approach to downtown displayed the Tempe's emerging political culture. By combining municipal efforts and MAMA's fairs, Tempeans continued using public-private collaboration to stimulate art and culture in downtown.<sup>109</sup>

Attempting to accommodate the tremendous influx of new residents in this period and supply new cultural facilities, city leaders began addressing these needs by implementing the distinct redevelopment agenda. In doing so, they developed a vision for the role of art and culture in downtown. Realizing new possibilities for downtown and building off of ASU's

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<sup>108</sup> City of Tempe Planning and Zoning Commission, Tempe City Council, and Van Cleve and Associates, *General Plan*, 18-21, 26-27, 50-51; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 183-186, 245-247, 298-299; City of Tempe Planning Department, *General Plan 1978*, 21, 33, 25, 57; Sargent, "Main Street Meets Megastrip"; City of Tempe, 128; *University-Hayden Butte Area 1 Redevelopment Plan*, 3-5.

<sup>109</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 184-185, 265-293; City of Tempe Planning and Zoning Commission, Tempe City Council, and Van Cleve and Associates, *General Plan*, 7, 70; "Hayden's Ferry's Fair Days Set"; Sargent, "Main Street Meets Megastrip," 128.



cultural momentum, city officials and residents started redirecting the city's growth. Though many of the ideas for cultural venues remained conceptual prior to 1980, the gradual inclusion of art and culture into the planning process demonstrated a commitment future cultural growth.<sup>110</sup>

Thus, by 1980, the execution of the art and culture vision allowed for some cultural development in the form of cultural facilities, organizations, and festivals. ASU provided an important impetus for cultural development in downtown. City leaders and the countercultural business owners worked first toward commercial revitalization, and by the 1970s started to encourage a cultural scene in downtown as a way to generate economic development. Before 1980, downtown endured as the main focus of cultural promotion, but the city did support the construction of new cultural facilities outside downtown. This provided space for emerging cultural organizations. As Phoenix became a multi-nodal metropolis, and the Valley's cultural institutions were decentralized, Tempe started developing its own cultural attractions to lure educated workers, tourists, and other cultural advocates to the city. This allowed Tempeans to begin creating a unique identity for their city.<sup>111</sup>

### **The 1980s: A Cultural Transition**

Building on the modest support for culture cultivated by 1980, Tempe leaders and citizens pursued many of the city's original goals, but also expanded their art and culture strategy to incorporate new ambitions. As the downtown redevelopment strategy began showing success in the 1980s, political leaders, artists, performers, planners, business owners, and citizens

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<sup>110</sup> City of Tempe Planning and Zoning Commission, Tempe City Council, and Van Cleve and Associates, *General Plan*, 50-51, 62-66; City of Tempe Planning Department, *General Plan 1978*, 13-15, 25, 33, 48, Sargent, "Main Street Meets Megastrip," 129-137.

<sup>111</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 167-171, 221-229; City of Tempe Planning Department, *General Plan 1978*, 13-15, 24-25, 33, 48;

continued looking for new ways to integrate art and culture into downtown. In response to evolving notions about suburban development and downtown revitalization, a changing economy, and Tempe's growth challenges, leaders and citizens crafted the an art and culture strategy that regenerated downtown and diversified its function beyond a commercial district. These strategy facilitated cultural development in the form of cultural facilities and programs, cultural organizations, and festivals.<sup>112</sup>

Through the 1980s, Tempeans executed the redevelopment agenda in downtown and in the riverbed. While they carried the vision forward, they repeatedly broadened their approach to include art and culture in the planning process indicating new attitudes about growth. Municipal support for cultural organizations, events, and facilities, as well as the Municipal Art Ordinance signaled these new attitudes. It also resulted in leaders realizing the increasing economic benefits of art and culture.

The emergence of the Tempe Arts Advisory Council (TAAC) and the Fine Arts Center of Tempe (FACT) displayed municipal support for culture after 1980. The city appointed the TAAC in 1980 for the purposes of creating a Tempe arts center on Mill Avenue. FACT was created as a result of this advisory council. Started by the city in 1982, the FACT functioned as a private non-profit organization. Though it was started by the city, FACT only received some financial municipal support and thus had to rent the second floor of the Tempe Hardware Building on Mill Avenue. The TAAC and FACT were important pieces of early redevelopment,

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<sup>112</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 184-186, 224, 324-331, 365-366; City of Tempe, *University-Hayden Butte Area 1 Redevelopment Plan*, 3-8; City of Tempe Community Development Department, *General Plan 2000*, 35, 57-58, 102.

and Tempeans recognized downtown's potential as a cultural hub and they hoped to cultivate support for the arts.<sup>113</sup>

Despite some municipal support, FACT struggled financially like many Valley arts organizations in the 1980s. FACT was unable to pay rent for space on the second floor of the Tempe Hardware Building. In response to this difficulty in 1986, the city provided a new space for FACT allowing the organization to operate at an extremely low cost of a newly renovated recreation building at Tempe Beach Park. FACT's early financial troubles forced them to reexamine their mission. By the end 1986, the organization revised its mission by focusing on sculptures and crafts, and rebranded itself as the Tempe Arts Center (TAC). The new mission in addition to a better facility equipped with space for administrative offices, a gallery, and an arts park would help the organization be more successful. The city and TAC hoped to use this facility in Tempe Beach Park to generate cultural activity make the riverfront more inviting.<sup>114</sup>

In 1987 the city also took a more direct step to promote cultural progress in Tempe. Glendale (1983), Scottsdale (1985), and Phoenix (1986), lead the Valley in municipal support for public art, and recognizing the value in this idea, Tempe leaders passed their own resolution in 1987. This created the Municipal Art Fund, which dedicated ½ of 1 percent of the city's Capital Improvement budget to public art. The specific allocation of funds for artistic purposes indicated

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<sup>113</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 328-330; "Mill as Cultural Hub is Prospect to Cultivate," *Tempe Daily News*, September 8, 1982; "Help Us Grow! Become a Founding Patron of the Fine Arts Center, Inc.," *Tempe Daily News*, December 23, 1983; Lori Grzesiek, "City Council Approves Art Showcase," *Tempe Daily News*, October 2, 1981; Edward Lebow, "Spaced Out in Tempe," *Phoenix News Times*, June 25, 1998; Bruce Trethewy, "Solo Show Opens at Fine Arts Center of Tempe," *Tempe Daily News*, January 6, 1985.

<sup>114</sup> Bruce Christian, "FACT Makes Comeback, Plans Show Through December," *Tempe Daily News*, June 8, 1986; Bruce Christian, "FACT Plans to Move New Gallery," *Tempe Daily News*, September 14, 1986; Bruce Christian, "Fine Arts Center Gives Graffiti Party a Chance," *Tempe Daily News*, November 15, 1986; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 329.

Tempeans' dedication to fostering cultural development and suggested a cultural shift in the city's support of art. The resolution also created the Tempe Municipal Arts Commission (TMAC) providing a channel for public input in the cultural planning process. The TMAC was responsible for producing an annual Municipal Arts Plan and advising the mayor and city council on art in the city. Additionally, this helped to create new possibilities for enriching the lives of Tempeans through art and culture.<sup>115</sup>

The Mill Avenue Arts Festivals contributed substantially to the city's cultural expansion during the 1980s. Tempe became known for these bi-annual festivals thus creating a set of expectations for the events. By the late 1980s, the festivals attracted roughly 150,000 visitors from Tempe and across the East Valley. The events supported a market for local artists and contributed to increased retail sales and tax revenues indicating economic revitalization. In addition, by the late 1980s, these events enhanced the image of downtown considerably, and provided an opportunity to display the major improvements to downtown resulting from redevelopment.<sup>116</sup>

By the late 1980s, there was a growing demand for art and culture in Tempe. Expanding resident and tourist interest in culture, and a growing number of willing arts performers necessitated the construction of a new Tempe Performing Arts Center. The venue at Tempe Beach Park provided a space for the TAC, but it was clear that a new facility was needed. By

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<sup>115</sup> City of Tempe Community Development Department, *General Plan 2000*, 102; "Resolution No. 87.16 A," Tempe City Code (April 23, 1987); "Ordinance No. 88.62," Tempe City Code (September 8, 1988); Weldon B. Johnson, "Despite Economy Public Art Prevails," *Arizona Republic*, October 15, 2009; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 328.

<sup>116</sup> Bruce Christian, "Fall Festivals Spot Lights Artists' Best," *Tempe Daily News*, December 3, 1987; Steven Tseffos, "MAMA Knows Best: Fairs Good for City," *Tempe Daily News*, December 2, 1988; Holochwost, "Changing Perceptions," 80-82.

1988 a coalition of local arts groups including individuals from the TAC, the Tempe Little Theater, and Childsplay, which were operating out of various locations throughout the city, began lobbying for a new visual and performing arts center. With the help of the newly formed TMAC, these groups held a public forum to begin the initial evaluation of creating a new arts center. Much like earlier decades, these groups looked to build on the growth of cultural programs at ASU and take advantage of the growing cultural climate in Tempe. With municipal support, they also hoped to gain a larger presence in downtown with a new facility.<sup>117</sup>

### **The 1990s: A Shift to Higher Gear**

Building on the rising support for cultural activity and facilities, leaders and citizens increased their emphasis on art and culture in downtown considerably. Tempeans responded to shifting economic circumstances, and new ideas about redevelopment by expanding their economic, political, and cultural ambitions to transform the physical environment of downtown in the 1990s. The city constructed a new Tempe Performing Arts Center which demonstrated these ambitions. But the emerging Tempe Rio Salado Project offered new opportunities and by the mid-1990s political leaders, artists, performers, and others began planning for ways to reuse the reclaimed riverbed.<sup>118</sup>

Encouraged by increasing interest in art and culture, Tempe leaders and citizens revised the strategy to accommodate changes in the economy while generating economic goals for carrying their plans forward. By the 1990s, effective financing and increased retail and tax

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<sup>117</sup> Peggy Bryant, "Arts Groups to Seek Public Input on Ideas for Tempe Based Center," *Tempe Daily News Tribune*, July 13, 1988; City of Tempe Community Development Department, *General Plan 2000*, 57-58, 102.

