

Course of Action

VI. COURSE OF ACTION

This chapter includes a **Course of Action** specifically designed to help Downtown Coolidge attain the community's vision, take advantage of the economic opportunities revealed through the market analysis, and become more economically successful and self-sustaining.

The specific recommended **Course of Action** is shown following a reiteration of the guidelines which HyettPalma suggests be embraced as the basis of this **Downtown Action Agenda**.

Guidelines

Given Downtown's current strengths – as well as the community's concerns, desires, and preferred future image for Downtown – HyettPalma strongly recommends that the **Downtown Action Agenda** be implemented using the following guidelines.

1. Set the Stage

In its early days, the Downtown enhancement effort must be focused on the basics – ensuring that Downtown is clean, safe, and visually appealing. Doing so will set the stage for successful business development and the recruitment of quality businesses and investors.

2. Set Standards of Quality

Along with setting the stage for business development, standards of quality must be established in and for Downtown. These standards of quality must address what is expected in Downtown regarding physical improvements made by the private and public sectors – e.g., building appearance, public improvements, landscaping, etc.

3. Create Examples of Quality

Once standards of quality are established, the institutions located in Downtown must set an example by adhering to those standards. Doing so will result in

having examples of quality created by Downtown's leadership – examples which will raise the barre and require others to meet that test.

Downtown institutions that should take the lead in creating examples of quality include:

- The City government;
- The Chamber of Commerce;
- The School Board;
- Banks; and
- The Historical Commission.

4. Make Sure Downtown Remains Unique

It is anticipated that the City of Coolidge will experience tremendous commercial growth over the next several years. For Downtown to successfully co-exist with this new commercial development, Downtown must remain unique and distinctive from the competition. This must be accomplished by:

- Preserving Downtown's remaining historic structures;
- Respecting, and being true to, Downtown's historic architecture – rather than remodeling façades to replicate structures not located in Downtown;
- Ensuring that newly constructed buildings complement the old in Downtown;
- Maintaining the pedestrian-orientation of Downtown's historic area;
- Creating the economic orientations recommended for the three Downtown districts discussed later in this document; and
- Marketing Downtown as a unique destination that provides an experience not found elsewhere.

5. *Get the Word Out*

All forms of available communication must be used to let the buying public and investment community know that:

- A market-driven course of action has been created to bring about Downtown's enhancement;
- Downtown's enhancement is a top priority of the Mayor and City Council;
- A large number of positive improvements are occurring in Downtown;
- More and more improvements are about to come on-line; and
- In short . . .

It's a new day in Downtown Coolidge!

6. *Ratchet Up*

The effort to get the word out that it is a new day in Downtown Coolidge should be aimed at increasing the public's interest in, support of, and commitment to Downtown's enhancement. Accomplishing this will ratchet up the confidence, interest, and involvement that quality investors have in Downtown.

7. *Create Linkages*

The City government is in the early stages of creating financial linkages that would make funds for Downtown improvements available from new developments within the City. This is an excellent initiative that should be expanded, with linkage contributions continuing past the construction phase of new developments.

8. *Coordinated, Quality Improvements*

Care must be taken to ensure that all improvements made in Downtown:

- Are coordinated;

- Are in-keeping with the ***Downtown Action Agenda*** recommendations;
- Move Downtown toward attaining the community's vision;
- Enable Downtown to capture the opportunities defined in the market analysis;
- Adhere to the standards of quality established for Downtown; and
- Are based on – and adhere to – advice obtained from experienced professionals, where applicable.

Doing so will ensure that all improvements made will “fit” and result in the kind of Downtown desired by the community. It must be recognized that the time appears to be right for creating such a Downtown. So much so that a once in a lifetime opportunity might be at hand – and such an opportunity cannot be lost due to disjointed or poorly conceived Downtown improvements.

9. Re-Build Pride

The Downtown enhancement effort must be used to rekindle and re-build the pride which local residents feel for their Downtown, their history, and the future of their community.

10. New Area Residents

The tens of thousands of new residents expected to locate in Coolidge comprise an entirely new, potential customer base for Downtown. These potential customers can be viewed as a clean slate – one without any pre-conceived notions about Downtown Coolidge. Therefore, Downtown must be improved and marketed to these new residents as an appealing destination and a unique experience.

11. Business & Residential Enhancement

Downtown Coolidge was developed in an unusual configuration. Typically, a Downtown is comprised of contiguous commercial development that has residential uses on its peripheries. In Coolidge, the reverse has occurred: a

residential neighborhood lies in the center of Downtown, with commercial uses forming a ring around that neighborhood.

In a Downtown with a more typical configuration, the commercial area and its adjacent neighborhoods are usually improved in a phased manner. However, in Coolidge, Downtown's commercial and residential uses are much more inter-related, due to its unusual configuration. Therefore, the Downtown enhancement effort in Coolidge cannot be phased. Instead, the enhancement of Downtown Coolidge must entail improving both the commercial area and residential area – simultaneously – rather in phases.



