THE CENTRAL IDEA
AFFIRMING THE CENTER OF THE PHOENIX METRO
UNIVERSITY CITY EXCHANGE
AT ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY
To all CEOs for Cities National Meeting attendees, welcome to Phoenix. As you know, the organization has rarely ventured this far west, so we are particularly delighted to share our city with you—one still very much in a process of becoming.

The West has long been a place apart—a magnet for bold plans, personal reinvention, and unique perspectives. With this in mind, rather than provide a conventional introduction to our city, we have assembled a living document featuring observations, aspirations, and challenges, many of which will surely resonate with the city clusters represented at this conference. This think piece is also intended as a supplement to the panel discussions arranged around corresponding topics. Since the essence of CEOs for Cities is the exchange of ideas transferable to other locales, we thought this would be the most productive way to present our city-building efforts and to gain insights from your comparable work.

This national meeting comes at a propitious time. As former President Bill Clinton said at the recent U.S. Conference of Mayors, “In a very profound way, the cities have become the laboratories of democracy.”(1) Nowhere is this more true than Phoenix, the centerpiece of Maricopa County, the fastest growing county in the country.(2) As the locus for some of the most critical concerns of the day—demographic shifts, educational attainment, climate change impact and international relations—Phoenix has the opportunity to be an exemplar of President Clinton’s expectations. Indeed, as we continue to attract new residents, we are striving to be a more inclusive, informed and adaptable city in response to these significant matters.

That said, the national trend toward growing the urban core has come with a price, literally and figuratively. As our featured speaker at this conference, Richard Florida, wrote in a recent op-ed for the New York Times, “The urban revival that swept across America over the past decade or two may be in danger. As it turns out, the much ballyhooed new age of the city might be giving way to a great urban stall out.”(3)

Cities and the institutions within them are still the engines of our economy. Clearly, many are thriving and putting greater distance between themselves and others
in the competition for talent and investment (witness the Amazon HQ2 race). However, urban living has become ever more unaffordable in these same locations, reflective of a widening socio-economic gap nationally. Adding to the complexity is the counterintuitive trend by some states to reduce the ability of cities to manage their own affairs in response to some of these situations. Creating cities which are simultaneously pushing the boundaries of innovation and responsive to the needs of all residents is an imperative for our time.

We are at an historical tipping point for cities, public institutions, and the greater social enterprise. In recognition of this new reality, the subheading of this conference is “Everything Will be Different,” a theme that Michael Crow, president of Arizona State University, introduced at the CEOs for Cities event in Greenville, S.C. earlier this year. At ASU, we operate under the assumption that traditional modes of operation and measures of performance are inadequate to address the demands and obligations before us. The same proves true for the Phoenix Metro, as it may for your region of the country as well. You will hear echoes of this sense of urgency throughout the conference as we present leaders who are charting new paths in their respective spheres.

Finally, as I write this, we are reminded once again of the fragility of our cities and the vital yet often under-appreciated services they provide on a daily basis. At this moment, Houston, a CEOs for Cities Cluster member, is responding to the impact of Hurricane Harvey and the 20 trillion gallons of water making much of America’s fourth-largest city temporarily unrecognizable. While the particulars of this storm could not have been forecast, the vulnerability of Houston and many cities in the southern tier of the U.S. is well-documented. Long before Harvey arrived, we had purposefully invited mayors from cities along the I-10 corridor to this meeting, knowing that this trans-continental axis from Los Angeles to Jacksonville uniquely highlights many of the most critical issues of our time.

Again, welcome. We look forward to a robust exchange of ideas and the establishment of long-term partnerships for the future.

WELLINGTON REITER, FAIA
Executive Director, University City Exchange at ASU
WAYS TO NAVIGATE THIS BOOK

There are several routes through this document, all intended to be expeditious and high-concept:

1. The ten tactical components of the Central Idea reflect a sequential strategy for making Central Avenue the essential street for the entire Phoenix Metro as it was intended to be.

2. Embedded in the Central Idea are key agenda items: economic vitality, civic realm, arts & culture, resiliency, and education, each of which has been addressed in a brief essay by a civic leader in our community.

