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- Councilman Johnson - District 8

City Departments

- City Manager's Office
- Community and Economic Development
- Phoenix Convention Center
- Planning and Development
- Public Transit
- Street Transportation

Study Area Property Owners and Businesses

- Arizona Latino Arts and Cultural Center
- Hanny's
- Hyatt Regency Phoenix
- Downtown Phoenix, Inc
- Downtown Phoenix Partnership
- Renaissance Phoenix Downtown Hotel
- Steve's Grill



FOREWORD

Foreword by John M. Chan, Community and Economic Development Director

Thanks to the leadership and support of our Mayor and City Council, the vital investment of the business and development community and the participation of our downtown neighborhoods, the past decade has seen dramatic and large changes to downtown Phoenix. Beginning with the 2004 Downtown Phoenix: A Strategic Vision and Blueprint for the Future, the community and the City has focused our efforts in to revitalizing and growing downtown. While a significant number of these efforts have been on large projects, with the support of Council and the downtown community, we have begun focused efforts at a fine grain level.

The Adams Street corridor, between light rail stations on the west and the recently expanded Phoenix Convention Center on the east, we have identified an area that needed additional attention. This area is not only home to two of our large tourist and convention hotels but also the home to several local small businesses and a cultural center. While the great recession has slowed some of the growth it has also allowed the City to reach out to the community and area stakeholders to take a closer look at ways to activate this critical gateway into our nationally recognized convention center and heart of downtown Phoenix.

The City is pleased to have selected and worked with Gensler and the numerous community, property and business stakeholders to create and document the Adams Street Activation Study.

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to identify opportunities to activate and encourage development of the two blocks of Adams Street between Central Avenue and 2nd Street in downtown Phoenix. These blocks serve as connectors for our diverse population of residents, workers, students, visitors and convention attendees to hospitality, entertainment, civic and culture amenities. While there are vibrant enterprises on these blocks, the street itself does not have strong sense of place unique to our urban center in the Sonoran desert. The purpose of this study is to identify opportunities to establish a destination in the urban core that will enhance the sidewalks and streets through the development of a variety of diverse activities to create a unique downtown destination for visitors and locals alike, provide a comfortable pedestrian connector to downtown civic and cultural locations and encourage diverse new enterprises that will provide revenue to the City of Phoenix.

Approach

The Adams Street Activation Study was initiated through collection of background information on infrastructure and existing conditions within the Study Area and more than 30 individual stakeholder meetings with businesses located on the street, civic organizations, City staff and interested citizens. This initial feedback provided the initial issues presented and discussed in Charrette One attended by more than 60 business and civic leaders, citizens and stakeholders. Analysis of these findings was used to develop Guiding Principles that provide the foundation for the development of Study Options. These options included a conservative, mid-range and game-changer concept for each of five Activation Zones identified through the analysis of findings. These Zones included the face of the Hyatt Hotel on the north side of the street between 1st Street and 2nd Street, the face of the Renaissance Hotel on the north side of the street between Central Avenue and 1st Street, the lot at the southeast corner of Central Avenue and Adams, the podium and face of the Regency Garage between 1st Street and 2nd Street and overall street improvements along Adams between Central Avenue and 2nd Street including the adjacent intersections. Study Options were presented and evaluated in Charrette Two, a public workshop to provide feedback from stakeholders as the basis for the development of final recommendations.

Findings

Five Activation Zones were identified through analysis of existing conditions and findings from the stakeholder meetings first public charrette. Findings further indicated that for the activation concepts to be sustainable over time required 1)content (activities and a reason for people to visit Adams Street), 2)form (amenities to enhance the street for pedestrian comfort and safety and to support activities and enterprises on the street) and 3)operation (systems to support and encourage the development of new business, enhancements to existing business and enterprises, and ease of use to provide special events on the streets).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

In December 2012, the City issued a Request for Proposals for consultant services to conduct a conceptual master planning study to explore strategies to activate and enhance the pedestrian and economic vitality of Adams Street between Central Avenue and Second Street. On March 20, 2013, the City Council authorized the contract with Gensler to conduct the Adams Street Activation Study (Study).