Downtown Districts

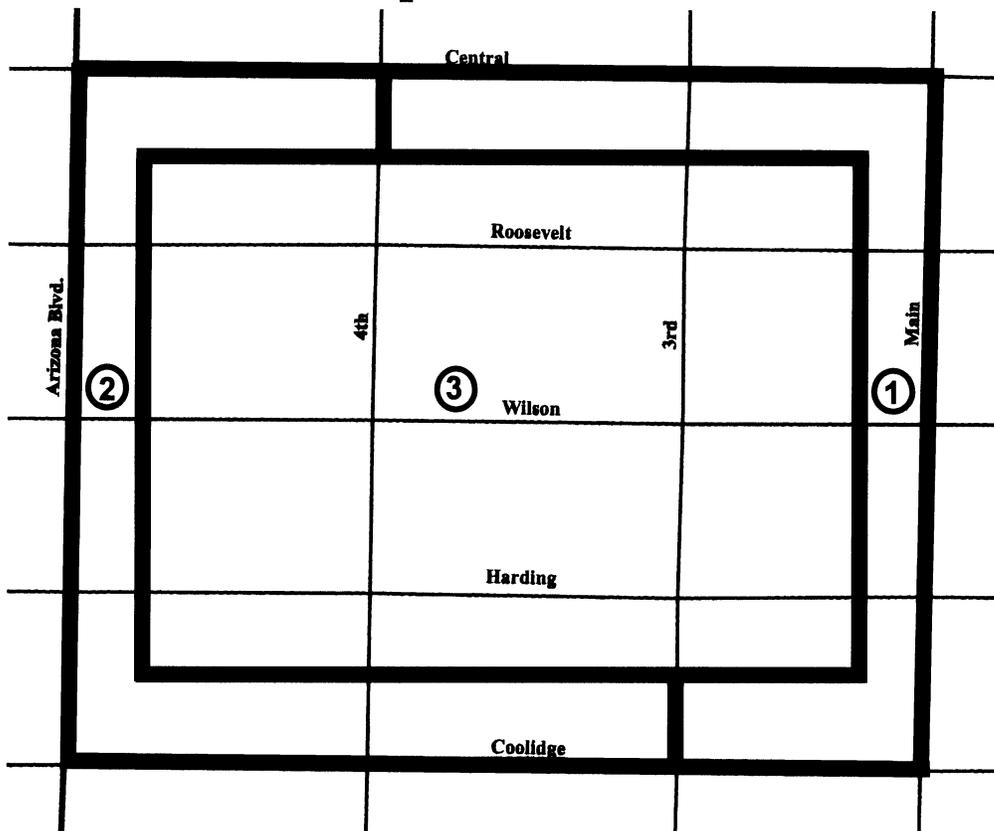
The ***Downtown Action Agenda*** should be used to create the following three districts in Downtown Coolidge (shown on the map on the following page). Doing so will create clear economic orientations in Downtown and direct the appropriate placement of uses within Downtown.

1. Historic Downtown Coolidge

Most of this area is included in Downtown's historic district. It is the most pedestrian-oriented portion of Downtown and the area that affords the greatest potential for creating the unique Downtown desired by the community. The goals of the enhancement effort, related to this district, should be to:

- Create a cluster of specialty retail, food, art, and entertainment uses that make this area a destination;
- Stress the preservation and appropriate rehab of Downtown's historic structures; and

Downtown Coolidge Development Districts



Downtown Districts

- 1 = Historic Downtown Coolidge
- 2 = Boulevard Auto
- 3 = Housing Revitalization

HyettPalma

America Downtown®

- Encourage the development of two- to three-story, mixed-use infill structures that have businesses on the first floor with offices/housing units above.

2. Boulevard Auto

This is a more auto-oriented portion of Downtown that includes a good deal of vacant parcels on Coolidge. The goal of the enhancement effort in this district should be to:

- Create a cluster of convenience retail, food, office, and service businesses;
- Encourage both the rehab and redevelopment of existing structures;
- Encourage infill construction on vacant lots; and
- As Downtown's market strengthens, encourage more intense development on Arizona Boulevard.

3. Housing Revitalization

This district includes the residential core of Downtown. The goal of the enhancement effort in this district should be to:

- Encourage a mix of both single family and multi-family housing units;
- Encourage the improvement/creation of quality market-rate housing, blended with a degree of quality affordable housing; and
- Encourage housing that appeals to a range of incomes.

4. Target Areas

As was stated earlier, Downtown's commercial areas and residential core are highly inter-related, due to Downtown's unique configuration. This means that the health and sustainability of each is also highly inter-related. Therefore, for

the next several years, enhancement actions and initiatives should be focused in the following two target areas:

- Historic Downtown Coolidge; and
- The Housing Revitalization District.

