
CHAPTER 3

ACTION PLAN

Action Plan

Category I: General Redevelopment

GOAL 1: Promote the revitalization of downtown Chandler and surrounding neighborhoods through sound land use planning, financial investment, coordination between various groups and agencies, neighborhood preservation/conservation, and strategies for economic development.

Strategy

Support and facilitate an organization that will assume a strong leadership role in defining, broadening, and coordinating the efforts of the various groups, businesses, property owners, and neighborhoods involved in downtown planning activities. Currently, the presiding organization involved in this type of activity is the Downtown Business Association (DBA).

Action Step

1) In order to coordinate and expedite downtown redevelopment objectives, the City should assist in the formation of a working group represented by all appropriate groups and interests involved in downtown planning efforts, such as, representatives of the DBA, City, Redevelopment Advisory Committee (RAC), Redevelopment Area neighborhood groups, etc. to help define the structure, specific responsibilities, and mission of the coordinating organization. Potential funding sources such as civic and corporate endowments would also be targeted.

Timeframe: The framework of the organization should be in place by November 1, 1995. Implementation should occur immediately thereafter.

Responsibility: The City of Chandler, Downtown Business Association, and the Redevelopment Advisory Committee in close coordination with other affected and interested groups.

Discussion: Currently, there exists groups with overlapping or competing interests in downtown revitalization. Assisting the Downtown Business Association to function as a centralized and focused entity will help determine action step priorities and provide coordination between interested agencies and groups. This will serve to facilitate implementation of downtown redevelopment objectives.

Strategy

Attract new businesses, employers, offices, and housing to the downtown area.

Action Step

2) Continue to promote and expand the City's EDGE loan program, Enterprise Zone, Small Business Resource Center, as well as the resources and assistance available from the City's Planning, Economic, and Housing/Redevelopment Divisions. All available financial and non-financial resources should be utilized to attract new redevelopment projects and ventures, as well as employers, retail users, and small businesses.

Timeframe: On-going; status of these programs will be evaluated on an annual basis, with regular updates provided to Redevelopment Advisory Committee and the City Council. A financial status report will be presented to RAC in August.

Responsibility: City of Chandler.

3) Facilitate desired redevelopment projects by accommodating parking allowances, providing financial and non-financial incentives, approving density/intensity bonuses, project assistance, neighborhood communication/mediation, and assistance in land assemblages where necessary.

Timeframe: On-going.

Responsibility: City of Chandler, property owners and developers, Redevelopment Advisory Committee.

Discussion: The City should play an active, frontline role in the redevelopment process and consider a number of non-financial resources to expedite redevelopment proposals, organize neighborhood involvement in the planning process, and facilitate property assembling and acquisition. Construction of infrastructure is another key area of potential contribution. The use of eminent domain powers should be used as a final resort to acquire small remnant or problematic parcels.

Other Recommendations

4) Conduct an annual assessment of needed infrastructure improvements in the downtown

Timeframe: On-going.

Responsibility: Public Works Department.

5) Target certain neighborhoods for programs such as the Pride in Chandler Program to help eliminate substandard property conditions in neighborhoods near the city center.

Timeframe: On-going.

Responsibility: Planning Services. Neighborhood associations.

Discussion: The stability and longevity of the area's older neighborhoods are crucial to successful redevelopment. Sustainable, healthy neighborhoods in the downtown can provide safe, affordable housing for families, bring more people to the area, and enhance the area's image. More neighborhood involvement increases neighborhood awareness, pride, and a sense of security.

GOAL 2: **Develop Downtown Chandler as the community's cultural, civic, business, and activity center. To accomplish this vision, downtown should be developed as a diverse, balanced community attracting people to live, work, shop, play, and gather.**

Strategy

Prepare land use plans for the downtown area that provide a balanced mix of land uses for additional commercial, employment, housing, and recreation in the downtown.

Action Steps

- 6) Prepare redevelopment recommendations and strategies for individual planning districts based upon the resources, issues, and common problems of each district.

- 7) Prepare area plans in conjunction with proposed redevelopment proposals. These plans and associated zoning actions should involve the Redevelopment Advisory Committee during the initial planning process prior to public hearings by the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council.

- 8) Identify key areas for potential land assemblages and redevelopment - involve land owners in the planning and potential development of vacant or non-conforming land uses.

Timeframe: Immediate or as development proposals are submitted.

Responsibility: City of Chandler, Redevelopment Advisory Committee.

- 9) Promote the Gateway Area Plan for the area north of the San Marcos Resort and A.J. Chandler Memorial Park. The plan establishes conceptual land uses and reflects a commitment from the City to assist in the redevelopment of this area.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

Responsibility: City of Chandler, property owners.

