

Executive Summary

In November 2004, the then College of Architecture and Environmental Design (CAED) was asked by the Phoenix Community Alliance (PCA) to conduct a teaching exercise on the upgrade of the Arizona Capitol Mall District in Phoenix. Instructors and students in the CAED at Arizona State University (ASU) have conducted many site- and discipline-specific studio projects in the past. The novelty of this year's project was that the architecture and planning studios would focus on the same area and were to be conducted simultaneously.

In the spring of 2005, 46 students (31 urban planning and 15 architecture seniors) assembled in a joint studio project to develop a revitalization plan for the Arizona Capitol Mall District, applying urban design concepts that would be unique to the area. This report is the result of a single semester's worth of collaboration and serves two purposes: it acts as a supplement to the architecture studio's final design program and as a resource for ideas and concepts toward furthering the renaissance of the Capitol Mall District.

The planning studio was divided into six groups: state facilities, human services, neighborhoods, private investments, transportation, and civic collaboration, reflecting the six components that were determined to have the most influence in the Capitol Mall District. For the planning students, concentrating on a realistic approach to the coordination of project development was the directing priority, whereas the architecture students' designs were guided by intuitive solutions that reflect one of many possible futures if the planning framework is carried out to its fullest potential.

This report is organized in two parts. Part one presents the work of the planning students. And part two presents the boards developed by the architecture students. The following summaries list the key findings of

each planning group and the focus of their recommendations, as well as the projects developed by the architecture students.

PLANNING STUDIO

STATE FACILITIES

This group researched the current status and location of all properties owned by the state. State officials expressed the desire to centralize many departments and services in the Capitol Mall District in an attempt to increase efficiency. The group members found this to be an excellent opportunity for the state to begin centralizing its office space. Some are optimistic that more state facilities would foster new residential growth, not only through job creation, but through innovative building designs that would give back to the community.

Development Area 1 - Capitol Gateway

- The most significant intersection in the Capitol Mall District
- Great potential for a "gateway" space
- Possible site for the Arizona Art and History Museum
- Candidate site for a "sky bridge" to augment a visual connection to the State Capitol Building
- Location for the beginning point of a "flag walk" streetscape alignment

Development Area 2 - Carnegie Square

- Mixed-use of state buildings: live-work, work-play, and after hours uses
- Adaptive reuse of the Carnegie Library
- Removal of fencing
- Environmental Services Campus

Development Area 3 - Capitol Campus

- New construction of House and Senate
- Wesley Bolin Plaza
- Social Services Campus
- Education Campus

Development Area 4 - 19th Avenue and Van Buren Street

- Re-platting will allow for legislature to relocate
- 19th Avenue (SE corner)
- Health Campus

HUMAN SERVICES

The decentralization of government facilities and businesses from the downtown area that occurred during the late 1970s through the 1980s depleted the Capitol Mall District of the vital components that make for strong communities. There was little remaining to maintain a twenty-four-hour-a-day presence in the community and thereby avert overwhelming the area with an influx of Maricopa County's homeless population. The human services group determined that all previous plans for the revitalization of the district have not taken into account the now permanent existence of the homeless. With the opening of the new Human Services Campus, its directors must be allowed to provide strategies for a district master plan. This will ensure a more coordinated effort in moving services to other cities without depriving access for those in need of them.