It should be noted that, over time, improvements made in these districts will spur investment in the Boulevard Auto District.

Catalyst Projects

The following projects should be made a top priority of the enhancement effort, since their speedy and successful implementation will catalyze additional, quality investment in Downtown Coolidge.

1. Public Safety

The issue of Downtown public safety appears to be of great concern to the community. While statistics show that lack of Downtown public safety is more of a perceived issue than a reality, the Mayor, City Council, and Police Chief of Coolidge have responded to community concern and taken action on this issue – for which they should be commended.

Specifically, the City:

- Has increased police presence in Downtown – an action that has been noticed by the public and has met with great approval;
- Has established the Crime Suppression Team, comprised of a sergeant and three officers, which will begin patrolling Downtown in January 2007; and
- Intends to place a dedicated officer in Downtown, who will patrol on foot, bike, and Segway.

In addition, it is suggested that:

- The dedicated Downtown officer should be assigned to begin patrolling Downtown immediately;
- Any graffiti appearing in Downtown – on public or private properties – should be removed within 24-hours; and
- Efforts should be made to broadly let the public know that the City is actively and aggressively addressing the issue of Downtown public safety.

Implementing these actions is highly important since doing so will induce consumer and quality investor confidence in Downtown.

2. Clean-Up

The cleanliness of a Downtown impacts the public's perception of – as well as the reality of – public safety in that Downtown. Therefore, Downtown's cleanliness is an economic issue as well as a safety issue that must be addressed.

It appears that the issue of cleanliness in Downtown Coolidge entails the storage and collection of trash. Therefore, the following steps should be taken to address this issue and improve Downtown cleanliness.

- The City should undertake a comprehensive review of the trash storage and collection systems used in both the commercial and residential portions of Downtown.
- In the commercial portion of Downtown, the City should ensure that containers being used by businesses are large enough, are in appropriate locations (alleys), and are being emptied often enough to keep Downtown trash-free. If necessary, consideration should be given to using dumpsters and trash compactors, which should also be located in alleys. And, for businesses producing large amounts of trash on a regular basis,

consideration should be given to requiring such businesses to retain a private trash removal company.

- The City should initiate clean-up days – to include both the commercial and residential portions of Downtown. These events should be held as often as needed to keep Downtown trash-free.
- To ensure that large residential trash items are not visible from the public right-of-way, the City should consider either placing a centrally located dumpster (which is screened from view) in the residential portion of Downtown or more frequently collecting such items.
- The City should ensure that ordinances are adequate to prohibit abandoned cars from being located on public property.

The goal of the above efforts should be to effectuate appropriate, timely trash containment and storage within both the commercial and residential portions of Downtown.

3. Target Area Master Plan

The City has budgeted funds to complete a master plan for the City Hall complex, to include City Hall, the library, and other City government functions. In addition, the City has budgeted funds to enhance San Carlos Park.

Since both the City Hall complex and San Carlos Park are located in the Historic Downtown District – which is one of the two recommended Downtown target areas – the master plan appears to present an ideal opportunity to:

- Define and create standards of quality for this target area;
- Recreate this target area's image and role;
- Make this target area the community's hub, and not just a place of commerce; and

- Induce quality private investment in this target area.

This should be accomplished through the following.

- San Carlos Park

A professional landscape architect should be retained to completely redesign San Carlos Park. The goal of doing so should be to:

***Recreate San Carlos Park as a
civic gathering place for the entire community,
a premier staging ground for public events & entertainment,
and a beautiful haven.***

To accomplish this goal:

- All of the park's existing facilities should be examined and evaluated, including buildings, equipment, trees, and landscaping;
 - The park's redesign should include public art that is of significance, of high quality, and that reflects the City's history and diversity; and
 - The park should include a grand and significant passive water feature.
- City Hall Complex
Given its architectural integrity, the current Coolidge City Hall building is a striking example of Downtown's historic buildings. For this reason, the master plan should include continued use of this structure as City Hall and the preservation of its visual character.

- Streetscape

The scope of the master plan should be expanded to include and address needed streetscape improvements in the Historic Downtown District, as follows.

- A professional landscape architect, with experience in Downtowns, should be retained to design a streetscape plan for the Historic Downtown District.

- The streetscape plan should address the design of:
 - Sidewalks;
 - Street surfaces;
 - Landscaping;
 - Possible in-street medians;
 - Benches;
 - Trash receptacles;
 - Decorative streetlights; and
 - The undergrounding of utilities.

- The streetscape design should include the following objectives:
 - All improvements should be pedestrian-oriented and pedestrian-friendly;

 - The design should stress minimalism, so the visual emphasis remains on Downtown's businesses;

 - The design of all elements chosen – such as benches, trash receptacles, and streetlights – should complement the historic character of this district;

 - All landscaping should include irrigation systems; and

 - All on-street parking and angled parking spaces now existing should be retained.

