



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

February 3, 2026

The Economic Development Advisory Board of the City of Mesa met in the boardroom at the Office of Economic Development, 120 N. Center St., on February 3, 2026, at 7:30 a.m.

BOARDMEMBERS PRESENT

J. Steven Beck
Kurt D. Ferstl
Michelle Genereux
Charles Gregory *
Anthony Ruiz
Frank Sanders *
Andrew Schreiner
Susan Stephensen

BOARDMEMBERS ABSENT

STAFF PRESENT

Jaye O'Donnell
Maribeth Smith
Benjamin Snow
Rob Stirling
Brent Stoddard

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT

Scott Butler, City Manager
Sally Harrison
Richard Blake *
Sonny Cave
Mark Drayna

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ABSENT

Mark Freeman, Mayor (excused)
Natascha Ovando-Karadsheh (excused)

GUESTS

Jeff McVay
Jeff Robbins
Councilmember Jenn Duff

(*Participated in the meeting via video conference equipment)

1. Call meeting to order.

Chair Michelle Genereux called the meeting to order at 7:32 a.m.

Chair Genereux excused Board member Frank Sanders from the beginning of the meeting. He arrived at 7:36 a.m.

2. Approval of minutes from the January 6, 2026, Economic Development Advisory Board meeting.

It was moved by Vice Chair Kurt Ferstl, seconded by Board member Andrew Schreiner, that the January 6, 2026, Economic Development Advisory Board meeting minutes be approved.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – Beck-Ferstl-Genereux-Gregory-Ruiz-Schreiner-Stephensen

NAYS – None

ABSENT – Sanders

Chair Genereux declared the motion carried unanimously.

4. Hear a presentation regarding City of Mesa redevelopment efforts, followed by a discussion.

Chair Genereux stated items 4 and 5 would be a combined presentation.

Senior Economic Development Project Manager Jeffrey Robbins presented an overview of the City's Redevelopment Program, emphasizing that redevelopment had become a strategic priority. He explained that while redevelopment had always been part of the City's long-term planning, the focus was now on adapting aging properties to meet current needs and working collaboratively across departments and with the private sector to facilitate building conversions and reinvestment. Robbins discussed the Fiesta Mall site, noting that while no renderings were currently available, the property was being carefully curated for a transformative regional or national development. He stated that City Council had supported the use of a special taxing district to unlock financing tools, clarifying that the intent was not to create a theme park but to enable entertainment-oriented uses with tax advantages and bonding capacity. He reported that Mayo Global had begun acquisition efforts, in partnership with LG NOVA and Blue Cross Blue Shield, with plans for Arizona's first women-focused health and athletics campus, potentially including professional soccer. The project was described as a future economic engine for southwest Mesa. (See pages 13-15 in Attachment 1)

Mr. Robbins also outlined redevelopment efforts in areas identified by City Council as experiencing blight or underinvestment. He explained that staff had presented a series of tools to Council in January aimed at encouraging reinvestment, noting that Arizona lacks mechanisms such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF), which are widely used in other states. The proposed tools included demolition and remediation assistance for obsolete or contaminated properties; enhanced code enforcement paired with reinvestment grants; commercial space activation to help older buildings meet modern code requirements; vacant property registration to better understand barriers to occupancy; the establishment of a revolving loan fund to address financing gaps; public infrastructure funding to support redevelopment in underserved areas; and placemaking and strategic acquisition to catalyze investment and strengthen community identity. (See pages 16-18 in Attachment 1)

5. Hear a presentation regarding downtown Mesa, followed by a discussion.

Downtown Transformation Manager Jeff McVay provided an update on residential development, noting that The Grove on Main had helped establish market demand and demonstrated the viability of additional similar projects, including potential expansion through Eco Mesa. He reported that Forge Towers, formerly senior apartments, had been converted to market-rate units, and that Edge on Main was currently under construction at Country Club and Main with planned ground-floor retail. Residences on Main was expected to be completed by February, delivering approximately 200 units along with retail space. He also discussed The GRID (The 233), the City's first large-scale residential agreement, which had entered bankruptcy. The City worked closely with the lender, trustee, and courts to stabilize the project, and a purchase was expected to be completed by October. Planned ground-floor tenants included Crust Italian, Babalino's Sorbet, and Nightingale. Mr. McVay further noted that between 2010 and 2020, 254 residential units had been added, while 1,055 units had been added since 2020, with approximately 800 additional units currently under construction, reflecting strong ongoing residential growth. (See pages 1-3 in Attachment 1)

Jeff McVay also highlighted several City projects and downtown initiatives, including City Hall and The Post, which had proven to be a successful event space. The Neon Garden had been refurbished the previous year, with restored signage that was illuminated nightly and available for rental as a collective feature. He emphasized the uniqueness of the downtown business community, noting that since 2020, 20 new locally owned and operated businesses had opened. He shared that a business incubator was expected to be completed in the fall, and that the City was partnering with Local First to introduce seven to eight food vendor stalls that would serve as a pipeline for future brick-and-mortar businesses in Mesa. (See pages 4-7 in Attachment 1)