Discussion: This area represents a prime opportunity to provide for a “gateway” environment of high quality shops, restaurants, large retail or department stores, and outdoor gathering areas. It's strategic location affords an opportunity to expand the central business core to Chandler Blvd., enhancing the business area's visibility and exposure. Projects that provide “connectivity” are much more valuable than scattered redevelopment sites. Establishments providing a high level of activity and choices will bring people downtown and provide a fun place to visit. The plan should provide for intersection landscape treatments and a strong, physical pedestrian link/connection to the Chandler Center for the Arts. Zoning of the area should coincide with a user-driven proposal for one or more of the phases.

10) The Downtown's transportation system should be improved to include additional parking and bike lanes, and access to commuter rail, and special needs transportation. Additionally, the City should adopt the MAG Pedestrian Policies and Design Guidelines.

Timeframe: On-going. In conjunction with project proposals.

Responsibility: City of Chandler.

Discussion: Adequate parking and access to different kinds of transportation are critical to the downtown area. Not only would expanded transportation opportunities encourage more people to visit the downtown, they would also allow greater freedom for people in nearby neighborhoods who rely on walking as a matter of necessity. Parking, high density and underground parking facilities are highly preferred over surface parking lots.

11) Initiate a separate zoning district or PAD overlay zone for the central business district in order to match zoning provisions to the characteristics of the area. This zone would also establish appropriate standards for parcels that are substandard in size and configuration. This district should also include nearby neighborhoods and employment areas adjacent to the central business district.

Timeframe: Initiate by May, 1995.

Responsibility: City of Chandler.

Other Recommendations

12) Areas suited for new housing should be identified and preserved for residential expansion. Housing provided on the upper floors of multi-story office buildings is encouraged.

13) The City should encourage other governmental agencies to locate branch offices and annexes downtown, as well as other professional office users to complement the concentration of civic functions along the Commonwealth Mall. Ground floor retail or shops are appropriate.

14) Prepare a southern "gateway" plan for the area south of the City Center that includes a land use plan for the area between the Redevelopment Area and the proposed interchange of the San Tan Outer Loop Freeway.

15) Encourage the development of a museum of industry, technology, and heritage in the downtown area.

Category II: Business and Economic Development

GOAL 3: The downtown should provide a viable mix of commercial retail, service, leisure/entertainment establishments, and office/industrial employers to serve as an active destination point for residents, visitors, and employees.

Strategy

Promote new retail development, new industry and employers, and the expansion and retention of existing businesses and services. In addition, assist small business development and expansion.

Focus on the development of a range of high quality leisure and entertainment oriented establishments, restaurants, pubs, cafes, and other high exposure and appealing service establishments that attract customers and create a festive atmosphere as well as an active nightlife.

Action Steps

1) Prepare a comprehensive market study to assess potentially underserved and strategic commercial markets that could be expanded to serve the downtown and enhance the area's level of business activity. Emphasis should be placed on the viability of users serving community-wide and regional markets, as well as tourism, such as department, discount/outlet stores, movie theaters, and discount/outlet stores. A recruitment plan should follow.

Timeframe: Commence by December, 1995.

Responsibility: City of Chandler, Downtown Business Association, Redevelopment Advisory Committee.

Action Plan

2) Attract new businesses, employers, and offices to locate in the downtown. Emphasize the need and importance of small businesses in the downtown.

Timeframe: On-going. Coordinate with existing economic development activities and programs directed at retail and industrial recruitment.

Responsibility: City of Chandler, Chamber of Commerce. Industrial Development Authority.

Discussion: The City and other groups can do a number of things to help business and employment expansion downtown. In close coordination with the City's economic development programs, a number of actions can be combined in order to implement a focused downtown business development plan. The City should work with other groups and organizations to provide resources through the following:

- The development of a public relations and advertising campaign to improve the identity, public perception, and community awareness of the downtown.
- Current information reflecting market conditions, demographic projections, available City assistance, and potential financial sources for business development.
- A complete and current inventory of all federal, State, regional, County and local programs and funding sources that can be used to assist or finance the development of downtown businesses.

- Financial and non-financial **incentives** such as but not limited to zoning intensity or density bonuses, parking allowances, zoning variances, City participation in infrastructure development/upgrade, expedited plan processing, possible waiver or reduction of some development fees, sales tax rebates, and additional economic incentives such as those offered in association with the City's EDGE and Enterprise Zone programs, and the **Small Business Resource Center**. City staff assistance is also available to assist in meetings with property owners, contacts with the development community, and coordination of applicable and available resources. Community Development Block Grants which can be used to assist in the acquisition or clearance of properties for eligible redevelopment projects.
- Chandler Industrial Development Authority participation in the issue of private activity bonds.
- Information on the availability of industrial parcels and business parks and potential office building locations in the downtown area.
- Publication and distribution of a brochure to inform potential businesses of the wide range of programs and available services, technical services, and potential financial resources as described.