3. A collection of community voices is distributed amongst the pages, allowing for a more nuanced take on our collective future and the work ahead.

4. Finally, as a very youthful city, we recognize the value of learning from others. Exemplary precedents are juxtaposed with our aspirations for a more vibrant and inclusive community.
"Our identity has been formed by one attribute: growth. That’s how we’ve measured success. It’s borne of the reality of making a hot desert place habitable. Once we figured that out, we never looked back."

GRADY GAMMAGE, JR.
AUTHOR, “THE FUTURE OF THE SUBURBAN CITY: LESSONS FROM SUSTAINING PHOENIX”
AN INVENTED CITY

Most of the municipalities represented in the CEOs for Cities audience today originated near navigable waterways. They were purposely positioned at geographically advantageous locations based on matters of defense, constructibility, and/or commerce: a natural harbor (New York, Boston, San Francisco), the gateway to a continent (New Orleans), the convergence of two rivers (Pittsburgh, Cincinnati), or immediate access to the greatest freshwater highway on the planet (Chicago, Cleveland, Milwaukee).

Aerial views of the emergent city of Phoenix do not offer an equivalent sense of inevitability. This is a city that had to be invented.

The West, including Phoenix, has always been a place of the imagination, a physically challenging environment requiring significant intervention and engineering in order to make large-scale habitation possible. This was true for the Hohokam people who occupied this valley until approximately 1450. They built a vast network of canals, drawing water from the Salt and Gila Rivers to create an agrarian society in an unlikely but ultimately very productive setting.

This original civilization faded but it left a system of water distribution deeply etched into the Sonoran Desert. Building on this legacy, water infrastructure projects have been the hallmark of the Phoenix region. The Roosevelt Dam of 1911, for example, expanded our capacity for agricultural output and laid the foundation for extraordinary residential growth.

The post-WWII expansion of the Phoenix metro region was driven by vision, technology, and a definition of prosperity that is uniquely American. The critical, enabling factors are easily observed: the automobile, air conditioning, regular air travel, and production homebuilding. Extending the Phoenician legacy of seeing potential where few obvious clues existed, audacious planned communities
emerged. Square miles of detached houses came to typify the impression of Phoenix as a low-rise, land-rich community, one where the prevailing industry was growth itself.

When Richard Florida, our closing keynote speaker this week, came to Phoenix in 2004 to a sold-out crowd at the Orpheum Theater, the question on everyone’s mind was whether Phoenix had a chance to flip this narrative and become a city with “creative class” attributes. Given our suburban inclinations, this seemed somewhat unlikely. But change was in the air.

The Phoenix of 2017, presently the fifth largest city in the U.S., continues a legacy of growth, but is doing so in a decidedly more diversified manner. The downtown area now features highly visible public transportation, institutional commitment, vertical living, tech arrivals from Silicon Valley, robust homegrown retail, and expanding live performance venues. These features were not much in evidence at the time of Dr. Florida’s first visit. Thirteen years ago, the local audience was only on the cusp of realizing a new approach to our downtown, one which has since redefined living in our urban core.

AN UNPRECEDENTED PARTNERSHIP

Upon assuming the presidency of Arizona State University in 2002, Dr. Michael Crow put in place an ambitious agenda under the heading of the New American University. This framework includes the imperative to “leverage our place,” a commitment to fully embrace the cultural, economic and physical attributes of this unique location. With this as a point of departure, the university in partnership with the cities of Phoenix, Tempe, Scottsdale, Glendale, Mesa, Chandler and others, has come to see these fortunes as inextricably linked by a proactive vision of vibrant communities and corresponding economic opportunity.

A frequently cited inflection point for downtown Phoenix was the conceptualization of a new ASU campus, launching a vital city/university collaboration, which continues to be highly productive. A city bond election in 2006 formally authorized funds for the land and buildings, several of which will be locations for the CEOs for Cities 2017 National Meeting. Over the intervening years, the academic programs
Institutions and cities can inspire and enable each other to achieve remarkable results otherwise unthinkable without the benefit of a nimble, collaborative spirit and shared commitment to goal.”

and schools which would benefit most from an urban setting were relocated downtown. Social work, journalism, law and nursing, among others, now thrive by embedding their work in the fabric of the city.