<sup>118</sup> Tad Savinar et al., *Public Arts Master Plan: The Rio Salado Overlay District*, (San Francisco: Helene Fried Associates, 1994), 1-7.

revenue became vital to redevelop downtown. Transformations in the Valley's economy, specifically the growth of retail and cultural tourism motivated Tempe political, business, and civic leaders to alter the redevelopment agenda by incorporating these changes and expanding the tax base. The rise of the post-industrial economy provided new possibilities to generate retail and sales tax revenue from the arts festivals, cultural performances, or other events that brought residents and tourists to downtown. Sales tax revenue aided the city in providing programs, services, and new facilities, including those related to art and culture.<sup>119</sup>

In the 1990s, effective planning, public input, and public-private collaboration remained critical to advancing the art and culture strategy. At the same time that Tempe leaders formed new economic ambitions of the art and culture strategy, they began responding to rising public demand for cultural programs, services, and facilities including a new performing arts center. Continued cultural planning, strategic partnerships, and diverse public input during this period produced new possibilities for downtown which was reemerging as the economic core of the city.<sup>120</sup>

By 1990, local art groups, motivated by a growing interest in culture and the need for a new performing arts center, demanded a larger voice in cultural planning. The Tempe Municipal Arts Commission functioned as an instrument for communicating the desires of the arts

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<sup>119</sup> City of Tempe Community Development Department, *General Plan 2000*, 45, 75; Heim, "Border Wars," 831, 837-839; Hal K. Rothman, *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth Century American West*, (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 15-22; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 300-311.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid, 183-186, 295-297; City of Tempe Community Development Services Department, *General Plan 2020*, 11; City of Tempe Community Development Department, *General Plan 2000*, 39; City of Tempe, *University-Hayden Butte Amended Redevelopment Plan*, 3-18.

community with the Tempe City Council and gained public support of a new performing arts center. Constructed in 1990 near city hall, the Tempe Performing Arts Center provided office and performance space to local art groups including the Tempe Little Theater and Childsplay. The completion of this new facility and the city's commitment to diverse public input from artists, performers, musicians, business owners, and art organizations displayed Tempe's political culture.<sup>121</sup>

The continued success of downtown redevelopment and revitalization occurred in part because of broadening cultural activity. By the 1990s, Tempe leaders and citizens embraced new growth initiatives like historic preservation, infill, and the protection of open space which directed downtown redevelopment, they continued creating new cultural plans and policies that would help the city grow in new ways. The planning of the Tempe Rio Salado Project and reclamation of the Salt River bed provided opportunities for combined recreational, cultural, and urban activities. Recognizing this, city leaders, the TMAC, and a number of art advocates and interest groups formed the 1994 *Public Arts Master Plan*. The Arizona Commission on the Arts, recognizing the value of the plan, supported the TMAC in creating it. Conceived as a guide for cultural programs and development in the Rio Salado Overlay District (RSOD), the plan allowed Tempeans to articulate the art and culture vision for the Rio Salado and downtown making it an important milestone for the city. Reflecting increasing support for and new ideas about riverfront redevelopment, the plan addressed the use of temporary and permanent public art, cultural facilities, as well as festivals and special events to integrate art into the built and

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<sup>121</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 295-295, 314-323; Savinar, et al., *Public Arts Master Plan*, 1-6; Max McQueen, "Tempe Arts Center Solves City's Space Wars," *Tempe Daily News Tribune*, September 6, 1990; City of Tempe, *3 Decades*, 35.

natural environment thus enhancing the RSOD. This plan also displayed an increasing awareness of culture as a driver for economic development. But the report's clear perspective on future needs led to criticisms, noting the weaknesses of the Tempe Performing Arts Center as a place to foster cultural development.<sup>122</sup>

As Tempe leaders and citizens created a strategy for incorporating art in the RSOD, they also produced funding options for carrying out the vision. Federal and state grants, funds from local or national foundations, and private donations could be used for future cultural development and activity. Subsequently, the city's Art in Private Development Ordinance, which required developers to incorporate art into commercial or office development, and Tempe's Municipal Art Fund became reliable sources of funding for art and culture as well.<sup>123</sup>

While city leaders continued planning for art in the RSOD, the construction of the lake, which commenced in 1997, represented a conflict of interest between the Rio Salado strategy and the art and culture strategy. Construction plans for the lake advanced but at the expense of the Tempe Arts Center's use of the facility situated in Tempe Beach Park. This vulnerable organization which was partially supported by the city, was displaced and searching for a new

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<sup>122</sup>City of Tempe Community Development Department, *General Plan 2000*, 44-45, 51-52, 57-59, 62-63,74, 102; City of Tempe Community Development Services Department, *General Plan 2020*, 11, 15, 17, 23-27, 38, 41-45, 54-55; City of Tempe, *University-Hayden Butte Amended Redevelopment Plan*, 4, 8; Savinar et al., *Public Arts Master Plan*, 1-7, 9-18, 21-27, 28-30; Bill Davis, "Panelists Push for New Arts Center, *Tempe Daily News Tribune*, November 15, 1992.

<sup>123</sup> Savinar et al., *Public Art Master Plan*, 33-37; City of Tempe Community Development Services Department, *General Plan 2020*, 38.



home. The loss of this facility in June of 1998 indicated diverging approaches for the type of development deemed appropriate along the lake.<sup>124</sup>

When Tempe Town Lake opened to the public in November of 1999, Tempeans would continue implementing the 1994 *Public Arts Master Plan* for the RSOD. Festivals and events and public art had already begun to appear, but a new center for the arts that would replace the TPAC and the TAC was next on the agenda. By the close of the 1990s, the growth of culture assured Tempe leaders to proceed with their plans for a new facility to enhance Tempe Town Lake.

### **The 2000s: Reaching for a New Level**

Art and cultural activity became an even larger priority in downtown as Tempe entered the 2000s. Tempe Town Lake presented new possibilities for cultural facilities and programs, festivals, public art, and the growth of cultural organizations. The direct result of public investment and private support of art and culture, the Tempe Center for the Arts was finished in 2007, and revealed Tempe's role as an important cultural center. The placement of this facility on the lake was a clear indicator of the city's emphasis on culture in downtown. By implementing the art and culture vision, Tempeans continued making downtown into a cultural tourism destination.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> John Yantis, "Arts Center Needs New Home," *Tempe Daily News Tribune*, May 16, 1996; Lebow, "Spaced Out in Tempe."

<sup>125</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 184-186, 224, 265-297, 324-331, 365-366; City of Tempe, *University-Hayden Butte Amended Redevelopment Plan*, 3-9; Savinar et al., *Public Arts Master Plan*, 1-4; City of Tempe Community Development Department, *General Plan 2020*, 38; *General Plan 2030*, 137, 143-144, 221-225; "Tempe Center for the Arts," *City of Tempe, Arizona*, accessed December 10, 2012, <http://www.tempe.gov/index.aspx?page=575>.

The first step to building the new cultural facility was gaining voter support for Proposition 400 in May of 2000. The financial model consisted of a bond measure, or a 0.1 percent sales tax increase, would last for twenty years and fund a new arts center on the lake. The new facility would accommodate the city's theater and dance companies, and musical groups and supply them with a permanent home. Municipal and citizen support for the measure and this center demonstrated a commitment to future cultural vibrancy in downtown. This action signaled a shift in the strategy as Tempeans pursued the art and culture vision in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>126</sup>

The implementation of the art and culture strategy in the 2000s fostered the growth of festivals and special events, and local arts organizations and stimulated changes to the urban form through public art installations and the construction of the Tempe Center for the Arts in downtown. Catering to the expansion of cultural tourism and retail, Tempe leaders and art supporters used art and culture to rebuild downtown. Art and cultural expansion in downtown demonstrated significant economic development, provided new opportunities for community engagement, reinforced cultural values, and improved the quality of life for residents.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> City of Tempe, *Tempe Town Lake on the Rio Salado*, 12; Elvia Diaz, "Tempe C of C Supports Arts Center Measure, *Arizona Republic*, March 23, 2000; Neil Guiliano, "Prop 400 "Yes" A Vote for Arts, Children," *Arizona Republic*, April 13, 2000; Greg Roybal, "Tempe Oks Arts Tax, Mayors Term," *East Valley Tribune*, May 17, 2000.

<sup>127</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 183-186, 324-333; City of Tempe Development Services Department, *General Plan 2030*, 125, 137, 125, 137, 143-144, 224-225; Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa. "Arts and Culture in Urban and Regional Planning: A Review and Research Agenda," *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 29, no. 3 (January 2010): 379-388; Kimberly Hodgson and Kelly Ann Beavers, "Overview: The Role of the Arts and Culture in Planning Practice," *American Planning Association*, (Chicago: American Planning Association, 2011).

The Tempe Festivals of the Arts endured as a major part of arts promotion and downtown revitalization by the 2000s, despite a change in sponsorship. By the 2000s, the members of MAMA remained key advocates in generating cultural activity in downtown. However, the festivals grew so large that in 2003 the Tempe City Council decided the Downtown Tempe Community, Inc., the private non-profit organization that worked with the City of Tempe to manage downtown, was better equipped to produce and sponsor the events. While the number of attendees and artists increased, the nature and purpose of the festivals remained similar to the late 1960s. Artists and craftspeople gathered to sell paintings, jewelry, sculptures and other works of art while tourists and residents enjoyed entertainment, food booths, and musical performances. These events generated substantial economic impact for the city by 2012.<sup>128</sup>

By the 2000s, public art installations around downtown signaled cultural vibrancy in Tempe. Sculptures, transit shelters, retaining walls, lighting, and other public art began to populate downtown Tempe's streets, sidewalks, and public facilities. Public and private investment in public art also enhanced the trails and parks around Tempe Town Lake reinforcing its function as a regional recreational and cultural amenity. The emergence of public art in downtown's built and natural environment promoted artistic expression and cultural diversity.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>128</sup>Garin Groff, "Tempe Festival Goes More Upscale Bans Pets," *East Valley Tribune*, March 30, 2001; Alia Beard Rau, "Festivals May Get New Owner Fall Fair to Kick Off as Tempe Discusses its Future," *Arizona Republic*, December 4, 2003; Dianna Nanez, "Beauty in a Bad Economy," *Arizona Republic*, March 28, 2009; Jennifer McClellan, "Tempe Arts Festivals by the Numbers," *Arizona Republic*, March 25, 2010; "Downtown Tempe Community, Inc," *Mill Avenue District*, accessed February 7, 2014, <http://www.millavenue.com/downtown-tempe>; "About the Festival," *Tempe Festival of the Arts*, accessed February 24, 2014, <http://www.tempefestivalofthearts.com/about>.

<sup>129</sup> Colleen Sparks, "New Art in Place in Tempe's Salt River Bank," *Arizona Republic*, February 6, 2009; "Public Art," *City of Tempe, Arizona*, accessed February 25, 2014,

By the 2000s, Arizona State University endured as a catalyst for cultural activity in downtown. ASU's music, theater, dance, and art programs as well as museums, galleries, and other venues remained as key cultural attractions in the Valley. Broadway shows at ASU Gammage were among the most of the most notable examples of this. As the university grew, its educated and cultured individuals continued to help foster culture in Tempe.<sup>130</sup>

Most significantly, the construction of the Tempe Center for the Arts (TCA), the city's first real visual and performing arts center symbolized wide municipal and citizen support for the arts and the culmination of the art and culture strategy. At the same time lakeside development began to appear by the 2000s, Tempe leaders and citizens worked to reuse and prepare the site, and construct the facility. These changes to the built and natural environment reflected the city's revised definition of growth and new attitudes about the riverfront.

Much like the riverbed, the 23 acre site for the TCA, located west of Tempe Beach Park on Rio Salado Parkway within the RSOD, required substantial investment and cleanup to construct the facility. Due in part to the site's previous use as a landfill, the site required investing nearly \$15 million for environmental remediation, parking, and other improvements to the site prior to building the TCA. Dedicated open space and the completion of a 17 acre arts park also helped to revitalize the area.<sup>131</sup>

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<http://www.tempe.gov/index.aspx?page=884>; City of Tempe, *3 Decades*, 27; City of Tempe Development Services Department, *General Plan 2030*, 143-144, 221-225.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid, 221-225; Kerry Lengel, "ASU Arts Programs Reach Out to Valley," *Arizona Republic*, September 10, 2006; Stephanie Nowack, "City Becomes Great Stage for the Arts of All Kinds," *Arizona Republic*, October 10, 2008.

