

# Downtown Tucson Arizona

November 17–22, 2013



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Working Together to Revitalize Downtown

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# About the Urban Land Institute

**THE MISSION OF THE URBAN LAND INSTITUTE** is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. ULI is committed to

- Bringing together leaders from across the fields of real estate and land use policy to exchange best practices and serve community needs;
- Fostering collaboration within and beyond ULI's membership through mentoring, dialogue, and problem solving;
- Exploring issues of urbanization, conservation, regeneration, land use, capital formation, and sustainable development;
- Advancing land use policies and design practices that respect the uniqueness of both the built and natural environments;
- Sharing knowledge through education, applied research, publishing, and electronic media; and

- Sustaining a diverse global network of local practice and advisory efforts that address current and future challenges.

Established in 1936, the Institute today has more than 30,000 members worldwide, representing the entire spectrum of the land use and development disciplines. Professionals represented include developers, builders, property owners, investors, architects, public officials, planners, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, academics, students, and librarians.

ULI relies heavily on the experience of its members. It is through member involvement and information resources that ULI has been able to set standards of excellence in development practice. The Institute has long been recognized as one of the world's most respected and widely quoted sources of objective information on urban planning, growth, and development.

Cover photo: city of Tucson.

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# About ULI Advisory Services

**THE GOAL OF ULI'S ADVISORY SERVICES** program is to bring the finest expertise in the real estate field to bear on complex land use planning and development projects, programs, and policies. Since 1947, this program has assembled well over 400 ULI-member teams to help sponsors find creative, practical solutions for issues such as downtown redevelopment, land management strategies, evaluation of development potential, growth management, community revitalization, brownfield redevelopment, military base reuse, provision of low-cost and affordable housing, and asset management strategies, among other matters. A wide variety of public, private, and nonprofit organizations have contracted for ULI's advisory services.

Each panel team is composed of highly qualified professionals who volunteer their time to ULI. They are chosen for their knowledge of the panel topic and screened to ensure their objectivity. ULI's interdisciplinary panel teams provide a holistic look at development problems. A respected ULI member who has previous panel experience chairs each panel.

The agenda for a five-day panel assignment is intensive. It includes an in-depth briefing day composed of a tour of the site and meetings with sponsor representatives; a day of hour-long interviews of typically 50 to 75 key community representatives; and two days of formulating recommendations. Long nights of discussion precede the panel's conclusions. On the final day on site, the panel makes an oral presentation of its findings and conclusions to the sponsor. A written report is prepared and published.

Because the sponsoring entities are responsible for significant preparation before the panel's visit, including sending extensive briefing materials to each member and arranging for the panel to meet with local community members and stakeholders in the project under consideration, partici-

pants in ULI's five-day panel assignments are able to make accurate assessments of a sponsor's issues and to provide recommendations in a compressed amount of time.

A major strength of the program is ULI's unique ability to draw on the knowledge and expertise of its members, including land developers and owners, public officials, academics, representatives of financial institutions, and others. In fulfillment of the mission of the Urban Land Institute, this Advisory Services panel report is intended to provide objective advice that will promote the responsible use of land to enhance the environment.

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# Acknowledgments

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# Background and the Panel's Assignment

**TUCSON HAS BEEN BLESSED** with a rich cultural heritage. Native American, Spanish, and Mexican populations have defined the city's collective identity for centuries, imbuing Tucson with a vibrancy that is critical to its future. Located in the Sonoran desert, Tucson is surrounded by mountains—many adorned by cacti and pine trees—that leave visitors and locals alike awestruck. With nearly 1 million people in the metropolitan region, Tucson has grown dramatically since its Spanish founding in the 18th century, and its desert community, anchored by the University of Arizona, continues to lure diverse populations.

Over the past five years or so, nearly \$1 billion in public and private investment has gone into Tucson's downtown, even as the city continues to recover from the Great Recession. Hit harder than most cities, Tucson lost nearly 9 percent of its jobs during the downturn. Among the most visible signs of recovery is the city's exciting new streetcar line, which aims to expand and sustain the downtown growth that is already occurring at a relatively fast pace. Although downtown has seen a sizable increase in local businesses and new housing for students, the area's dearth of private sector employment continues to stifle the city's economy.



Regional map.

Tucson must grapple with more than just economic and market constraints if it wants to revitalize its downtown. Painful experiences with urban renewal, especially the demolition of barrios in the 1960s, have left an imprint on the city. A Latino barrio was razed to make way for the Convention Center, which is a focus of this panel report. Memories of destroyed neighborhoods and displaced families have stayed with the people of Tucson and have

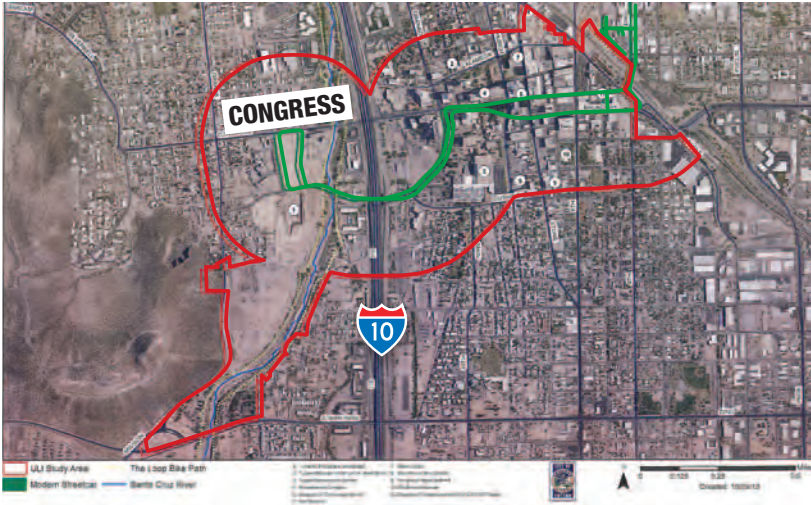


CITY OF TUCSON



Left: A Latino barrio seen in 1958 before urban renewal razed the neighborhood. Right: The Convention Center complex seen in 1970, following the displacement of the barrio.





The ULI study area.

created a distrust of government that was palpable to the panelists.

Moreover, the financial issues associated with Rio Nuevo—the administrator of the special taxing district approved by voters in 1999—have further deepened the public’s skepticism of development. The special taxing district receives a portion of state-shared funds from sales tax dollars called tax increment financing (TIF) funds. A widespread belief that poorly planned projects were never completed or did not make sufficient impact led the Arizona state legislature to reconstitute Rio Nuevo in 2009 and bring in new management.

Despite economic and market constraints and the challenge of community engagement, Tucson is working to turn the page and to build a bright future for all its citizens. The streetcar line has given many people confidence that the city can execute new urban development. Rio Nuevo’s new management has also given people confidence that

The Sun Link streetcar on a test run.



it will be more effective in its mission. Demonstrating their commitment to downtown revitalization—in a sign of what the panel hopes will be continued partnership—the city of Tucson (lead agency), Rio Nuevo, Holualoa Companies, Pima Association of Governments, Pima County, Visit Tucson, and Tucson Electric Power brought the Urban Land Institute to Tucson to give its objective advice on how to revitalize downtown.

## Study Area

The study area is the central and western portions of downtown Tucson. Spanning more than 500 acres bisected by Interstate 10, the study area includes many historic, cultural, and civic assets. The central area of downtown encompasses the Congress Street entertainment district, multiple museum and performing arts facilities, and the government and Convention Center complexes. West of the interstate (commonly known as the west side) is Tucson’s historic and cultural birthplace and the site of the Mercado District.

Starting in the summer of 2014, the study area will have a modern streetcar system running through it. The streetcar will connect the University of Arizona, Fourth Avenue, downtown, and the Mercado District. Estimated to cost nearly \$200 million in capital expenses, the streetcar system will have eight streetcars, run 3.9 miles through downtown, and stop at 18 places. Interestingly, many vacant and underdeveloped sites in the area are attracting both public and private interest in development owing, in part, to the streetcar.

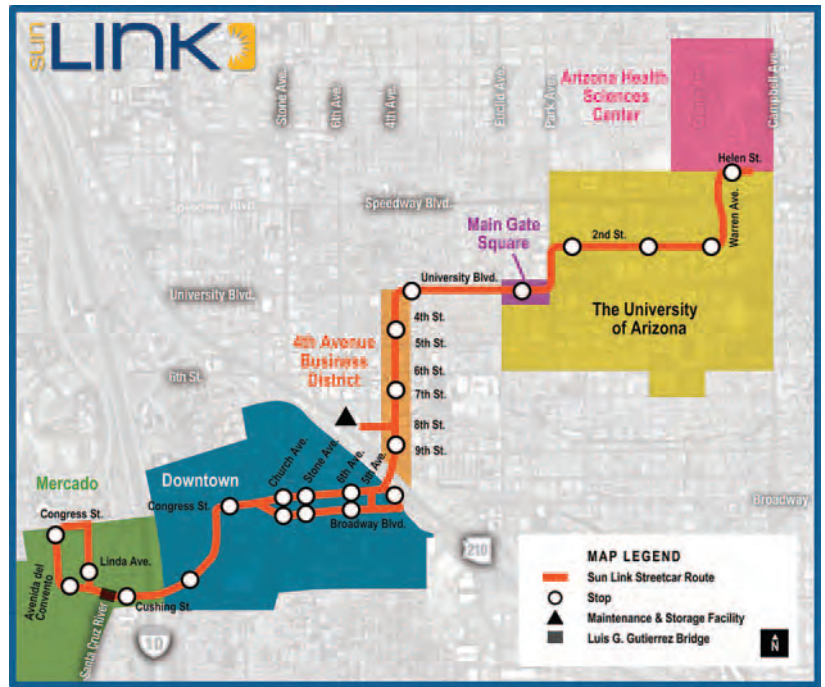
According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the population of Tucson’s metropolitan statistical area (MSA) is 980,263. The study area’s population, however, is about 42,000—lower than most downtowns in similarly sized metropolitan regions. Just 60 miles from the U.S.-Mexico border, Tucson is highly diverse, with Latinos representing about 40 percent of the population and African Americans, Asian Americans, and Native Americans together making up 12 percent.