Additional development updates included the Council-approved Culdesac project at Site 17, with approximately 1,000 residential units and 50,000 square feet of amenities. A pre-submittal had been received, and the first phase would include 140 for-sale townhomes, representing the first such product type in Mesa since the mid-1980s. Mr. McVay also reported that a proposal for Arizona State University at the Post Office site would be presented to Council, focusing on creative technologies and academic programming, and incorporating the concept of a “Light Walk” as a public spine connecting key downtown amenities. A feasibility concept was underway for 51–55 East Main Street, with a request for proposals anticipated in early 2026 to support higher-density, mixed-use development in partnership with private developers, including opportunities for modern office space for the City or ASU. He also noted plans for an AC by Marriott hotel with 156 rooms at the northeast corner of Centennial and Main, and that the adjacent park-and-ride lot was being evaluated for potential repurposing through a future RFP for the six-acre site. (See pages 8-12 in Attachment 1)

Board discussion followed on a range of topics. Members discussed the challenges of attracting a grocery store to downtown Mesa, with McVay noting that such projects typically require sufficient residential density and income levels to be viable, though smaller-scale markets may emerge in developments like Culdesac. Housing supply and affordability were also discussed, with staff noting that while multifamily production had been strong, there remained a significant shortage of housing for residents below median income, and continued demand at both the high and low ends of the market. The importance of townhome development in establishing market comparables and encouraging lender confidence was emphasized, along with ongoing efforts to advance infill housing policies.

Transportation and infrastructure considerations were also discussed, including the need to transition from surface parking to structured parking, opportunities for shuttle systems and emerging autonomous transit, and the importance of maintaining transit ridership requirements in coordination with Valley Metro. Councilmember Duff emphasized the importance of vertical development and integrated parking solutions, while other members discussed connectivity and pedestrian improvements.

6. Hear from District 4 Councilmember Jenn Duff regarding her priorities and economic development, followed by a discussion.

District 4 Councilmember Jenn Duff discussed the vision for an Arts and Innovation District anchored by the Mesa Arts Center, Arizona State University, and other downtown assets. Central to this vision was the Light Walk, a pedestrian-oriented corridor intended to physically and conceptually connect key destinations, encourage walkability, and support the growth of creative industries, including gaming and emerging technologies. The discussion highlighted the importance of placemaking, public investment, and creating a cohesive downtown environment that would attract private investment, venture capital, and

professional employment opportunities. Members emphasized the need for shaded walkways, public art, and enhanced pedestrian infrastructure to support this vision.

7. Economic Development Director’s current events summary including conferences attended.

Economic Development Director Jaye O’Donnell summarized recent economic development activity, including multiple grand openings and groundbreakings, and noted upcoming events such as ULI Trends Day and the International Economic Development Council Leadership Summit. She announced that Hayley Freestone had been promoted to Project Manager with a focus on retail development. Board members were encouraged to share current advisory board opportunities within their networks, including an Advisory Board Open House scheduled for March 3, 2026, at The Post.

8. Introduction of new business to be discussed at a future meeting.

No new business was introduced; however, Vice Chair Kurt Ferstl announced that he had accepted a new position with Boeing in Asia for the next three years. The timing of his departure had not been determined yet.

9. Schedule of meetings.

Next meeting scheduled for March 3, 2026, at the Office of Economic Development.

10. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Economic Development Advisory Board meeting adjourned at 8:48 a.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Economic Development Advisory Board meeting of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 3rd day of February 2026. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Submitted by:



Jaye O’Donnell
Economic Development Director

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DOWNTOWN AND REDEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Economic Development Advisory Board