4. Building Appearance

Three tools must be created in order to encourage preservation of Downtown's history, set standards of quality, and induce quality building improvements within the Downtown Historic District. These are:

HyettPalma

America Downtown®

- A building inventory;
- Detailed design guidelines; and
- A façade study.

- Building Inventory

There is a great deal of questioning locally regarding which Downtown buildings are worthy of/capable of being saved and which should be demolished for redevelopment. The answers to these questions should not be determined by laypeople. Instead, a preservation architect or architectural historian – with experience in Downtowns that are of Downtown Coolidge’s vintage – should be retained to:

- Complete a comprehensive building inventory within the Historic Downtown District;
- Devise and apply a rating system that identifies which structures within the district:
 - Are of historic or architectural significance – and should, therefore, be preserved;
 - Are structurally sound, but non-contributing structures to the historic district – warranting greater flexibility in the review and approval of façade changes; and
 - Are structurally unsound, non-contributing structures – and, therefore, can and should be demolished.

- Detailed Design Guidelines

The Historic Commission now performs its design review functions using the *U.S. Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation*. While this is a good first step, there is a need for guidelines that offer more detail and direction, given this district’s array of architectural styles and conditions. Therefore, the retained

preservation architect or architectural historian should prepare design guidelines for the Historic Downtown District that:

- Discuss and illustrate the do's and don'ts of appropriate building renovation, restoration, and new infill construction for the district's architectural styles;
- Discuss and illustrate the appropriate design of business signs, awnings, and fencing for the district;
- Establish a palette of appropriate paint colors for the district's buildings; and
- Encourage respect for the district's existing architectural styles while encouraging compatible infill construction.

- Façade Study

The retained architect or architectural historian should also be directed to complete a façade study for the Historic Downtown District. The façade study should include:

- Renderings of actual buildings in the district, showing what front façades – and other façades that are visible from the public right-of-way – could and should be renovated to look like, based on the building inventory rating system and the design guidelines;
- Renderings of what infill buildings could and should look like, based on the design guidelines – with the goal being to have them complement the district's historic structures;
- Showing the types of appropriate signs and awnings that should be used on the district's buildings; and

- Showing the appropriate types of fencing and other materials that could be used to screen the district's vacant lots.

5. Commercial Rehabilitation Program

The City operates this relatively new incentive program, which offers forgivable, zero-interest, deferred loans that can be used for façade and sign improvements in Downtown. To date, the City has received applications totaling far more than the funds available through the program. This illustrates the demand that currently exists for such incentives. And, it is anticipated that – when the first projects funded actually get underway – demand for these incentives will increase. Therefore, it is suggested that:

- The City should continue to seek funds so that this incentive program can be continued;
- Since it is understood that the City might no longer be able to access Community Development Block Grant funds for this program (as the City's demographics change), the City should consider the use of general funds and funds generated from the linkage program to continue this incentive program;
- If demand far outstrips funds available, the City should consider requiring applicants to provide a match in order to receive funding;
- The City should make these incentives available to commercial owners, even if their buildings are not occupied at the time application is made – if this is done, a maximum grant of \$20,000 that requires a 50-50 match should be considered;
- The award of these incentives should be concentrated in the Historic Downtown District; and
- Loan and grant recipients should be required to adhere to the design guidelines and the building inventory rating system.

6. Arizona Boulevard

It is understood that the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) intends to resurface Arizona Boulevard in the summer of 2007. To maximize the impact of this improvement project, the following should be considered.

- The City should approach ADOT to discuss the possibility of including streetscape improvements into this project – sidewalks, decorative streetlights, landscaping – as was done at the Safeway development. The community appears to greatly approve of and appreciate those improvements. And, the same attention to detail and creation of a unique ambience should be brought to Downtown.
- The streetscape improvements should be coordinated with those designed as part of the Target Area Master Plan, but they should not be identical to those. Instead, the Arizona Boulevard streetscape improvements should reflect the auto-oriented nature of the boulevard.
- As part of the improvements, the City should install signs that read “Welcome to Downtown Coolidge” and placed on Coolidge and Central, are beautifully landscaped, lighted for evening visibility, and include arrows directing motorists to Downtown.
- The signs should be distinctive, creative, in keeping with the design standards established as part of the Target Area Master Plan, and reflective of the image being created for Downtown.
- The generic green and white signs currently in place, that read “Business District,” should be removed.

7. Farmers Market

There appears to be a great desire locally to create a Coolidge Farmers Market. Since farmers markets have proven to be excellent Downtown draws, the Coolidge market should:

- Be created in Downtown;

- Be held on a vacant lot in the Historic Downtown District; and
- Include growers, food, arts, crafts, and entertainment.

Building Improvements

The following actions should be taken to improve privately owned properties located in the commercial portions of Downtown.

1. Design Review

As was stated earlier, one of Downtown's strengths is that the City has created a local historic district in Downtown. However, there are questions locally about the role of preservation in Downtown – and, as a result, the role of the Historic Commission, which performs the City's design review function.

