

Reinvent Phoenix District-wide vision for **MIDTOWN IN 2040**

The Midtown District in 2040 – An Overview

In 2040, the Midtown District is a vibrant community characterized by strong independent businesses, cool and comfortable neighborhoods, diverse housing options, and safe, convenient transportation choices for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders.

Historic neighborhoods have been preserved and their character maintained [IN2; IN3; IN4; W2], while new mixed-use mid and high rise buildings have been designed to complement the existing mid-century modern architecture, while activating street life along Central. Numerous adaptive reuse projects incorporating green building techniques have been built as well as a diverse mix of smaller two and three story townhouses, apartments and live/work units.

Theme: Economic Vitality through Strong Local Businesses

In 2040, thriving local businesses drive Midtown's economy and support the District's growth and prosperity by keeping more money circulating within the District. While the District continues to attract large companies, it has evolved to also support small, local, and independent businesses [W2; VESC]. Midtown now offers a wide variety of goods and services, including coffee shops, restaurants, small food markets, yoga studios, fitness clubs, clothing stores, business incubators, and law offices among others [IN7; IN10; SE2; SE3; SE4].

Theme: Cooler Temperatures

In 2040, Midtown has cooler temperatures and less intensive sun exposure along sidewalks and within open spaces. The improved comfort has

enabled many more residents to live active outdoor lifestyles throughout the year [W1; VESC]. Both young and old enjoy walking, bicycling, and chatting with neighbors. Mature shade trees encourage people to browse shops and relax on benches. Lush and well-maintained landscaping makes the area beautiful, further inviting residents out to enjoy their community [W1; W2].

In addition to shade and landscaping, cool pavement techniques further reduce temperatures. Instead of using black asphalt that absorbs heat, pavement is permeable and light colored to reflect heat, help vegetation grow, and further improve the district's microclimate. [W1; VESC; Vision Pool].

Theme: A Walkable and Bikeable Place for All

In 2040, residents move throughout Midtown with a wide variety of quality transportation options. Safe and comfortable sidewalks and bike lanes provide easy access to destinations, including for those using assistive devices such as wheelchairs and white canes. Now, more residents travel within the District by walking, bicycling and using public transit than by automobile [SE2; SE3; W1; VESC]. Several corridors have been reconstructed using Complete Streets policies that have slowed down traffic. [W1; W2; VPS]. A street car circulator has also been added to the District, extending the reach of pedestrians [VESC], and boosting light rail ridership [W1; VESC]. The circulator stops at bustling hubs such as Park Central Mall, St. Joseph's Hospital, and restaurant and shopping locations on Central and 3rd Street.

Major Investment Areas

Major Investment Area 1: Park Central

In 2040, Park Central is the anchor of the Midtown District. The redevelopment of its large surface parking lots helped catalyze the transformative changes that have occurred throughout the district over the past two decades [IN7; IN8; IN9; SE1; SE2; SE3; SE4]. Mid and high-rise buildings front Central Avenue, [IN9; IN13] and a pedestrian-oriented outdoor retail occupies the heart of the property. The shopping mall is now a mixed-use urban center that blends outdoor retail [SE3; IN7], restaurants, housing [SE2; SE4], office space and medical research facilities [SE2; SE4].

In 2040, Park Central is a major destination that draws people from around the city and provides residents easy access to retail and office jobs [IN8; W2]. Residents in the Willo neighborhood enjoy strolling along restaurant patios and storefront windows and employees from St. Joe's often walk over for lunch. The hospital has partnered with a university to build a medical research center [IN8; W2; VESC], integrating cutting-edge technology jobs with great amenities - including shopping, nightlife, hotels and quality urban housing - all within a short walk. A concentration of people, including researchers, hospital staff, students, residents and frequent visitors have transformed Park Central into a vibrant urban environment, with a college-town feel. [IN9; IN13; W2].

Theme: Thriving Small Businesses

In 2040, Park Central's mixed-use buildings are home to numerous local, independent businesses that are able to thrive with affordable lease payments [W2; VESC]. Midtown residents strongly support these businesses with a "buy Midtown" ethic, along with many other residents who come from all over the city for Park Central's collection of unique stores, walkable streets, and beautiful open spaces [W2].