<sup>131</sup> Greg Roybal, "Tempe Site May Cost \$14.5 to Tidy Up," *East Valley Tribune*, October 30, 2000; Heather Urquides, "Center for Arts Getting Costlier Tempe Seeks Funds for \$63

Much like other lakeside development, the TCA suffered delays and setbacks for various reasons. After experiencing delays with site preparation, the city moved to construct the facility in March of 2004 using the 0.1 percent sales tax increase to fund it. City leaders encountered setbacks with the construction process including concrete shortages, construction site thefts, and rising overall cost impeded the TCA's completion. Adding a "multifaceted shed roof" to the facility to block out aircraft, freeway, railroad, and light rail noise for acoustic purposes was another difficulty city leaders and builders had to overcome. However, despite these challenges, city leaders moved forward with their plans, determined to realize the art and culture vision.<sup>132</sup>

The TCA was finished in the fall of 2007, and became the first visual and performing arts center and largest beacon for culture in the city. Costing \$67.6 million to build, the 90,000 square foot building contained a 600 seat proscenium theater, 200 seat black box theater, an art gallery, a café, as well as other features. The TCA housed the Tempe Symphony Orchestra, the Tempe Symphonic Wind Ensemble, the Tempe Little Theater, Childsplay, the Tempe Community Chorus, and the Ludwig Dance Theater. These groups and others demonstrated the continued expansion of cultural organizations in Tempe. The TCA provided support for these groups allowing culture to flourish in the community. More than just an arts venue, the TCA

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Million Project," *Arizona Republic*, October 7, 2001; City of Tempe Development Services Department, *General Plan 2030*, 119-120.

<sup>132</sup> Alia Beard Rau, "Tempe Arts Center Grand Creation," *Arizona Republic*, February 2, 2007; Katie Nelson, "Construction Delays Hamper Tempe Center for the Arts," *Arizona Republic*, May 30, 2007; Jenna M. McKnight, "Tempe Arts Center, Tempe, Arizona," *Architectural Record*, Vol. 196, no. 1, (January 2008): 108-113; "Tempe Center for the Arts Ready for the Public," *Arizona Republic*, September 5, 2007.

would be used for weddings, meetings, and other special events becoming a vital part of downtown and Town Lake.<sup>133</sup>

The Tempe Festival of the Arts, the growth of local arts organizations, public art and the TCA became emblematic of Tempe's cultural maturity and the success of the strategy. The cultural development was a testament to Tempe's endorsement of the arts, and as the city emerged as a semi-independent supersuburb, it helped to reinforce the city's unique character and identity. Tempeans pursued the art and culture strategy by providing downtown with attractive new cultural amenities. These amenities, especially the TCA enabled Tempe to compete with other cultural centers in the Valley and attract educated workers, tourists, and new businesses to the city. By 2012, the art and culture in Tempe demonstrated considerable economic impact reinforcing continued downtown revitalization.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Kelsey Hazelwood, "Tempe Center for the Arts Celebrates 1 Year," *Arizona Republic*, September 23, 2008; McKnight, "Tempe Arts Center, Tempe, Arizona," 108-113; Geri Koeppel, "Childsplay to Get Permanent Home: A Vagabond for 29 Years, Troupe Will Settle in at Tempe Center for the Arts at End of Season," *Arizona Republic*, September 6, 2006; Srianthi Perera, "Tempe Orchestra Opening 33<sup>rd</sup> Season at New Center," *Arizona Republic*, August 11, 2007; "Tempe Center for the Arts"; "Tempe Center for the Arts, Be Part of the Scene, Fall '12" *City of Tempe, Arizona*, accessed February 24, 2014, <http://www.tempe.gov/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=12956>; "Tempe Center for the Arts, Be Part of the Scene, Spring '10," *City of Tempe, Arizona*, accessed February 24, 2014, <http://www.tempe.gov/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=6309>.

<sup>134</sup> Abbott, *How Cities Won the West*, 225-228; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 221-229; City of Tempe Development Services Department, *General Plan 2030*, 137, 143-144, 221-225; Morrison Institute for Public Policy, "A Place for Art and Culture: A Maricopa County Overview," ii-iii, 1, 25; Markusen and Gadwa, "Arts and Culture in Urban and Regional Planning," 387-388; "Arts and Economic Prosperity III: The Economic Impact of Nonprofit Arts and Culture Organizations on their Audiences" *Americans for the Arts*, accessed April 15, 2013, [http://www.artsusa.org/pdf/information\\_services/research/services/economic\\_impact/aepiii/national\\_report.pdf](http://www.artsusa.org/pdf/information_services/research/services/economic_impact/aepiii/national_report.pdf), 2, 3, 8, 13, 20, 38.

Between the 1960s and 2012 Tempe political leaders, art advocates, and citizens responded to new economic circumstances, changing ideas about the nature of suburban development, and local growth issues and molded an art and culture strategy to revitalize downtown and make it a cultural hub in the Valley. They relied on effective planning and financing, public-private collaboration, citizen participation, and an altered perception of growth to realize their vision. After 1960, city leaders worked to improve downtown as a commercial center, and but recognizing the new opportunities generated by ASU's cultural activity, and the Hayden's Ferry Arts and Crafts Festivals, the arts earned a small role in the downtown redevelopment strategy. Then, after 1980, due to rising support for cultural activity in the city, the arts were given a much larger role in reviving downtown. Between the 1980s and the 2000s, Tempeans started intentionally investing in the Tempe Festival of the Arts, arts organizations and programs, public art, and cultural institutions to make downtown a centralized and diverse cultural destination.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 6, 183-186, 224, 295-296, 314-334, 361-366; *General Plan 2030*, 125, 137, 143-144, 221-225; City of Tempe, *University-Hayden Butte Amended Redevelopment Plan*, 3-4.

## CHAPTER 4

### HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND THE HAYDEN FLOUR MILL

As Tempeans began working to reclaim the riverbed, and incorporate art and cultural activities in downtown they became more conscious of the city's historic properties and started building a strategy for including them in the modified vision of growth. Reacting to rapid growth and the decline of the central business district in the 1960s and 1970s, Tempe leaders and citizens molded a downtown redevelopment strategy which replaced the city's postwar strategy and reoriented city's development. Their primary goal was to commercially revitalize downtown, but over time historic preservation was added as a small component of the larger strategy. In the years before 1980, Tempeans became increasingly aware of local history. The new appreciation for local history and the arrival of new economic incentives motivated leaders to provide some municipal support for historic preservation. In the midst of tremendous metropolitan growth before 1980, Tempe began affirming itself as semi-independent supersuburb with a unique historic downtown. After 1980, Tempe leaders and citizens advanced and expanded the historic preservation strategy considerably by intentionally identifying, studying, rehabilitating, and designating the city's significant historic properties. In this period, particularly starting in the 1990s, the Hayden Flour Mill, the city's most iconic property located in the heart of downtown, exemplified increasing support historic preservation. The city acquired, preserved, and began reinvesting in this contentious property, and as this occurred it demonstrated the city's commitment to protecting key remnants of Tempe's past to reinforce downtown's historic appeal.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 6-7, 183-186, 221-229, 231, 245-247, 265-293, 324-336, 361-362; City of Tempe, *University-Hayden Butte Area 1 Redevelopment Plan*, 3-16, 38; City of



## The 1960s-1980: Early Efforts for Saving Tempe's History

After 1960, expansive physical and population growth stimulated debates about flooding and water conservation, leapfrog development, and downtown decline. Concerned by these new challenges, Tempe leaders and citizens produced a plan to tackle disinvestment and decline and commercially redevelop downtown. The plan began as a vision for remaking downtown as a retail and entertainment center, but citizen encouragement pushed Tempe leaders to start exploring options for incorporating Tempe's historic buildings into downtown revitalization. Revealing new attitudes about downtown and the role of semi-independent supersuburbs in a multimodal metropolis, Tempe leaders and citizens struggled to create a strategy to revitalize historic properties in downtown. Historic preservation gradually gained municipal support and was included in the larger planning process. By 1980, Tempe leaders and citizens formed the preliminary strategy for identifying and designating Tempe's historic buildings, primarily along Mill Avenue. In doing so they pursued economic, political, cultural, and physical goals for reviving downtown.<sup>137</sup>

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Tempe, *University-Hayden Butte Amended Redevelopment Plan*, 3-18; City of Tempe Planning and Zoning Commission, Tempe City Council, and Van Cleve Associates, *General Plan*, 36; City of Tempe Community Services Department, *General Plan 2020*, 11, 41-45; *General Plan 2030*, 53, 97-99, 119-120, 137, 143-144; Isenberg, *Downtown America*, 6, 311, 315; Teaford, *Metropolitan Revolution*, 240-262; Abbott, *How Cities Won the West*, 225-228; Sargent, "Main Street Meets Megastrip," 99-100, 125-126, 138-151; Holochwost, "Changing Perceptions," 23-28, 50-53, 66-68, Morley, *Historic Preservation*, 1-20.

<sup>137</sup> Dennis Ferrel, "Tempe's Main Drag Now in Tug-of-War," *Phoenix Gazette*, January 8, 1973; Sargent, "Main Street Meets Megastrip," 3, 42, 54, 115-123, 148; Holochwost, "Changing Perceptions," iii, 23-28, 50-53; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 189, 221-225, 286, 324; Isenberg, *Downtown America*, 255-315; Par 3 Planning, Architecture, and Research Studio, *Old Town Tempe – Mill Avenue Rehabilitation Feasibility Study*, 6, 14, 22, 28; City of Tempe Planning and Zoning Commission, Tempe City Council, and Van Cleve Associates, *General Plan*, 18-20, 34-36, 50-51; City of Tempe, *University-Hayden Butte Amended Redevelopment*

Downtown decline in Tempe was one of the most pressing growth challenges facing the city after 1960. The appearance of new commercial centers drew some of some Mill Avenue businesses to outlying areas, and as downtown waned, it was unable to compete with rapid suburbanization occurring in south Tempe. Disinvestment, declining property values, and aging and decaying buildings, damaging downtown's role as the main commercial hub of the city.<sup>138</sup>

After this occurred, the MAMA moved into downtown establishing countercultural retail businesses in many of the empty historic buildings and newer structures and making changes to the built environment. Depressed property values discouraged reinvestments and improvements to the aging and historic buildings. But hip business owners did change some of the newer buildings by adding brightly painted facades that embodied a “makeshift Bohemian flavor.”<sup>139</sup> Although better than having vacant storefronts, city leaders felt the uncoordinated alterations diminished downtown's appearance as a vibrant and attractive business district. Tempe leaders, hoping to improve the conditions of downtown, started creating a redevelopment plan.<sup>140</sup>

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*Plan*, 3-18; City of Tempe Planning Department, *General Plan 1978*, 21, 25, Abbott, *How Cities Won the West*, 225-227.

<sup>138</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 269-293; Fogelson, *Downtown*, 223, 247-248, 314-315; Isenberg, *Downtown America*, 166-202; Teaford, *The Metropolitan Revolution*, 90-139; *General Plan*, 38; Sargent, “Main Street Meets Megastrip,” 112-117; “Tempe—62,907 People, Downtown Ugliness and a Major University”; Eaton, “Major Face-Lifting Urged for Tempe Acres”; City of Tempe, *University-Hayden Butte Amended Redevelopment Plan*, 5-7.

<sup>139</sup>Par 3 Planning, Architecture, and Research Studio, *Old Town Tempe – Mill Avenue Rehabilitation Feasibility Study*, 14; “Tempe—62,907 People, Downtown Ugliness and a Major University”.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid, VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 276-293; City of Tempe Planning and Zoning Commission, Tempe City Council, and Van Cleve Associates, *General Plan*, 38; Sargent, “Main Street Meets Megastrip,” 112-126; Holochwost, “Changing Perceptions,” 22-49.