The University of Arizona's presence affects the area's demographics. The study area has about three times as many young adults (18 to 24 years of age) than the metro as a whole, representing 32 percent of the study area's population. As a result of the large youth population, the area also has a lower median household income (\$23,710) than metro Tucson (\$43,922).

## The Panel's Assignment

With economic conditions improving in Tucson (and throughout the country) and the new streetcar line being put in place, downtown is primed to catalyze citywide growth. The downtown study area has several underdeveloped opportunity sites. The city of Tucson asked ULI to identify what type of development is recommended for the vacant land within the area, with an emphasis on using public land and resources to leverage private investment toward achieving the following goals:

- Recognize Tucson's birthplace by furthering the intent set forth in existing plans for the west side area, such as historic and cultural facilities and outdoor spaces;
- Create a walkable, transit-oriented downtown with high-quality development and public spaces;
- Identify development opportunities that encourage and promote modern streetcar ridership while considering streetcar infrastructure (i.e., stop locations);
- Enhance and connect the cultural and natural resource assets in and around the area;
- Activate the Tucson Convention Center (TCC), including its performance venues, convention facilities, outdoor spaces, and frontage along the streetcar route;
- Develop strategies to pursue new economic opportunities capitalizing on the proximity to the University of Arizona to create jobs and diversify the economy within the area;
- Recognize, protect, and strengthen the historic neighborhoods and sites within and surrounding the area;



- Encourage an appropriate balance of new housing and related services and amenities to attract additional residents to the area; and
- Identify the appropriate types, mix, and locations for retail, hotels, attractions, and other development to attract residents and visitors to the area.

*The streetcar line will enable people near the University of Arizona to travel to the west side's Mercado District and several places in between.*

## Summary of Recommendations

The panel made two overarching recommendations that should be seen as the primary themes of this report: (a) public leadership, community outreach, and transparency are essential, especially given the people of Tucson's skepticism about government and urban development, and (b) because of market and economic realities, a small-scale, incremental development strategy should be implemented instead of a big-bang approach.



*The ULI panel discussing potential recommendations and opportunities.*

### **Public Leadership, Community Outreach, and Transparency**

Downtown revitalization will occur only if the city leads a diverse group of stakeholders, unites various ward interests, and works with the county and Rio Nuevo to move forward as one community, brought together by a shared love of place. The city needs to demonstrate a renewed sense of service to its citizens and foster bipartisan action between the city and the county. Toward those ends, the panel recommends that the city take the following steps:

- Create an advisory committee composed of diverse stakeholders who will work with local governments and report back to their constituents;
  - Work with a revamped Rio Nuevo at the city, county, and metro levels to extend its life and focus its role;
  - Appoint a citizen ombudsman to safeguard transparency;
  - Develop and implement an information technology master plan to aid transparency and efficiency for the government and public's good; and
  - Provide professional development training to public officials and initiate leadership training programs in high schools and colleges.
- Retain private management of the TCC, reconfiguring its event calendar and making modest improvements to the facility;
  - Undertake an analysis of the city's transit use; and
  - Activate the stravenue (portmanteau word created from street and avenue)—a type of road particular to Tucson, running diagonally between and intersecting a street and an avenue—and redevelop a portion of La Placita.

### **Small-Scale Development Focus**

Instead of spending resources trying to attract big, splashy developments, the city should create a smaller, more incremental and locally based strategy focused on modest projects and improvements. What has been successful thus far in Tucson (and often how downtown revitalization occurs) is not one big retail development but rather a number of smaller concepts that together aggregate to something significant. With that in mind, the panel recommends the city take the following steps:

- Focus on market-rate multifamily rentals near the Congress Street entertainment district;
- Encourage a new business-quality downtown hotel;

# Economic and Market Insights

## UNDERSTANDING THE SOCIOECONOMIC TRENDS

that affect the study area can help decision makers, the community, and planners identify the potential and pressure for future land uses. ULI believes that successful urban planning and land use policy can best be described as public action generating desirable, widespread, and sustained private market reaction. Therefore, Advisory Services panel reports typically have their foundation in market realities and economic development possibilities.

## Local Dynamics

With the national and local economies sustainably into a period of cyclical growth, now is an excellent time to plan for a downtown that has the capacity to capture its share of regional growth. In addition, a national megatrend based on demographics and lifestyle preferences that favors urban rather than low-density suburban life makes this timing especially favorable for Tucson.

Tucson was battered disproportionately during the economic downturn. While the U.S. economy experienced a net loss of nearly 6 percent of total jobs, the Tucson metro lost nearly 9 percent between 2007 and 2010. Similarly, its recovery has been much slower than the national recovery, with only 3 percent of jobs regained, compared with nearly 5 percent for the nation since 2010.

A highly respected economic forecaster, Moody's economy.com, however, is optimistic for Tucson's future. Over the next four years, nearly 12 percent, or 42,500 employees, is forecast to be added to the region. This projection compares with less than 8 percent for the country over the same time frame. Tucson's peak 2007 job levels are expected to be regained by 2015; 2014 is forecast to see a noticeable pickup in pace, led by the service sector, but also fueled by leisure/hospitality and health care. The

public sector and housing market will not contribute to growth until 2015. Favorable demographics as well as defense and aerospace industries will support long-term growth. Dependence on federal spending, however, means significant uncertainties for these sectors. An increased shift from defense to aerospace is mitigating some of this risk.

One of the region's key strengths is the University of Arizona, which brings a young and educated potential workforce to the area. The launch of start-ups in health care, optics, and other high-tech sectors, largely derived from the university, has seen some success. A possible upside to the local economy would be the attraction of high-tech firms, particularly from Phoenix, because of Tucson's lower costs and superior quality of life. In addition, according to *Entrepreneur Magazine*, Tucson has the potential for the development of a collaborative culture among the university, the city, and other business development organizations to become a leading city for entrepreneurial and start-up businesses. This upside potential will require significant collaboration.

Tucson's economy is highly linked to Phoenix. By far the most in- and out-migration is with Phoenix, with southern California in distant second place. Tucson attracts significant in-migration from the Midwest and Pacific Northwest, particularly retirees and preretirees. Net in-migration is projected to pick up in 2014, averaging between 20,000 and 25,000 people annually. This change reflects a significant increase from historical averages, mirroring the aging of the nation's baby boomer population and their retirement and preretirement lifestyle preferences.

Downtown Tucson serves as the region's hub for government, culture, and entertainment, while providing supportive retail, restaurants, and cafés. A modest convention

center and hotel rooms provide minimal support for tourism and meetings, while the adjacent University of Arizona enhances the level of activity downtown. A small but growing population of students and other residents are populating the area.

Government is disproportionately represented in the Tucson economy, and it dominates the downtown, with city, state, and federal agencies providing the majority of jobs in the area (some 18,000 public sector workers). Compared with traditional major urban downtowns, Tucson's does not house a significant base of private sector employees. Suburban office space dominates private sector employees, accommodating an estimated 80 percent of this nongovernmental market.

### **Residential Potential**

Near term, residential development has the greatest potential for success in downtown Tucson. With renewed population and employment growth, demand for housing is poised for renewed growth. Given an anticipated shift in some of this demand from peripheral suburban to more centrally located housing, the relocation of some suburban baby boomers into more infill locations, and the growth of the millennial population, including students who are largely expected to seek urban locations, demand for housing within the downtown could be relatively robust. This demand will be somewhat moderated by the high cost of higher-density construction, however. A capture of 200 to 300 units annually over the next five years would be a reasonable goal, assuming appropriate sites can be assembled. Of the approximately 12,000 to 13,000 housing units that will be demanded annually over the next five years, this represents only a 2 percent capture.

Given land constraints downtown, multifamily will be the target product. Of total housing demand for the region, local and national trends indicate that between 8 and 10 percent can be expected to be for market-rate multifamily housing. Downtown could potentially capture 20 to 25 percent of this demand. Hence, 200 to 300 units annually should be an achievable goal.

In the near term, this demand will be predominantly for rental units. As downtown develops into a more desirable residential location, for-sale product should also be supportable, but probably not during the next five years. The panel does expect continued robust demand for single-family homes within the historic districts surrounding the downtown area and within the Westside Development area. Although continued renovation of homes will likely accelerate as the economy improves, infill vacant or under-used sites could be developed with new homes compatible with the area. The panel recommends that the city adopt flexible zoning rules that will facilitate such development, provided that it is compatible with the historic character of the areas. New home development is likely to accelerate in the west side, expanding upon the very high quality development that has been completed to date. In general, these new homes are attracting a high-income demographic that will be essential to downtown revitalization.

### **Office Potential**

Little near-term potential exists for new private office space in downtown Tucson. According to CoStar, the region supports only 21 million square feet of occupied office space of varying quality, serving a region of 1 million persons, which is low relative to population compared with many other U.S. cities. Downtown constitutes 20 percent of occupied regional office space inventory, which is also a small capture relative to other U.S. cities.

The vast majority of downtown's office inventory is Class B or Class C space, with only 17 percent higher-quality Class A space. As a result, a large supply of affordable office space is available in the downtown that could be appropriate for start-up and other entrepreneurial businesses. This opportunity could lead to an upside potential for accommodating such firms within the downtown area. Collaboration of university and other key groups could help facilitate this growth.

### **Hotel Potential**

Although downtown Tucson has supported hotel rooms in the past, it currently houses no business-class hotel space. According to Smith Travel Research, the region has

a total of nearly 16,000 hotel rooms in 149 properties. During the first eight months of 2013, occupancy averaged 59 percent with an average daily rate of \$92. The highest-performance submarket is Midtown East, which tends to serve the university and businesses within the more robust office markets north and east of downtown. Resort hotels are by far the strongest segment of the Tucson market, with 62 percent occupancy during the first eight months of the year at an average daily rate of \$146. These generally higher quality properties attract not only vacationers, but also high-end small to medium-sized meetings and incentive travel. A subset of this group includes several world-famous spa properties that place Tucson on the map among health-conscious, affluent consumers nationally and internationally.

Among a subset of seasonal desert hotel markets, Tucson underperforms. Scottsdale tends to have the strongest performance, followed by Santa Fe, Phoenix, and Palm Springs. Albuquerque actually underperforms Tucson. As the name recognition improves for Tucson with more extensive marketing, Tucson's lodging market has great promise for improvement.