Theme: Quality Employment and Training Opportunities

In 2040, Park Central provides a diverse range of employment opportunities for residents, including healthcare, education, service, retail, and hospitality. The medical research center attracts students from all over the country for high quality, hands-on learning. [IN8; W2; VESC]. This university-hospital partnership also provides opportunities for residents to increase their academic and professional capacities through affordable courses and numerous free lectures [W2].

Theme: Safe, Convenient, Comfortable and Affordable Transportation

In 2040, Park Central is well-connected to surrounding neighborhoods. Along perimeter streets like Thomas Road, bike lanes and wider sidewalks have replaced automobile lanes to improve safety for bicyclists and pedestrians [W1; W2; VPS]. New streets within Park Central are designed for slow traffic with narrow travel lanes and street parking [W1; W2; VPS]. Heavily shaded sidewalks [W1] and bus stops [SE1; SE4; W1] provide comfort to pedestrians walking to and within Park Central, and residents that live farther away can ride the new streetcar circulator [W1; VESC]. People feel safe using well-lit streets and bus stops at any time of day [W1]. The close proximity of businesses, restaurants, offices, and housing helps residents meet their daily needs without having to travel very far, saving many families from the high cost of car ownership.

Theme: Parks at Park Central

Park Central's shaded paseo provides a pedestrian-friendly, active outdoor mall [W1; VESC] that links together two high quality open spaces: a beautiful plaza fronting Central Avenue and a lush green adjacent to 3rd street. The spaces are highly used by surrounding residents and employees and

also provide a place for weekend farmers' markets and other community events that draw people from around the city. [W1; VPS].

Daily Life at Park Central

It has been great to live and work at Park Central. I eat lunch most days out on the plaza with my St. Joseph's coworkers and often look up to see my dog Nacho eagerly awaiting his mid-day walk as he peers out of my apartment window. Today, the plaza stage is hosting a free performance from Midtown's new theatre troupe. Park Central's conscientious developers installed a solar energy system on the stage's roof, providing free power for the plaza's lights and the audio / video equipment. It's so fun to have so many free concerts and cultural events right next door. The neighborhood is so fully of life and it seems like each day there's a new unique small business opening, which now includes everything from small software design offices to day-care services and a small food co-op [SE2; SE3; MTN03]. [W1; W2; MTN02].

Park Central also has great local restaurants and entertainment, and I often have friends over for late night drinks on my 18th floor balcony [W2]. It's easy for everyone to get home safe, since my front door is only steps from the light rail station and there are always taxis passing on the streets. Midtown's "Living Room", Park Central's nick name, also fuels my professional and academic life. I intern at St. Joseph's new Preventative Health and Rehabilitation center. The center has built a community healing garden at Park Central's 3rd Street Green through a partnership with universities, local farmers, and Midtown restaurants and food markets [W2]. Today, I am excited to help occupational therapy patients improve their strength and mobility with gardening! It feels good to see the positive impact my job has on both my neighbors and the larger community. This initiative is just one example of how Park Central has reclaimed its status as a unique and valued destination in Phoenix [MTN02; MTN03; SE3].

Major Investment Area 2: Central Avenue Corridor

In 2040, Central Avenue is Midtown's business spine [IN7; IN10; SE3]. Lined with mixed-use high rises that once suffered from high vacancy rates, Central is now a bustling corridor of commerce and energy that welcomes visitors to Midtown from all over the city [IN1; IN2; IN9; SE2; SE3; W1; W2].

Theme: Adaptive Reuse and Green Building Retrofits

During the decades leading up to 2040, Midtown overcame a 30 percent vacancy rate in its high rise offices[IN9] through an adaptive reuse strategy that has rehabilitated and repurposed vacant buildings into mixed-use towers. The creative integration of businesses and residences has filled most buildings along Central to full occupancy, which once suffered from nearly 3 million square feet of vacant space [W1; W2; VESC]. As the high-rises were renovated, the structures were made more energy efficient. In addition to cost savings, these investments also provide sound barriers that allow residents to live close to one another and to businesses without any noise problems [W1]. Many buildings were also upgraded with cutting edge IT equipment that helped attract the numerous creative technology companies that now lease space in them.