Preparation for Tempe's Centennial, which occurred simultaneously with the formulation of the new downtown vision, provided an impetus for support of the preservation of Tempe's historic buildings. The city began planning for this event in the late 1960s. The creation of the Tempe Beautification Committee equipped with a Historic Subcommittee in 1967 indicated early municipal support for Tempe's history. By 1969, the city created the Tempe Historical Society, a non-profit designated specifically for creating a historical museum, carrying historical research, developing a program for restoring the city's historic properties, as well as education and outreach. The Tempe Historical Society played an important role in the planning the centennial and early preservation advocacy in Tempe.<sup>141</sup>

Tempe's 1971 Centennial was a significant milestone in the early recognition of Tempe's past. The centennial celebrations, which included parades, historical exhibits, festivals, and other activities affirmed some acknowledgement of local history. The events attracted residents and important state and local officials to downtown shedding light on key historic structures along Mill Avenue and throughout downtown linked to Tempe's commercial and agricultural past like the Hayden Flour Mill.<sup>142</sup>

At the same time, Tempe political and business leaders, and some citizens continued to form a new plan for downtown but producing the vision became significantly more complicated

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<sup>141</sup> Adriana Milinac, "Three Visions of History: The Tempe, Chandler, and Scottsdale Museums," (Master's Thesis, Arizona State University, May 2012), 16-20.

<sup>142</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 269-276; Holochwost, "Changing Perceptions," iii-iv, 20, 28-32, 42; Sargent, "Main Street Meets Megastrip," 118-123; Eaton, "Major Face-Lifting Urged for Tempe Acres"; City of Tempe, *3 Decade*, 3; Vargas et al., *Hayden Flour Mill: Landscape, Economy, and Community Diversity in Tempe, Arizona*, Volume 1, 204; "Welcome to Century II" *Tempe Daily News*, January 6, 1971; "City Starts Birthday Festival, *Tempe Daily News*, April 17, 1971; "Hayden Flour Mills Centennial," *The Arizona Republic*, February 28, 1971; Mitchell, interview.

and contested. MAMA and city leaders favored competing visions, triggering debates about the fate of the central business district and delaying redevelopment. Both sides opposed postwar growth policies and were interested in reviving the city's core, but there was question over how to pursue redevelopment. The city initially began using an urban renewal concept to eradicate blight and improve downtown. They planned to demolish many of the buildings and reconstruct an upscale shopping district that would produce retail revenue. MAMA criticized the urban renewal approach. Expressing concern about Tempe's oldest structures, and recognizing their distinctiveness, MAMA supported making a historic district.<sup>143</sup>

In 1973 the city produced the *University-Hayden Butte Redevelopment Plan* to guide early commercial redevelopment and provide a coherent design for a unique downtown. This plan relied on recommendations from the *Old Town Tempe – Mill Avenue Rehabilitation Feasibility Study* and gave some consideration to MAMA and other stakeholder's concerns. The plan called for the use of CBDG's to revitalize downtown using old and new structures. It outlined the new strategy for rehabilitating certain architecturally distinct historic commercial buildings located between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Street along Mill Avenue, and razing other structures were incompatible with the new design. The selected historic commercial buildings were examples of Victorian, Territorial, or Spanish Colonial Revival architecture. The mixture of old and new was

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<sup>143</sup>Teaford, *The Metropolitan Revolution*, 112-124; Isenberg, *Downtown America*, 166-174; Fishman, "The American Planning Tradition: An Introduction and Interpretation", 17-20; Sargent, "Main Street Meets Megastrip," 134, 137; Mark Vinson, "A Brief History of Historic Preservation in Tempe," April 2002, Tempe Redevelopment File Archives, City of Tempe, Arizona; Ferrel, "Tempe's Main Drag Now in Tug-of-War"; Holochowst, "Changing Perceptions," iii, 2, 22-69; City of Tempe Planning and Zoning Commission, Tempe City Council, and Van Cleve Associates, *General Plan*, 50-51; Mitchell, interview; Johnson, "Historic Preservation," 1-4, 11.

intended to revive downtown indicating a somewhat broadening acceptance of historic preservation in city planning.<sup>144</sup>

Despite this new awareness for Tempe's history and the creation of the 1973 plan, Tempe political leaders and some residents were slow to fully support historic preservation. Historic preservation as a strategy for downtown was still a relatively new concept in the 1970s, and many leaders and some downtown stakeholders failed to see its intrinsic or economic value. It required a major economic incentive for city leaders to embrace historic preservation.<sup>145</sup>

Effective public and private financing helped to slowly begin revitalizing downtown prior to 1980. Economic changes, namely the growth of retail and tourism in the Valley influenced decisions about downtown and the formation of the historic preservation strategy. Using Community Development Block Grants, federal and state preservation funds, and private donations, city leaders slowly acquired and reinvested in some of the oldest properties. They hoped these efforts would raise property values, increase sales tax revenues, and stimulate commercial activity. Reacting to the growth of tourism and retail in this period, they reinvested in downtown to make it a safe and attractive place to for residents and tourists. Tempe's initial postwar vision involved using aggressive annexation and depended on home construction and population increase to generate tax revenues. After the city become landlocked in 1974, it was

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<sup>144</sup>Holochowst, "Changing Perceptions," iii, 2, 22-28, 50-69; Isenberg, *Downtown America*, 255-311; Sargent, "Main Street Meets Megastrip," 138-141; Morley, *Historic Preservation*, 1; Linoff, interview; Mitchell, interview; Par 3 Planning, Architecture, and Research Studio, *Old Town Tempe – Mill Avenue Rehabilitation Feasibility Study*, 6, 10, 22, 28; City of Tempe, *University-Hayden Butte Area 1 Redevelopment Plan*, 3-16, 22-23; Kent A. Robertson, "Downtown Redevelopment Strategies in the United States: An End-of-the-Century Assessment," *Journal of American Planning Association* 61, no. 4 (Autumn 1995): 432; Mark Vision, "A Brief History of Historic Preservation in Tempe."

<sup>145</sup> Isenberg, *Downtown America*, 259-260.

critical for Tempeans to alter this strategy by reusing land in downtown to create sales and property tax revenues. By rejecting postwar growth policies and embracing new economic goals, Tempeans started reviving downtown.<sup>146</sup>

While these efforts were important, it was the introduction of federal preservation tax credits in 1976 provided the main impetus for full municipal support of the use of historic preservation in downtown. The tax credits gave property owners, city leaders, and developers a monetary incentive to designate their buildings on the National Register of Historic Places, and adapt them for a new use. This became a driving force for the city to take more active role in preserving historic buildings downtown.<sup>147</sup>

Prior to 1980, public-private partnerships, citizen input, and effective planning were critical parts of the historic preservation strategy as it garnered support from political leaders. To begin preserving and rehabilitating some of the historic downtown properties, the political leaders started to collaborate with business owners, developers, and the Tempe Historical Society. MAMA's ability to have some influence on the redevelopment plan for downtown

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<sup>146</sup> Ferrel, "Tempe's Main Drag Now in Tug-of-War"; "Tempe – 62,907 People, Downtown Ugliness And a Major University"; Eaton, "Major Face-Lifting Urged for Tempe Acres"; City of Tempe Planning Department, *General Plan 1978*, 25; City of Tempe, *University-Hayden Butte Amended Redevelopment Plan*, 3-18, 26; Sargent, "Main Street Meets Megastrip," 118-126; Schmandt, "Local Government," 20-28; Holochwost, "Changing Perceptions," 50-55; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 183-184, 221-222, 196, 245-246, 289-299, 304; City of Tempe Planning and Zoning Commission, Tempe City Council, and Van Cleve Associates, *General Plan*, 18-20, 38, 50-51; Morley, *Historic Preservation*, 4-5, 7-10; Heim, "Border Wars" 831-833, 837-839; City of Tempe, *3 Decades*, 13, 15-16, 18-19, 22, 24; Janet Cantley, *Tempe Bakery/Hackett House in Transition*, Tempe, AZ: City of Tempe Department of Community Services and Tempe Historical Museum, 1987), 24-27.

<sup>147</sup> Morley, *Historic Preservation*, 4-5, 7-10; Johnson, "Historic Preservation," 118; Mitchell, interview; Stuart Siefer, interviewed by Ronald McCoy for Mill Avenue Oral History Project, April 26, 1988, transcript, Hayden Arizona Collection, Arizona State University Library.

through the historic preservation, displayed Tempe's political culture, and the city's commitment to public participation in planning. This included providing access to the Project Area Committee in the redevelopment process before 1980 as well.<sup>148</sup>

The redevelopment plan began as a vision for remaking downtown as a commercial hub, but the persistence of the Tempe Historical Society and MAMA coupled with the advent of federal tax credits for historic preservation caused Tempe leaders to start exploring options for incorporating Tempe's historic buildings into downtown revitalization by the late 1970s. Thus, Tempe followed Phoenix and Arizona's lead with preservation activity, and took a larger role in protecting the city's historic commercial properties. It pushed the city to start acquiring, studying, and designating the Tempe Bakery/Hackett House and the Andre Building. These properties were listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974 and 1979. The effective use of historic preservation as part of the larger redevelopment process and indicated changing attitudes about downtown, criticism of sprawl, and the wider recognition and awareness of Tempe's past.<sup>149</sup>

Thus, the implementation of the historic preservation strategy began to change the physical form of downtown Tempe by 1980. Tempe became surrounded by encroaching Valley growth, and the preservation of several key historic structures would give downtown a distinct

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<sup>148</sup> Mitchell, interview; Siefer, interview; Holochwost, "Changing Perceptions," 78; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 183-186, 221-225, 265-266, 269, 273-276; Isenberg, *Downtown America*, 6.

<sup>149</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 183-186, 276; Isenberg, *Downtown America*, 6, 255-311; City of Tempe, *3 Decades*, 13,19; Cantley, *Tempe Bakery/Hackett House in Transition*, 24-27; Mitchell, interview.

character. Protecting Tempe's history aided in creating the city's identity while starting to improve downtown and redirect growth inward.<sup>150</sup>

### **The 1980s: Breathing New Life into Mill Avenue**

The historic preservation strategy resulted from concerns about decline, the ultimate fate of Tempe's early historic buildings, and the introduction of federal tax incentives in the 1970s. In the 1980s the strategy continued to reflect those economic and cultural interests. Rapid growth persisted as new notions about preservation and the reuse of historic buildings emerged. By the 1980s, Tempe political leaders and citizens, implemented the *University-Hayden Butte Redevelopment Plan* and were driven by new urbanist ideas like encouraging mixed-use development, creating a walkable and sustainable community, and reviving urban centers through historic preservation. Influenced by these ideas along with local growth challenges, and changes in the economy, they placed greater emphasis on preservation in downtown and worked to expand support for historic preservation and develop a more comprehensive strategy to care for the historic commercial properties along Mill Avenue. As a result, city leaders accepted historic preservation a viable tactic for facilitating growth and encouraging downtown redevelopment.<sup>151</sup>

Building on early preservation efforts, Tempe leaders, planners, architects, business owners, and preservation advocates, worked to preserve some historic structures in downtown.

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<sup>150</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 189, 221-225, 289; Isenberg, *Downtown America*, 311, 315; Morley, *Historic Preservation*, 1-20, 25.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid, 1-20; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 183-186, 221-225, 295-297, 317, 324-336; City of Tempe Community Development Department, *General Plan 2000*, 74; City of Tempe, *University-Hayden Butte Amended Redevelopment Plan*, 3-18; Isenberg, *Downtown America*, 6, 311, 315; Teaford, *Metropolitan Revolution*, 240-262; "Charter for the New Urbanism," *Congress for the New Urbanism*, accessed April 14, 2013, <http://www.cnu.org/charter>.