The scope of the Study included outreach with area businesses and property owners, and hosting community stakeholder meetings to gather input on potential concepts to improve the experience in the Adams Street corridor for residents, visitors, businesses, students and workers. The goal of the Study is to generate concepts for enhanced connectivity and pedestrian comfort, while providing a friendly and inviting atmosphere that is representative of the cultural identity of Phoenix. The Study also sought to maximize utilization of the right-of-way and adjacent City properties to enhance City revenue through increased commercial opportunities and tourism.

Over the past six months, Gensler and City Staff conducted over 30 meetings with individual property and business owners located on and adjacent to Adams Street. In addition, Gensler hosted four interactive community stakeholder meetings at the Phoenix Convention Center, where over 100 stakeholders provided ideas and feedback on concepts to activate and enhance Adams Street. Participating stakeholders included residents, students, business owners and operators, downtown workers and community group representatives.

The Opportunity

Through these outreach efforts, Gensler collected, analyzed and refined input from the stakeholders, studied best practices from other communities around the country, and developed a series of recommendations to activate Adams Street.

The recommendations are based on the premise that any sustainable activation of Adams Street requires three key elements: 1) Content (activities and a reason for people to want to be on Adams Street); 2) Form (physical infrastructure that enhances the street for pedestrians, and supports activities and events in the street); and 3) Operation (systems to support and enhance the ability to successfully program and host events, and to operate businesses in a collaborative and streamlined manner).

The recommendations are categorized into five Activity Zones, including the face of the Hyatt Hotel on the north side of the street between 2nd Street and 1st Street, Renaissance Hotel on the north side of the street between Central Avenue and 1st Street, the City-owned lot on the southeast corner of Central Avenue and Adams, Regency Garage podium and upper elevation of the garage on the south side of Adams between 1st Street and 2nd Street and street

improvements along both blocks of the Study Area.

A summary of these recommendations can be found below. A diagram of these zones can be found on page 32 of this report. Recommendations are assumed to be implemented through a partnership between private business entities and the City of Phoenix. The approach assumes that the City of Phoenix will provide public street improvements concurrent with private development. The City of Phoenix is supportive of utilizing the rights of way to provide greater opportunity for individual business to enhance sidewalk presence and activation.

Through data collected in the stakeholder meetings and public charrettes it is clear there is continued support for using these blocks of Adams for special civic and cultural events through temporary street closure. While there was not a consensus of support for permanent closure of these blocks of Adams, providing additional amenities and a consistent process for administration of special event closures was enthusiastically supported. Recommendations below include street improvements that would enable these blocks of Adams to better accommodate special events and additional administrative support that address the comfort and safety of event attendees and infrastructure to support events.

Summary Recommendations:

Eight areas of recommendations were then developed considering public feedback from the Activation Options presented in Charrette Two and follow-up stakeholder meetings. Renderings were developed to illustrate each of the activation concepts. Further design development of each of the recommendations as they are planned and implemented in the future. The study recommends that the design of each of the enterprises along these blocks of Adams be encouraged to celebrate their individual brand, enhancing the diversity of activities along the Street with the design of the associated City street improvements providing the unifying design elements of landscape, curbs, sidewalks, lighting, and signage/wayfinding.

Streetscape:

Develop shovel-ready construction plans to reconfigure and enhance the street (shade, street surface, curbs, parallel parking, bike facilities, lighting, signage). These improvements should be designed to incorporate and reflect the unique southwestern culture and heritage of Phoenix.

Art:

Solicit artist proposals to activate blank facades.

Event Infrastructure:

Develop plans for event infrastructure to simplify temporary street closure (power, stage and theatrical lighting, signage, restrooms, security).

Hyatt Edge:

Activate edges with new retail, restaurants and shaded patios.
Expand building, patio and sidewalk footprint; reduce asphalt.

Regency Garage Edge:

Solicit proposals to renovate, occupy and activate vacant tenant spaces – encourage restaurant and uses that support and enhance activity on Adams.
Considering issuing solicitation in early 2014.

Renaissance Edge:

Relocate drop-off to 1st Street.
Activate street with new/expanded restaurants, patios, retail and expanded sidewalk.

