

Community Input

The following input was gathered from Mesa community members during a series of four Community Input Sessions 10/28-11/6, 2016.

“Perceptions of Downtown Mesa”

- Lack of unique or visually engaging exteriors on a regular basis
- Lack of safety (neighborhoods, young people don't feel safe here)
- Caters to College Students
- Where is Downtown? (city too large, isolated communities)
- Lack of identity
- Lack of shared/unified vision (Is change good? Is growth good? How do we tell the new story of Mesa? How do we come together and accomplish goals, ways to participate)?
- Emerging from old stigmas (history, charm, stepchild of valley, conservative, sleepy town closes at 6pm, resistant to change, halfway houses)
- Lack of communicated brand (cool things happening, no communication)
- Place to work, not to play
- Innovation is happening (bars, restaurants, open later, programming, arts/culture)
- Mom and Pop places are welcomed/supported
- Disenfranchised property owners (Small percentage of property owner's downtown, no campaigns for downtown businesses,
- Historic buildings un-useable, not attractive or safe
- Disconnection between City/Employees/Business
- Needs better PR
- Downtown area doesn't feel inclusive of surrounding areas—all sides, especially south (language and economic barriers)
- Cobblestone, art installations and historical buildings make Downtown Mesa special.

“Ideas and Strategies”

Community Connections

- Bring people together around a cause, or to learn about a topic
- Feeling of vibrancy and connectedness—feeling of community.
- Courtyard/Plaza: Have a place where people can experience culture, music, museums. A place where multiple cultures come together/have a voice. Close off sections of downtown to cars (north Macdonald?)
- Connect as a community—communication system
- Communications bridge between businesses and government

- Get people to work on solutions together, share information, work together
- Need more of a localism push here to emphasize why it's important to spend your money in Mesa (whether downtown or all of Mesa).
- Spirit of the Senses "salons" where people give talks, share, provide input—build community
- Best way to get people to participate is to ask them for help.

Atmosphere

- Beautiful place to arrive—lampposts, flower baskets, bustle, atmosphere, updated facades
- Storefronts represent what is happening inside
- Shade! Different kinds of shade
- Keep doing more multicultural festivals and offerings
- Places where people can sit, rest, continue on their exploration
- Increase comforting atmosphere, small town feel.
- Sense that you have arrived, you are here—signage, clarity, identity.
- DTM should not look like a mall. I like the cobblestones, weird places to sit, it makes it special.
- Transformation-from day to night, transform old building into new
- Small town subtle- nice color, natural life(trees/flowers)
- Renovate abandoned buildings near Broadway. Keep old character but make it feel safe and new.
- South of Main Street; make it beautiful, add beautification elements—around 2nd Avenue—work with the people who live there
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- Lights and fountains make it a family place for my family and me
- Not a lot of seating areas or events on the side streets; would like different types of seating or gathering places—comfortable, artistic, creative
- Food Court- variety, affordable, family friendly, Ice Cream Shops
- Movie Theater- Modeled after Mill Ave
- Empty Building- Murals, interactive spaces, galleries, use empty spaces for things that will bring people to downtown—incentives for businesses
- Spaces for Encounters- public performance, amphitheaters,
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- Courtyard or grassy area that, with comfortable seating—a place to hang out with friends or family
- Some expanded areas for foot traffic and seating—where it's not squeezed as it is in some areas on Main
- Wayfinding so visitors can know what's there and where it is
- Sprinkle PLAY throughout downtown
- Art on the walls, lights that change color (obvious transformation from day to night)

- Places for pets to play; pet drinking fountains
- Art picking up the historic nature of Mesa and bridging to the new
- Rube Goldberg-esque experience that people could play with
- Lighting improvements—to feel more inviting
- Village feel, welcoming and inviting, comfortable but still with some Wow factor.
- One pocket park per block with welcoming seating. Large public artworks.

Multi-Generational

- Want things that are vibrant, “out there,”—Eccentric or eclectic means that there are a variety of people and they are engaging with each other.
- Have things that bring young families out; playgrounds
- Play areas or splash pads for kids to attract younger families, places for parents/families to hang out and watch (bar areas with cocktail tables)
- Interactive art with an educational component for little ones; interactives for play by all ages
- Place for everyone, multi-generational, people of all ages feel comfortable (old, young, single); all people feel it’s for them, whether rich, poor, black, white
- Cultural activities for all ages; places for different ages—teens don’t want to hang out with little kids—want to be with friends, not with the community at large.
- More of a college atmosphere, educational opportunities, cafes with things conducive to students
- Diversify the art for different generations (for kids, teens, adults, parents)

Safety

- More pedestrian traffic makes it feel safer
- Safety—Need to create a safe space, Presence of police, but not too much! Public restrooms, water fountains
- Friendly horse-mounted Police that seem like real people, relationship oriented, talking to others, eating with others
- Phones help young people communicate with parents- could this be Wi-Fi, coffee shop with computers?

Sports

- Sports opportunities—parks and other places where you can exercise—or do body movement activities that provide exercise
- Rentals of bikes, scooters, Segways
- Ice Skating Rink, Roller Skating Rink, Laser Tag: Big place for people to play.
- Lights or fans where the person’s activity powers it

Artist Interactions and Arts Spaces

- Large co-working space for artists.
- Opportunities for interaction with artists
- Spots that are platforms for playing music—artists scheduled to show up
- Places to make things, hands-on creation, art activities
- Museum with permanent art collection
- Turn empty spaces into art galleries

Small Business Generators

- Help for people trying to start a business—concierge-type service to reduce isolation, get assistance; communication bridge between businesses & government
- Economic development package for small businesses in downtown Mesa
- Short-cuts for people to go through processes, to get help, don't feel isolated and without assistance in trying to establish a business (Concierge service)
- Some sort of subsidizing for improvement of downtown spaces to make them work for small businesses. More up-to-date, make the spaces work. City friendly to this type of growth
- Have to get visions and strategies aligned to systems and regulations so they don't obstruct process of seeking to reach the vision

Transportation/Streets/Amenities

- Better Public transit to downtown (from neighborhoods north and south).
- Transform empty places, alleyways, activate arteries. Art to go down a side street, so you then discover what else is there.
- Let people know what's here and encourage them to try what's here; digital kiosks
- Better walking/biking paths (sidewalks) connecting to neighborhoods south of Broadway.