Theme: A Supportive, Entrepreneurial Environment

In 2040, the office spaces along Central Avenue's re-energized high rises are filled with small, local businesses. Companies along the corridor include high tech start-ups, service-oriented firms, and numerous non-profits [IN10; W1; W2]. The Central Corridor has been perfect for firms that want to be in an exciting, urban environment but can't afford the high cost rents Downtown [IN9]. Seed-Spot, a social impact incubator located in the Corridor, has helped create a cluster of ambitious entrepreneurs who are focused on creating products that improve the communities around the world. This has helped foster an international, socially-conscious cultural

feel in Midtown.

Central Corridor entrepreneurs also benefit from a small business support organization that is funded by Midtown's Community Investment Bank. This program provides micro-loans to assist with start-up costs and operating expenses [Vision Pool; W2; VESC]. Some high-rises on Central Avenue feature floors dedicated to co-working spaces that allow organizations to share office resources and expertise [W2; VESC], which reduce costs and further help small organizations join the Central Avenue business community.

Theme: A Complete Street for Phoenix's Signature Corridor

In 2040, Central Avenue is an active, pedestrian and bicycle-friendly street with slow moving traffic and numerous shops and restaurants. Central still has two lanes of traffic in both directions, but the combination of shortened left turn lanes and the removal of the striped, excess pavement along the light rail track have provided space for street parking along portions of the street and facilitated the striping of highly visible shared bike/car lanes called "sharrows" [W2; VPS]. Not only is Central Avenue safer for pedestrians and cyclists, but it also offers more attractions for visitors. Small plazas and greens provide spaces to relax [VPS], and outdoor cafes and restaurant patios occupy the ground floor of many high-rises [IN1]. With trees lining the sidewalk, Central's public spaces are cool and shaded.

Theme: Lower Cost of Living and Improved Government Budgets

In 2040, the Central Corridor is home to many new residents and businesses, and the increased activity reduces transportation costs because residents live close to where they work and shop [IN1; IN2; IN9; SE2; SE3; W1; W2]. While most of the development in the Corridor has focused on repurposing existing buildings, there has been a few major new construction projects on what used to be asphalt parking lots. These new buildings are generally 10 to 20 stories [VPS], which has significantly grown

tax revenues without the added costs of extending infrastructure and city services further out into the desert. By 2040, the high-rises along Central Avenue are full of tenants after the Midtown Partnership carefully helped match the right tenants with the right buildings. New development was slow at first, which avoided saturating the area with real estate before it could support additional commercial and residential units [IN9]. Once the vacant high-rises were rehabilitated and converted to mixed-use, they filled up. This concentrated activity and renewed vitality pushed the area's market demand over a tipping point that unleashed capital and created a wave of development.

Daily Life in the Central Corridor

Every morning I open my eyes to a beautiful sunrise over the Phoenix Mountain Preserve shining onto the bustling streets below [MTN05]. My apartment is in a renovated office building on Central Avenue, and I call the fourteenth floor home [VPS]. I begin my morning by taking the elevator down to the lobby, while chatting with one of my neighbors who works at the community development firm on the second floor [SE3; IN7; SE2; SE4; IN8; W2].

Once outside, I walk my son to his elementary school on 3rd Street, then head back to Central to grab a coffee on the ground floor of my office building. My office is in a co-working space in a high-rise, just two light rail stops from where I live [W2]. We have been able to make such progress in this new location, building invaluable connections with other small businesses in the area through a mentorship program [VESC; IN10; W1; W2]. For lunch, I walk to a local sandwich shop at Park Central, and eat with friends who are enjoying a lunch meeting. While waiting for the light rail, we often overhear folks from St. Joseph's excitedly discussing new research [N8; W2]. I end my day early so I can pick up my son after school and bike [SE; MTN04] to the Heard Museum for an arts festival hosted in their outdoor exhibition center [MTN04].

Major Investment Area 3: 3rd Street Corridor

In 2040, 3rd Street is a destination for pedestrians and bicyclists. Independent businesses front the street, with residential neighborhoods within surrounding blocks. Contrasting the larger scale of development on Central Avenue, the 3rd Street Corridor is conscious of the smaller, more personal scale of adjacent historic neighborhoods, and is visually integrated into a historic residential setting [IN4; W2].