As a result, the campus will achieve and exceed its planned population of 15,000, a goal that seemed audacious only a little more than a decade ago. The arrival of light rail, another high-impact civic investment, has contributed mightily to the success of this enterprise and its surroundings. Private sector development on parcels within a short distance of the campus and rail line is now measured in the billions of dollars, further contributing to a changed profile of the city.

This should all sound familiar. James Fallows, when speaking to CEOs for Cities earlier this spring, offered his “Eleven Signs a City Will Succeed.” A research university as an engaged partner was one the significant components cited.(9)

Tom Murphy, the former mayor of Pittsburgh, Senior Fellow for the Urban Land Institute and contributor to this meeting, has written, “A shared vision at the local level must leverage the leadership of anchor universities, medical institutions, public sector officials, and private entrepreneurs to forge new local economies in which to sustain their communities.” (10)

Our experience confirms the wisdom of this formulation. Institutions and cities can inspire and enable each other to achieve remarkable results otherwise unthinkable without the benefit of a nimble, collaborative spirit and shared commitment to goal.
IDENTITY AND PERCEPTION

Phoenix is occasionally on the receiving end of some fairly harsh judgments—some based on facts, but many casually informed by perception. Eyebrows are raised when a dust storm resembling a Hollywood special effect rolls across the Valley of the Sun (blotting the latter out) and subsequently into news feeds around the country. More water in Lake Mead would certainly be welcomed. And it does get a bit crispy here during the summer months, a circumstance sometimes matched by the political climate. But in the spirit of the place, we have adapted and made this a very attractive and viable location, as the growth figures confirm.

Given its relative youth, the identity of Phoenix is a regular topic of discussion as we compete with cities enjoying more established institutions and economic clout. We are clearly more than the sum of our environmental conditions, and can point to great foresight in managing them, especially water. But we have yet to construct a compelling and widely accepted narrative which supersedes the simple statistical observations associated with scale, population, and affordability.

The Central Idea, which is threaded through this document, was created in response to the question of identity—not only for the urban core, but for the greater Phoenix metropolitan region as well. This project seeks to capitalize on the latent potential of Central Avenue, our fundamental organizing boulevard, to communicate our grandest ambitions in the most vivid manner. By deliberately concentrating meaningful investments—public, corporate, and philanthropic—this singular spine can provide an authoritative narrative tailored to this place, and become a center of gravity for a region asserting itself on the national stage. In the process, we imagine the emergence of an extraordinary urban vernacular which is responsive to our climate, an elevated role for arts and culture, and a population fully representative of our diverse heritage.

Embedded within the Central Idea, three essential topics offer the chance to radically revise the conventional narratives about Phoenix: heat, sprawl and demographic change. In each case, a supposed deficit can be transformed into an
opportunity unavailable to many other cities. A compelling identity for the region must be constructed by turning informally gathered and incomplete perceptions completely inside out, allowing our proven capacity for problem-solving to develop new demonstrations of inventiveness and a more diversified economic landscape. Our challenges can become our strength.

ARID ASSETS
Our extreme arid climate presents a singular opportunity to position Phoenix as the premier laboratory of adaptability in a time of change. About 40% of the globe’s surface and 30% of the population is dealing with the exigencies of an arid climate and desertification. Unfortunately, this circumstance is only going to increase. Phoenix and Arizona have an authentic and authoritative legacy of developing solutions in a resource-limited environment. We can become a locus of research and exporter of design, products, education and processes that intelligently embrace this setting and help to establish more resilient communities worldwide.

ASU was the first university in the nation to build a School of Sustainability, and currently generates more solar energy than any other. The City of Phoenix has one of the most proactive agendas around energy, water and waste in the nation. In fact, we are situated at the nexus of water, energy and food systems engineering, the preeminent issues of our time—and of the future. Working in concert with municipal partners in the region, we imagine the Phoenix Metro as a real-time test bed for all aspects of conservation, sustainability and resiliency.