In the near term, Chandler should work with the Chamber of Commerce to attract additional conferences, meetings, and conventions. The City will also cooperate in the development or expansion of downtown festivals and special events. Current market information sources indicate that a broad range of various financial services and certain other services are underrepresented in the community. These services include stock/security brokerage, finance, and insurance firms, apparel and accessory stores, restaurants, and specialty retailers. These types of markets are well suited in downtown locations. Since there is considerable spending "leakage" in these sectors, the City should selectively target and pursue proprietors of these establishments to locate downtown.

Strategy

Help provide additional jobs for downtown residents by affirmatively promoting existing programs and resources, coordinating this action step with the resources of other agencies and contacts, and improving communication with area residents about the availability of these programs and opportunities.

Action Step

3) Create an outreach function and liaison to assist in the improvement of the incentives available in the City's Enterprise Zone, promote the pending Job Training Partnership Act, and work closely with the Arizona State Job Service. Assist with other measures aimed at providing additional jobs and small business assistance programs and improve communication channels with local (downtown residents) through churches and other social service agencies. Encourage the location of service establishments and other businesses who can employ neighborhood residents in the Redevelopment Area.

Timeframe: Current and on-going.

Responsibility: City administrative support and affected social service agencies.

Category III: Land Use and Neighborhoods

GOAL 4: Maintain stable, viable neighborhoods in the residential areas of the downtown and utilize sound land use planning principles to accomplish the vision of the downtown as a diverse community of many uses.

Strategy

Provide specific guidance in the Redevelopment Plan for land use locations and intensities. These guidelines should discourage land use and zoning conflicts, and provide for safe, viable neighborhoods and adequate neighborhood services and features.

Action Steps

1) Use the 1987 Downtown Redevelopment Area Plan as the general guide for land use decisions concerning location and intensity.

Timeframe: On-going; continue to prepare specific area plans for strategic redevelopment areas.

Responsibility: City administrative support. Private investors and property owners.

2) Continue single-family in-fill construction and rehabilitation on a lot-by-lot basis. For larger, undeveloped areas, identify and encourage new medium density housing in order to provide a mix of housing opportunities within or near the city center.

Timeframe: Current and on-going

Responsibility: Federal government, City of Chandler, affiliated charities, non-profits, and local builders.

3) Proactively administer and enforce City neighborhood maintenance codes and standards to upgrade deteriorating areas and properties to maintain neighborhood longevity and stability. Selecting areas for participation in Chandler's Neighborhood Pride Program can implement these objectives in a positive, participatory way.

Timeframe: On-going.

Responsibility: Neighborhood Services Division. Neighborhood groups and associations.

Discussion: New home construction or rehabilitation and the implementation of neighborhood maintenance standards can improve community pride, foster development momentum and sustainability, and reduce or eliminate blight conditions. There are many platted lots in South Chandler neighborhoods that can support new home construction. The City should promote new construction to enhance the stability and appearance of these areas. Closely related to this is the importance of enforcing City Codes to eliminate substandard conditions and zoning violations.

4) Develop an inventory of substandard housing units in the Redevelopment Area for potential demolition projects in order to assess and determine future Community Development Block Grant allocation needs for this purpose.

Timeframe: Initiate by July 1, 1995.

Responsibility: City of Chandler Housing and Redevelopment Division.

5) Implement the land use plan by approving only those rezoning requests that conform to the Redevelopment Plan and contribute to the immediate area in a positive manner. Some specified uses such as schools, playgrounds, churches and other neighborhood services such as daycare and senior care homes can be considered in residential areas on an individual basis.

Timeframe: On-going; assess in conjunction with rezoning and Use Permit applications.

Responsibility: City of Chandler, Redevelopment Advisory Committee, Planning and Zoning Commission.

6) A specific land use and redevelopment plan should be initiated to provide a mixed-use district for the industrial area situated along S. Washington St. between Boston and Elgin Streets. The plan should also address the reuse of the Municipal Operations Yard and the problem of land use conflicts resulting from heavy industrial and fabrication operations.

Timeframe: Initiate by Fall, 1995.

Responsibility: City of Chandler, property owners.

7) Establish a new City program with a new position to conduct building (housing) code inspections for properties in the Redevelopment Area to assure that property investors/owners maintain these structures in decent and safe condition. This will help eliminate substandard building and prevent further structural deterioration in the Redevelopment Area.