Adams Street Lot:

Solicit proposals for private development (mid-rise mixes-use with restaurants at the street level and residential above).
Consider issuing solicitation for early 2014.

Special Events Entity:

Create, fund and enable a special events entity responsible for Adams Street event programming, review and approvals, coordination and communication.

Next Steps

The recommendations listed above are not funded but are intended to establish a vision of what the improvements could be based on stakeholder and public input and suggestions from City staff. It is the intent of this study to provide an outline to guide future public and private activities while allowing for each property owner and business to create their own unique, authentic space that represents Phoenix. It is recommended that the City of Phoenix continue to work with private enterprises currently located on the street and new stakeholders to include the concepts recommended herein in their project plans and concurrently identify sources of funding for street and infrastructure improvements to support these new developments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Below are detailed recommendations of concepts and key actions for implementation for each recommendation. There is support for the adjustment of property lines to enable businesses currently located on the street to achieve greater utilization of the sidewalk spaces adjacent to their property as a means to encourage activation of their Adams Street facades. The recommendations listed below were developed by the design team from research and analysis of the existing conditions and opportunities to leverage existing assets on Adams, stakeholder outreach meetings, public design charrettes, and meetings with City of Phoenix staff.

Recommendations for Public Right-of-Way

General Recommendations

Expand the Street Improvement District to include both blocks of Adams between Central Avenue and 2nd Street.

Establish an Adams Street Infrastructure Improvement District as a means of funding recommended street improvements.

Establish an authentic identity for Adams Street between the front door of the Phoenix Convention Center and Central Avenue.

Establish a vocabulary of lighting, landscaping, furnishings, and street treatments including bike lanes and narrower vehicular lanes, consistent with the quality and design of the existing First Street Enhancement Project.

Evaluate the City of Phoenix sign ordinance to allow for tenant signage to be positioned perpendicular to the flow of traffic on Adams.

Establish a pedestrian-oriented, iconic/landmark way finding system to direct visitors to downtown activities and points of interest within a 5 or 10 minute walk from the front door of the Phoenix Convention Center.

Study Area Recommendations

Improve the character and pedestrian experience along Adams Street with public art, enhanced streetscape and improving blank building facades to embrace the elements that represent the unique character and culture of the southwest. Apply for grant funding where possible, and make improvements as funding becomes available. Enhance the use of Adams Street for special events through the addition of infrastructure that may include programmed space for a stage, bollard sleeves, portapotties, pedestrian curb transition to street paving, electrical access,

speakers and event lighting.

Streetscape:

Establish a vocabulary of street amenities that enhances the pedestrian experience, encourages new enterprise and provides a cohesive, authentic design expression that ties the street together as a unique district representative of the diverse urban culture of the Sonoran desert.

Implementation: Develop shovel-ready construction plans to reconfigure and enhance the street (shade, street surface, curbs, parallel parking, bikes facilities, lighting, signage).

Implementation (long-term): Develop an iconic shade structure to address changing climactic conditions throughout to the year as needed to address pedestrian comfort. The structure may adjust to accommodate the aspect of the sun through different times of day and seasons that may include special feature lighting in the evening. This structure could be purposeful public art and a feature unique to Phoenix.

Art:

Enhance Adams and celebrate the diverse culture of the Sonoran desert through public art.

Implementation: Solicit artist proposals to activate blank facades.

Special Events Entity:

Establish a process to provide operational and/or administrative support to simplify utilization of the street for special events, provide administrative consistency, and enhance the use of and schedule street events, simplify coordination and approval process. Develop a robust, year-round events program and facilitate event-related communication among impacted businesses and stakeholders. Implementation: Create, fund and enable a special events entity responsible for Adams Street event programming, review and approvals, coordination and communication.

Event Infrastructure:

Develop the design to support the safe use of Adams for special, civic and cultural events that enable performances and provide a safe and festive environment for pedestrians.

Implementation: Develop plans for event infrastructure to streamline temporary street closure (power, stage and theatrical lighting, signage, restrooms, security)

Implementation: Identify funding sources.

Recommendations for Improvements – 1st Street to 2nd Street

Recommendations for improvements to this block of the study area include activation of the north side of Adams and the facade of the Hyatt Hotel and improvements to the Regency Garage.