To make the role of preservation in Downtown clear, and to formalize and clarify the role of the Historic Commission, it is suggested that:

- The Historic Commission should adopt the building inventory rating system and the design guidelines that are completed by the retained preservation architect/architectural historian;
- City staff should be given the authority to administratively approve all applications for a Certificate of Appropriateness that adhere to the design guidelines and the building inventory rating system;
- For all projects that come before the Historic Commission, the Commission should follow the results of the building inventory rating system and use the design guidelines;
- All applicants should be required to submit drawings showing proposed improvements;
- In all reviews, whether made by the Commission or its staff:

- The building inventory rating system should be used;
 - The design guidelines should be adhered to; and
 - A distinction should be made between reversible and irreversible changes;
- Reversible changes should be reviewed and ruled upon with more flexibility than irreversible changes; and
 - The Commission should encourage, but not require, use of the paint color palette that is developed for the Historic Downtown District – since the painting of a structure the “wrong color” is reversible.

2. Code Enforcement

The City should institute an annual, systematic review of all commercial properties in Downtown to eliminate life/safety concerns and structural violations.

3. Problem Properties

The following steps should be taken to address properties whose owners have allowed them to become eyesores and detriments to Downtown, by not making needed repairs and improvements:

- Work with existing owners to urge and assist them in making needed improvements;
- Help existing owners – who are unable or unwilling to make needed improvements – market their properties to those who will;
- Have the City or other appropriate public body purchase problem properties to resell to those who will make needed improvements or to demolish structures that are determined to be structurally unsound by a qualified structural engineer; and

- Apply aggressive code enforcement to remove the incident of sub-standard structures, which compromise life-safety, in such a way that does not result in the demolition of valuable historic buildings – according to the building inventory.

4. Vacant Structures

The City is considering enacting a vacant building tax to address Downtown's long-time vacant structures. This should be pursued immediately, as an inducement to owners to either fill or sell their properties. The penalty for those who do not comply should be established at a significant level. And, funds generated by the vacant building tax should be used to make Downtown improvements – possibly using the funds to make loans and grants under the Commercial Rehabilitation Program.

5. Inappropriate Uses & Improvements

The City should not allow the following uses and improvements in Downtown:

- Mobile homes;
- Warehousing;
- Light manufacturing;
- Industry;
- Chain link fences;
- Barbed wire or other forms of such;
- Exterior security bars or grates on façades visible from the public right-of-way; and
- Boarding-up of windows.

6. Infill Construction

In the Historic Downtown District, a goal of the enhancement effort should be to recreate the streetwall. By doing so, the district's pedestrian-orientation and hometown feel will be strengthened. To accomplish this:

- Infill construction should be encouraged on the district's vacant lots;

- New buildings should be mixed-use, with appropriate businesses in first floor spaces and offices/housing above;
- New buildings should be a maximum of two- to three-stories in height;
- Zero-lot line construction should be required, meaning requiring buildings to be constructed at the sidewalk line on Central, Main, and Coolidge in this district;
- Surface level parking lots that front Central, Main, or Coolidge – in this district – should not be allowed;
- Parking lots should be located at the rear of buildings or on side-streets; and
- The number of curb cuts should be minimized on Central, Main, and Coolidge, within the Historic Downtown District.

7. Vacant Lots

All of Downtown's vacant lots should be cleaned-up and greened-up until infill buildings are constructed on them. Unsightly vacant lots should be screened with decorative materials that are in-keeping with the design guidelines.

8. City-Owned Properties

The City currently owns several vacant lots in Downtown. To induce and create quality infill structures in Downtown, the City should consider:

- Transferring these lots to private owners, at no charge;
- Requiring that new owners build mixed-use infill structures that meet the design guidelines and include the business mix recommended in this ***Downtown Action Agenda***;
- Establishing a timeline for such construction to be completed; and

- Including a deed restriction in the property transfer that stipulates, if sold within five-years, the seller is required to pay the City the assessed value of the lot (not the improvements) at the time of its transfer.

Parking

While parking is not scarce in Downtown at this time, the following actions should be taken to ensure that parking does not become a problem as demand in and use of Downtown increases.

1. Current Supply

The City should continue to provide as many on-street spaces as possible – and angled parking wherever possible. This is important since on-street spaces are those most sought by customers and angled parking is a pedestrian-friendly, traffic calming technique.

2. Future Supply

As parking demand increases in Downtown:

- An adequate number of off-street parking spaces should be provided for Downtown employees;
- Employee parking lots should be located behind buildings and on side streets and should be safe and well-lighted;
- On-street spaces should be maintained and reserved for customer use – not for use by Downtown employees or business owners;
- As more and more customers come to Downtown, business owners should provide on-site customer parking, whenever possible; and
- When customer demand warrants, the City should consider creating public parking lots to meet this demand.