PROXIMITY AS PRODUCT
The region has long offered a case study for suburban sprawl and outward expansion. Yet contemporary entrepreneurship and innovation rewards proximity (think Silicon Valley and the 20-minute rule). Interestingly, the leaders of the digital economy are building decidedly analog enclaves in Seattle, Boston, Chicago
URBAN IDENTITY

and San Francisco. In an earlier op-ed for the Arizona Republic on this topic, I wrote: “The challenge for the Phoenix Metro region is simple: Will our geography—one that has been shaped by the automobile and access to moderately priced housing, fuel, and water—be our destiny? Can our archipelago of loosely coordinated municipalities compete with more cohesive offerings by other cities? Most importantly, can we invest strategically and even disproportionately in select areas that represent only a percentage of the total landmass of the Phoenix metro area?”

More succinctly, can the fifth largest city in the nation begin to think fast and small? As we build the Phoenix of the future, it must include systems which overcome the time and space impediments installed on a platform of 20th century industries. We now need an economic development plan and associated businesses built around the production of proximity.

Again, it is the knowing reversal of expectations which can be our strength. While radical in concept, this region is already a test bed for autonomous vehicles, hyperloop prototypes, distance education and other services which can compress the experience of Phoenix and other widely distributed geographies. Our brand and identity will be built on a new ecosystem of connectivity.

EMPOWERMENT THROUGH EDUCATION

There is another kind of distance we must overcome, one that is more social than spatial. We will be a majority-minority state by 2028, well ahead of the country as a whole, which will not see such a shift until 2050. The demographic and cultural change Phoenix is experiencing offers yet another opportunity for us to reverse narratives which are incomplete portrayals of our community. Just as we embrace our climate, we must embrace the rising, native-born Latino population as well as immigrants from all countries who are attracted to this place and the opportunity it affords.
The required investment in education—the undeniable enabler of personal, familial and societal progress—is probably the most fundamental issue facing this region, and will be a major item of discussion during the conference. As Bruce Katz and Jennifer Bradley rightly stated in The Metropolitan Revolution, “For a nation undergoing profound demographic transformation, the metropolitan model of education and social integration provides a path toward managing growth and diversity in a way that lifts all boats. Cities and metros understand intuitively what the nation fitfully remembers and often contests: the United States is demographically blessed, and diversity is its greatest competitive advantage and strength.”(15)

Phoenix is at the epicenter of this ongoing national project. Accordingly, we must equip all of our citizens—and aspirants—with the tools that lower barriers to success, include all who are capable and willing, and respond to the skills demanded of a 21st century workforce. This will require that we recast our educational institutions at an unprecedented pace. Nothing could have a more profound impact on the identity of our region than achieving this outcome.

In closing, I return to the intertwined themes of identity and invention. The identity of the Phoenix Metro, much like the physical city itself, is still in its formative stages and is a collage of options at this point. It finds itself among the
ranks of the largest cities but is nothing like New York, Los Angeles or Chicago. Western peers such as Denver, Salt Lake City, or San Diego are more singularly defined. And though similarly in a process of reinvention, Phoenix is without the imposed urgency of Detroit, New Orleans and now Houston.

Nevertheless, Phoenix—as it is forced to compete for talent, investment, and resources on the contemporary stage—is rapidly developing a clearer sense of itself and its options going forward. Foremost among them is the opportunity to translate the obstacles associated with a harsh desert context into revelatory achievements. This should serve as yet more motivation to demonstrate a reversal of expectation and to position Phoenix as the laboratory for the future.

“A compelling identity for the region must be constructed by turning informally gathered and incomplete perceptions completely inside out. Our challenges can become our strength.”
GREAT CITIES DARE TO DOCUMENT THEIR HIGHEST ASPIRATIONS, THUS INCREASING THE CHANCES OF REALIZING THEM.
Cities become great by design. Accordingly, we should design bravely and with intent. As a region still early in its development and possessing a surprising abundance of resources at its disposal (unlimited solar, for example), Phoenix can champion an urbanism which becomes the paradigm for arid environments around the globe. A map charting a deliberate path to our future must be created as a continual point of reference.
10. THEY HAVE BIG PLANS. If I see a national politician with a blueprint for how things will be better 20 years from now, I think: Good luck! In fact, few national politicians even pretend to offer a long-term vision anymore. When a mayor or city-council member shows me a map of how new downtown residences will look when completed, or where the new greenway will go, I think: I’d like to come back. Cities still make plans, because they can do things.”