Municipal support for preservation grew in the 1980s, and the city continued to acquire, survey, reinvest, rehabilitate, designate, and reuse Tempe's historic commercial buildings. Leaders and planners used remnants of Tempe's past to create a unique identity for the city, as it continued to expand within the larger multi-nodal metropolis.<sup>152</sup>

Implementing the historic preservation strategy in the early 1980s, the city acquired some key historic structures in downtown, and provided some of the initial site improvements. This demonstrated larger municipal acceptance of historic preservation as a new growth policy. Following the acquisition of the Tempe Bakery/Hackett House and the Andre Building in the 1970s, the city purchased the Vienna Bakery, the Petersen Building, as well as a few other key properties and prepared them for private development using CDBGs.<sup>153</sup>

At the same time that much of this preservation activity commenced in downtown, the city and the Tempe Historical Society supported the first major survey and inventory of Tempe's historic buildings. The Tempe Historical Property Survey of 1983 funded by a grant from the Arizona Historic Preservation Office identified and inventoried 150 historic properties. This survey called attention to some of the oldest and most significant properties and was an early step ensuring their proper care and treatment in the future.<sup>154</sup>

In conjunction with this survey, the City of Tempe and property owners reinvested, rehabilitated, and designated the majority of the historic properties along Mill Avenue through the early 1980s. Public and private actors combined federal, state, and private funds to repair

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<sup>152</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 221-229.

<sup>153</sup> City of Tempe, *3 Decades*, 13, 15, 16, 18-19; Holochwost, "Changing Perception," 50-74.

<sup>154</sup> Vinson, "Historic Preservation"; Milinac, "Three Versions of History," 44-45.

many of the buildings identified and highlighted by the property survey. Coinciding with the ongoing identification and rehabilitation of historic structures in downtown, many buildings were designated to the National Register of Historic Places including the Vienna Bakery (1980), the Tempe Hardware Building (1980), the Hayden House (1984), and the Goodwin Building (1984). Property owners, with the help of the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office, applied the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation, which promoted the responsible treatment of these structures, in order to reuse some of Tempe's historic gems. Compliance with these standards was necessary to receive federal tax incentives, which provided a monetary benefit and the strongest incentive for preservation in downtown.<sup>155</sup>

By 1990, the public and private implementation of the downtown vision produced a revitalized historically-themed business district embodying a mixture of historic commercial buildings, new construction, and a historic streetscape. A majority of Tempe's historic buildings in downtown were lost during early redevelopment in the 1970s, and those that remained, only some of which retained high historic integrity, helped to produce a distinct downtown. These adaptively reused historic structures, coupled with the historic streetscape finished in 1987, aided in transforming downtown and attracting families, ASU students, educated workers, and tourists suggesting economic revitalization.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Holochwost, "Changing Perceptions," 50-74; City of Tempe, *3 Decades*, 13, 15, 16, 18-19; Sargent, "Main Street Meets Megastrip," 140-151; Peggy Bryant, "Tempeans View Renovations of Downtown Buildings for Use," *Tempe Daily News*, March 9, 1982; Siefer, interview; "Hospitality with a Blend of History," *Arizona Republic*, April 13, 1984; Vinson, "Historic Preservation".

<sup>156</sup> Randy Kull, "Mill Avenue Then...and Now," *Arizona Republic*, 19 December 1990; Holochwost, "Changing Perceptions," 61, 80-83, 89-92; Johnson, "Historic Preservation," 145-146.

## **The 1990s: Modifying the Strategy**

By the early 1990s support for preservation was growing in Phoenix and across both the Valley and Arizona. Partly because of this, Tempeans responded to new circumstances and continued to pursue and widen their efforts for using historic preservation to continue reviving downtown. Early preservation efforts in the 1970s and 1980s, and the reorientation of Tempe's growth encouraged the economic regeneration of Mill Avenue, attracted development, and provided new opportunities for downtown by 1990, thus demonstrating the value of historic preservation as a redevelopment strategy. After 1990, Tempe leaders and citizens expanded the downtown redevelopment strategy and incorporated formal historic preservation policies that supported an increasingly systematic approach. The strategy which relied on public-private collaboration, effective planning and financing, and broad citizen participation, reinforced a revised perception of growth.<sup>157</sup>

The commercial success of Mill Avenue gave political leaders and citizens the confidence to carry out the Rio Salado Project by improving the riverbed. This decision had both positive and negative consequences for preservation. The channelization of the river and early proposals for lakeside development threatened or triggered an interest in some historic structures adjacent to the riverbed. In this way the Rio Salado strategy conflicted with the goals of the historic preservation strategy with regard to certain historic structures like the Ash Avenue Bridge, which was razed during ongoing site improvements in the riverbed. Conversely, the Rio

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<sup>157</sup> Morley, *Historic Preservation*, 1-20; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 183-186, 221-225, 295-297, 317, 324-336; City of Tempe Community Development Department, *General Plan 2000*, 74; City of Tempe Community Development Services Department, *General Plan 2020*, 41-42; City of Tempe, *University-Hayden Butte Amended Redevelopment Plan*, 3-18; Teaford, *The American Suburb*, 203; Isenberg, *Downtown America*, 6, 311, 315.

Salado Strategy prompted the preservation of Tempe Beach Stadium and more importantly created opportunities for the still privately-owned Hayden Flour Mill in the early 1990s. The preservation of the Hayden Flour Mill was included in the Hayden Ferry plan, a proposed mixed-use development along the riverfront. This endeavor was a joint effort among Arizona State University, a major landowner in the Rio Salado Project area, Bay State Milling, the company that owned the mill, and Benton-Robb Development Associates.<sup>158</sup>

As developers displayed interest in the Hayden Flour Mill, the historic preservation strategy continued to reflect specific economic interests. Changes in the Valley's economy and Tempe's growth challenges motivated Tempe political and business leaders, city staff, preservation advocates, and citizens to slightly alter their economic ambitions in response to these new circumstances. Tempe leaders looked to capitalize on the city's new economic strengths, in particular, the retail, and high-tech business sectors in downtown. By the 1990s, Tempeans also realized the connection between heritage tourism and economic development, driving them to continue reinvesting in historic buildings. They worked to attract businesses and other private investment that would expand downtown's economy. With little remaining developable land in Tempe by the 1990s, the tactical reuse of land and existing structures in downtown to produce increased property and sales tax revenues became even more critical by the 1990s. This suggested the reversal of attitudes about growth and the use of historic preservation to revitalize downtown and strengthen the local economy.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> City of Tempe, *3 Decades*, 45; Martha Reinke, "Bay State, Benton-Robb, ASU Creating Hayden Ferry Plan," *The Business Journal*, April 6, 1992.

<sup>159</sup> City of Tempe Community Development Department, *General Plan 2000*, 44-45, 75; City of Tempe Community Development Services Department, *General Plan 2020*, 33, 41-45; City of Tempe, *University-Hayden Butte Amended Redevelopment Plan*, 8; VanderMeer, *Desert*

While Tempeans continued to revive and diversify downtown, effective planning, public-private-collaboration, and citizen input remained essential to carrying out the strategy. Effective planning in downtown encouraged redevelopment by the 1990s. Responding to new opportunities in downtown and increased demand for services, programs, and facilities, Tempe political and business leaders, and citizens expanded the redevelopment agenda by incorporating new growth policies and programs into their approach. Tempeans used infill, art and culture, open space conservation, neighborhood rehabilitation, mixed-use development and other new planning initiatives that supported a new pattern of growth. Formal preservation policies were also added to larger planning efforts.<sup>160</sup>

Motivated by the loss of federal preservation tax incentives and the demolition of many of Tempe's historic structures during downtown redevelopment, the Tempe Historical Museum Advisory Board requested that the city explore options for becoming a Certified Local Government (CLG). CLG status would strengthen Tempe's relationship with the Arizona State Historic Preservation office and make Tempe qualified for preservation grants and other assistance. Responding to this active lobbying, Mayor Mitchell and the Tempe City Council set up an ad hoc Historic Preservation Commission in 1994 for the purposes of drafting a historic preservation ordinance, creating a historic preservation commission, and carrying out a new

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*Visions*, 300-309,329; Morley, *Historic Preservation*, 1-20; Donovan D. Rypkema, *The Economics of Historic Preservation: A Community Leader's Guide*, (Washington, DC: The National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1994), 11013, 53, 55-57, 62, 77-78, 82, 102; Hayden, *Building Suburbia*, 234; Rothman, *Devil's Bargains*, 15-22.

<sup>160</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 183-186, 314-336; City of Tempe, *University-Hayden Butte Amended Redevelopment Plan*, 3-18; City of Tempe Community Development Department, *General Plan 2000*, 44-45, 51-52, 58-59, 62-63, 87; City of Tempe Community Development Services Department, *General Plan 2020*, 33, 38, 41-49.

Tempe historic property survey. These new efforts and attitudes reflected an increasing appreciation and support for local history.<sup>161</sup>

By 1995, in preparation for obtaining CLG status, Tempe leaders adopted the Tempe Historic Preservation Ordinance, expanding the city's role in the protection of Tempe's historic structures. This supplied a more systematic strategy for the treatment of Tempe's significant historic, cultural, and archaeological resources, and allowed for some regulation of development. The ordinance formalized preservation efforts by creating the Tempe Historic Property Register (THPR), and the Tempe Historic Preservation Commission (THPC). Additionally, though not specifically designated in the ordinance, the Tempe Historic Preservation program was established to carry out the processes specified in the ordinance.<sup>162</sup>

The historic preservation program, which followed the creation of Phoenix's program in 1985, formalized and professionalized historic preservation efforts, helping to produce a clearer vision for historic preservation. It provided city leaders, preservation staff, and other advocates a way to identify, survey and inventory, and locally designate historic properties. Gradually, city leaders, staff, and citizens commenced the local designation process by adding to the Tempe Historic Property Register. This process required the application of the Secretary of Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties to evaluate the significance and integrity of public and private properties, districts, sites, and structures at least fifty years old. Designation

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<sup>161</sup>City of Tempe, Minutes of Ad Hoc Historic Preservation Commission, June 30, 1994, file 175.1, Historic Preservation Ordinance & Commission, Tempe History Files, Tempe History Museum; Vinson, "Historic Preservation"; Joseph Nucci, personal communication to author, March 11, 2014.

<sup>162</sup> "Historic Preservation Ordinance No. 95.35" Tempe City Code (November 9, 1995); John Yantis, "Tempe Approves Preservation Ordinance," *Tempe Daily News Tribune*, November 10, 1995; Morley, *Historic Preservation*, 5; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 269, 335, 339.

to the THPR established a set of protections including the Historic Zoning Overlay to preserve historic and prehistoric resources from demolition. Unlike designation to the National Register of Historic Places, local designation offered stronger protection from demolition or alteration. However, this did not diminish the importance of national register listing and leaders and citizens continued this key preservation activity in the late 1990s as well.<sup>163</sup>

At the same time that municipal support for preservation increased, the city remained committed to wide citizen participation in carrying out the strategy. The Tempe Historic Preservation Commission provided citizens a way to participate in the identification and preservation of key historic and prehistoric resources in the community. It became an avenue for public input demonstrating Tempe's distinct political culture, and the city's effort to accommodate diverse participation. The THPC also served as a tool for communicating the preservation community's concerns with the Tempe mayor and city council.<sup>164</sup>

Similar to plans for the Rio Salado strategy and the art and culture strategy, the *Tempe Historic Preservation Plan* articulated the larger vision for the preservation of Tempe's history. This small plan, intended to help implement the historic preservation ordinance, indicated the THPC's refined set of goals and served as a guide for preservation planning from 1997 forward. The THPC also expanded the strategy slightly by incorporating new ambitions such as education to enhance public awareness and to infuse preservation into other city planning and

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<sup>163</sup> City of Tempe Community Development Services Department, *General Plan 2020*, 41-45; "Historic Preservation Ordinance No. 95.35," Tempe City Code (November 9, 1995); Julia H. Miller, *A Layperson's Guide to Historic Preservation Law: A Survey of Federal, State, and Local Laws Governing Historic Preservation Protection*, (Washington, D.C.: The National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1997), 7-9; Johnson, "Historic Preservation," 21-32.

