

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 by business owners.
- Reviewing and issuing permits based only on matters directly related to the permit. Businesses should not be mandated to pay for improvements outside the scope of the permit.
- Basing fees on actual costs of providing services and not based on the fees of surrounding communities.
- Providing regular construction updates on the City's website, much like the updates by ADOT, to 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.
- Requiring that costs which result from errors in communication, planning and development be borne by the entity making the error.
- Considering implementation of form-based code in the development of appropriate character areas.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The City has provided the environment that attracts new businesses and encourages business growth, but increasing focus on economically unviable social-issue mandates will place Tempe businesses at a disadvantage to those in neighboring communities. We need to ensure that existing businesses remain competitive and grow in Tempe by anticipating and addressing their future needs.

Recognizing the growth opportunity for Tempe, the City should:

- Create a comprehensive economic development plan with both short and long-term components.
- Leverage the Chamber's leadership team during negotiations 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.
- Partner with the Chamber to support businesses disrupted by public works projects.

ELECTIONS

The Tempe Chamber opposes local publicly funded elections.

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.
- Streamline 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.

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.
- Consult the Chamber on any proposed regulation(s) that may impact the business community.

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.
- Explore private-sector solutions for operating and marketing the Tempe Center for the Arts prior to any efforts to reauthorize tax funding.
- Careful review of financing and operation options for city parks is necessary prior to any decision being made to fund them through increased taxes.

TRANSPARENT GOVERNMENT

An open and transparent government is one that works best for the people it serves. The City of Tempe should strive to provide an unprecedented level of openness maximum responsible disclosure.

- The City of Tempe should immediately begin posting the notices, agendas and outcomes of City Council Working Groups.
- The City of Tempe should work to improve its website for disability compliance and transparency.

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.

- Dense economic 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.
- The Tempe streetcar should use the most economically sensible methods of propulsion and vehicle size and should not include technologies that have not been adequately tested and operated in commercial production, especially for the climatic conditions of the Southwest.
- The addition of neighborhood circulator routes throughout Tempe are important to provide city 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.
- Planning work for high-capacity transit in preparation for inclusion in the update of the regional transportation plan should begin immediately.
- 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.
- Engage the City of Mesa about streetcar connectivity between Downtown Tempe and Mesa Riverview.

The Tempe Chamber of Commerce represents more than 650 businesses who employ nearly 70,000 people. For more than a century, the Tempe Chamber has been dedicated to sustaining Tempe's quality of life and keeping our community and economy vibrant. The Tempe Chamber develops policy on key federal, state and local issues and influences legislation and other public policy decisions. The Tempe Chamber creates a strong voice for the Tempe business community, improves and enhances the business climate, and furthers Tempe's quality of life through a strong economy.