February 3, 2026



RECENT RESIDENTIAL PROJECTS



The Grove on Main – 285 Units



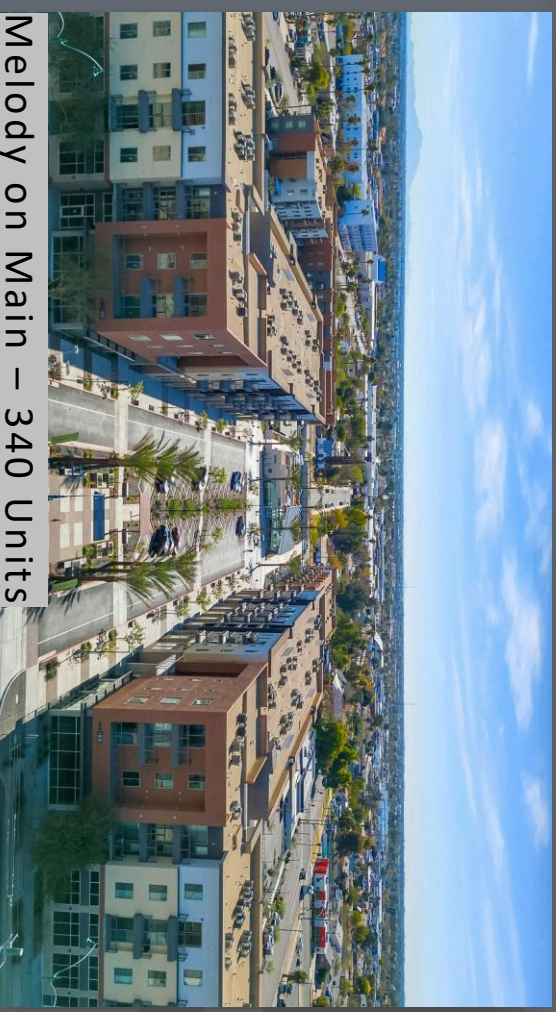
Eco Mesa – 105 Units



2nd Avenue Commons – 140 Units



Forge Tower – 175 Units



Melody on Main – 340 Units



UNDER CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS



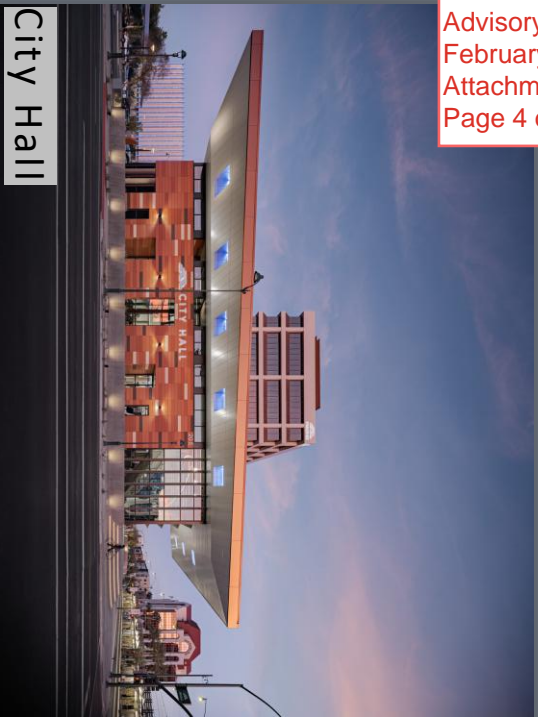
Edge on Main – 400 Units



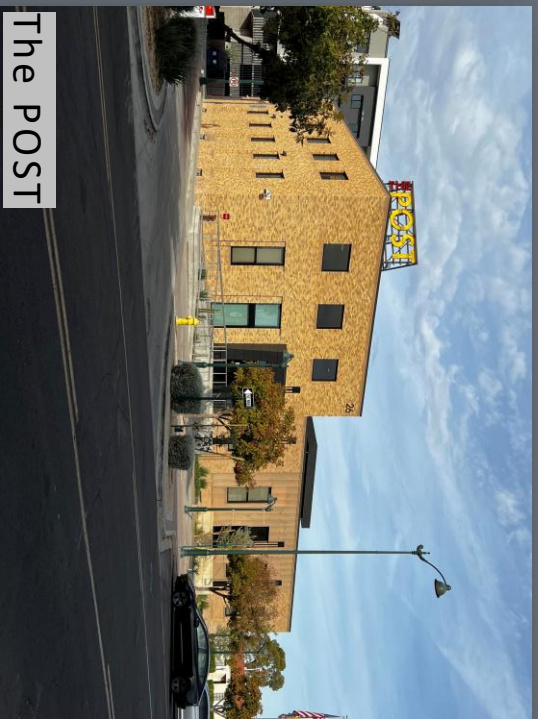
Residences on Main – 200 Units



The 233 – 200 Units



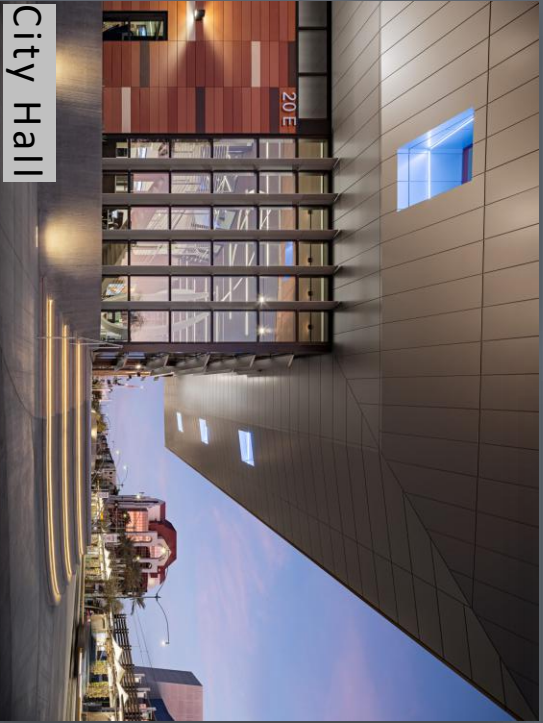
City Hall



The POST



Neon Garden @ The POST



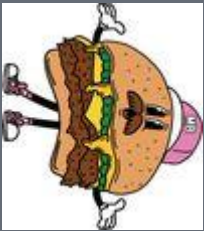
City Hall



Neon Garden @ The POST



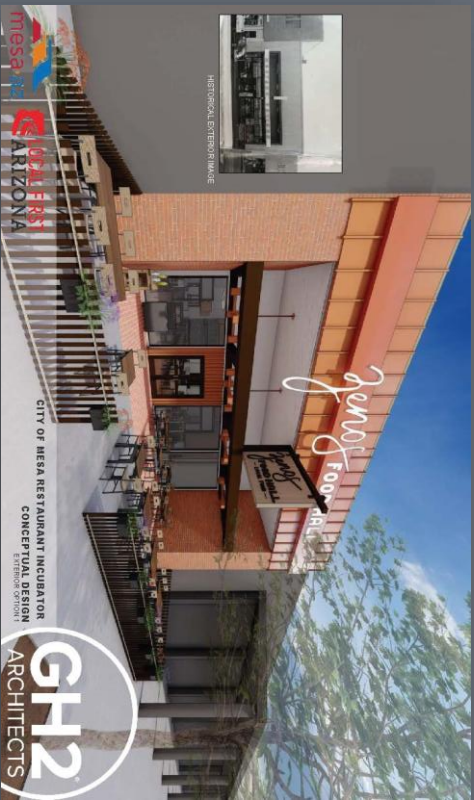
UNIQUELY LOCAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY

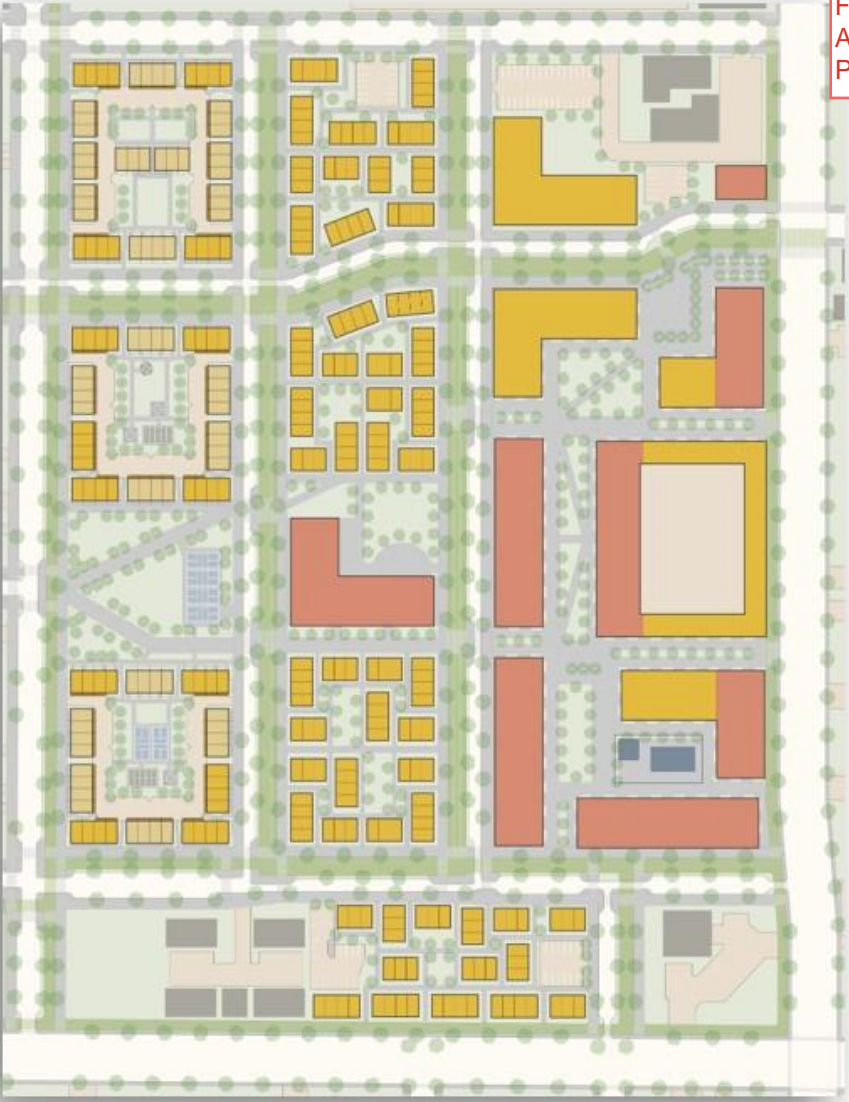




LOOKING FORWARD

RESTAURANT INCUBATOR

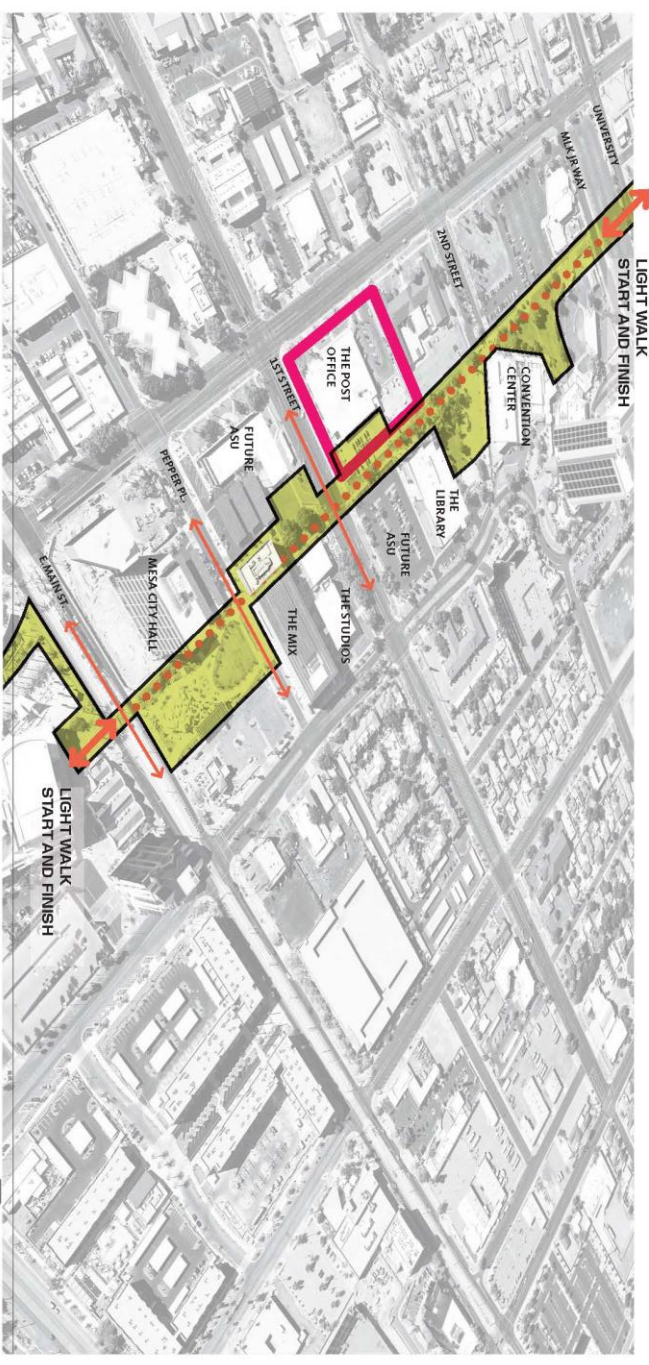


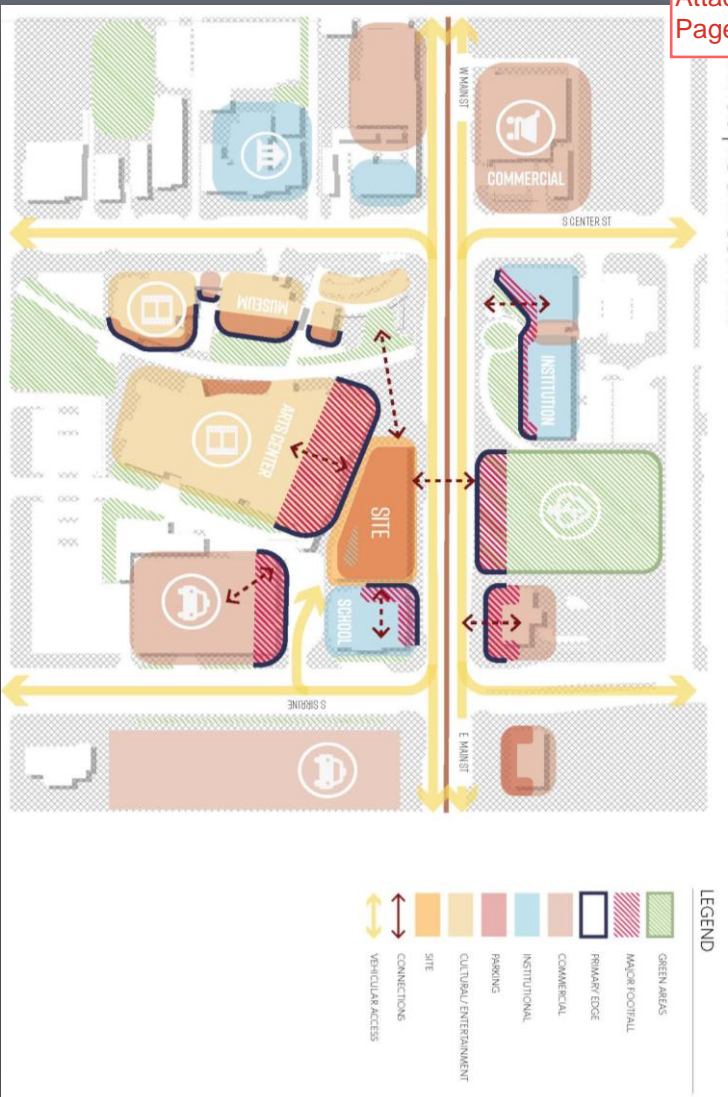


ASU @ Post Office

Adaptive reuse of current Post Office for future ASU use

POST OFFICE - SITE





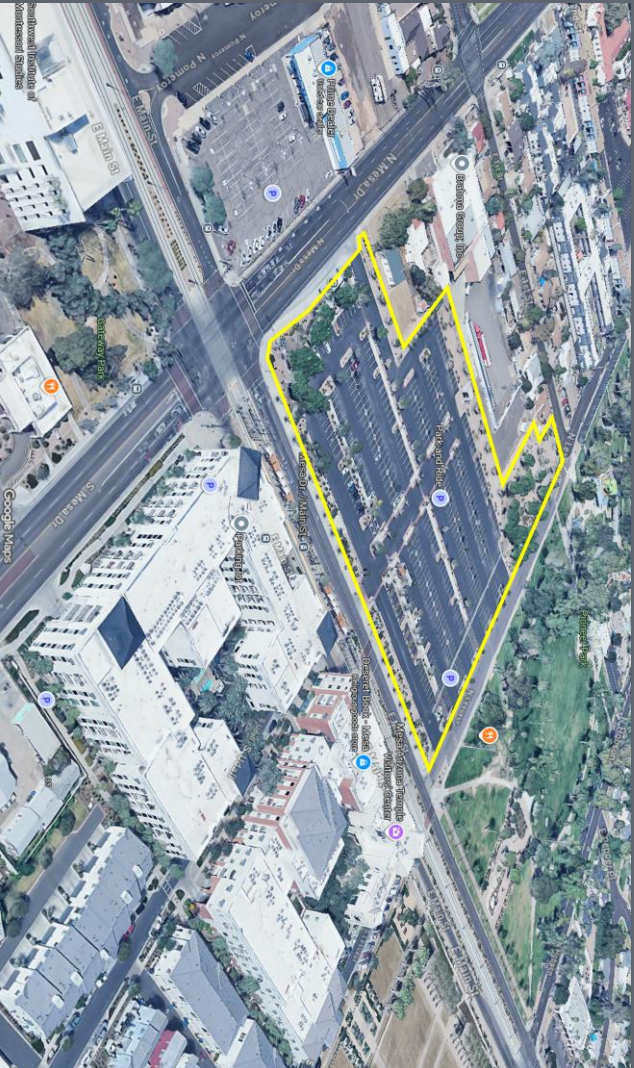
51-55 E. Main

RFP for redevelopment in early 2026



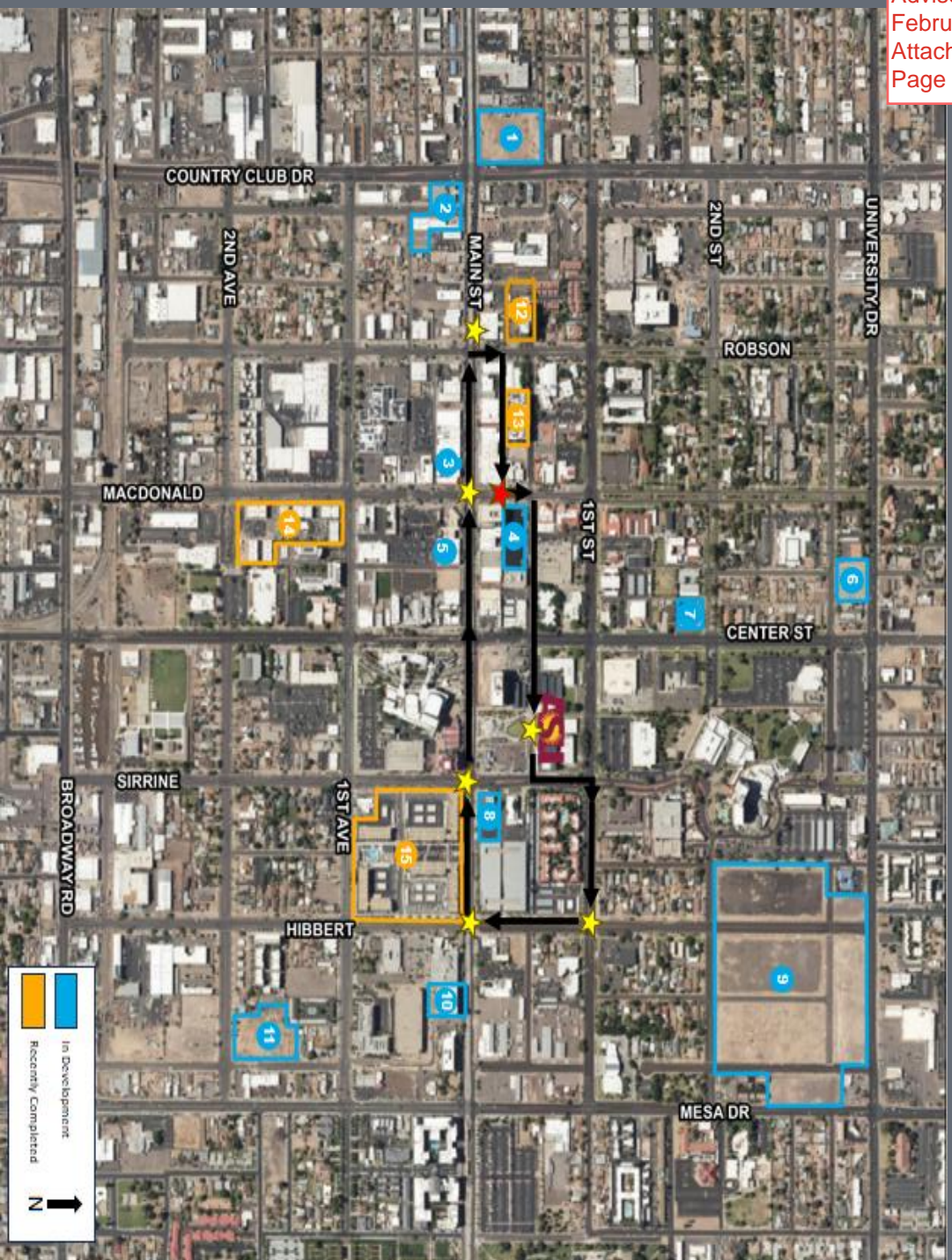
AC by Marriott
New 156 room hotel

Mesa Drive Park-n-Ride
RFP for 6.0± acre redevelopment in
early 2026





BY THE NUMBERS



254 Residential units added
2010-2020

1,055 Residential units added
since 2020

800 Residential units under
construction

1,100 Residential units in
planning and negotiation

25+ New businesses added since
2020



REDEVELOPMENT



sa approves new theme park district for former Fiesta Mall

Former Fiesta Mall site to house women's health and sports campus

NOVAWAVE AND ARIZONA COMMERCE AUTHORITY LAUNCH NEW AI VENTURE STUDIO IN ARIZONA

LG NOVA-Supported Fund and Investment Vehicle Welcomes AZ Venture Capital Inc. and Sunny Day Sports as New Investors

ARIZONA NEWS

Owner of former Fiesta Mall site kicks off campaign for women's soccer team, domed stadium