With no hotels currently serving downtown Tucson, demand clearly exists for a modest supply of new hotels. The panel recommends moderately priced, strongly branded urban hotel concepts. Support will be derived from downtown business and government, a modest amount of meetings and trade shows, along with an increasing number of tourists as downtown becomes a more attractive location.

## Market Insights

Successful revitalization of downtown will require a strategy appropriate in scale and type for Tucson's market and goals. Identifying development opportunities, including with respect to residential, office, hotels, and retail, will be paramount to Tucson's wider downtown development strategy. Downtown Tucson has a number of development opportunities that should be seized upon.

### Residential

The panel believes that the private market development with the most near-term promise and impact will be multifamily rental developments. Optimally, these first projects should be within or adjacent to the East Congress entertainment district, which the panel believes to be the most marketable location currently. The first of such developments could be supportable in 2014, as the new units being completed at One East Broadway Boulevard are absorbed. For efficient management, some scale is required, so that even if a development spans more than one block, a critical mass of at least 100 units, and preferably 150 units, is needed for operational efficiency. These units will not only be in the most marketable portion of downtown, but they will also be highly supportive of the health and expansion of the East Congress entertainment district. The west side might also support an apartment development during the next few years. This could be a less dense product with more amenities that would attract a renter profile different from that of the East Congress entertainment district and, therefore, not be directly competitive. Longer term, apartment sites within the governmental and cultural center of downtown could be supportable, thereby enlivening this more limited activity district.

For-sale single-family, attached or detached, homes should be encouraged within the adjacent historical residential areas to downtown. Some of this development has already taken place, demonstrating its viability. As the economy improves in the next few years, such infill development could accelerate. The city should actively work to accommodate such development while ensuring its compatibility with the historic districts. Such product is likely to be within the upper ranges of price points of for-sale product in Tucson and will expand the range of demographics residing in the immediate area.

### Office

In the near term, the panel does not believe much potential exists for new private office development within downtown Tucson unless a major new user can be attracted. The city should focus its efforts on assisting property owners in attracting users to fill the substantial amount of vacant



JOE SUSCO

*Hydra Leather and More is indicative of Tucson's alternative character. The locally owned business recently opened a second location in nearby Bisbee, Arizona.*

space downtown, which should be an achievable effort as the economy improves, thereby allowing for the expansion of service tenants. More exciting, the city should work aggressively and creatively to attract start-up and entrepreneurial office users into the downtown, where a significant inventory of older, affordable office space exists.

### Hotels

With the closure of downtown's only hotel, which is now generally viewed as obsolete, the panel believes that immediate support exists for new hotel rooms. Smaller hotels in the 150- to 200-room range constructed at moderate costs should be supportable. The East Congress entertainment district has the greatest near-term promise for such a hotel. Longer term, however, a hotel within the governmental and cultural district should be supportable as well. The panel recommends branded urban-style hotels. Such space not only will attract business visitors, but also attendees at small conferences and trade shows downtown. In addition, downtown should begin attracting tourists who will appreciate the improvements to the downtown area.

### Retail

In spite of a debilitating recession, retail in downtown Tucson has surged in the last five years. In line with national trends and driven by an assortment of relatively successful cultural attractions (as well as a visionary developer), the eastern half of the city, centered on the Congress Street corridor, has welcomed numerous up-market food and

drink offerings and has even started to draw proven operators from other markets such as Flagstaff and Phoenix.

In addition, as a reflection of an increasingly cosmopolitan sensibility, the city has attracted a number of so-called third wave coffeehouses serving the kind of artisanal coffee and espresso more commonly associated with cities such as San Francisco and Seattle, and certain locations also double as "Third Places," or central gathering spaces, for discrete subcultures and subdistricts.

Finally, and perhaps most impressively, downtown Tucson contains a small, but significant collection of shops, with the majority catering to alternative hipsters. Indeed, Hydra Leather and More, a clothing shop, has successfully served customers in its current location since 1994, while the Tucson-born national chain Buffalo Exchange opened a new store on Congress Street in 2011.

With all of this activity, available spaces in new buildings fill quickly, and the ones in the best locations—on the eastern end of Congress Street—are now fetching rents in the low \$20s per square foot (triple net). And partly because of the strength of that corridor, higher-caliber operators have started to appear on secondary streets such as Broadway Boulevard, Scott Street, and Pennington Street.

That said, with many of these new restaurants targeting the same (limited pool of) customers, relatively low residential densities nearby as well as slow weekday-lunch traffic, some concern exists about longer-term sustainability. Furthermore, as one moves farther from this core of strength, rents drop dramatically, to as low as \$6 per square foot, and downtown's western half is almost entirely devoid of retail.

### Competition

To understand the possible limits and ceilings to the recent vitality, one must develop a clearer sense of downtown Tucson's current and potential draw, or trade area. Delineating the boundaries for this trade area requires a review and assessment of the other districts and centers with which downtown Tucson must compete for consumers and prospective tenants.

Downtown's primary competition also sits along the street-car route, at Main Gate and, to a lesser extent, Fourth Avenue. The former, of course, enjoys immediate proximity to the university campus as well as a growing student and visitor population in the immediate vicinity, with 1,600 new beds in two new towers as well as the coming of a new Marriott Residence Inn. In addition, one property owner, the Marshall Foundation, controls most of the real estate and tenant mix.

Not surprisingly, rents are higher, with available space fetching as much as the \$30s per square foot (triple net). In contrast to the state's other college-town business

district, Tempe's Mill Avenue, shopping at Main Gate performs relatively well, with larger brands such as Urban Outfitters and American Apparel renewing their leases. Main Gate's few more upmarket restaurants have not been hugely affected by the growth in new offerings in the downtown core.

Partly because Main Gate absorbs the interest of larger brands, and also as a result of its limited parking supply, Fourth Avenue's rents are considerably lower, at \$10 to \$12 per square foot (triple net), and its tenant mix has remained funky. With the exception of its collection of conventional student-oriented bars, the corridor still caters

## Conventional Commodity-Driven Retail Competition

Center (owner)	Location (distance/drive time from downtown)	Size and format	Anchors	Notes
El Con Mall	Broadway Boulevard east of Country Club (3.3 miles/11 minutes)	1.2 million-square-foot power center	Target, JCPenney, Home Depot, Century Theatres, Burlington Coat Factory, Ross Dress for Less	In-line space of original center demolished in 2011
Southgate	I-10 and Sixth Avenue (3.6 miles/7 minutes)	191,000-square-foot community shopping center	Curacao, El Super	Heavily oriented toward Latinos
Tucson Spectrum	I-19 and Irvington (5.2 miles/10 minutes)	1 million-square-foot power center	Target, JCPenney, Home Depot, Harkins Theatres, Ross Dress for Less, Marshalls, Old Navy, Best Buy, Bed Bath & Beyond, Sports Authority	Demand supplemented by Mexican day-trippers
Tucson Marketplace at the Bridges	I-10 and Kino Parkway (5.9 miles/10 minutes)	Up to 1 million-square-foot power center (planned)	Walmart, Costco	Part of a larger master plan including new UA Biosciences Park
Park Place Mall (General Growth)	Broadway Boulevard west of Wilmot (6.0 miles/15 minutes)	1.1 million-square-foot enclosed one-story regional mall	Dillard's, Macy's, Sears, Century Theatres (20-plex), Old Navy	Renovated in 1999
Tucson Mall (General Growth)	Oracle Road and Wetmore Road (5.2 miles/13 minutes)	1.3 million-square-foot enclosed two-story regional mall	Dillard's, Macy's, Sears, JCPenney, Forever 21, REI, Cheesecake Factory	80,000-square-foot Forever 21; renovated and expanded in 2007
Foothills Mall (Feldman Mall Properties)	Ina Road and La Cholla Road, in Casas Adobes (11.3 miles/21 minutes)	700,000-square-foot open-air outlet center	Off 5th, Ross Dress for Less, Old Navy Outlet, PUMA, Barnes & Noble, buybuyBaby, AMC	Originally developed as upscale mall, outflanked by Tucson Mall and repositioned as a discount/outlet mall; draws tourists
La Encantada (Westcor/Macerich)	Campbell Avenue and Skyline Drive (8.8 miles/22 minutes)	258,000-square-foot lifestyle center	Anthropologie, Crate & Barrel, Apple, Coach, Louis Vuitton, Tiffany's, St. John, Cole Haan	Opened in 2004; first modern shopping center in Tucson metro

Source: MJB Consulting.



primarily to an alternatively minded customer, although one that veers slightly more toward 1960's hippie than 21st-century hipster.

Neither of these competitors offers much in the way of available inventory, and at present the three districts complement one another relatively well, with each focusing on and excelling in a slightly different niche. Some danger lies, however, in the possibility of rental speculation with the arrival of the streetcar, especially along Fourth Avenue, with property owners along that corridor emptying their spaces and competing more directly with the same sorts of operators.

The other (somewhat) relevant competitor is Broadway Village, a 37,000-square-foot specialty retail center built in 1940 by one of Tucson's famed local architects, Josias

Joesler, and located just 2.5 miles from downtown (an eight-minute drive) in midtown. After years of decline, Broadway Village has been restored to its full Spanish Colonial luster and is in the process of retenanting. Offering competitive rents ranging from \$14 to \$20 per square foot (triple net), it has already attracted some of the same sorts of upmarket concepts (and even operators) that have been opening on Congress Street.

The larger metro is, of course, littered with more conventional commodity-filled shopping centers, including two enclosed regional malls and two large power centers (with a third on the way). With the notable exceptions of the upscale La Encantada lifestyle center and Latino-oriented strips such as Southgate, their tenant mixes cater primarily to a mass-market sensibility. With their size, anchors or cotenancy, and automobile orientation, they are not viewed as direct competition to downtown Tucson.

## Trade Area Demographic Profile

Characteristic	Five-minute drive time	Tucson Metro
Population	42,135	999,461
% Non-Hispanic white (number)	47 (19,817)	53
% Latino	40	36
% African American	4	4
% Asian	4	3
% Native American	4	3
Median age (years)	26.6	38.1
% Married, spouse present	16	43
% with a BA or more (number)	29 (6,456)	29
Group-quarters population	8,897	26,248
% Population 18–24 years (number)	32 (13,368)	10
Median household income	\$23,710	\$43,922
% Households earning \$75,000 or more (number)	11% (1,707)	26
% Households earning \$25,000 or less (number)	53 (8,152)	29
% Households with children	20	30
% Households without car	21	8
% Owner occupied	29	64
Median home value	\$139,613	\$167,918
% of homes \$200,000+ (number)	26 (1,186)	38

Source: Nielsen-Claritas, MJB Consulting.