<sup>164</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 224, 322; "Historic Preservation Ordinance No. 95.35."

redevelopment processes. Many of these new policies introduced in the mid and late 1990s informed the preservation of historic properties in downtown. In particular, they shaped how Tempe political leaders, business leaders, developers, and preservation supporters cared for the Hayden Flour Mill.<sup>165</sup>

By 1997, the disappearance of agriculture in Tempe and the rise of the post-industrial economy caused the Bay State Milling Company to cease operations at the Hayden Flour Mill, Grain Elevator, and Silos, stimulating the subsequent degeneration of the property. The city's best known historic structures, responsible for Tempe's existence and early agricultural and commercial growth, had become obsolete. After its closure the Bay State Milling Company, local developers, and city leaders were unsure about how to proceed with these now seemingly useless structures that were once such an integral part of the local economy. Situated at the base of Tempe Butte at the southeast corner of Mill Avenue and Rio Salado Parkway, the highly visible HFM had begun to deteriorate and was becoming a blighting influence in increasingly vibrant downtown.<sup>166</sup>

By the late 1990s, Tempe's preservation efforts expanded considerably with the strategy. The historic preservation ordinance, the THPC, the historic preservation program, and the *Tempe Historic Preservation Plan* provided the city a more precise strategy for the care of the city's historic structures. It also demonstrated increasing municipal and citizen support for local

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<sup>165</sup> "Historic Preservation Plan," *City of Tempe, Arizona*, accessed March 2, 2014, <http://www.tempe.gov/index.aspx?page=1618>.

<sup>166</sup> "Landmark Tempe Mill to Shut Down," *The Arizona Daily Star*, March 30, 1997; Elvia Diaz, "Future of Hayden Flour Mill Raises Concern in Tempe," *Arizona Republic*, September 8, 1999.



history. Tempeans continued implementing the strategy to reinforce the historic character of downtown and aid in creating economic development.

### **The 2000s: Creating a Historic Destination**

Because of the advancements in preservation in the 1990s, historic preservation was given even greater emphasis within the redevelopment agenda after 2000. The revitalization of downtown and the completion of Tempe Town Lake offered new possibilities for the preservation and redevelopment of the Hayden Flour Mill. The 2012 opening of the Hayden Flour Mill as an event venue in downtown revealed larger public and private support of Tempe's history and desire to reuse the site. The pursuit of the historic preservation strategy in this period reinvigorated downtown as an attractive heritage tourism and historic destination.<sup>167</sup>

Much like the Rio Salado Project and the Tempe Center for the Arts, the Hayden Flour Mill suffered delays and challenges. These included the risk of the partial destruction of Tempe Butte, vagrancy, legal battles, and economic downturn. These difficulties continually impeded the rehabilitation of the structures.

One of the first challenges surfaced with the threat to Tempe Butte causing a backlash from some members of the preservation community and environmental conservation advocates. Encouraged by the construction of Tempe Town Lake and other downtown redevelopment, a new developer, MCW Holdings purchased the 7.5 acre property in 1999. The developer initially

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<sup>167</sup> Morley, *Historic Preservation*, 1-20; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 183-186, 221-225, 295-297, 317, 324-336; City of Tempe Community Development Department, *General Plan 2000*, 74; City of Tempe Community Development Services Department, *General Plan 2020*, 41-42; City of Tempe Community Development Services Department, *General Plan 2030*, 97-99, 119-120, 137, 143-144; City of Tempe, *University-Hayden Butte Amended Redevelopment Plan*, 3-18; Teaford, *The American Suburb*, 203; Isenberg, *Downtown America*, 6, 311, 315; Teaford, *Metropolitan Revolution*, 240-262; "Charter for the New Urbanism."

planned to preserve the pre-existing mill structures and redevelop the site into a mixed-use development, known as Hayden Ferry South, which would be composed of condominiums, office space, and retail space. Though originally allowed by City Council with specified height restrictions, these plans also called for retail and office development on the side of the Tempe Butte.

Both preservation advocates and other activists were skeptical of the developers intentions and opposed the plan for slightly different reasons. Members of the preservation community, including members of the THPC and the Tempe History Museum staff expressed ongoing concerns about the protection of the petroglyphs, other artifacts, and the Tempe Butte as an archeological and historic site. These individuals were also interested in preserving the Hayden Flour Mill and Silos, and backed the formation of a preservation plan. The Friends of the Butte, composed of ASU professors, senior citizens, Native Americans and other grassroots activists were concerned about the environmental and cultural significance of the site. They protested the proposed development on the butte and hoped to conserve it. The Friends of the Butte created a petition, secured 3,000 signatures, and asked the Tempe City Council to take action.<sup>168</sup>

Tempe political leaders, reacting to citizen concern for the protection of the Tempe Butte from encroaching development, rejected the developer's proposal. To ensure protection of the

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<sup>168</sup> Diaz, "Future of Hayden Flour Mill Raises Concern in Tempe"; Bob Petrie, "Hayden Butte Looks Nice, Smells Good," *Arizona Republic*, August 29, 2002; Elvia Diaz, "Lake Project Criticism Rises Proposal for 18-Story Building Riles Some Residents," *Arizona Republic*, September 29, 1999; Elvia Diaz, "Butte Project Height a Worry," *Arizona Republic*, August 22, 2000; Teresa L. Pinter, Don W. Ryden, and Victoria D. Vargas, *Hayden Flour Mill: Landscape, Economy, and Community Diversity in Tempe, Arizona*, Volume 3: *Hayden Flour Mill Historic Preservation Plan*, (Tempe: Archeological Consulting Services, 2008), 2-5.

site, they intervened and established the Hayden Butte Preserve in 2002. The city guaranteed a roughly \$12 million incentives package for infrastructure and tax abatements to MCW Holdings since the change prohibited development on the butte. The public's ability to persuade leaders to preserve and conserve the butte demonstrated the city's political culture and consideration for public input. It also showed the city's commitment to protecting Tempe's history, pre-history, and open space.<sup>169</sup>

In addition to the risk of severe alteration to Tempe Butte, issues of vagrancy and vandalism endangered the HFM and delayed its preservation. A fire set by transients destroyed some of the mill's interior as well as some of the existing milling machines in October of 2002. Luckily, the cast-in-place, reinforced concrete building was designed to be fire resistant thus suffering only minimal damage. These events postponed the redevelopment of the mill and were a clear indication that the neglected property required attention.<sup>170</sup>

Subsequent legal entanglements between the City of Tempe and MCW Holdings also impeded the preservation, designation, and reuse of the HFM. The city took the first tangible step in preserving the mill and purchased the property in 2003 when MCW Holdings was unable to meet development deadlines. Like the Peabody Hotel fiasco that occurred as part of the Rio Salado Project, the developers filed a lawsuit against the city. During the lawsuit, Mayor Hugh Hallman requested that the THPC designate the property to the THPR in March of 2005.

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<sup>169</sup> Pinter, Ryden, and Vargas, *Hayden Flour Mill: Landscape, Economy, and Community Diversity in Tempe, Arizona*, Volume 3: *Hayden Flour Mill Historic Preservation Plan*, 2-5; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 224, 314.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid, 2; Vargas et al., *Hayden Flour Mill: Landscape, Economy, and Community Diversity in Tempe*, Volume 1, 250; "Arson Suspected at Hayden Flour Mill Tempe Landmark Engulfed in Huge Fire," *Arizona Republic*, October 2, 2002; Nancy Clark-Puffer, "Landmark Mill Suffering Neglect," *Arizona Republic*, May 22, 2003.

However, fearing the designation could further complicate the lawsuit, leaders terminated this process in June of 2005. While the lawsuit ended in 2006, these events prevented any redevelopment efforts for the site from moving forward.<sup>171</sup>

Despite these challenges, Tempe leaders, determined to revive the HFM, used public-private collaboration to redevelop the mill by searching for a replacement developer. They succeeded in this, and transferred the HFM for development to a new developer, Avenue Communities between 2006 and 2007. The city continued to work with this developer to fund and redevelop the site.<sup>172</sup>

As the mill gained more attention and as Tempe political leaders collaborated with Avenue Communities, they also took another step in preserving the property by funding a large archeological, historical, and architectural study in 2006 of the Hayden Flour Mill Complex which included the mill, grain elevator and silos, along with the Hayden Ditch, Phoenix and Eastern Railroad, and the Tempe Butte. The city was awarded a \$340,000 grant from the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community to fund the study that was carried out primarily by Archeological Consulting Services (ACS), with assistance from the Tempe History Museum and the Tempe Historic Preservation Office. The research provided city leaders and staff with a three volume study which offered the historic and architectural context for the HFM and perhaps most significantly produced a *Hayden Flour Mill Historic Preservation Plan*. This plan, which relied

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<sup>171</sup> Alia Beard Rau, “Tempe Sued over Taking of Flour Mill Agreement Violated, Developer Says,” *Arizona Republic*, May 19, 2004; Pinter, Ryden, and Vargas, *Hayden Flour Mill: Landscape, Economy, and Community Diversity in Tempe, Arizona*, Volume 3: *Hayden Flour Mill Historic Preservation Plan*, 4-5.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid*, 10; Yara Georgann, “Flour Mill Project Has New Developer,” *Arizona Republic*, August 19, 2006; William Hermann, “Developers to Create Retail, Office Space at Historic Tempe Flour Mill,” *Arizona Republic*, November 22, 2006.

upon earlier Tempe preservation planning efforts, provided a framework for the future management and revitalization of the significant cultural and historic resources within the project area. It served to educate Tempe political leaders, developers, and citizens about responsible preservation planning, developer incentives, the benefits of heritage tourism, and site interpretation. This reflected increasing municipal support for the preservation of the HFM.<sup>173</sup>

During the ACS investigation, Avenue Communities continued collaborating and planning with the City of Tempe to sensitively redevelop the HFM. Between 2007 and 2008 Avenue Communities looked across the country for other successful examples of adaptive mill, grain elevator, and silo reuse projects. The proposed mixed-use redevelopment designs would have converted the silos into space for restaurants, retail stores, and offices, in addition to the construction of a five story glass building between the mill and silos. The rehabilitation plan was to retain the historic integrity of the structures and accentuate special features discovered during the ACS investigation.<sup>174</sup>

While these plans looked promising, the economic downturn of 2007 and 2008 again stymied the reuse of the HFM, presenting Tempe leaders with yet another challenge. The economic circumstances ended the most recent developer's plans halting redevelopment activity

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<sup>173</sup>Pinter, Ryden, and Vargas, *Hayden Flour Mill: Landscape, Economy, and Community Diversity in Tempe, Arizona*, Volume 3: *Hayden Flour Mill Historic Preservation Plan*, i-5, 9, 23; Katie Nelson, "Dig at Hayden Flour Mill to Turn up Relics," *Arizona Republic*, May 13, 2006; City of Tempe Community Development Services Department, *General Plan 2030*, 97-99.