3. Parking Lots

As was stated above:

- Surface level parking lots that front Central, Main, or Coolidge in the Historic Downtown District should not be allowed;
- In this district, parking lots should be located at the rear of buildings or on side-streets; and
- The number of curb cuts should be minimized on Central, Main, and Coolidge, within the Historic Downtown District.

Housing

The improvement of Downtown's commercial areas and residential areas must go hand-in-hand, if successful enhancement is to be achieved in Downtown Coolidge. The City government understands this, and therefore, has committed to seeking additional funds to assist owner-occupants improve their homes. In addition, the following actions should be taken to strengthen and improve the appeal of Downtown's Housing Revitalization District.

1. Goal

A goal of the Downtown enhancement effort should be to:

- Create a mixture of single-family and multi-family units in this district;
- Create a mix of market-rate and affordable housing in this district;
- Increase the number of owner-occupied housing units in this district;
- Ensure that all housing in this district is well-maintained;
- Break the cycle of disinvestment and rebuild neighborhood pride in this district; and

- Create the tools necessary to meet this goal.

2. Inventory

The City should conduct a comprehensive inventory within the Housing Revitalization District to:

- Identify all sound structures;
- Identify all sub-standard structures; and
- Focus first on those structures determined to be most problematic.

3. Code Enforcement

Once the inventory is completed, the City should initiate a code enforcement effort in this district – focusing on building exteriors and yards visible from the public right-of-way.

4. Incentives

Hand-in-hand with the code enforcement effort, the City should offer the following incentives and assistance for housing improvements:

- A grant program should be created and made available to owner-occupants who are unable to make needed home improvements otherwise; and
- A low-interest loan program should be created and made available to owner-occupants who are not low-income.

These incentives should be made available to owner-occupants of housing units located in the Housing Revitalization District to:

- Make exterior improvements; and
- Correct code violations.

5. Assembly

As a next step in strengthening the Housing Revitalization District, the City should consider:

- Demolishing sub-standard structures;
- Assembling lots;
- Marketing assembled property to quality, qualified developers;
- Writing down the cost of land for such developers;
- Requiring developers to construct quality housing that is in-keeping with this ***Downtown Action Agenda***; and
- Requiring developers to designate a certain percentage of their units as affordable housing.

Business Development

The following actions should be taken to further strengthen Downtown's existing businesses and attract additional businesses to Downtown.

1. One-on-Ones

The City's recently retained planner has begun meeting one-on-one with Downtown business owners and property owners. This is the most effective form of business development, and therefore, should be continued. The planner should:

- Use the one-on-one meetings to identify the needs and concerns of Downtown business and property owners;
- Familiarize owners with the ***Downtown Action Agenda*** and induce them to make improvements that are consistent with its recommendations; and

- Request that the SBDC, located at Arizona Central College, provide technical assistance to Downtown's owners.

2. Hobby Businesses

The City should let it be known that Downtown Coolidge is not an appropriate location for "hobby businesses" – defined as those that are not open on a regular and year-round basis.

3. Windows

The City should require that a certain percent (possibly 75%) of first floor business windows remain free of signs, flyers, ads, merchandise, and other items that limit visibility into the business. This is important as an economic issue, an aesthetic issue, and a public safety measure.

4. Variety & Quality

According to the resident survey conducted as part of the **Downtown Action Agenda** process, trade area residents believe it is very important to improve the variety and quality of Downtown businesses. And, as the survey results below illustrate, Downtown business owners agree:

- Increase restaurant variety (89% residents, 88% business owners);
- Increase the number of retail businesses (83% residents, 93% business owners);
- Increase the variety of retail goods (79% residents, 78% business owners);
- Improve restaurant quality (79% residents, 71% business owners);
- Improve the variety of service businesses (72% residents, 46% business owners); and

- Improve the quality of retail goods (71% residents, 62% business owners).

Therefore, Downtown's current business owners should take these survey results to heart and improve the variety and quality of their own businesses, as much as possible, by:

- Using the findings of the market analysis contained in this ***Downtown Action Agenda***;
- Experimenting with merchandise expansion and contraction, to determine the optimum variety of goods that best serve the market;
- Ensuring that their business interiors and building exteriors are of quality, by being attractive, clean, and appealing at all times;
- Advertising on a regular and year-round basis;
- Take advantage of the financial incentives available through City Hall; and
- Participating in the overall Downtown enhancement effort.

5. Incentives

The City should consider creating a 50-50 matching grant program of up to \$2,500 to induce and assist Downtown business owners to:

- Remove exterior security bars and grates that are visible from the public right-of-way;
- Install interior security bars (set back from display windows);
- Install security alarm systems;
- Light display windows; and

- Open up boarded windows and replace glass, if necessary.