## Trade Area

These existing competitors delimit the trade area for downtown Tucson. All other variables held equal, the boundaries would be drawn roughly halfway between (by distance or drive time), but given their greater size and gravitational pull, centers such as Park Place and Tucson Mall should still be able to draw heavily from neighborhoods that actually lie closer to the downtown core, thereby shrinking its reach still further. For this reason, a five-minute drive time (from the intersection of Congress Street and Fifth Avenue) has been chosen (see map).

The table summarizes the demographic profile of the trade area (using 2014 estimates by Nielsen-Claritas) and provides as a frame of reference the characteristics of the metropolitan area as a whole.

These data are owed in large part to the presence of the University of Arizona. Despite only 29 percent of the area's population having a bachelor's degree or more, the large concentration of students makes for an "effective" educational level. Similarly, the median household income is low (and still lower given Group Quarters), but students will spend their parents' money and that should be factored into economic and market analyses.

**Students:** About 15,000 students are estimated to be living within a quarter-mile of campus (including nearly 5,000 on the campus itself), with the remainder as far north as River Road. Given these numbers, strong demand exists for student housing (even the 500 beds at 22nd and Park Avenues are full). Most students have automobiles and do not possess much affluence (in percentage or absolute numbers). Local students generally are not music lovers or culturally engaged, with about 10 percent (compared with 20 percent in other high-profile college towns) considering themselves to be hip, artsy, or sophisticated.

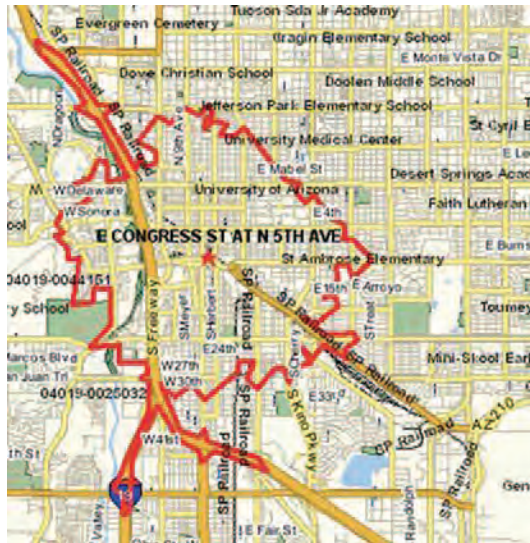
**Psychographics/residential:** Despite the low percentage of students who are culturally engaged, Tucson has a large “bohemian” population (e.g., baristas, bartenders, artists, and musicians). This alternative group is drawn to the city’s low cost of living, as in Portland, Oregon, “where young people go to retire.” Concentrated in such areas as Fourth Avenue, people frequent funky, alternative shops and value quality of life over upward mobility. Another population group in the West Side Foothills also is passionate about downtown as well as a group of professionals, doctors, and scientists (e.g., in Sam Hughes).

**Other Market Drivers**

Other market drivers include the following:

**“Destination” traffic:** Major high-culture establishments include the Tucson Museum of Art (150,000 to 200,000 visitors a year), which is interested in expanding; the Arizona Theatre Company (100,000 visitors and 140 per-

*The Tucson Museum of Art.*



*Downtown Tucson trade area map.*

formances a year); and the Fox Tucson Theatre (60,000 visitors and 120 event nights a year). Hip culture venues include the Rialto (100,000 visitors and 150 to 170 shows per year) and the Club Congress (60,000 visitors and 375 events a year). Other destinations include the Music Hall, the Leo Rich Theatre, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Beowulf Alley Theatre Company, and the Screening Room.

**Employment:** Some 27,000 office workers populate the study area, with 18,000 of them in the public sector. Civil servants will not want to spend money on East Congress Street restaurants (county rank-and-file get only a half-hour lunch). Instead, there should be brown bags for delivery, roving food carts allowed in buildings, and small offerings in La Placita (like the pizzeria). The “there, there” (East Congress Street) will help draw upwardly mobile types and hence employers from other parts of the city/metro, helping reverse the “brain drain.” The newer generation is prioritizing quality of life over salary levels and might come despite the relative paucity of professional jobs (“barista economy,” like Portland, which is now getting more high-tech).

**Recommendations**

The panel recommends the following:

**Tenancing strategy:** Tucson should focus on a small-scale and fine-grained approach rather than a “big

bang.” Possible anchors include Barnes & Noble College Bookstore hybrid and Maya Cinemas. The city should also think about different dining concepts and price points (e.g., more “fast-casual,” such as Diablo Burger), an outlet center (on the west side), and projects that connect the hips to the adults. Moreover, nearby (high-density) residential is critical because of the lack of an east–west freeway.

**New retail inventory:** Opportunities and ideas include the remaining bays in Cadence and Plaza Centro Garage; 8,000 square feet in Stiteler’s development behind Hub Building (on Broadway Boulevard); the Transit Center site, reserving frontage for storefronts (and across Congress Street); Peach Properties at the Broadway Boulevard site; Gran Mercado, with some traffic-generating anchor; Tucson Rodeo and soccer fields; and a Depot Plaza. There is nothing on the western end, though people can take the streetcar from the convention center to the west side.

# Enhancing the Convention Center

When railways got into economic trouble, a saying evolved in that industry: “We are not in the rail business; we are really in the transit business.” The same applies to Tucson. Tucson is not in the convention and conference market; it is in the events market that just happens to include conventions.

## Events Calendar

Tucson hosts many conventions and conferences every year, but the preponderance of them are held at area hotels and resorts. In fact, the panel’s analysis estimates that based on the nearly 16,000 rooms in the market, Tucson hosted 700,000 group room nights in 2012.

In contrast, the TCC does not host many conventions and will not in the short to medium term. The figure summarizes demand at the venue in 2012.

In total, about a half-million people use the TCC complex, not including the theater venues. Although low compared to more productive venues, this is still a substantial service to regional residents.

The panel is highly optimistic that the events calendar at the TCC facilities can be enhanced substantially if a mod-



Map showing the TCC site.

est improvement plan were considered. The building can still host conventions and conferences as it currently does and, through modifications, the building could be oriented to events more likely to use the facility regularly. Such

## Tucson Convention Center and Arena 2012 Event Demand and Attendance

Event type	Arena	Exhibit halls (A, B, C)	Grand ballroom	Meeting rooms (all)	TCC total
	Events	Events	Events	Events	Events
Concerts	8	3	—	—	11
Entertainment event	28	23	—	—	51
Conventions and conferences	16	20	19	—	102
Sporting	208	1	—	—	211
Reception/party	—	—	27	—	41
Nonprofit events	60	20	31	—	146
<b>Total (attendance)</b>	<b>320 (282,655)</b>	<b>67 (138,852)</b>	<b>77 (29,201)</b>	<b>98 (4,855)</b>	<b>562 (455,563)</b>

Source: TCC, Johnson Consulting.

The TCC holds several sporting events throughout the year.



The Gem and Mineral Showcase is one of the TCC's largest events. This image is from the 60th Annual Tucson Gem and Mineral Show, one of over 40 independent gem groups to come to Tucson for the Gem and Mineral Showcase.



KERDON, TOWNS

events of course include the American Gem Trade Association Gem and Mineral Show, as well as social, military, educational, religious, fraternal, and ethnic events; sports tournaments; festivals; trade shows; and consumer shows.

If the venue is upgraded and managed effectively, the panel expects that visitation to the building could double, thereby increasing room nights and downtown spending.

### Facility

The events recommended for category targets are much less sensitive to facility quality, but the basics need to be present. To make the venue more attractive, the following improvements should be phased in:

- Add two locker rooms on the arena edge to make the arena and exhibit hall more usable for sporting events.
- Purchase flooring and other equipment for sporting events, as needed.

- Reskin and animate the building to reflect the area, using art, local materials, lighting, and soft goods to provide aesthetic improvements.
- Provide the same aesthetic treatments to the ballrooms but make no other major changes to them.
- Address life safety and infrastructure issues.
- Reserve land for possible expansion of the south exhibit hall and the possibility of adding more meeting space.
- Repurpose the existing north meeting room complex for cultural purposes and associate with the theater complex, as described below.

### Environmental Improvements

One of the biggest detractions and criticisms of the TCC is its bulk and the way it was imposed on a traditional historic barrio. Many improvements can be made to enhance the environment around the TCC and to make it a better neighbor. The panel believes the TCC environs should become more animated and active.

To accomplish this goal, the following improvements should be considered:

- Support the demolition of the Hotel Arizona and leveling the land to the Congress Street level.
- Redevelop La Placita into a better-planned development.
- Attract hotels to the site area to support events at the TCC, downtown, and the city generally.
- Improve the stravenue and making this path attractive and fun, as was originally intended.

### Campus

A bold addition to the TCC campus would be attracting a cultural school from the University of Arizona to the site. The visual or performing arts category makes most sense.



JOEL DOWSHEN

*The University of Arizona's Center for Creative Photography on the university campus serves as the official archives of famed photographer Ansel Adams. Adams cofounded the center in 1975.*

In Orlando, the University of Central Florida located its Center for Emerging Media in an area of Orlando very similar to the TCC site area. The Center for Emerging Media located in the building formerly known as the Expo Center across from Amway Arena. The building is home to a diverse group of professionals and students, and space is divided among several degree programs in media programming.

In Tucson, because of the presence of the two theaters at the TCC, performing arts could work. The University of Arizona would also be a good candidate because of its outstanding art collections. Finally, this model would work much better in Tucson than in Orlando because the TCC and the University of Arizona are connected by the streetcar line.

Next, vendors have been interested in adding more exposition space for the American Gem Trade Association portion of the Gem Show. This development should be supported, especially if the city, Rio Nuevo, and the county joint ventured with the private sector for the hall. The panel could see adding a market hall near the TCC that focuses on consumer shows, market days, farmers markets, and various art shows. The city of Austin developed such a venue called the Palmer Events Center. The venue in Tucson could be smaller, more basic, or even open air.