<sup>174</sup> Ed Taylor, "Plans in Place for Hayden Flour Mill Revitalization: Modern Glass Addition Will Join Historic Tempe Structure," *McClatchy – Tribune Business News*, August 14, 2007; Garin Groff, "Restoration Plans for Tempe's Hayden Flour Mills Unveiled," *McClatchy – Tribune Business News*, March 26, 2008.

between 2008 and 2011. City leaders continued looking for a developer that would sensitively redevelop the site indicating their support for preserving the city's industrial heritage.<sup>175</sup>

By 2011, some Mill Avenue business leaders, concerned about the negative impact the neglected eyesore had on downtown, urged city leaders to take independent action and continue carrying out the historic preservation strategy. They encouraged city leaders to invest in the site by creating an events venue at the mill. City leaders, members of Downtown Tempe Community, Inc., and other business leaders began working together hoping these efforts would stimulate private development.<sup>176</sup>

The implementation of the historic preservation strategy between 2011 and 2012 prompted physical changes to the Hayden Flour Mill and its environs. Responding to the growth of tourism, retail, as well as requests from the business community, public and private actors collaborated to create an event venue. They decided to reinvest in the HFM displaying larger concerns about decline in downtown and direction of the city's growth.<sup>177</sup>

The realization of this plan required effective financing. The City of Tempe contributed \$70,000, while the Rio Salado Foundation raised \$600,000 from private donations. This financial support allowed for the initial rehabilitation of the HFM. The use of public-private

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<sup>175</sup> Dianna Nanez, "Battle Brewing Over Landmark Tempe Mill," *Arizona Republic*, April 1, 2012.

<sup>176</sup> Dianna Nanez, "Tempe Hayden Flour Mill to Reopen as Events Venue," *Arizona Republic*, June 6, 2011; Eddie Goita, "City's Embrace of Hayden Mill Effort is Exciting," *Arizona Republic*, July 27, 2011.

<sup>177</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 183-186, 300-311, 324-331.

funding for this project resembled the model used in many other redevelopment projects in downtown.<sup>178</sup>

Once they secured funding, the City of Tempe rejuvenated the HFM and grounds to make the historic resource more attractive and inviting. They added trees and other landscaping, as well as lighting to improve the natural environment. A lawn and stage were added on the north side of property. In addition, exterior sandblasting on the lower level, interpretive signage, and displays of some of the remaining milling equipment enhanced the aesthetic appeal of the property. These changes transformed the mill into a new community and event venue used for concerts and other cultural and business events. The mill opened for its first public tours in October of 2012.<sup>179</sup>

The completion of this project and the opening of the iconic Hayden Flour Mill were tangible results of the historic preservation strategy demonstrating the redirection of the city's growth and the application of new notions about revitalization. It indicated municipal support for the preservation of historic properties in downtown and the celebration of Tempe's diverse history and shared identity. The rejuvenation of the property made it more attractive to future private investors and the event venue presented new cultural and entertainment opportunities. The mill also served as the critical link between Tempe Town Lake and downtown encouraging

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<sup>178</sup> Nanez, "Tempe Hayden Flour Mill to Reopen as Events Venue"; "The Hayden Flour Mill," *The Rio Salado Foundation*, accessed March 4, 2014, [www.supportriosalado.org](http://www.supportriosalado.org); Dianna Nanez, "Old Hayden Flour Mill Comes to Life as Event Venue," *Arizona Republic*, October 11, 2012.

<sup>179</sup> "The Hayden Flour Mill"; Nanez, "Tempe Hayden Flour Mill to Reopen as Events Venue"; Mike Sunnucks, "Tempe's Hayden Flour Mill Set to Reopen," *Phoenix Business Journal*, May 11, 2012; Mandy Zajac, "Grand Opening Unveils Tempe's Historic Hayden Flour Mill as Event Venue," *East Valley Tribune*, October 3, 2012.

access to all venues. The preservation of this towering remnant of Tempe’s agricultural and industrial past aided in attracting tourists, businesses, and educated individuals the city reinforcing its role as a diverse, centralized historic destination. By the end of 2012, the preservation of Tempe’s distinct character including the HFM, supported economic development through tourism, and special events in addition to raising the quality of life for Tempeans.<sup>180</sup>

Between 1960 and 2012, Tempeans used effective planning and financing, strategic public-private partnerships, diverse citizen participation, and a modified vision of growth to preserve the city’s significant historic and pre-historic resources. Responding to different economic challenges and strengths, a changing intellectual climate, as well as local growth issues, they altered the historic preservation strategy by identifying, studying, designating, and rehabilitating key properties like the Hayden Flour Mill that exhibited certain aspects of Tempe’s history. Between the 1960s and 2012, Tempe leaders and citizens developed, expanded, and continually redefined their historic preservation strategy. The city’s support for the strategy, including reinvestment in the Hayden Flour Mill, and their commitment to broad public input in the preservation planning process indicated the evolution of Tempe’s unique political culture. By 2012, downtown became a successful attraction populated by Tempe’s rare architectural gems that helped to define the city’s character and identity, in addition to reinforcing economic

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<sup>180</sup> City of Tempe Community Development Services Department, *General Plan 2020*, 11, 41-45; *General Plan 2030*, 97-99, 119-120, 137, 143-144; Nanez, “Old Hayden Flour Mill Comes to Life as Event Venue”; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 221-229; Morrison Institute for Public Policy, “A Place for Art and Culture: A Maricopa County Overview,” ii-iii, 37-41; Rypkema, *The Economics of Historic Preservation*, 13, 25-26, 53, 62, 102, 77-78, 82; Nanez, “Battle Brewing Over Landmark Tempe Mill”.



diversity and revival. This suggested a complete shift in attitudes about the reuse of historic structures and about downtown since the 1960s.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 6-7, 183-186, 221-229, 295-337; Isenberg, *Downtown America*, 255-315; Morley, *Historic Preservation*, 1-20; City of Tempe, *University-Hayden Butte Amended Redevelopment Plan*, 3-18; Teaford, *Metropolitan Revolution*, 239-262.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION: TEMPE'S COMING OF AGE

Since Tempe's inception, political, business, and civic leaders and citizens pursued growth strategies to advance their economic and political interests. Carried out by public and private actors, these strategies depended on a myriad of economic, political, and cultural factors and encouraged Tempe's development. The strategies provided a framework for planning and development between the 1870s and 2012.

Implementing the first strategy guided Tempe's economic, political, cultural, and physical development for the first seventy years of its existence. Tempe leaders and citizens focused on expanding the town's economic base to include agriculture, commerce, and to some extent tourism. To do this, they worked to develop the town's transportation connectivity through a ferry over the Salt River, the railroad, and the automobile. At the same time, they took advantage of the regional water supply by using an irrigation system to facilitate agricultural and other economic growth. Municipal expansion provided the necessary political structure, functions, and services for supporting the town's development. These efforts stimulated changes in Tempe's built environment allowing for the rise of a small central business district to form around Mill Avenue. The strategy also contributed to Tempe's early support for modest cultural activities and some social institutions. During this period, Tempeans worked to make Tempe into a productive farming area, agricultural service center, and commercial corridor within the hinterland of Phoenix.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 6-9, 19, 27-29, 31, 71-72, 361-366; Vargas et al., *Hayden Flour Mill: Landscape, Economy, and Community Diversity in Tempe, Arizona*, Volume 1, 44, 59-61, 81-82, 95; Solliday, Tempe Historic Preservation Commission, and National Park Service, *Post World War II Subdivisions*, 7, 9.

Between 1940 and 1960, the second strategy shaped Tempe's growth allowing it to change from a small agricultural town and commercial corridor to a high tech suburb and education center. World War II presented new opportunities and relationships, and brought new residents into Tempe in search of new employment and educational prospects. The brief growth of agriculture after the war, the emergence of new electronics manufacturing, as well as a rise in retail and tourism resulted from these changes contributing to Tempe's postwar economic expansion. It also triggered a transition in the composition of the central business district. By 1960, agricultural businesses were replaced by retail and other service industry enterprises. Tempe's suburban growth in this period rested on the expansion of an effective local government. Political leaders reacted to new economic possibilities and population growth by intentionally annexing more land to foster extensive suburban commercial and residential development. The implementation of the second strategy altered the built environment by supporting growth outside of the CBD which hastened the decline of downtown. While this occurred, Arizona State University enticed educated and cultured workers to move to Tempe indicating some cultural advancement.<sup>183</sup>

After 1960, the third development strategy reflected many of the critical elements of the second strategy, but also signaled leader's new ambitions for making Tempe a high tech suburb. By the 1960s, Tempe was experiencing many unanticipated repercussions of rapid postwar growth, forcing leaders to formulate a vision for confronting these problems. Reacting to flooding, pollution, leapfrog development, and downtown decline, new ideas about downtown revitalization, and shifts in the Tempe and the Valley's economy, Tempe leaders and citizens

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<sup>183</sup> Ibid, 9-14, 41-47; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 6, 93-94, 141-143, 151-154, 171, 181, 363.

produced a redevelopment strategy that influence the economic, political, cultural, and physical development of the city as it transitioned from a suburb to a supersuburb by 1980.<sup>184</sup>

In the twenty years after 1960, Tempe, which was oriented toward Phoenix, continued to grow at a tremendously rapid rate. This contributed to the decline of downtown and other new challenges. By the mid-1960s, concerned citizens pushed political leaders to explore options for improving downtown. In 1967 the city produced Tempe's first general plan which included the early ideas for downtown and riverfront redevelopment. Tempe leaders decided to revitalize the CBD into a unique downtown in the early 1970s, and by 1973 they developed the initial plan for how to accomplish it. Consequently, the direction of Tempe's development began to shift and its character was influenced by this plan and its newly landlocked form.<sup>185</sup>

The redevelopment strategy reflected the original economic model used in the postwar period with some alterations. Tempe's landlocked condition prevented leaders from using annexation to further population growth, home construction, and the replenishment of the city's tax base. This new circumstance pushed Tempeans to search for alternative ways for producing tax revenues. Thus, out of necessity, Tempeans looked to employ this model and reclaim the riverbed and reinvest in and reuse land in downtown to foster sales and property taxes revenues, and elevate property values.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 221-225, 361-366; Abbott, *How Cities Won the West*, 225-228.

<sup>185</sup> City of Tempe Planning and Zoning Commission, Tempe City Council, *General Plan*, 12-15, 38, 50-51, 68; City of Tempe, *University-Hayden Butte Area 1 Redevelopment Plan*, 3-16; City of Tempe Planning Department, *General Plan 1978*, 38.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid*, 25, 29; Heim, "Border Wars," 831-833, 837-839.

