



TEMPE CHAMBER
— of COMMERCE —

TEMPE CHAMBER Local Policy Agenda 2021



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

The City continues to make progress in its implementation of adaptive reuse and fast-track programs. We believe that the next steps should include:

- Encouraging development of sustainable projects through accelerated City approval and reduced fees.
- Implementing on-line plan review to both streamline processes and help clear up misunderstandings.
- Reviewing and issuing permits based only on matters directly related to the permit.
- Basing fees on actual costs of providing services and not based on the fees of surrounding communities.
- Provide better communications to businesses affected by construction in adjacent right-of-ways. More specific business signage for lengthy street construction projects should be standard.
- Implement form-based code.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Tempe has an environment that attracts new businesses and encourages business growth. However, increasing focus on social-issue mandates that place Tempe businesses at a disadvantage to those in neighboring communities both economically and environmentally. We need to ensure that existing businesses remain competitive and grow in Tempe, by anticipating and addressing their future needs thereby enhancing revenue to the City.

Recognizing the growth opportunity for Tempe, the City should:

- Create a comprehensive economic development plan with both short and long-term components that recognizes the value of small businesses.
- Include the Chamber's leadership team with incoming businesses to discuss the local business climate from the private sector side.
- Support the Chamber in a focused regional business retention and expansion program.
- Work with the Chamber as a resource to support businesses disrupted by public works projects.

PROCUREMENT

The City has done a good job in reaching out to area businesses for products and services. In order to engage even more businesses, the City should:

- Review any changes in City procurement requirements for budgetary impact and potential barriers to entry for small business.

- Simplify procurement processes to make the rules clear and make it easier for local small businesses to navigate.

- Avoid additions to the procurement process that will drive away bidders and decrease competition.
- End apprenticeship requirement practices as part of development agreements or procurement solicitations.

REGULATIONS

Businesses respect and will comply with regulations that make sense. To stimulate growth in the City in a way that meets the needs of all the constituents in the City:

- Regulations should undergo regular review for relevance.
- Cost/benefit considerations should be made early in the process of developing new or updating existing regulations.
- Programs and regulations should encourage, not mandate behavior.
- Mandates on employee compensation should not place Tempe businesses at an economic disadvantage Valley-wide.
- Work with the Chamber on all proposed regulation(s) that may impact the business community.
- Strongly opposes an additional business registration.

ELECTIONS

The Tempe Chamber opposes local publicly funded elections.

SIGNAGE

Signs are important to economic vitality. As the City grows and changes it is important to ensure the sign ordinance is appropriate for businesses and residents and takes into consideration the environment in which the sign will be seen.

TAXES

Tax levels should be based on sound planning and economic principles. Tax levels should be reasonable to continue necessary infrastructure support and maintain and enhance this great city.

- Continue the policy to stabilize the proceeds of the property tax by setting the tax levy and annually adjusting for CPI, which results in relatively minimal and consistent change to the actual amount paid by property owners.
- Any tax increase should be considered as a last resort for meeting the City's financial obligations. Program

right-sizing, hiring freezes, asset divestiture, and privatization of certain services should be considered first amid the COVID-19 economy.

TRANSPARENT GOVERNMENT

The Tempe City Council needs to be applauded for its steps toward a transparent council committee process. Transparent government works best for the people it serves.

TRANSPORTATION

A modern multi-modal transportation system that connects regionally and locally enables Tempe businesses to effectively compete in a market with increasing demands for on-time delivery of goods and services, and maintain a local employee base. It is a selling point in attracting and retaining businesses. As economic plans are developed, transportation considerations must be made early in the process.

- Development in Downtown Tempe will result in major increases in traffic on SR 202, Rural Road and downtown streets. We must plan now for future alternatives.
- Continue to improve neighborhood circulator routes and frequency of other routes throughout Tempe that are important to provide connectivity for employment, shopping, entertainment and special events.
- Bus Rapid Transit meeting federal definitions for funding should be advanced on major Tempe arterials.
- All transit service decisions should focus on high-efficacy routes, encourage private development, and concentrate on providing quality routes rather than spreading poor service broadly.
- Improvements in pedestrian environments and connectivity should be continued.
- Engage ADOT and other transportation stakeholders to discuss solutions to existing and future traffic congestion along Rio Salado from Priest Drive to Mesa.
- Encourage the use of technology in transportation solutions.
- Continue to work with the City of Mesa to develop effective streetcar connectivity between Downtown Tempe and Mesa Riverview.
- In preparation for the reauthorization of the regional transportation plan, the City should work with the Tempe Chamber on the inclusion of specific projects since lobbying will be necessary.