To really make the TCC a valuable, welcomed neighbor, the broader TCC campus could be home to a community center serving the south and west side neighborhoods. Such a venue could be used by the University of Arizona, neighborhood residents, and nearby hotels. The Salvation Army Kroc Center in Salem, Oregon, is one example. This center can take many forms, ranging from a Kroc Center, to a YMCA, to a recreation center. At a minimum, it should house a community meeting room and other amenities. A location next to the fire station would provide built-in security for such a venue.

## Operations and Capital

Economic development for the tourism and hospitality industry has been affected by various conditions that could be enhanced to better benefit the central business district. Much work has been done in recent years, but improvements can still be made. The panel encourages consideration of the following:

- Improve the stewardship model of the TCC. The city is funding a regional asset and has been reticent to spend needed capital funds because of competing needs for such funds. Rio Nuevo has been helpful in addressing smaller capital needs, but a broader dedicated capital resource is needed to address development and operations of the TCC and west side venues discussed in the next chapter. Further, a greater level of business acumen is needed for the oversight of the venues, and private management could be of great benefit for achieving the calendar enhancement targets described.
- Attracting entertainment events is a personal business that requires relationships with promoters. Private management companies and seasoned arena general managers have these relationships. Joint marketing efforts between venues such as McKale Memorial Center on the University of Arizona campus and the arena at the TCC could create synergy and improve bargaining power. In Columbus, Ohio, a joint booking and operational model has evolved. Before July 1, 2010, one of Value City Arena's major event competitors was the

downtown Nationwide Arena, which opened in 2000 and is home to the National Hockey League's Columbus Blue Jackets. In May 2010, the Blue Jackets and Ohio State University signed a one-year, annually renewable agreement to turn over day-to-day operations and nonathletic event booking of Nationwide Arena to the university, effective July 1, 2010. This agreement puts both arenas under the same marketing and management system and makes the facilities sister venues.

- TIFs are a powerful tool, and the Rio Nuevo model is consistent with tools used to fund convention centers and other venues in other markets. Very rarely are states so enlightened to remand sales tax to cities for convention facilities. Tennessee, Arizona, and a few other states do this. In the panel's judgment, this tool is very appropriate because the state receives so much of the fiscal benefits from tourism.
- The panel heard from many developers and others about the poor tools the city and county have used for supporting economic developments. The panel encourages clear criteria for Government Property Lease Excise Tax (GPLET) and site-specific TIFs for targeted projects in the downtown area, which the city has largely done.

Tucson does have 21 incentives in place, including GPLET, which do have clear guidelines. The only incentive the city has not used yet, and which needs some definition, is the Site-Specific Sales tax incentive. The panel acknowledges the significant work the Tucson City Council has done in recent years to put incentives in place. Such programs need to keep up their momentum. In addition, the regulatory relief (e.g., no parking requirements) and the parking garages where the city has taken the lead have allowed several developments to go forward. Although this past work has primed the pump, the panel emphasizes that these measures need to be continued earnestly and aggressively, including a continued effort to approve projects that further the social and cultural goals along with economic results, in addition to financial incentives. The panel recommends broader market penetration and information efforts with developers and non-real estate business owners.

# West Side Strategies

**THE PROPERTY LOCATED ON THE WEST SIDE** of I-10 in the study area provides some challenges and opportunities that will allow the city to provide for private development with a historical and traditional perspective. Although much of the area is still affected by landfills, the panel proposes opportunities for both public and private uses that can be successful streetcar-related properties. Because of the high cost to remediate the large landfills in the south area that are not adjacent to the streetcar line, the panel agrees with earlier studies that this large area should be used for recreation, community activity, and historical preservation. The area immediately adjacent and proximate to the streetcar loop can become a mixed-use area that includes residential, neighborhood services, and tourist-related uses.

Adjacent to the rail line, the panel recommends that the city consider a balance of higher-density living space and facilities that introduce visitors to the cultures and traditions of historic Tucson. The building designs should be compatible in scale and use building materials consistent with both the existing older building stock and the newer developments. In addition to residential, the area could become a prominent point for visitors and residents to park their cars and begin their tour of the many diverse attractions that exist and have been proposed along the streetcar route.

The panel believes that the west side will develop as a result of market dynamics driven by public improvements. To ensure that the historical and traditional values of the area are preserved, the panel recommends that the zoning provide the flexibility to develop as the market evolves but exercise enough control to provide compatibility of design and architecture while balancing the occupancies and uses in the area. The neighborhoods already in place should not be overwhelmed by new development. The panel recommends that the zoning and design control in the area allow market-driven development such as can be provided through form-based zoning ordinances.

Incentives have been used effectively in many communities to increase the velocity of development. The panel believes the incentives for the west side should be carefully managed. The preservation of historical conditions, such as the acequias (irrigation canals), set-asides for open areas, preservation or development of view corridors and sight lines, or development of activity and event programming would be effective incentive drivers. The panel recommends that incentives toward vertical development will not be necessary or effective on the west side absent the results outlined here. Accelerating the development of the area and increasing market-driven velocity of development are not likely results. The panel believes that the most ef-



*Two multifamily housing developments located near the west side's Mercado District.*



fective approach by the city is to have patience and vision to achieve a lasting asset for the community.

## Visitors Center

The panel views the construction of a new visitors center in conjunction with Visit Tucson as a potential catalyst for the west side. The panel believes that the center could provide vignettes and displays, films and photographs, and historic references that would entice visitors and residents to further their Tucson experience by hopping on the streetcar to visit the museums, historic sites, and attractions. The center could be designed to allow seasonal changes of the “teasers” displayed there. The panel envisions displays of Ansel Adams photographs, natural settings of wildlife, including birds and indigenous animal life, paintings, sculptures, and films of the Congress Street and Fourth Avenue experiences.

The panel believes the center should be located with easy access to I-10 along the riverfront. Parking should be ample for those who are going to spend an afternoon, evening, or whole day experiencing all that Tucson offers along the streetcar line. For those who prefer to use their own energy for mobility, the riverfront location provides easy access to the pedestrian and bike routes that follow the river. The panel believes this portion of the river should have water introduced from the treatment facility in a similar manner as the area to the north. The river ecosystem has proven to invigorate and grow in a way that attracts wildlife, birds, and plants, thereby allowing the historic riverfront to be enjoyed again. The Cahokia Mounds Interpretive Center in Collinsville, Illinois, is an instructive example.

## Streetcar-Served Mercado

The panel also endorses the development of a streetcar-served mercado (public market) facility. The panel expresses concern about the scale and effectiveness of a very large facility but has some confidence that a properly designed and tenanted smaller-scale facility would appeal to both the local community and visitors to the area. Adja-

gency to the track is critical. Proximity to the visitors center could be a real value enhancer.

## Origins Heritage Park and the Mission District

Origins Heritage Park and the Mission District have strong cultural and tourism potential. Rancho Chuk-Shon has suggested a rodeo complex and equestrian riding complex marking the history of the region. Many scenarios exist for such a complex. A smaller version of WestWorld of Scottsdale, themed with indigenous heritage rather than just western heritage, is encouraged. Native American Pow Wows, equestrian events, mariachi festivals, and Mexican rodeos could be held at such grounds. A stabling operation could also be housed here for equestrian shows and as a trailhead for recreational riding. The town of Norco, California, allows horses in its community, using special zoning guidelines. The southwest part of the site nearest the Mission District and close to trailheads could offer similar zoning. If Native American heritage is incorporated, area casinos could provide economic development grants through their compacts. Funds for this project could be solicited from these tribes, who are very interested in supporting their members and communicating their history to the general public. These tribes donate 12 percent of gross gaming volume to regional projects as part of their compact. This equates to large sums granted annually.

*A sketch by the panel of the horse track envisioned for the west side.*



# Planning and Design Strategies

**SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITIES** increasingly depend on shrewd planning and good design to achieve vibrant, healthy neighborhoods and economically profitable downtowns. From the single business to the largest lot, issues of location, connectivity, sight lines, and appearance must be carefully considered to achieve the best results. Like many communities, Tucson faces challenges in supporting longtime neighborhoods, adapting existing facilities to new uses, providing public infrastructure, and assisting appropriate new development.

The panel heard from many people that they value Tucson's heritage of four cultures (Spanish, Mexican, Native American, and contemporary American), its desert environment, and the way that its architecture expresses that heritage and reflects its setting. The panel's observations show that scale is an important component of that distinctive local character. Although some high-rise buildings identify downtown and other nodes around the city, low-rise buildings predominate. Part of local heritage is a grid system of streets—not a rigid grid, but a grid that delimits modestly sized blocks on which to build. It is instructive to see that the most vibrant residential and commercial areas exist where the scale is smaller than the superblocks that replaced traditional Tucson blocks. Scale is a very important consideration in maintaining local character and aligning development potential with market demand.

In addition to scale, Tucson's downtown and nearby development potential has much to do with access and circulation. The panel's planning and design recommendations, therefore, focus largely on transportation issues.

## Transportation Opportunities

Tucson recognizes the need for good transportation and has made major investments in transit and roads. Creative use of transportation can support redevelopment and improve the appeal of downtown to residents, employees, and visitors.

### Make Efficient Use of Transportation Resources

Downtown Tucson has ample transportation capacity to support current demands and significant growth.

**Parking:** Broad measures of parking adequacy include the ratio of spaces to downtown employment and floor area. Those ratios affect the amount of parking that is typically occupied on workdays. Tucson has approximately 0.55 stalls per employee, a high ratio compared with other downtowns that range from 0.35 to 0.4 employees per stall.

Opportunities to increase use of existing parking resources include the following:

- Use available public parking to support redevelopment and new development. This can be done with developer payments in lieu of providing parking where zoning requirements are not waived or through waivers of required parking where significant excess supply exists close by. This approach reduces development cost and boosts public revenue.
- Investigate opportunities to use existing garages—such as the state garage and the old Spanish Colonial Pima County Courthouse garage—to support major events and activities at the TCC.
- Aggressively market off-street parking to customers and visitors so they know where to park.

- Maximize use of on-street parking. Many streets in and around downtown could be striped for additional parking, either by adding parking where it does not exist or by converting parallel spaces to diagonal spaces where street width allows. This strategy could assist a variety of cultural institutions such as the Tucson Museum of Art and the Children’s Museum Tucson.