Recommendations for Property Improvements

Hyatt Hotel Edge:

Activate the Hyatt edge with new retail shops, restaurants, patios or other pedestrian-friendly uses by collaborating with hotel ownership and management. Enable expansion of the building footprint and reduction of the street width by allowing a portion of the existing Adams Street right-of-way to be reduced through abandonment or revocable permits depending on the improvements. Develop a plan for City investment in enhanced right-of-way improvements concurrent with the Hyatt's investment in its property.

Implementation: Activate edges with new retail, restaurants and shaded patios; expand building, patio and footprint; reduce sidewalk and asphalt.

Other Considerations:

- Develop a pedestrian feature at the NE corner of Adams and 1st Street that may include, but is not limited to, an art installation, parklet, water or lighting feature scaled to a point of interest.
- Adjust the property line necessary to implement additional building improvements.
- Reconfigure parking to parallel.
- Enhance sidewalk to new space provided by shifting angle parking to parallel, add street enhancements to include new shade structures, lighting, landscaping and street furniture.

Regency Garage Edge:

Activate the Regency Garage edge by filling the vacant spaces. Solicit proposals for self-sustaining uses that support and enhance the experience for locals, convention attendees and visitors, downtown workers, residents, students and others with a variety of diverse activities. Encourage restaurant uses where possible and consider a full renovation of all retail spaces if funding is identified. New uses should consider transparency into new tenant facilities or sidewalk activity as a means to engage the street.

Implementation: Solicit proposals to renovate, occupy and activate vacant tenant spaces – encourage restaurant and uses that support and enhance activity on Adams. Considering issuing solicitation in early 2014

Other Considerations:

Enhance the sidewalk to improve the pedestrian experience with new shade structure, lighting, landscaping and street furniture.

Future Considerations:

Issue an RFP for the redevelopment of the Regency Garage site considering the historic structures on the block between Adams and Washington/1st and 2nd Streets.

Recommendations for Improvements - Central to 1st Street

Recommendations for improvements to this block of the study area include activation of the north side of Adams and the façade of the Renaissance Hotel and the development of the Adams Street lot at the southeast corner of Adams and Central Avenue.

Renaissance Hotel Edge:

Activate the Renaissance Hotel edge by encouraging the hotel to relocate its main entrance and drop-off from Adams Street to First Street. Improve the pedestrian experience with expanded patio dining, new sidewalks and new retail shops. Develop a plan for City investment in enhanced right-of-way improvements concurrent with the Renaissance's investment in its property.

Implementation: Relocate drop-off to 1st Street Activate the street with new/expanded restaurants, patios, retail and new sidewalk

Other Considerations:

- Enclose space to fill in arches at entry and bar to provide a more inviting and transparent street presence and entry to the hotel and lobby bar. Modify the sidewalk provide additional space for sidewalk service at the existing bar.
- Develop a restaurant and/or coffee shop and outdoor patio under the Arcade.
- Establish priorities and timeline for Expand sidewalk beyond the arcade out to existing property line.
- Enhance to improve pedestrian experience with new shade structure, lighting, landscaping and street furniture.

Adams Street Lot:

Activate the use of the lot and activate Adams Street by utilization of real estate with a new mixed-use or residential building. Enhance new development with improved pedestrian experience to include shade, lighting, landscaping and street furniture.

Implementation: Solicit proposals for private development (mid-rise, mix uses with restaurants at the street level and residential above).



View of Adams Street, open to vehicle traffic during the day, from Central Avenue and Adams Street looking east toward the Phoenix Convention Center. Note, the sidewalk cafe, parklet, bike racks and street furniture.



View of Adams Street, open to vehicle traffic during the day, from the front door of the Phoenix Convention Center at Adams and Second Street. Note, bike racks, street furniture, pedestrian-oriented signage and wayfinding elements, parklet and parallel parking.



View of Adams Street, closed for a special event, from the front of the Phoenix Convention Center looking West. This rendering illustrates the street in the evening, temporarily closed for an event. Note the bollards, lighting, illuminated art and illuminated shade canopy.



View of Adamst Street right from Adams and Second Street during an event.