

6. REVITALIZATION AND REDEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

The City of Peoria understands that the fabric of the city is comprised of both newly developing as well as mature areas. The city has invested in the planning and implementation of improvements in its distressed employment areas to foster enhanced job creation, tax base and vibrant economy. It now seeks to assist its older neighborhoods with the appropriate enhancements to maintain attractive, dynamic neighborhoods that exhibit a high degree of character and charm.

The Revitalization and Redevelopment Element is organized in the following manner:

- 6.a. Introduction
- 6.b. Goals, Objectives and Policies
- 6.c. Revitalization and Redevelopment Plan

6.A. INTRODUCTION

Early Plans

As early as 1992, the City of Peoria began to take actions to revitalize and rejuvenate portions of the City which were in need of reinvestment and redevelopment. The City has prepared and adopted two redevelopment plans to stem the conditions of slum and blight within the city, pursuant to Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS §36-1479 et al), the North Peoria Redevelopment Area Plan and the Downtown Peoria Redevelopment Plan.

The first redevelopment plan to be adopted was the North Peoria Redevelopment Area Plan, which was adopted by the City Council in December 1992. The boundaries of the irregularly shaped redevelopment area included Athens Street on the north, Thunderbird Road on the south, 77th Avenue on the east and 92nd Avenue on the west comprising approximately 3.5 square miles of land. The plan included a description of the redevelopment area, analysis of existing conditions, planning issues and development code, land use plan, goals and objectives, real property, financing and check list.

The second redevelopment plan created was the Downtown Peoria Redevelopment Plan, which was adopted by the City Council in March 1997. The Study Area was bounded by Peoria Avenue to the north, Monroe Avenue to the south, Grand Avenue to the east, and 85th Avenue on the west. The plan included objectives, guidelines, action plan, land acquisition, financing options and project ideas. Recommended land uses were not spatially designated within the redevelopment area.

1999 Central Peoria Revitalization Plan

Developing upon the work of the Downtown Peoria Redevelopment Plan, the City prepared and adopted the Central Peoria Revitalization Plan in 1999. The revitalization planning area was a four square-mile area bounded by 75th Avenue to the east, Loop 101 to the west, Olive Avenue to the south, and Cactus Road to the north. The plan was intended to guide the rejuvenation of the historic center of the City. The plan included a mission statement, plan foundations, principles for revitalization, revitalization plan and circulation plan. A number of the projects and policies recommended by the plan were incorporated into the General Plan, and have already been accomplished or are underway including the following:

- Creation of a Historic Square Master Plan
- Creation of a Multi-Modal Transportation Plan

- Development of Cotton Crossing and the realignment of 83rd Avenue

Another recommendation was to explore the feasibility of constructing a performing arts center on the location of the former Peoria City Hall building. In 2007, the Peoria Center for the Performing Arts opened its doors in this very location, bringing renewed excitement and activity to the City's Old Town area.

2009 Old Town Peoria Revitalization Plan

As the life span of the Central Peoria Revitalization Plan reached towards the end of its 10-year horizon, the City undertook a comprehensive update of the plan beginning in late 2008, following the same boundaries as the original 1999 plan. Completed in 2009, the newly adopted plan has been named the Old Town Peoria Revitalization Plan (OTPRP) as a result of input from the community. Building upon the foundation created by the Downtown Peoria Redevelopment Plan and the Central Peoria Revitalization Plan, the community-guided Old Town Peoria Revitalization Plan will ensure continued attention and policy focus is directed toward the City's first neighborhoods. The plan divides the large four square mile study area into a number of smaller districts in order to provide specialized recommendations tailored to the unique character of each district. The OTPRP explores several key elements for revitalization: future land use and redevelopment opportunities, barriers to reinvestment, revising the City's Infill Incentive Policy, modifying Grand Avenue to reduce its negative impacts on the area, multi-modal transportation and transit-oriented-development opportunities, preservation of the area's historic context and elements, and thematic design elements to establish and enhance the area's identity.