**Transit:** With the introduction of streetcar service and additional growth downtown, transit operations will need careful monitoring to achieve the best results. Specifically, decision makers should take the following actions:

- Evaluate ridership patterns on the bus system to understand passengers’ trip origins and destinations, as well as the relation of route structure to demand to see how well current service meets passengers’ needs. This evaluation could help focus resources to optimize ridership and make the most efficient use of the Ronstadt Transit Center.
- Allow operating policies to adapt to passengers’ needs, for example, by
  - Maximizing ridership by considering frequency for streetcar service based on markets to be served;
  - Matching streetcar hours of service closely with operating hours of primary passenger traffic generators (restaurants, cultural centers, and so on) to maximize ridership; and
  - Considering use of a shorter route if and when west side activities are closed. This would support higher frequencies on more heavily traveled segments without increasing operating costs.

**Streets:** Just as with transit operations, streets will need to be monitored to determine patterns and needs. A couple of considerations are the following:

- Evaluate current and future traffic patterns to identify use of street capacity. The effect of the Downtown Links project on traffic will be demonstrated once it opens, so

monitoring those changes will be important to enhancing downtown planning.

- Consider resizing streets consistent with known and anticipated levels of use. Some streets appear to be wider than needed. Church Avenue, south of Broadway Boulevard, is an example.

### **Improve Quality of Pedestrian and Bike Facilities**

Downtowns are inherently pedestrian areas and increasingly bike destinations. As such, the city needs to ensure proper quality of walkways and bike paths.

**Walkways:** Creating an interesting, pleasant, and walkable downtown is a primary concern. Public officials should take the following actions:

- Complete an inventory of sidewalks and paths along with their width, pavement condition, and lighting.
- Identify gaps in connections and gaps in adequate quality walkways.
- Prioritize improvements with emphasis on connections to transit, parking, residential areas, and major traffic generators.
- Revitalize the stravenue—fix what is broken and create more links to it. Redevelopment of the La Placita site, the hotel site, and the north exhibition hall of the TCC can greatly increase the stravenue’s exposure and use.
- Investigate whether a cross section of Congress Street can be narrowed because of the effects of Downtown Links. Its width near I-10 creates a potential barrier to people crossing the street. This is also the location for the El Paso and Southwestern Greenway to cross Congress Street.

**Bike Paths:** Bike paths are an important part of an accessible downtown, and the city needs to make sure they are properly marked to ensure safety:

- Designate alternate routes for bikes through downtown so they do not ride along streetcar tracks. Bicycle



wheels can too easily be caught in the tracks. In addition, it is better to have bikes on less busy streets.

- Work to complete missing links in downtown bike paths such as the El Paso and Southwestern Greenway.

### Increase Connectivity and Enhance Sight Lines

Vehicular and pedestrian or bike connections are sometimes missing or difficult because of street vacations and jogs in the street grid. Distances between many major destinations are short, but people may not realize just how close they are because they cannot see the destination. Decision makers should

- Make pedestrian walkways as direct as possible by enhancing or creating walkways through large blocks.
- Create sight lines that let people know what is ahead and that invite them to go.
- Look for opportunities to create interesting destinations within the barrios surrounding downtown that people can walk to. Many of these neighborhoods are a short walk from downtown.

### Create a Consistent Wayfinding System

Although portions of a wayfinding system exist now, a more comprehensive and consistent system would benefit visitors, businesses, and major attractions. A comprehensive system should

- Guide visitors to downtown and its major destinations from regional highways and arterials.
- Guide drivers to parking locations convenient to their destinations.
- Guide visitors from parking to major destinations.
- Guide pedestrians to and from transit stops.



*The stravenue as seen in both directions.*

- Create a consistent Tucson look with standards for graphics, colors, size, and placement of wayfinding signs.

## Site-Specific Opportunities

The panel's planning recommendations also emphasize access and circulation improvements at specific sites to make them more convenient to their users and to integrate them with other parts of downtown.

### Parking

In addition to a general recommendation to increase the use of existing resources, the panel also makes these specific recommendations about parking:

- Evaluate parking needs for the likely range of demand and events at major facilities such as the TCC, the Tucson Museum of Art, and the Children's Museum Tucson to determine how much parking is warranted, taking into account the availability of other area garages, lots, and street parking.
- Consider opportunities to consolidate parking in a low-rise structure west of the Music Hall that could serve multiple uses and facilities.
- Market use of the Pima County Courthouse garage for large events on evenings and weekends. It offers weather-protected parking and creates pedestrian traffic on the stravenue.
- Maximize the on-street parking supply where possible.

West of I-10, use existing opportunities to accommodate overflow parking for downtown's largest events with streetcar connections.

### Walkways and Open Spaces

The panel sees that select improvements in walkways and the sight lines they afford could make a significant difference in the quality of life downtown. Most important, the La Placita site could be redeveloped to establish the intersection of Congress Street, Broadway Boulevard, and Church Avenue as the heart of downtown, linking cultural, employment, and entertainment uses by all modes of travel. For example, the city can take the following actions:

- Use the posited University of Arizona museum and art schools project to open new vistas and walkways into the cultural campus formed by the new museum, theater, and music hall from the Broadway Boulevard/ Congress Street/Church Avenue intersection;
- Orient buildings and activities to create activity in the plaza framed by the museum, theater, and music hall; and
- Locate food carts along the stravenue and in this plaza for lunch use by county and city employees and evening use by event patrons.

On the west side, the city can consolidate authority for trails and paths under one entity and support horseback riding with appropriate trails and access to them.

In short, a strong focus on pedestrian conditions, transit service, open space, and strategic use of parking can build pedestrian traffic in now underused areas, support redevelopment, and generate new revenue.

## Design Opportunities

Urban design in Tucson deals with the existing armature of the city, working within its discipline and making changes where a clear benefit exists. This framework includes streets, transit lines, infrastructure, and open space. Tucson needs to analyze the assets and problems of the city layout, seeking to enhance assets and modify or eliminate

problems. It should link, connect, or strengthen lines between assets to create a new synergy between elements. A more detailed list of these considerations might include potential opportunities, appropriate scale, energy, historic assets, solar access, parking and transit, topography, unique character or "sense of place," cultural assets, civic art, and streetscape.

With regard to the specific ULI study area, these considerations might be applied as follows:

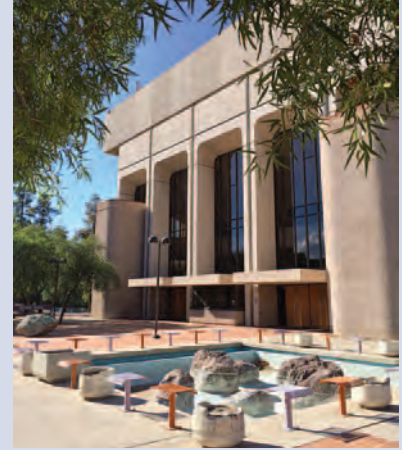
- Remove La Placita. It is an outmoded and unsuccessful complex that works counter to the potential of the convention area district. Replace it with a complex of better-designed, low-rise, LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) buildings.
- Create a focal, large-scale "Spanish Steps" entrance to the site that opens to the dense development across the street and provides an open space and meeting place for people.
- Create or enrich a new cultural plaza at the top of the steps, incorporating the theaters and a new museum (at the northernmost extreme of the convention center). Develop the plaza in concert with Eckbo elements (see box on facing page) where appropriate, abandoning those elements that are in conflict with desired topography, landscape, or gathering spaces. Add a monumental sculpture or fountain at the focal center point.

*La Placita, with Garrett Eckbo's original sculptures on the right.*



## Garrett Eckbo

Garrett Eckbo (1910–2000) was an American landscape architect who used modernist techniques to create landscapes that were accessible to the public—what some critics have called “social art.” Eckbo designed the outdoor Tucson Community Center in the La Placita development. Both Eckbo’s plaza and the Tucson Convention Center it was intended to serve were built on the site of a historic barrio. While it may seem ironic in retrospect, the Tucson Community Center was intended to unite the complex’s various theaters and conference halls and to serve as a space for the public to gather. Unfortunately, the design proved expensive to maintain, especially because of its intricate waterfalls. Worse still, the area was insufficiently programmed, thus failing to realize Eckbo’s vision. Today, the waterfalls do not work and the space is generally devoid of people. Resurrecting the social aspect of Eckbo’s



concept would help work toward the city’s larger goal of engaging the public and bringing people together to revitalize downtown.

*Eckbo’s plaza, showing poor maintenance.*

- Create a new crescent walkway from the cultural plaza to the entrance axis rather than a 90-degree connection adjacent to the convention center mechanical plant. This crescent walkway, generously planted with shade trees, provides an opportunity for a celebration of civic art depicting subjects such as Tucson history, its technological future, or civic leaders in niches interspersed among the shade trees, fountains, and seating. As in the cultural plaza, where the Eckbo construction is complementary, it is preserved; where it is not, it is abandoned.
- Make the walkway a valuable connection, arcing to the southwest and terminating at an enlarged and redesigned diagonal entrance axis at the convention center. This axis should be a properly scaled monumental entrance drive rather than a “driveway” connecting the monumental convention center entrance with a future iconic building opposite.
- Construct an iconic tower, visible from all points of the development and unique in form and height, that anchors the opposite end of the axis with the convention center entrance. As part of its unique form, the tower is surrounded by a three-story semicircular building mass, either tenantable space if underground parking is

provided, or a three-story parking structure if not. In the latter case, it might be clad in a vertical garden to its full height.

- Along the I-10 alignment, design four “small” high-rise buildings to incorporate an advanced energy identity, given their western exposure, as well as a distinctive

*A sketch by the panel showing its vision for an iconic tower.*





*Sketches by the panel of the envisioned west side's Mercado District.*

landscape treatment and kinetic civic art for the benefit of I-10 traffic.

- Place an appropriately scaled mercado at the southern end of the streetcar circuit west of downtown. The architectural style should reflect the characteristics of Mexican architecture within an expression of contemporary design. A visitors center of similar design could be sited adjacent to the mercado, overlooking the river. Scale, signage materials, and pedestrian activity make the buildings good neighbors to future barrio developments.

These steps, carried out over the coming years, would do much to knit together the anonymous buildings and vacuous spaces of the subject area in a manner that would greatly benefit this important area of Tucson.

# Implementation Tools

## FOR TUCSON AND THE METROPOLITAN REGION

to prosper, a renewed spirit of public service must be engendered to yield bipartisan action. The people of Tucson need to know that their representatives are serving them and are working together to create a thriving city. The city needs to equip its citizens with data to spur healthy civic engagement, to encourage entrepreneurship, and to demonstrate transparency.