The new strategy also reflected changes in the Valley's economy and the departure of traditional businesses from downtown. Between the 1960s and 1980s, the Valley's economic base expanded and diversified. Manufacturing, tourism, retail, and the construction industry increased considerably in this period. Tempe planned to revive downtown with these emerging strengths in mind, hoping to benefit from the transformation producing new possibilities.<sup>187</sup>

Effective planning, public-private cooperation, and citizen input were critical parts of the redevelopment strategy between 1960 and 1980. Faced with new challenges of growth, concerned citizens, especially MAMA, demanded a larger role in dictating the city's growth and this required city leaders to accommodate diverse public participation in the planning process through municipal commissions. These new developments demonstrated widening expectations the local government and its role in ameliorating the problems of downtown. This conscious effort by the city revealed public-private collaboration among diverse interest groups and Tempe's emerging political culture.<sup>188</sup>

The acceptance of a new path of growth for the city also indicated Tempe's political culture. Tempe political leaders and citizens consciously elected to have a distinct downtown and formed a plan to make it happen. The 1973 *University-Hayden Butte Redevelopment Plan* contained the initial goals for the commercial redevelopment of downtown. Though primarily focused on commercial ambitions, Tempeans also started supporting riverfront redevelopment, art and cultural activity, and historic preservation in their vision for downtown. In the 1970s,

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<sup>187</sup> City of Tempe Planning and Zoning Commission, Tempe City Council, and Van Cleve and Associates, *General Plan*, 18-19, 26-27; VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 298-299.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid*, 184-185, 221-225, 265-293; City of Tempe Planning and Zoning Commission, Tempe City Council, and Van Cleve and Associates, *General Plan*, 7, 70.

this multi-faceted redevelopment agenda replaced the postwar development strategy, enabling the city to grow in three new ways.<sup>189</sup>

The implementation of the redevelopment strategy reflected cultural interests and started to influence cultural activities in downtown. Grady Gammage Auditorium at ASU remained the Tempe's most sophisticated cultural institution fostering other cultural efforts in the arts in downtown and throughout the city in the early years. The best example of this was the Hayden Ferry Art and Crafts Festival. Though a small focus of the redevelopment strategy, initial municipal support for the arts in this period contributed to some cultural growth with institutions, festivals, cultural organizations, and the creation of Tempe's own identity which separated it from other East Valley cities.<sup>190</sup>

By 1980, the redevelopment vision began to transform Tempe's built environment. New cultural venues and other cultural attractions enhanced Tempe's appearance. Early reinvestment, rehabilitation, and designation of a few historic properties reinforced the historic character of downtown and economic revitalization. Since the commercial redevelopment of downtown was the primary objective in the early years, the riverbed was not changed at all in this period. These new developments attempted to broaden the function of downtown.

In the years after 1980, Tempe leaders and citizens built on the early revitalization efforts and reacted to yet another set of economic circumstances, the city's landlocked status and

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<sup>189</sup> Ibid, 12-15, 36, 38, 50-51, 62-66, 68; City of Tempe Planning Department, *General Plan 1978*, 25, 33, 38, 60; City of Tempe, *University-Hayden Butte Area 1 Redevelopment Plan*, 3-16; Morley, *Historic Preservation*, 4-5, 7-10; Mitchell, interview.

<sup>190</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 171, 221-225; City of Tempe Planning and Zoning Commission, Tempe City Council, and Van Cleve Associates, *General Plan*, 15, 50-52, 62-66; *General Plan 1978*, 13-15, 25, 33, 48; *University Hayden Butte Amended Redevelopment Plan*, 3-5; "ASU Dedicates New Auditorium"; Hayden Ferry Days, Outdoor Fair Very Successful; City of Tempe Planning Department, *General Plan 1978*, 16.

location, and a new intellectual climate, while continuing to mold and modify the redevelopment strategy to accommodate these alterations. Consistently diversifying their approach to downtown, they aggressively pursued riverfront redevelopment, art and culture, and historic preservation to foster economic development and vibrancy. These endeavors gained a much larger role in the redevelopment agenda in this period. Consequently, Tempe's economic, political, cultural, and physical development were shaped by the redevelopment strategies between 1980 and 2012.<sup>191</sup>

Many of the economic goals of the strategy between 1980s and 2012 resembled those of the 1960s and 1970s, but were adjusted for the Tempe's changing economy after 1980. The rapid increase in tourism and cultural tourism, retail, and finance in downtown presented many new possibilities for downtown, growing the tax base, and providing high paying jobs to residents. Similar to the earlier decades, Tempeans used effective financing for redevelopment by including CDBGs and other public and private funding in the form of bond issues, sales tax increases, and grants to fund the Rio Salado Project, the TCA, and the HFM.<sup>192</sup>

Citizen input and effective planning were central to the redevelopment strategy after 1980 as Tempe became a politically semi-independent city. Tempe citizens continued to demand a larger role in planning and Tempe leaders responded by allowing citizens to help shape and build

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<sup>191</sup> City of Tempe Community Development Services Department, *General Plan 2020*, 38, 41-45, 48, 54-55; City of Tempe Community Services Department, *General Plan 2030*, 97-99, 119-120, 137, 143-144, 215-218, 221-225; Abbott, *How Cities Won the West*, 225-228.

<sup>192</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 185-185, 300-313; City of Tempe Community Development Department, *General Plan 2000*, 75, 79; City of Tempe Community Development Department, *Rio Salado Development Plan*, 25; 39; City of Tempe Community Development Services Department, *General Plan 2020*, 33; City of Tempe Community Development Services Department, *General Plan 2030*, 125.

downtown as well as the rest of the city. Tempe leaders and citizens exhibited particular political behavior by embracing new planning policies for the Rio Salado Project, art and culture, and historic preservation that reoriented the city's growth. They voted in support of new growth policies and funding options for investing in these and other redevelopment projects revealing Tempe's political culture. The political culture manifested in slightly different ways in terms of leadership and public input with each strategy. Leader's endorsement the Rio Salado Project and their consistent efforts to find a financial model to make the lake a reality was a clear sign of this. The art and culture and historic preservation strategies most strongly reflected the city's attempt to accommodate diverse citizen participation. Responding to rising demand for art and cultural activity and increasing awareness of Tempe's history, the city included these strategies in the planning process carrying out a more all-encompassing vision for downtown by building the TCA, and saving the HFM.<sup>193</sup>

Building from the early support for culture in downtown by 1980, Tempe leader and citizens expanded their efforts to make Tempe vital a commercial center but also a cultural center between the 1980s and 2012. Grady Gammage Auditorium at ASU remained Tempe's most sophisticated cultural generator helping to encourage the arts and attract visitors to the city. Beginning in the 1980s, cultural promotion became a major focus in downtown. Art and cultural activity generated economic development and cultural planning. The city funded arts organizations, art and cultural fairs and other programming, and public art in downtown.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 183-186, 221-225, 265-293, 314-324, 365; City of Tempe Community Development Department, *Rio Salado Development Plan*, 54.

<sup>194</sup> City of Tempe Community Development Services Department, *General Plan 2030*, 137, 143-144, 221-225.



The redevelopment strategies changed downtown's form after 1980 by protecting some historic structures, producing large amounts of new development as well as open space. With Tempe's economic circumstances in mind, leaders and citizens cultivated new economic, entertainment, commercial, cultural, and recreational opportunities and revitalized downtown. They reinvested in and built new offices, hotels, condos, Tempe Town Lake, the TCA, and preserved the Hayden Flour Mill and other key historic structures.

By 2012, Tempe evolved into a mature supersuburb with a distinct redevelopment agenda. The nature of Tempe's development possessed urban and suburban characteristics, and its position in the multi-nodal, decentralized metropolis changed. While the rest of the metropolitan area continued to expand, downtown Tempe became more centrally located next to downtown Phoenix making it an appealing place to live and work. Affordable single-family detached homes, schools, parks, and shopping malls still populated much of the city indicative of its status as a suburb. Much more than a commercial district by 2012, downtown became a highly dense environment offering urban functions and services, as well as educational and employment opportunities. New diverse recreational, cultural, entertainment, commercial, and historic attractions and amenities were a direct result of the redevelopment vision and set Tempe apart from the rest of the Valley. In this way, Tempe Town Lake, the TCA, the HFM, new construction, and the light rail made Tempe stand out as a dynamic, accessible, and desirable urban destination with a unique character. The completion of these projects symbolized Tempe's coming of age, a celebration of its rich history, and its economic vibrancy. Tempe developed a

distinct identity as a small supersuburb in the Valley with a lake, a major university, rare historic structures, and cultural activity.<sup>195</sup>

Economic impact and visitation demonstrated the success of all three strategies in reviving downtown. By 2012, Tempe Town Lake was visited by 2.7 million people from across the Valley every year generating an economic impact of \$166 million from events and a net revenue of \$557.5 million indicating the economic success of the project. Revenue generated by the Tempe Festival of the Arts and visitation to the TCA showed that the art and culture strategy too, was successful. These festivals generated substantial economic impact for the city through retail revenues and sales tax, and by 2009 the spring festival alone produced \$2.1 million in art sales. By 2012, the biannual events attracted nearly 225,000 visitors to downtown Tempe suggesting the return of economic vitality in downtown. In addition, the Tempe Center for the Arts averaged 125,000 visitors a year by 2012. The preservation of the city's historic structures fostered the least amount of economic development, but helped stabilize downtown and generate tax revenues. This included designated historic commercial properties in downtown that were rehabilitated and by 2012 still housed businesses and restaurants. Even non-designated historic structures like the Hayden Flour Mill and Silos supported Tempe's historic character and

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<sup>195</sup> VanderMeer, *Desert Visions*, 185-189, 221-225, 228-229; Abbott, *How Cities Won the West*, 225-228; Teaford, *The American Suburb*, 79-98; Lang and LeFurgy, *Boomburbs*, Vii-ix, 1-21, 144-161, 173-174; City of Tempe Community Development Services Department, *General Plan 2020*, 6, 29-32; City of Tempe Community Development Services Department, *General Plan 2030*, 125, 137, 143-144; "Which City Has the Most Vibrant Downtown, and What Makes it That Way?" *Arizona Republic*, January 8, 2011; Mike Branom, Mill Avenue Makes List of Country's Top 10 Great Streets," *McClatchy – Tribune Business News*, October 9, 2008; "Downtown Tempe's Lesson: Find your Soul," *Arizona Republic*, July 25, 2009; Dianna Nanez, "Tempe Has Mined Redevelopment Gold," *Arizona Republic*, March 26, 2011.

encouraged heritage tourism. Though historic preservation had the smallest impact, it was still a successful and important strategy for downtown revitalization.<sup>196</sup>

Over the course of Tempe's history the central business district continually evolved and functioned in new ways. This ongoing process reflected the diverse ideas and interests of Tempe political, business, and civic leaders as well as citizens, and the various stakeholders that inevitably influenced what downtown became at different increments of time. Downtown was subject to changing interconnected economic, political and cultural forces, but it always remained the heart of the city.<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> City of Tempe Community Development Services Department, *General Plan 2030*, 119-120, 143-144, 209-212, 215-218, 221-225; "Tempe Town Lake by the Numbers 2012"; Nanez, "Beauty in a Bad Economy"; Jennifer McClellan, "Tempe Arts Festivals by the Numbers," *Arizona Republic*, March 25, 2010; "Downtown Tempe Community, Inc"; Christine M. Dwyer, and Kelly Ann Beavers, "Economic Vitality: How the Arts and Culture Sector Catalyzes Economic Vitality," *American Planning Association*, (Chicago: American Planning Association, 2011); Lisa Nicta, "Arts Center to Celebrate 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Saturday," *Arizona Republic*, September 5, 2012; Donovan Rypkema, Caroline Cheong, and Randall Mason, "Measuring Economic Impacts of Historic Preservation: A Report to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, November 2011," accessed March 1, 2014, [http://www.placeeconomics.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/economic-impacts-of-hp\\_execsummary.pdf](http://www.placeeconomics.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/economic-impacts-of-hp_execsummary.pdf); Morrison Institute for Public Policy, "A Place for Art and Culture: A Maricopa County Overview," 37-41.

<sup>197</sup> Fogelson, *Downtown*, 1-8, 395-398; Isenberg, *Downtown America*, 1-12, 311-317.

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