Recommendation 1–Satellite Centers

- There is overall consensus between shelter directors of the need for other shelters in surrounding cities
- Satellite centers would alleviate the strain on existing shelters
- Satellite centers would be located in cities that send a large percentage of their homeless population to Phoenix
- Satellite centers would eventually have complementary programs necessary to eradicate the homeless population

Recommendation 2–Affordable Housing

- Increase the number of subsidized homes in Phoenix
- Assist the rehabilitation of existing rental stock
- Provide housing with embedded services
- Facilitate permanent housing and transition to homeownership

Recommendation 3–Funding

- Only \$3.8 million are diverted to homeless programs compared to \$22 million to community action programs
- Funding should be increased for satellite centers, treatment programs, and crime prevention programs
- Possible sources are the Department of

Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Economic Security, city donations, and other private contributors

NEIGHBORHOODS

The Woodland Historic District is the only remaining neighborhood within the district's boundaries. This third group recognized poor infrastructure and dilapidated homes as the major contributors to stagnant growth. Developing new urban design guidelines to maintain the historic integrity of the neighborhood is seen as crucial for attracting more homebuyers. Currently, the Capitol Mall Association is the most effective organization for encouraging investment in the neighborhood. Their service as stewards for home buying in the area will be expanded as the St. Matthew's neighborhood to the east of the district's 19th Avenue boundary is incorporated. The neighborhood group foresees great potential for this residential quarter, which should be allowed to receive innovative financial incentives to establish a stronger presence. Creating a critical mass of residents in the district is seen as essential for resurrecting the Capitol Mall District.

Capitol Mall Association (CMA)

Improvements

- Implement historical preservation improvements
- Establish streetscape continuity
- Create strong residential social network
- Relocate CMA office in the Woodland Neighborhood
- Educate neighbors about federal funding for historic preservation

Residential Enhancement

- Increase neighborhood involvement
- Foster community interaction
- Increase awareness about historical preservation
- Develop standards for property design
- Enforce design regulations and promote yard up-keep

Mixed-Use Development

- Create a transition between the governmental area and residential communities

- Promote a pedestrian and transit environments
- Encourage a live/work environment
- Provide amenities
- Offer housing for a variety of income levels
- Promote infill housing with low-scale retail/office space

PRIVATE INVESTMENTS

Creating innovative investment strategies for breaking land inactivity has been the fourth group's responsibility. Their main focus, reducing the financial risk for private developers, guided their research, which compared case studies of areas that share similar disadvantages with the Capitol Mall District. Beyond tax incentives, this group has determined that the existing overlay of the district must be allowed to evolve into a more productive growth generator. The introduction of a Community Facilities District could give way to a Business Improvement District, and then, eventually, a Tax Increment Financing strategy should also be implemented. It is important that private sector stakeholders are included in the design of these policies to ensure effectiveness.

Available Financing Tools

- Lease purchase
- General obligation and revenue bonds
- Historic preservation funds
- Community Facilities District (CFD)
- Business Improvement District (BID)
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF)
- Government Property Lease Excise Tax (GPLET)

TRANSPORTATION

As with all urban planning exercises, understanding the circulation and connectivity is essential. The pattern of growth in the Capitol Mall District will be influenced by circulation factors, which include systems of mass transit, pedestrian pathways, the location of parking structures, and the direction of traffic flow. The goals for this group include the integration of these systems with the Copper Square District to the east as well as introducing transit-oriented

development. The possibility for lane reductions and one street closure also came into play in order to make a more pedestrian-friendly environment. The success of the district's rehabilitation is dependent on the reconfiguration of transportation modes.

Recommendations for Pedestrian Movement

- Completion and implementation of previous pedestrian study
- Development of physical and amenity improvements east of 15th Avenue, along 7th Avenue, and 19th Avenue
- Address pedestrian access routes to establish safe, convenient, accessible and comfortable movements
- Pedestrian development should be focused on improving the visual atmosphere of the area

Recommendations for Vehicular Movement

- Narrow Washington and Jefferson Streets to two lanes of traffic
- Establish non-rush-hour on-street parking along both sides of Washington and Jefferson Streets
- Establish bicycle lanes on Washington and Jefferson Streets
- Close the south roadway connection from Washington Street to Jefferson Street
- Reduced surface parking lots into mixed-use facilities and parking structures

