

***Downtown
Coolidge
Tomorrow***

IV. DOWNTOWN COOLIDGE TOMORROW

A series of discussions, focus groups, and meetings were held to define the community's preferred vision of Downtown Coolidge – as it would ideally exist in the year 2012. A compilation of the thoughts and preferences expressed during those sessions is shown below.

By the year 2012, Downtown Coolidge would be a “flourishing, thriving community” once again, with all buildings filled, businesses open during the day, restaurants and entertainment at night, people working Downtown, people living above shops, and people walking on the sidewalks and enjoying themselves in Downtown. Downtown would appeal to all ages – young people, families, older adults, retirees – and would have a variety of shops and activities that attract them, and would “never really close,” but would be active night and day.

Downtown would continue to be very friendly and retain its “hometown feeling” – derived from its “nice people,” “courteousness,” and fact that “everybody knows everybody”. This would be achieved despite the explosive growth anticipated to occur in Coolidge.

Downtown would have more retail, good restaurants, art, and entertainment – offering multiple reasons to come Downtown – and making Downtown a “special destination to enjoy.”

Downtown’s appealing variety of uses would be comprised of “a good balance” of daytime and evening businesses, including:

- More retail – in the form of specialty boutiques;
- More restaurants, cafes, and ethnic restaurants;
- The arts – both visual and performing;
- Evening entertainment, such as a community theater and movies;
- Apartments above shops, in single-family homes, and apartment buildings;
- Professional offices, banks, and service businesses;

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- Government offices, the main library, the post office, City Hall;
- The school district office, the museum, and churches;
- Open space;
- A farmers market with food, entertainment, and merchandise that reflects “our cultural diversity;” and
- Parking, to serve the users of all of the above.

Downtown’s physical appearance would be distinctive – “making you know when you’re in Downtown.” A “balance” would be found between buildings that are worth preserving and those that are not. Buildings that are preserved would be improved with façades that are “true to our history.” Boarded up windows would be opened and replaced with glass. Long-time vacant buildings would be fixed-up and filled. Buildings that are not worth saving would be demolished to make way for new buildings that would be modern and blend with the old.

“Visual effects” would be added to Downtown, in the form of benches, decorative streetlights, trees, public art, and water features. Downtown would be made more pedestrian-friendly, especially in the heat of summer, with “more green, less asphalt” and awnings that provide shade for pedestrians.

Better use would be made of San Carlos Park by “integrating it” into Downtown and more fully “connecting the park to Downtown.”

The residential portions of Downtown would also be improved and “integrated” into Downtown.

Downtown would feel safe for families and would be clean at all times – with trash picked up and streets kept clean.

Attitudes in and about Downtown would be positive, focusing on “what we have,” “how we can work together,” and on “getting it done.”

Downtown’s physical ambience, safety, cleanliness, and mix of uses, attractions, and activities would make it able to appeal to and draw a wide variety of customers, including:

- Residents of Coolidge, nearby reservations, and planned communities throughout the area;
- College students;
- Those who work in Coolidge, but live elsewhere – and vice versa;
- “Winter visitors,” aka “snowbirds;”
- Visitors to the Casa Grande National Monument;
- Event-goers – including special events in Downtown and elsewhere, County fairground events, the raceway, future sports complex, future farmers market, etc.;
- Weekend travelers – airport fly-ins, motorcycle and bicycle clubs, antique car clubs, equestrians, RV groups, etc.; and
- Future freeway travelers.

By the year 2012, Downtown Coolidge would be well on its way to having the following image.

***A vibrant, enjoyable, and fun Downtown with
Extremely friendly people,
Cute shops, a diversity of cool and eclectic restaurants,
A strong arts presence, and
A huge amount of nightlife.***

***A unique and special place where
Generations of families have chosen to stay,
Have opened businesses, and
Continue to care about the community.***

***A dynamic regional destination where
People of all ages gather and that
Attracts area residents and visitors alike.***

***A beautiful, quaint, and charming Downtown that
Has made a connection with its history,
Retained its hometown feeling, yet
Welcomes new buildings and modern businesses.***

***A pedestrian-friendly Downtown that is
Clean and safe and where
People park, walk, shop, can eat in a variety of restaurants,
Be entertained, live, and even spend the night.***

***A family-oriented Downtown that makes visitors say,
“This is a place that takes pride in itself and its heritage,”
“I haven’t had this much fun since I was a kid,”
“What a distinctive and beautiful place,”
“I wish they’d do this in my hometown,”
“Let’s stay here for the whole weekend,”
“Let’s come back soon!”***