Peoria Sports Complex District Urban Design Plan

In addition to the efforts directed towards Peoria's Old Town area, the City has also identified the vicinity of the Peoria Sports Complex as an area ripe for design refinement that will create increased excitement and further define a sense of place for the district. Already an economic engine made up of dining and entertainment-related businesses, the Peoria Sports Complex District Urban Design Plan (PSCDP) seeks to redefine and enhance this district so that its several discrete areas will function as a whole and become a destination-oriented and pedestrian focused mixed-use entertainment hub. The PSCDP provides recommendations on the following: increasing pedestrian connectivity while addressing vehicular circulation and parking; development and redevelopment opportunities; shifting the density of residential and non-residential land uses in the area; establishing and enhancing the districts identity with thematic elements; identifying recreation, environmental restoration, habitat creation, and environmental education opportunities in and around the Skunk Creek wash/Arizona Canal Diversion Channel (ACDC); and general design schemes for the district.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

As a complement to the infill and redevelopment strategies included in the City's revitalization plans, the City has also recognized that maintaining and preserving the unique character of mature neighborhoods is highly desirable. As a Certified Local Government, the City of Peoria has committed to supporting the preservation of the City's historic and pre-historic properties. Designation by the State Historic Preservation Office as a Certified Local Government allows Peoria to develop and govern local preservation programs, and also provides eligibility for specialized funding opportunities. Through its Historic Preservation Master Plan, Historic Preservation Zoning Ordinance, and other governing documents including the recently created Old Town Peoria Revitalization Plan, the City has identified strategies for encouraging the protection of historic resources.

In order to better understand the nature of the Peoria’s heritage resources, two Historic Resource Surveys have been initiated. The first survey was conducted in 1997, and identified 85 buildings in and around Peoria’s original town site. In 2006 a second survey was performed, covering the same general vicinity as the earlier survey. The later survey updated the status of properties covered by the original survey and described a number of additional properties as well. The reports resulting from these Historic Resource Surveys supply information that can be used to assist in determining whether properties may be eligible for listing on the City’s Local Register of Historic Places, and/or the state and federal historic registers. The surveys may also identify areas potentially eligible for listing as historic districts.

Historic resources within the City are eligible for designation as Local Historic Landmarks or as a part of a Local Historic District, a status which provides recognition of a property’s importance in the City’s history. The Historic Preservation Commission is charged with approving any significant changes to the exterior of a designated Local Historic Landmark. Designation as a Local Historic Landmark helps to ensure that properties which are important pieces of Peoria’s heritage are celebrated and preserved for future generations of Peorians to appreciate.

In addition to designating Local Historic Landmarks and Historic Districts, the City has also supports programs designed to educate and assist the public in preserving Peoria’s heritage. Events such as Peoria’s annual Pioneer Day draw members of the community together to celebrate Peoria’s history, while brochures for self-guided walking tours through Peoria’s original townsite allow the public to explore Peoria’s heritage at their own pace.

6.B. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

GOAL 1:	CREATE AN ATTRACTIVE, VIBRANT AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY WITHIN MATURE AREAS OF THE CITY.
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Objective 1.A:

Continue to leverage public investments within existing Redevelopment/Revitalization planning areas.

Policy 1.A.1:

Support the recommendations embodied in the Old Town Peoria Revitalization Plan and the Peoria Sports Complex District Urban Design Plan.

Policy 1.A.2:

Designate the adopted revitalization and redevelopment areas as infill incentive districts pursuant to Arizona Revised Statutes.

Policy 1.A.3:

Once adopted, implement transit improvements in accordance with the results of the Multi-Modal Transportation study.

Objective 1.B:

Encourage economic development in adopted revitalization or redevelopment areas.

Policy 1.B.1:

Identify appropriate areas, match with desired users, and prepare a marketing package for prospective developers.

Policy 1.B.2:

Develop incentives to attract infill employment opportunities that will entice residential development.

Objective 1.C:

Rejuvenate historic Old Town.

Policy 1.C.1

Implement the recommendations of the Old Town Peoria Revitalization Plan and enact the necessary ordinances to do so.

Policy 1.C.2:

Investigate restoration opportunities for selected historically significant structures.

Policy 1.C.3:

Continue to design and construct improvements for Osuna Park.

Policy 1.C.4:

Design a mixed-use transit station to be located north and west of Peoria and 83rd Avenues as part of a Multi-Modal Transportation Plan.

Policy 1.C.5:

Support efforts to prepare a marketing package for key sites within the Old Town area.

Policy 1.C.6:

Investigate enhanced streetscape designs for 85th Avenue between Grand Avenue and the City Hall Complex.

Objective 1.D:

Promote a pedestrian-friendly environment in the Old Town area.

Policy 1.D.1:

Utilize the Old Town Peoria Revitalization Plan architectural design standards when considering amendments to the City's Design Review Manual.

Objective 1.E:

Encourage arts, recreation and civic-oriented development in the Old Town.

Policy 1.E.1:

Continue to recruit theaters, museums, art galleries, recreation attractions and civic-oriented uses.

Policy 1.E.2:

Encourage service-oriented agencies, and professional offices to locate in the Old Town area.