6. Recruitment

An aggressive effort should be made by both the private and public sectors to recruit an appropriate range of additional businesses to satisfy the needs of the dynamically growing marketplace, consistent with the findings of this ***Downtown Action Agenda***.

The recruitment effort should be selective – meaning that appropriate businesses identified in the market analysis should be sought. And, remember, a vacancy is better than “any business,” particularly a businesses which is not appropriate for Downtown.

Filling vacancies with the appropriate types of businesses will create the mix, niche, and draws desired by the community.

Initially, every opportunity to create a new Downtown business should be afforded to those who currently operate businesses in Downtown Coolidge through line expansion/contraction, store expansion, or the opening of new doors. This form of business creation/attraction is referred to as “internal recruitment.” All incentives – financial and technical – should be offered to existing business owners in their efforts to better serve the marketplace and take advantage of the opportunities identified through the market analysis contained in this ***Downtown Action Agenda***.

If existing business owners have been offered the opportunity to open new doors or offer new services or new products, and there are still identified voids in the desired Downtown mix of businesses, an effort should be made to seek business prospects from outside the community through aggressive prospecting. Prospects should be sought from throughout the broader trade area and central and southern Arizona.

Prospects should be sought by visiting the types of businesses desired for Downtown Coolidge, discussing with the owner of each business the possibility

of opening an additional shop in Downtown Coolidge or relocating to the community, and inviting the prospect to visit Downtown Coolidge to examine the community, Downtown, and specific building spaces. All incentives available through the enhancement program – both financial and technical – should be offered to business prospects in an effort to induce them to locate in Downtown Coolidge ASAP.

7. Top List

The following types of additional businesses should be sought first for Downtown:

- Restaurants, cafes, and coffee houses – with evening entertainment;
- Bakery;
- Bowling alley, gym/exercise facility;
- Gifts, including Native American crafts;
- Home furnishings and accessories; and
- Art and antiques.

8. Full List

Following is the full listing of businesses appropriate for Downtown Coolidge:

Prepared Food

- Fine Dining Restaurants;
- Moderate Priced Restaurants;
- Sandwich Shops;
- Bistros;
- Coffee Houses;
- Delis;
- Bakeries;
- Candy/Ice Cream/Yogurt Shops;
- Pubs/Taverns -- with Atmosphere/Operation Welcoming to Families; and
- Ethnic Foods -- i.e., Italian, Greek, French, Chinese, Mexican, etc.

HyettPalma

America Downtown®

Food for Home

- Grocery;
- Health Foods; and
- Meat/Fish Market.

Entertainment

- Live Theater; and
- Entertainment in Restaurants -- i.e., piano player, guitarist, small combos, dancing, etc

Specialty Retail

- Antiques;
- Appliances;
- Art Galleries, Framing and Supplies;
- Bike Shop;
- Books;
- Cameras and Photo Supplies;
- Casual Apparel and Accessories;
- Computers/Software;
- Florist;
- Gifts, Stationery and Cards;
- Hardware;
- Home Decorating Products and Design Services;
- Music (Recorded and Sheet);
- Nurseries/Garden Supply;
- Office/School Supplies;
- Optical Products;
- Radio/TV/Electronics;
- Sewing Supplies;
- Small Variety Store;
- Sporting Goods;
- Toys, Games and Crafts;
- Traditional and Costume Jewelry; and
- Wall Coverings and Paint.

Convenience Retail/Select Services

- Auto/Home Supply;
- Barber Shops;
- Beauty Shops;

HyettPalma

America Downtown®

- Dance Studio;
- Dry Cleaners/Tailor Shop;
- Gas Service Station;
- Pharmacy;
- Physical Fitness Facility;
- Shoe Repair/Shine; and
- Video Rental.

Offices

- Accounting, Auditing, Bookkeeping;
- Advertising;
- Child Care Services;
- Commercial Banks;
- Computer and Data Processing;
- Credit Reporting and Collection;
- Credit Unions;
- Dentists Offices and Clinics;
- Doctors Offices and Clinics;
- Engineering, Architectural Services;
- Fire, Marine Casualty Insurance;
- Government;
- Health and Allied Services;
- Home Health Care Services;
- Individual and Family Services;
- Legal Services;
- Library;
- Life Insurance;
- Management and Public Relations;
- Medical Service and Health Insurance;
- National Security;
- Newspapers, Radio, and Other Media Outlets;
- Passenger Transportation Arrangement;
- Personnel Supply Services;
- Photographic Studios;
- Post Office;
- Print Shops;
- Public Order and Safety;
- Real Estate Agents and Managers;
- Residential Care;
- Savings Institutions;

- Security Brokers and Dealers;
- Subdividers and Developers;
- Tax Services; and
- Title Abstract and Insurance Offices.

Housing and Other Uses

- Housing above first floor uses;
- Housing as infill on redeveloped lots, underutilized lots and surface parking lots;
- Museums;
- Churches in buildings designed as churches, not storefronts; and
- Hotel facilities, if market conditions prove feasible in the future.