Timeframe: July 1, 1996.

Responsibility: City of Chandler.

Category IV: Environment and Appearance

GOAL 5: Create and maintain a strong identity for the Downtown that reflects the City's historical, cultural, and architectural influences.

Strategy

Create a strong design theme for the downtown area that provides a comprehensive urban design framework for new and existing developed areas.

Action Steps

1) Prepare development guidelines that reflect the following conditions:

- Maintain the early twentieth century architectural influences in new construction and facade improvements of existing buildings.
- Provide covered or shaded walkways and plaza-like openings in front of building entrances.

Utilize environmental design techniques to make common and open spaces highly observable and less susceptible to criminal activity. Solicit input from the Chandler Police Department.

- Provide unified landscape themes, street furniture, water features, and places for pedestrians to gather or rest.

Timeframe: Initiate preparation of a comprehensive set of design recommendations by September 1995.

Responsibility: City of Chandler.

2) Enhance the appearance of the downtown strip commercial areas by incorporating new or upgraded landscape treatments, streetscape improvements, and landscaped building setback areas.

Timeframe: On-going in conjunction with new construction, additions, and rezoning requests.

Responsibility: City of Chandler.

GOAL 6: Capitalize upon downtown's primary physical attributes, features, and landmarks.

Strategy

Provide strong linkages connecting the Commonwealth Mall, San Marcos Resort, A.J. Chandler Memorial park, and the historic business plaza.

Action Steps

3) Support the implementation of an area plan that creates a strong “gateway” entrance into the City Center at the intersection of Arizona Avenue and Chandler Boulevard.

Timeframe: In conjunction with the adoption of the Downtown Area Gateway masterplan and future zoning actions that specify required improvements.

Responsibility: City of Chandler, participating developer.

4) Provide for a strong pedestrian system linking important activity areas within the downtown and to facilitate walking as a primary means of transportation. Emphasis should be placed on providing a safe, functional walkway connection(s) between the business area and the Chandler Center for the Arts. This connection should be part of a larger, planned network of pedestrian walks located to serve points throughout the activity area. Bicycle lanes should be provided on downtown streets.

Strategy

Make the A.J. Memorial Park more user-friendly to increase it's level of everyday use.

Action Step

5) Consider a specific plan for the park to incorporate additional features such as gazebos or a small band shell, gathering places, and other improvements designed to make the park more attractive for everyday use. Also expand the number and scope of outdoor events in the park such as the Farmer's Market, art shows, concerts, and other activities that attract people.

Timeframe: Initiate and approach the Parks and Recreation Board by Summer, 1995.

Responsibility: City of Chandler.

Category V: Management and Implementation

GOAL 7: The City in cooperation with other community groups should commit to a sustainable and consistent redevelopment effort to assure the delivery of timely, appropriate, and realistic solutions to achieve Chandler's redevelopment goals.

Strategy

Initiate a procedure to coordinate the activities of established groups and programs that can participate in financial assistance, management, information sharing, and shared resources. Keep residents and property owners informed and involved in redevelopment planning efforts.

Action Steps

1) Establish a program to allow neighborhood groups or associations to meet periodically with the Redevelopment Advisory Committee to exchange information and solve problems associated with conditions in the Redevelopment Area.

Timeframe: Initiate by December, 1995.

Responsibility: City of Chandler, Redevelopment Advisory Committee.

2) Keep the Redevelopment Plan current to address changing conditions and opportunities. This includes an annual assessment of redevelopment implementation progress.

Timeframe: July 1, 1996. Annual status report to the City Council and the Redevelopment Advisory Committee.

Responsibility: City Housing and Redevelopment Division, Redevelopment Advisory Committee.

3) Initiate an effort to assess the advisability of expanding the current redevelopment area boundaries to include some residential neighborhoods and strategic areas north of Chandler Boulevard, both east and west of Arizona Avenue.

Timeframe: Initiate by the December, 1995.

Responsibility: Redevelopment Advisory Committee, citizens and neighborhood associations.

Discussion: Expansion of the redevelopment area boundaries could potentially benefit some older, residential areas by directing resources and other specific actions to improve areas exhibiting blighted or deteriorating neighborhood conditions; however, this study would constitute a separate action, and would depend heavily on the documentation of specific conditions required by law, neighborhood involvement, and the availability of resources that could be directed without diverting progress from other participating neighborhoods.

4) Neighborhood involvement and input should be solicited in conjunction with all requests to rezone property, for use permits, or to approve specific plans or policies affecting downtown land use.

Timeframe: On-going. In conjunction with each application, sufficient notice will be given to allow time for neighborhoods to review and comment.

Responsibility: City of Chandler.