## Public Service

The panel recommends that actions be taken now to foster a climate of cooperation as well as to develop skilled public servants. Actions might include the following:

- Strengthening civic engagement and customer service strategies to seek input and build support from community groups;
- Seeking professional development training for key officials through the University of Arizona or other universities and organizations;
- Offering fellowships for recent graduate students that fund their employment in Tucson's government, akin to Washington, D.C.'s Capital City Fellowship Program; and
- Supporting or initiating public leadership training programs at the high school and college levels. Partners could include the city, county, and state governments, the University of Arizona, the Downtown Tucson Partnership, Greater Tucson Leadership, and other organizations and schools.

## Advisory Committee

Building on the culture of public service, effective decisions are best made based on the greater good of the city

and county. The panel recommends creating an ongoing Advisory Committee that would strategically review key decisions, thereby providing transparency and accountability. This function would not be binding, but the panel feels that it would be irresponsible for any governing bodies to take action in opposition to the advice of the Advisory Committee. Individual committee members would work with their constituents to interpret and clarify the decisions of the Advisory Committee. The panel recommends it be composed of members representing the following groups:

- City of Tucson;
- Pima County;
- Rio Nuevo;
- University of Arizona;
- Public transportation;
- Neighborhood groups;
- Retail establishments;
- Developers; and
- Nongovernmental office occupants.

## Importance of Data

Data collection and analysis are important functions of government. Effective governments collect and manage their data in an efficient and transparent manner. This generates confidence within government operations as well as with constituents. As a long-term strategy, the panel concurs with IBM's Smarter Cities Challenge 2013 *Tucson Report* that the city of Tucson should develop and implement an information technology master plan with documentation of current business processes, applica-



tions, data models, and data interchange across key systems. In the shorter term, collecting data that represent community actions is crucial for decision making.

## Customer Service

Websites are an important communication tool and a real boon to government transparency. They can provide a user-friendly portal where people can get information. Small tweaks can save a tremendous amount of staff time by making information readily available. Of particular importance are search engine optimization, archiving current neighborhood and business activities, and providing links to different neighborhood and business association groups to encourage civic engagement.

Many people, however, want to get their information the old-fashioned way: by telephone. Improving that experience builds confidence in the overall ability of the government. In reviewing best practices in other cities, the panel finds the use of a one-call center, where a trained operator answers the city one-call line and sends the caller on to the proper person or department. Another solution is a citizens' ombudsman who would be available to research and address citizens' inquiries.

By the same token, the ability to ensure timely consideration of development issues can be bolstered with a similar ombudsman-type position within the city. This position would have the focused responsibility for coordination within city departments and between city council and city staff. Through this position, the city should create a "green tape" process to address and expedite those projects specifically related to downtown Tucson.

## Activating the Stravenue

The stravenue in downtown Tucson is just under a mile of urban promenade flowing north of the TCC. Promenades serve to connect places in an urban setting: they promote tourism, activate dormant urban areas, and link existing cultural offerings. The long-term goal is to engage in place making which, according to the Project for Public Places, "facilitates creative patterns of activities and connections

(cultural, economic, social, ecological) that define a place and support its ongoing evolution."

An effective place-making process for the stravenue will capitalize on Tucson's local assets, tap into its inspiration, and help realize its potential, ultimately creating an environment that promotes people's health, happiness, and well-being. The panel recommends that management of the activation process be negotiated with the Downtown Tucson Partnership. With a strong record for events management and knowledge of best practices for place activation strategies, the Downtown Tucson Partnership is poised to launch and implement a successful and inclusive activation plan.

In a climate like the one Tucson enjoys, public spaces are particularly meaningful. Hardscape space is abundant north of the TCC but is infrequently used. A key feature of the stravenue is the modernist design by Garrett Eckbo. In his design for the TCC, he aimed to bring the local people back into the area that the center displaced through its creation. His design of the plaza invites passers-by to participate in it. The various terraces provide a perfect setting for outdoor performance and informal gathering. The panel's recommendations largely respect and enrich his concepts.

The entire length of the stravenue is suitable for events and should be programmed like Bryant Park in New York or the Porch in Philadelphia. Ideas garnered from those venues are performances and art, food and drink, group fitness, and special events.

It is essential to measure progress of the stravenue place making. Best practices recommend pedestrian counts using multiple locations at multiple times that can be repeated annually. Good management would track and promote new activities and programs.

### Programs

Development of programs, including necessary ordinances, will lay the groundwork for activation. Initial work might create food carts, buskers, and murals.

Other programs, such as event management, can be established by policies and procedures. Two fundamental components of a well-managed space are (a) the underlying written and approved framework and (b) the assessment process that evaluates improvements and successes as the space evolves.

### Enhancements

Some initial physical enhancements will improve the appearance and utility of the promenade. Long-term plans can coordinate with the repurposed use of the north end of the TCC:

- Activate two fountains, perhaps the square in front of a proposed new music hall and the long waterway along La Placita.
- Paint out the remaining fountains with gray or variegated gray until they can be activated.
- Install power outlets for events, including a master switch to avoid unauthorized use.
- Look for ways to add colorful plantings.

### Community Involvement

Place making is about collectively shaping the public realm to maximize shared value. Energizing the community into active involvement in the process is essential.

- Mobilize museums and arts groups, especially focusing on children's activities.
- Prioritize inclusion of school events and activities, working with downtown schools.
- Enlist garden clubs or schools to maintain plantings.
- Enlist property owners to
  - Fill empty windows in La Placita and the hotel; and
  - Donate space for pop-up nonprofit use (cooking class, children's art show, student music or theater).

### Activities

Place making on the stravenue facilitates creative patterns of activities and connections that define it and support its ongoing evolution. They are at the heart of the panel's proposed process for the stravenue. Whether events or performances, parties or classes, if they take place on the stravenue, they are contributing to a better public space.

- Stage and attract small and large events, concerts and performances.
- Inspire volunteerism by coordinating a Make a Difference Day, a National Day of Service and Remembrance, or a Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service.
- Create a digital public art walking tour.

## Veinte de Agosto Park

In the longer term, activation of the Veinte de Agosto Park would offer a lunchtime oasis for nearby employees:

- Remove the traffic lane that bisects the park.
- Add picnic tables and benches.
- Build wide, shallow steps from the Garces footbridge to the park.

## Wrap-up

Each of the panelists ensured certain steps could be addressed immediately.

### Market:

- Encourage development of 100 to 200 units to begin construction, preferably within or adjacent to the Congress Street entertainment district, to meet immediate demand for market-rate multifamily rental.
- Encourage groundbreaking on a new business-quality hotel in downtown, preferably in the Congress Street entertainment district.
- Engage with Start-up Tucson and the University of Arizona to lease office space for new enterprises.

- Undertake a more detailed retail market assessment and devise a nuanced, fine-grained retail positioning and tenanting strategy for downtown.
- Consider a new hire with experience and sophistication in retail and economic development or, alternatively, train an existing employee on the same.

#### **Convention Center:**

- Retain private management for the TCC.
- Work with the revamped Rio Nuevo at the city, county, and metro levels to extend its life and focus its role.
- Use Pima County bond funding, which is the largest and only pool of public funding for significant infrastructure investments (for projects such as the proposed Convention Center improvements, the creation of a visitors center, the redevelopment of La Placita, and stravenue investments), as much and as appropriately as possible in addition to the extension of Rio Nuevo.
- Revisit the incentives policy for site-specific TIFs for hotel and retail use, making them contingent on proven need with clear black-and-white criteria.
- Purchase or contract with an operator to provide flooring and other equipment and management for court and ice sporting events.

#### **West Side Strategies:**

- Ensure that zoning in the west side area provides flexibility for market forces.
- Create a visitors center in conjunction with Visit Tucson.
- Develop a track-oriented mercado facility near the visitors center.

#### **Planning and Design:**

- Complete sidewalk and path inventory, including gap analysis.
- Undertake analysis of transit usage.

- Assess parking needs for major destinations to determine appropriate solutions.
- Create alternate bike routes off the streetcar line.
- Increase on-street parking supply where possible.

#### **Implementation:**

- Create an Advisory Committee that will work with governments and report back to its constituents.
- Appoint a citizen's ombudsman to safeguard transparency and accountability.
- Conduct pedestrian counts as a baseline for measuring improved activation.
- Begin activation of the north end of the stravenue with activities, events, and food while ensuring safety in these surroundings.

# Conclusion

**THE TWO INGREDIENTS** that the panel sees as critical for downtown revitalization—a renewed sense of public leadership, community outreach, and transparency and a small-scale, incremental development strategy—will take time to design, implement, and bear fruit. Tucson, however, is well on its way: the national economy is slowly rebounding, employment and population forecasts for the city are relatively strong, a new streetcar line will connect the University of Arizona to downtown, and new businesses and partnerships are springing up.

The panelists were struck by the great pride for and commitment to their community that the people of Tucson exhibited throughout ULI's visit. So many of those interviewed for this report made clear to the panelists that they were determined to improve their community and eager to

revitalize Tucson's downtown. This support, demonstrated in both actions and words, gives the panelists confidence that by building partnerships across sectors and governments, Tucson can revitalize its downtown and grow its economy. This report is designed to give the city and other stakeholders some of the tools and ideas to do just that and to encourage Tucson to keep up the momentum.

# About the Panel

## John M. Walsh III

*Panel Chair  
Dallas, Texas*

Walsh is the president and founder of TIG Real Estate Services Inc. TIG has developed and redeveloped over 2.5 million square feet of office and industrial buildings. It manages and leases a portfolio of almost 10 million square feet of office, industrial, and retail buildings on behalf of its institutional clients in four states. Before starting TIG, Walsh spent 17 years with Trammell Crow Company in various leasing, development, and senior management roles. During his tenure as development partner for the Northwest Dallas area market at Trammell Crow, Walsh was involved in the development of almost 5 million square feet, including leasing over 8 million square feet of office, industrial, and service center space.