9. Trolleys

The City should pursue ADOT funds to bring trolleys to Downtown.

10. Art Center

Those leading the Downtown enhancement effort should work with area artists to create an art center in Downtown Coolidge. In addition to galleries, the art center should include studios where artists produce their work.

Marketing

The following marketing campaign should be implemented to let the buying public know that a new day has dawned in Downtown Coolidge.

1. Promote

All available avenues of communication should be used to regularly, aggressively, and continuously get the word out to the investment community and the buying public that:

- An economic enhancement strategy has been defined for Downtown;
- Downtown improvements are underway and will increase in speed and intensity as the enhancement strategy is implemented;
- It is a new day in Downtown Coolidge; and

- Downtown's future is bright.

Among the avenues of communication that should be used to convey this message are:

- The City's newsletter;
- The Chamber of Commerce's newsletter;
- The City's Web site and public access cable channel;
- The Chamber's Web site;
- The *Coolidge Examiner*, and
- Print and electronic media from throughout the region.

In addition, the management of the *Coolidge Examiner* should be asked if they might run a weekly "News from Downtown" column, which should be written by the City's planner.

2. Events

A number of events are now held in Downtown Coolidge, including:

- Cotton Days;
- Calvin Coolidge Days;
- Christmas in the Park and the Electric Light Parade;
- Easter in the Park;
- The Halloween Carnival; and
- Music in the Park.

Most of these events are sponsored by the City's Parks and Recreation Department, with the exception of Cotton Days which is sponsored by the Coolidge Chamber of Commerce.

It is fortunate that events are held in Downtown, which are family-oriented and which celebrate the community's history. To maximize the impact of these events on Downtown's future, the following should occur:

- One or two of the events currently held in Downtown should be targeted and turned into signature events – defined as an annual event that is unique, that attracts increasing numbers of participants each year, is able to attract sponsorships of significance, and for which Downtown becomes widely known;
- All of Downtown’s events should be freshened each year – to include a new activity or twist – so that the public does not perceive them to be “the same thing every year;”
- Downtown’s events should include entertainment that appeals to a variety of age groups, as well as arts and crafts for sale; and
- The goal of holding Downtown events should be to:
 - Make people feel comfortable coming to Downtown;
 - Generate interest in and excitement about Downtown; and
 - Make Downtown a destination that attracts more and more event-goers each year.

In addition, consideration should be given to highlighting and leveraging Coolidge’s unique connection to country music (Waylon Jennings, Buck Owens, and Duane Eddie all performed in Coolidge long before they became famous). This could be done by incorporating a country music-related element into an existing Downtown event, or by starting a new, fun, and creative Downtown event around this portion of the community’s history.

3. Christmas

Downtown should be lavishly adorned with holiday decorations that are fresh, creative, and in good working order.

4. Historic Plaques

There is great interest locally in relaying Downtown’s history. Therefore, a program should be initiated to place historic plaques on Downtown’s buildings – which accurately tell the history of each location included.

5. Wayfinding

A “wayfinding system” entails a series of public signs that direct motorists to a community, and then to all major attractions within that community. In Coolidge, such a system should be created and include signs that direct motorists to Downtown and all its attractions. This should be done by:

- Placing Downtown-related information on the privately erected “kiosk signs” that are now located in Coolidge; or
- Erecting additional wayfinding signs that are created by the City and list public attractions (as opposed to private real estate developments).

Public wayfinding signs should be of a design that is distinctive and unique to Coolidge and its Downtown.

6. Historic Museum

The Coolidge Historical Museum, operated by the Coolidge Historical Society, is now located in Downtown. To help make this facility more of an attraction, consideration should be given to:

- Undertaking improvements that would create climactic conditions appropriate for a museum – to protect and preserve the museum’s collection; and
- Keeping the museum open on weekends.

7. Future Marketing

After strides have been made in strengthening Downtown’s business mix and creating additional attractions in Downtown, the following marketing tools should be created:

- A “lure brochure” extolling the quality-of-life enjoyed by Coolidge’s residents – with a feature about the uniqueness and appeal of Downtown Coolidge;

HyettPalma

America Downtown®

- A feature about Downtown Coolidge in the Chamber of Commerce's membership directory;
- An advertising campaign that promotes Downtown as a not-to-be-missed destination – and that runs on a regular basis throughout the year;
- A glossy Downtown brochure – which conveys Downtown's image and allure in both text and photos;
- A system for widely distributing the Downtown brochure – and ensuring that one is received by every resident new to the area;
- A Downtown page on the City's Web site – with a link to the Chamber's Web site; and
- A tourism development campaign – to, at a minimum, cultivate as Downtown customers those spending time at:
 - The Casa Grande National Monument;
 - Fairground events and the raceway;
 - The new sports complex;
 - Special events held in Coolidge and the area; and
 - Other tourist destinations throughout the valley.