Recommendations for Mass Transit

- Leave current mass transit routes and services intact
- Invest in greater rider incentive programs to make sure the current system is used to its fullest potential
- Add buses and infrastructure to the Rapid Bus System
- Promote higher ridership levels through the development of new projects and new stops
- Place the new light rail along Van Buren Street

Recommendations for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)

- Promote TOD along the Washington Street corridor
- Incorporate the light rail into the Capitol Mall District along the Van Buren Street corridor

- Reduce surface parking lots by transforming vacant/unused lots into mixed-use facilities and parking structures
- Improve Transportation Demand Management (TDM) schemes in the Capitol Mall District
- Provide a parking management system that encourages state employees to use mass transit

CIVIC COLLABORATION

Civic collaboration is how project ideas are developed, their locations established, and funding secured. It is the framework that allows the stakeholders to be productive while respecting how they influence the outcome of other developments. Community contracted design guidelines minimize the potential for conflicts and produce congruency throughout the district. After interviewing several municipal and public stakeholders, the sixth group generated a conceptual model of current collaborative efforts and determined what areas are in need of strengthening. There is overwhelming agreement that a new entity should be enacted, the Capitol District Development Corporation (CDDC), which would take ownership of the revitalization process. Structured as a proactive force, the CDDC would integrate existing stewardship organizations, aid in generating a district master plan, and supervise progress to maintain a logical pace in sustainable growth. Group six illustrates with flow charts and organizational diagrams how the first five components can be aggregated into a new streamlined system of development.

The Arizona Capitol District Development Corporation (CDDC)

- The organization should be permanent and have long-term membership
- The organizational structure should represent various interests
- It should have authority to manage a master plan, development strategies and enact stakeholder collaborations
- It should have paid professionals
- It should be set up through legislative processes

Main Roles of the Proposed CDDC

- Strategic Planning—act under the state and city to facilitate planning
- Partnering—collaborate and form alliances
- Sustained Financing—two features
- Implementation—facilitate stakeholders involvement in decision making

ARCHITECTURE STUDIO

THESIS STATEMENT

Public Monumentality as Social Invisibility?—Development of Infrastructural Strategies and Design Tactics for Better Urban Integration through Greater Architectural Inclusion, Diversification, and Rearticulation

INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

- The Capitol Mall has been a forgotten area in urban, cultural, and social terms.
- It is a complex urban district where state, county, and private buildings have been constructed without an integrated planning or architectural framework.
- The main objective of this project is to analyze the Capitol Mall District while proposing critical ways to revitalize and reverse the current state of disaggregation.
- While the Planning Studio developed a detailed analysis of the current conditions in the area and devised a long-term revitalization plan with a phased implementation agenda, the Architecture Studio focused on conceptual design opportunities to promote particular solutions and provoke feedback to create conditions for improved urban integrity and diversity in the area.

GENERAL GOALS

- To integrate urbanism and architecture, emphasizing connection, communication, inclusion, and celebration.
- Through projects at the edges and across the different zones of the Capitol Mall,

encourage interaction between both public spaces and users, previously isolated.

- To promote a strong diversity of architectural and social uses within a well-planned integrated space. Diversity will be achieved through architectural configuration and through developing a good mixture and articulation of public/private functions and open/closed spaces, encouraging the revitalization of a more dynamic, social space within the Capitol Mall district
- To develop a holistic approach capable of providing a more comprehensive vision for the area, envisioning “bigger ideas” and addressing different surveyed needs and preliminary recommendations from stakeholders, Planning Studio, and Architecture Studio.

PRELIMINARY IDEAS

- Through identifying a series of large infrastructural moves or strategies and particular interventions or tactics, break down the large scale of the project into a number of possible specific smaller projects and design opportunities according to the available physical and political conditions.
- The different projects become samples or examples of the possibilities and intentionalities behind the larger general strategy or particular tactic that it belongs to or promotes.
- Each project’s own schematic design will consider the complexity of new complementary uses for different locations while preserving the institutional character of the Mall.
- The projects introduce discussion for developing more complex notions of public/private spaces, diverse programming, sustainability, feasibility, tectonics, landscaping, aesthetics, and sociocultural issues that the area desperately lacks in its current situation.
- To provide a desirable range of possible projects to be developed in the future. Once these new strategies are sufficiently discussed and consolidated, the provisional shape of those strategies may evolve into more realistic, inclusive, and immediately realizable solutions and projects.