A Dallas native, Walsh has served as chairman, director, and trustee of various business and charitable organizations, including Trammell Crow Employees Profit Sharing Trust, Valwood Improvement Authority, Carrollton Zoning Ordinance Board, Texas Commerce Bank, Valwood Park Federal Credit Union, and Sky Ranch Youth Camp. He has also served on working committees and boards for the city of Carrollton, the city of University Park, Highland Park Independent School District, and the city of Farmers Branch. Walsh has been a member of the executive committee of the Vision North Texas initiative since its inception in 2004. He currently serves as a member of the Management Committee of North Texas 2050.

Walsh was an instructor at Brookhaven College for ten years and at the University of Texas at Arlington for two years, teaching business law to undergraduate students. He is currently a graduate school visiting instructor at the University of Texas at Arlington School of Architecture.

As a leader and active participant in the 30,000-member Urban Land Institute, Walsh has served as a volunteer member of numerous ULI Advisory Services panels. He has participated as a speaker and presenter for ULI at the national, regional, and local levels. In addition to his many other activities in ULI, he is currently serving as a trustee and serves on various committees, including Membership and Programs.

Walsh has made presentations to organizations throughout the country, including ULI, the National Association of Office and Industrial Parks, the Commercial Property News, Vision North Texas, the North Texas Commercial Area Brokers, the National Council of Real Estate Investment Fiduciaries, and numerous other real estate-related organizations. His presentations have included such topics as underwriting, development techniques, financing obstacles and opportunities, marketing strategies, legal challenges, contracts, transactions, community development standards, and real estate evaluation.

He has been a member of the Texas State Bar since 1978, with a law degree from Texas Tech University School of Law. He earned his BS from the University of Texas, Arlington.

## Michael Berne

*Berkeley, California, and New York, New York*

Berne is the president of MJB Consulting (MJB), a national retail planning and real estate consulting concern with offices in the San Francisco Bay Area and New York City. MJB has been retained by a wide range of clients across the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, including municipalities, business improvement districts, quasi-public and nonprofit development corporations, and educational institutions, as well as private developers,

landlords, and retailers, to conduct market assessments, advise on site planning, devise tenanting strategies, and spearhead recruitment efforts.

Berne is a frequent speaker at the conferences of the International Downtown Association and sits on the board of directors as vice chair of its executive committee. He has also presented at the annual gatherings of the International Economic Development Council (IEDC), the National Main Street Center, the Local Initiatives Support Corporation, the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC), and the California Downtown Association, among others.

He has written for the ULI *Urban Land* magazine and for the *Journal of Urban Affairs*, and he has served on expert advisory panels for ULI and IEDC. He has lectured at the University of Pennsylvania and the City University of New York and appeared in high-profile publications such as the *Washington Post* and the *Financial Times*.

Berne received a BA from Columbia University (Columbia College) in New York City and an MPhil from Cambridge University (Gonville & Caius College) in the United Kingdom. He splits his time between residences and offices in Berkeley's Elmwood neighborhood and New York City's Union Square.

## Alan Billingsley

*San Francisco, California*

Following a career of more than 30 years in investment advisory services and research for the real estate industry, Billingsley is currently managing and pursuing his own investment interests in the residential sector.

He recently departed RREEF (now Deutsche Asset and Private Wealth Management) after 13 years, where he served as head of Americas Research. He managed a large team that provided the basis for RREEF's investment strategy. This is a process unique to the industry, with Billingsley serving as a key member of the firm's Investment Committee. RREEF's investment strategy includes the office, apartment, industrial, and retail property sectors

for RREEF, including core, value-added, and opportunistic investment styles.

Before joining RREEF, Billingsley had 20 years of experience in all forms of real estate development and investment analysis, including work for both public and private sector clients. He was a managing partner with Sedway Group, a real estate and urban economics consulting firm with a staff of approximately 30 people and offices in San Francisco and Los Angeles. During his eight years at the firm, he helped grow the practice substantially in size and reputation. Earlier, Billingsley served as a principal with Economics Research Associates where he served for nearly ten years in its Los Angeles, Chicago, and San Francisco offices. He began his real estate career with RCLCO.

He is an active member of the Urban Land Institute at both national and local levels, is past president of the local chapter of Lambda Alpha International, is past president of the local chapter of the Counselors of Real Estate, is a member of the Research Task Force at ICSC, and is active in several civic and educational organizations. He is a former member of the National Council of Real Estate Investment Fiduciaries and the Pension Real Estate Association. Billingsley holds an MA in architecture and urban planning from the University of California at Los Angeles.

## Peter Hasselman

*Orinda, California*

Hasselmann is an architect, urban designer, and perspectivist providing consulting services to clients across the United States. He began an unusual career after graduation from the University of Illinois and completion of military service: his first "client" was President Lyndon B. Johnson, for whom he designed the 1964 inaugural pavilion (by competition). Then, as a designer with several leading firms, he was associated with such projects as the Pennsylvania Avenue master plan; the new town of Reston, Virginia; the Baltimore Interstate Highway system; and the rehabilitation of the Amtrak stations and the design of new maintenance facilities between Washington and Boston.

As a design principal, Hasselman designed numerous mixed-used, office, residential, industrial, and educational projects on both coasts. To organize his professional life around the areas of his particular expertise, he now provides consulting services in planning, architectural design, and presentation drawings. Representative consulting projects include the development of Ford Island, Pearl Harbor; urban developments in Australia and Malaysia; resorts in southeast Asia, the Caribbean, Mexico, Spain, and Japan; a state-of-the-art theme park in Dubai; development of Long Beach Harbor; numerous town centers in the United States; illustrating the future uses of the Presidio of San Francisco; mixed-use projects in historic Prague and Utrecht; and the master plan for the transportation system of Izmir, Turkey.

As a frequent member of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and Urban Land Institute panels, Hasselman has participated in studies of 16 cities in the United States. He was also a member of a small group of American architects who traveled to the Soviet Union to redesign the Armenian city of Spitak (which was destroyed in the 1988 earthquake) in the first such collaboration between American and Soviet architects. In addition, he was a member of an AIA multidisciplinary team that advised Atlanta on how that city should respond to the planning opportunities raised by the Olympics in 1996 and a ULI team that advised New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina.

Hasselmann is generally known for his ability to integrate many viewpoints and interests into his work, the active character of his drawings, and a high rate of productivity. A number of his projects have been recognized by competition award, design award, or design citation. He is a member of the Urban Planning and Design Committee of the AIA, a periodic visiting critic at architectural schools, and an editorial cartoonist on architectural subjects. He was elected to the College of Fellows of the AIA in 1983.

## Charles Johnson IV

*Chicago, Illinois*

President and chief executive officer, International Society of Hospitality Consultants, Johnson is a nationally recognized consultant with over 30 years of experience in convention, sports, hospitality, and general real estate consulting. Before forming Johnson Consulting, he worked for the Chicago-based real estate development firm Stein and Company, which was design/builder for the expansion at McCormick Place in Chicago. Earlier, he was national director of KPMG Peat Marwick's convention, sports, and leisure consulting practice. He served as program manager for the Puerto Rico Convention Center District project in San Juan, Puerto Rico, for four years and successfully guided that project from an idea to a highly regarded 110-acre urban redevelopment project. He has worked on numerous projects in western New York, including the expansion analysis of the Buffalo Convention Center.

Johnson has worked on more than 600 public assembly and urban development consulting assignments in the United States and abroad. He is a member of ULI and he has served on four Advisory Services panels.

## Jan Minami

*Fresno, California*

Minami has focused on business growth and development for over 20 years. She began in the agriculture industry where she managed finances for the family farms and packing shed. She founded Jasmin Printing and operated it for 11 years, getting involved in the businesses for which she printed, advising on marketing and sound business practices. She also was extensively involved in downtown issues as a volunteer leader of both the Downtown Association board and the Streetscape Commission board.

In late 2005, Minami sold her printing company and moved into the downtown leadership field, serving as executive director of the Downtown Visalia Alliance. While there, her accomplishments included a strategic plan

for business and property owners, a popular new music festival, and improved business practices.

In late 2007, Minami joined the downtown movement in Fresno. She served as executive director of the Downtown Association of Fresno and interim president and CEO of PBID Partners of Downtown Fresno. She rescued the dying business organization, improved business services, and developed strong foundations for events and community involvement. She spearheaded the formation of the business improvement district, with its successful launch in January 2011.

After establishing the PBID programs in Downtown Fresno, Minami founded AMI Concepts to provide economic development services to local and regional governments and organizations. She is committed to the support and development of the small business community. Her specialties include business retention and expansion, downtown revitalization, grant funding services, and public/private engagement.

Minami has a BS in business administration from Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon. She believes in continuing education through industry seminars and workshops. Over the years, these have covered urban planning, downtown revitalization, nonprofit management, marketing, business development, fundraising, and event planning through the International Downtown Association, the IEDC, the ICSC, and others. She is certified in business retention and expansion through the IEDC and in grantwriting through California State University, Fresno.

## Ross Tilghman

*Seattle, Washington*

Tilghman is a transportation planning consultant with his own practice, the Tilghman Group. Working nationally and internationally, he tailors transportation plans for a wide variety of land uses to fit their environmental, historical, and cultural settings. He brings 28 years of experience, including serving as executive director of a downtown business improvement district.

Tilghman offers extensive experience creating circulation and parking solutions for downtowns, historic districts, recreation areas, special event facilities, and other settings. His approach emphasizes careful observation of how people use transportation, abiding respect for the setting, and clear understanding of the client's objectives. Services include master plans, market studies, transportation-related revenue projections, and development strategies for governmental, not-for-profit, and private sector clients facing land use challenges.

Examples of significant projects include master plans for Al Ain Wildlife Park and Resort, United Arab Emirates; Iowa's State Capitol Complex; The Evergreen State College; Gallisteo Basin Preserve, New Mexico; and downtown St. Louis. Tilghman has also completed numerous special event and recreation area transportation plans, including those for Northlands in Edmonton, Alberta; San Diego's Balboa Park; Joe Robbie Stadium in Miami, Florida; the Iowa Events Center in Des Moines, Iowa; and Stones' River National Battlefield, Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

Tilghman is a full member of the Urban Land Institute and regularly serves on advisory panels for communities across the county, most recently addressing public health consequences of urban design. In Seattle, he serves on ULI's Sustainable Communities Task Force where he helped organize the inaugural course for the Center for Sustainable Leadership. He was recently appointed to the Seattle Design Commission that reviews public projects for design excellence. He received his MA in geography from the University of Washington and a BA in history from Washington University in St. Louis.