Jan 26, 2026, 8:07 AM | Updated: 1:30 pm



REDEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Dobson

Alma School

Country Club

Center

Hobson

Stapley

Gilbert

West
Redevelopment
Area

Southwest
Redevelopment
Area

Mesa Town Center
Redevelopment Area

East Redevelopment
Area

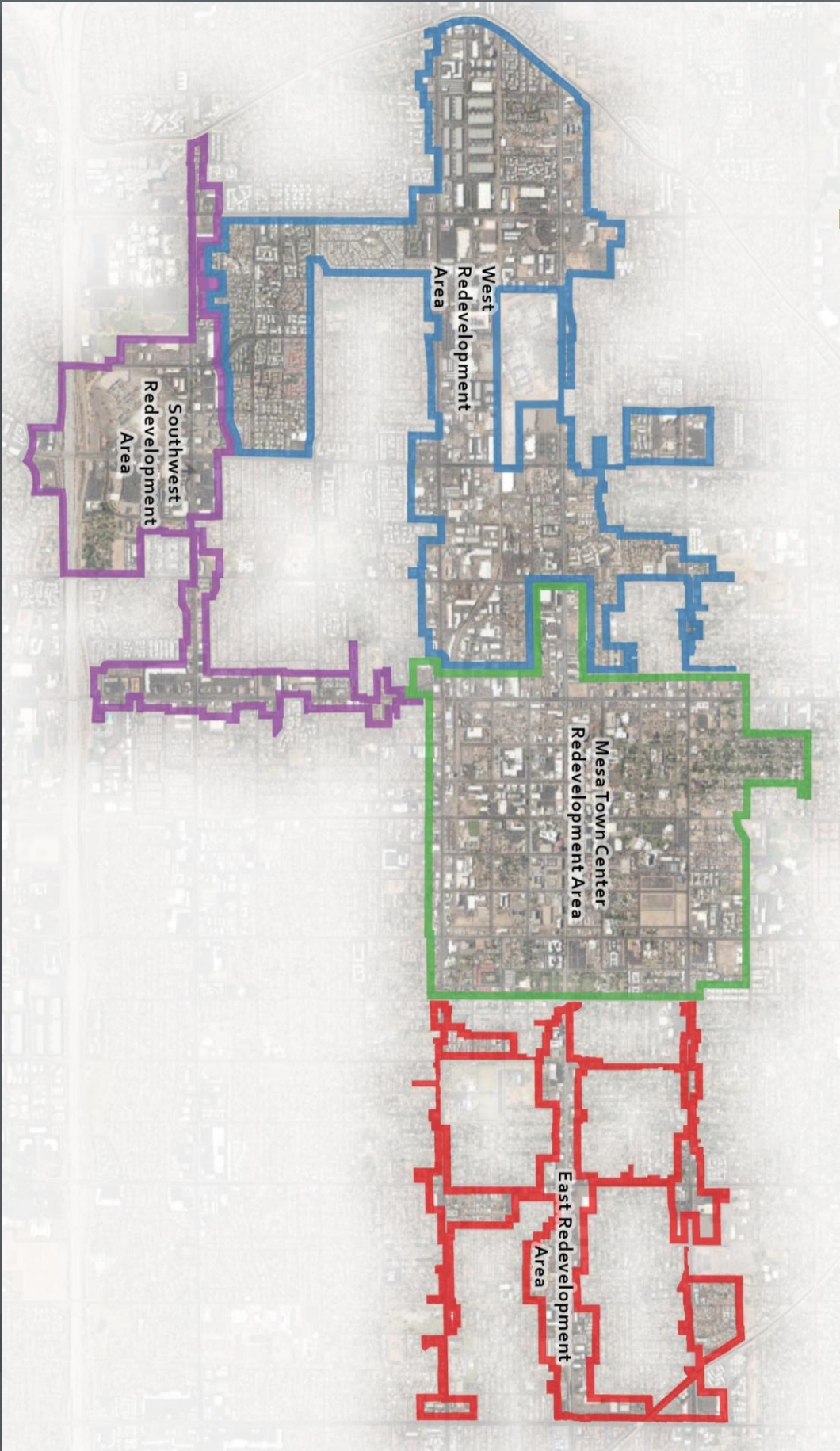
University

Main

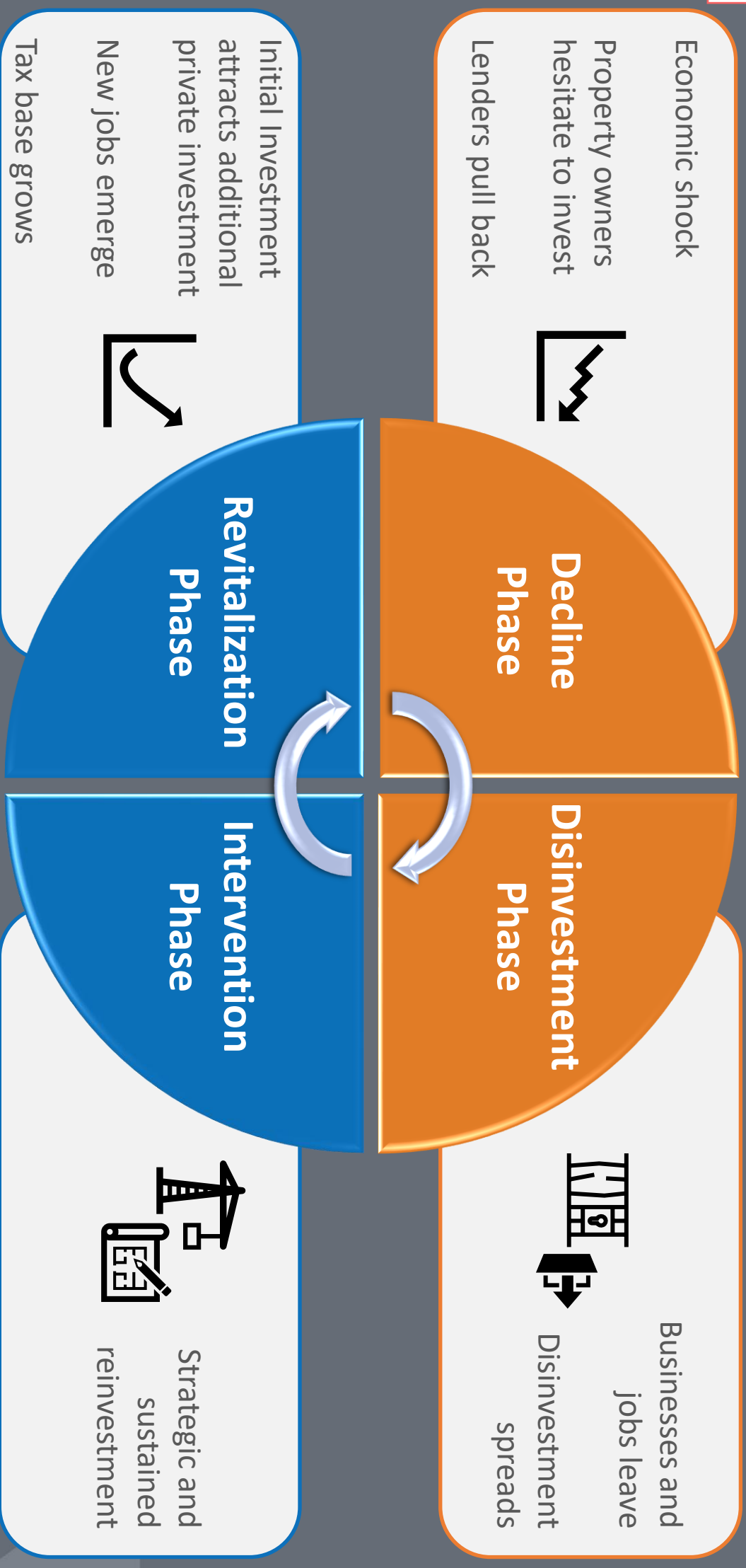
Broadway

Southern

US 60



REDEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

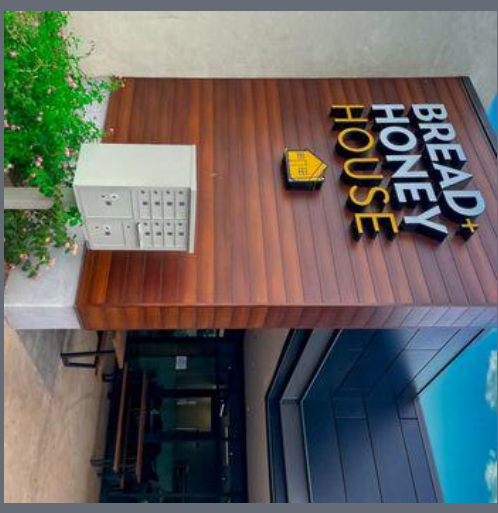




REDEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

PROGRAM TOOLS UNDER CITY COUNCIL CONSIDERATION

- 1) Demolition and Remediation Assistance
- 2) Enhanced Code Enforcement
- 3) Commercial Space Activation
- 4) Vacant Property Registration
- 5) Revolving Loan Fund
- 6) Public Infrastructure
- 7) Placemaking and Strategic Acquisitions





Thank You