GOAL 2:

IDENTIFY AND PROMOTE THE PRESERVATION OF PEORIA'S HERITAGE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Objective 2.A:

Identify Peoria's Historic and Cultural Resources

Policy 2.A.1:

Continue to update the existing Historic Resources Survey, and explore the possibility of conducting surveys in other areas of the City that are likely to have historic resources, such as the area referred to as “Weedville”, and the vicinity of Calderwood Butte.

Policy 2.A.2:

Develop criteria for the identification of pre-historic resources as a part of the Historic Preservation Master Plan.

Policy 2.A.3:

Maintain a local Register of Historic Places. The register shall be composed of nominated historic resources that have been approved through the processes specified in the Historic Preservation Master Plan and any applicable articles of the Zoning Ordinance.

Objective.2.B:

Preserve Peoria’s Historic Resources

Policy 2.B.1:

Maintain its designation as a Certified Local Government (CLG) in order to retain the local control of Historic Preservation decisions that it has been delegated by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

Policy 2.B.2:

Maintain an updated Historic Preservation Master Plan to guide preservation efforts.

Policy 2.B.3:

Consider placing Historic Preservation Overlay Zoning over properties nominated for the local Register of Historic Places.

Policy 2.B.4:

Discourage the demolition of structures and buildings identified as historic resources on the City’s Historic Resources Surveys.

Policy 2.B.5:

Identify opportunities to partner with the Peoria Arizona Historical Society and similar organizations to enhance the City’s historic preservation program.

Objective 2.C:

Foster Awareness and Support of Peoria’s Heritage and Historic Resources

Policy 2.C.1:

Apply for designation as a Preserve America Community to display its commitment to preserving Peoria’s historic resources.

Policy 2.C.2:

Develop standards and guidelines for signage intended to identify, describe, and commemorate Peoria’s historic resources.

Policy 2.C.3:

Continue to develop interpretive/informational materials to promote Peoria’s heritage, such as self-guided walking tour brochures.

Policy 2.C.4

The City will encourage the owners of properties deemed historically significant by Historic Resource Surveys support the nomination of their properties to the City's Local Register of Historic Places.

6.C. REVITALIZATION AND REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

The City has significantly expanded its population and employment growth northward over the past 30 years. As described previously, the City has prepared and adopted several plans that focus revitalization and redevelopment activities in areas that have been identified as opportunity zones for investment or reinvestment. The Old Town Peoria Revitalization Plan (OTPRP) and the Sports Complex District Plan both offer opportunities for the expanded economic development for their plan areas.

In the Old Town area this may take the form of encouraging the reuse of existing buildings to take advantage of the pedestrian-oriented "Main Street" character that gives the area near Osuna Park its charming traditional feel. Alternatively, activities in other districts of the OTRP may tend toward a focus on projects that are more urban in both scale and form to take advantage of future transit opportunities.

In order to achieve even greater economic vitality in the Sports Complex area, development will likely focus on larger-scale in-fill and redevelopment projects. However, investments in the public realm of both project areas such as enhanced pedestrian-connections across busy streets and directional signage to direct visitors to points of interest will be important for both plan areas.

The North Peoria Redevelopment Area Plan and the Downtown Peoria Redevelopment Plan were prepared pursuant to the provisions of the Slum Clearance and Redevelopment Law (ARS §36-1471). However, the effective cancellation of the use of tax increment financing (TIF) by the legislature in 1998 was a major loss in terms of a financial strategy that is based on the preparation of the redevelopment plan. While the use of TIF was considered illegal, several communities who had put these mechanisms in place have not faced legal challenges. In response to the lack of viable tools to achieve redevelopment or revitalization objectives, the legislature authorized (as a component of Growing Smarter Plus) the establishment of infill incentive districts. These districts could allow for expedited zoning or rezoning procedures, expedited processing of plans and proposals, municipal fee waivers (if not funded by other development fees) and relief from development standards as identified in the infill incentive plan.

In order to designate the infill incentive district, the city must find that three of the conditions identified below exist for the identified area:

- A large number of vacant older or dilapidated buildings exist;
- A large number of vacant or underused parcels of property exist;
- A larger number of buildings or other places where nuisances exist;
- An absence of development and investment activity exists;
- A high occurrence of crime exists; and
- A continuing decline in population exists.

Revitalization endeavors in residential neighborhoods are strongly tied to housing programs, as described in Chapter 7, the Housing Element of this plan. In addition, programs such as the Neighborhood Pride program provide financial assistance to neighborhood associations for neighborhood beautification and improvement projects. These types of programs involve citizens in

affecting change in their neighborhoods, which can lead to increased private investment in distressed areas.