Theme: Neighborhood-Supported Local Retailers

In 2040, 3rd Street is a thriving, small-scale business “main street”. Inspired by the Melrose District on 7th Avenue, the street’s commerce is dominated by independent and boutique businesses that create a distinct sense of place [IN5; IN7; IN10; SE2; W2]. To improve their success and further integrate into the Midtown community, local-business owners have created a “buy local” initiative to provide incentives for keeping Midtown money in the District [W2; VESC]. Residents participate in this initiative because they appreciate the friendly atmosphere [W2] that local businesses have brought to the area.

Theme: Connecting the City’s Best Parks

In 2040, 3rd Street is safe and comfortable for walking and bicycling. One lane of traffic in each direction has been replaced by wide sidewalks and a fully protected bike-lane located between the curb and street parking [SE4; W2; VPS;]. These improvements have slowed traffic and improved safety within the corridor, resulting in sidewalks that are always bustling with pedestrians. Along the corridor, small plazas and greens allow places to relax and people-watch [W2; VPS]. With the improved infrastructure, 3rd Street has linked together Steele Indian School and Hance Parks [IN9; IN18, SE3] and is now closed to cars every Sunday morning for a popular street festival [SE4] that draw numerous families with young children out to walk and bike from park to park.

Theme: Unique and Green Buildings

In 2040, single-story residential buildings and two to three-story office buildings have been adapted to house 3rd Street’s independent businesses [IN4; W1; W2]. The reused buildings saved a significant amount of resources compared to typical demolition and reconstruction methods. To further save money and energy, buildings have been renovated for efficiency and fitted with solar energy systems. To preserve the character of surrounding neighborhoods, solar panels are carefully placed to not impact the appearance of historic buildings [W1; W2].

Theme: Convenient Neighborhood Amenities

In 2040, 3rd Street’s mixed-use character reduces the need to drive. New development is mixed use, compact and generally 3 stories, allowing more residents to live closer to businesses that provide day-to-day shopping and services, and allowing for increased savings due to lower transportation costs.

Day in the Life on 3rd Street

It’s another gorgeous Sunday morning, as I step down the stoop porch of my townhouse in East Alvarado [IN4; W2]. I’m eager to get to work at my corner bakery on Clarendon. I love to ride my bike to work on 3rd Street and see all the families already out doing errands or heading to the park [MTN02; W2; IN1; SE1; SE4;]. As I approach my bakery, I’m greeted by the aroma of fresh bread and several tables of smiling, loyal patrons who wave and say hello [MTN02]. Customers love dining in our shaded garden patio that fronts the sidewalk, especially because they can see the fruits, vegetables and herbs used in our most coveted recipes.

My husband has been working all morning with our dedicated staff, who all live in the Midtown [IN5; SE2]. It’s hard to believe we’ve been open nearly a decade, with many thanks to the seed grant program provided by Midtown’s “Buy-Local Initiative” [IN5; IN7; IN10; SE2; W2]. Today is sure to be particularly busy, as we are one of the local eateries catering (and sponsoring) the monthly Midtown community development fundraiser

in Monterey Park [MTN05]. This month's event revolves around a walk/run/wheel a-thon, featuring a relay race down 3rd Street [SE4] for community members with special needs. The program is organized by our high schools, in conjunction with St. Joseph's medical center and Midtown's wheel-share co-ops. Events like this have been a great source of re-investment in our neighborhood institutions, and have boosted the success of independent local businesses like ours. These events help us unite family, friends and neighbors under a common cause—a vibrant and thriving Midtown community [MTN04].

Table 3. Midtown District Stakeholder Engagement Events

Event	Location	Date	Total Participants	Activities
SE1	Phoenix Historic Neighborhoods Coalition	2/28/13	16	Mapping activity and discussion
SE2	M7 Street Fair	3/2/13	32	Mapping activity and discussion
SE3	St. Joseph's Hospital	3/8/13	30	Mapping activity and discussion
SE4	Off Central Block Party	3/10/13	32	Mapping activity and discussion
W1	Steele Indian School Park	3/30/13	8	VESC; VPS; Narrative statements; discussion
W2	Seed Spot	4/3/13	9	VESC; VPS; Narrative statements; discussion
IN	1-on-1 Interviews	1/28/13 — 4/12/13	21	Mapping activity and discussion
Total			148	