SPECIFIC APPROACH AND PROCEDURE

- To review and study the areas as opportunities for shifting, changing, or improving the current conditions by the stakeholders, Planning Studio, and Architecture Studio.
- To formulate reintegrative north-south/east-west proposals or strategies embracing possible “big ideas,” while at the same time identifying specific sites for intervention within the proposals to reinforce through particular projects or tactics.
- To test strategic ideas through sample projects as a kind of implementation and demonstration phase of the project, while helping to shape specific planning recommendations to be later developed and possibly implemented.

PROVISIONAL CONCLUSIONS

- The emerging strategies and tactics from this investigation do not reveal a fully developed or complete plan, but remain a utopian course of action, that at full articulation, foreshadows what is possible for new social and physical integrity of the area.
- This investigation articulates the apparent, but critically neglected autonomy of territorial/spatial ties between existing local/particular urban conditions in the area. The character of these fragmentary pieces within the existing configuration draws a powerful physical, social, and political map that continues to shift and change shape.
- The heterodox, anti-idealistic, public and urban strategies performed in this architectural plan offer a preliminary but concrete body of criticism according to more precise regional and contextual sociocultural and political idiosyncrasies, in contrast to the generically abstract and purely utilitarian planning methods and the obsequious associated architecture.
- This inherent but now embedded modern architectural criticism encourages a realization of the “public interest” and a richer freedom of design with wider and

stronger roots, which is a programmatic objective for the continuing growth of architecture and urbanism in the metropolitan Valley of the Sun.

SCHEMATIC DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

The series of projects include three major strategies as greater links between the twelve other individual design opportunities developed:

1. The creation of a Legislative Campus with a north-south orientation in the form of a pedestrian path system and landscaping—the Wash Strategy, around the new Capitol.
 - 1.1 Within the Legislative Campus in the north, a new Commercial and Office/Services Complex at the intersection of 19th Avenue and Van Buren.
 - 1.2 A large expansion to the west and remodel of the existing Capitol Complex
 - 1.3 A consolidation of the dispersed ADOT facilities in the south.
2. A linear east-west Pedestrian Beltway between downtown and the Capitol along the Washington Corridor.
 - 2.1 Within the Pedestrian Beltway, an extensive reconfiguration of the Wesley Bolin Plaza.
 - 2.2 A mixed-use complex of buildings surrounding Carnegie Library Square.
 - 2.3 A Downtown-Mall Gateway project at the intersection of 7th Avenue and Washington.
3. Another pedestrian North-South Linkage reembodying the scattered existing social strata including:
 - 3.1 New Infill Housing in the north within the

- existing historic Woodland Park District.
- 3.2 A Linear Market at the north intersection of 14th Avenue and Washington.
- 3.3 An expansion and renovation of the Attorney General's building into a mixed-use building.
- 3.4 The conversion of the existing cemetery into a Memorial Plaza and park with auditorium.
- 3.5 A Transitional Housing project in connection with the new Human Services Campus both adjacent on either side of the Plaza.
- 3.6 A Vocational/Educational Center completing the strategy south of the railways and close to the existing neglected neighborhoods.

IMMEDIATE RECOMMENDATIONS

A series of permanent Public Installations in the form of lightweight urban furniture like bus stops, telephone booths, traffic lights, kiosks, and building entrances are developed along the Washington Corridor initiating the rearticulation and revitalization of the area and anticipating the celebration of the upcoming Arizona's 2012 Centennial.