JAMES FALLOWS
“11 SIGNS A CITY WILL SUCCEED” THE ATLANTIC, MARCH 2016
"We did not want to leave the city with static illustrative pictures of what their city could look like. There were already lots of those around. We wanted to leave the city with a tool that would enable people to manage change."

TONI GRIFFIN
Project Director, Detroit Works Project
“The investments in the downtown and their success in changing the urban culture are the most positive development in my time here. It has proven that active government planning and investment can have rapid and positive impacts on business and lifestyle.”

RICHARD STANLEY
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AND UNIVERSITY PLANNER, ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY
The advent of light rail and ASU’s move into downtown Phoenix have been game changers. Both have encouraged reinvestment in the Valley’s urban core, broadened appreciation for adaptive reuse—and created a foundation for increased development densities. The robust vitality that continues to gain momentum has transformed the area into a thriving urban core, bustling with humanity.”

DEBRA SYDENHAM
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ULI ARIZONA
"Everything follows transportation."

CHRISTINE MACKAY
COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR, CITY OF PHOENIX
FIRST YEAR RIDERSHIP EXCEEDED PROJECTIONS BY 134%

PHOENIX LIGHT RAIL PLANNED EXTENSIONS BY 2034 66MI
IN A CINEMATIC MANNER, A GREAT CITY BOULEVARD PROVIDES FOR THE ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING OF PLACE, BOTH AD-LIBBED AND SCRIPTED.
In the Roman city, the *Cardo Maximus* was the organizing north/south axis around which vital institutions were positioned. Central Avenue was purposefully inscribed into the Sonoran Desert to serve this function in what has become the fifth largest city in the U.S. In a region inclined toward unrestrained expansion, the full utility of this spine as the geographic, cultural and communal center of gravity has yet to be fully realized.
If you look at photos of 1930s downtown Phoenix, one of the most striking visual elements is shade. Striped awnings cover sidewalks that are teeming with pedestrians. The automobile and TV emptied out Phoenix as it did other American downtowns, but a renaissance is underway and people are returning. With so many new pedestrians, Phoenix once again requires shade. This place needs to launch a large-scale initiative to become the city of canopies and parasols—of structural and organic shade that is both functional and beautiful, that cools and connects, that harnesses the energy of the sun, and distinguishes this desert metropolis from other more conventional American cities.”

PHIL BOAS
DIRECTOR, ARIZONA REPUBLIC EDITORIAL PAGES
APA 12 CHARACTERISTICS OF A GREAT STREET

1. Provides orientation to its users—and connects well to the larger pattern of ways

2. Balances the competing needs of the street — driving, transit, walking, cycling, servicing, parking, drop-offs, etc

3. Fits the topography and capitalizes on natural features.

4. Is lined with a variety of interesting activities and uses that create a varied streetscape

5. Has urban design or architectural features that are exemplary in design

6. Relates well to its bordering uses — allows for continuous activity, doesn’t displace pedestrians to provide access to bordering uses

7. Encourages human contact and social activities

8. Employs hardscape and/or landscape to great effect

9. Promotes safety of pedestrians and vehicles, and promotes use over the 24-hour day

10. Promotes sustainability through minimizing runoff, reusing water, ensuring groundwater quality, minimizing heat islands—and responding to climatic demands

11. Is well maintained—and capable of being maintained without excessive costs

12. Has a memorable character
PHOENIX MIDTOWN
NORTH FROM CENTRAL • LEXINGTON
Central Avenue should be the economic and cultural spine of the City of Phoenix. The somewhat sporadic stretches of activity are held together by the vehicular traffic and more recently reinforced by the light rail. The stations have created a natural departure for intensification of activity. We chose our new studio location so that we could be a part of the city’s evolution, at the nexus.”

ALISON RAINNEY & JOSEPH HERZOG
PRINCIPALS, SHEPLEY BULFINCH
The crucial move in this proposal is to relieve the street of vehicles and incorporate broad strokes of verdant desert landscape. This is about big moves. Miles-long interventions that define new districts and signify positive change. The shade component is important but let’s not make it static and fixed, let’s instead craft it to be unexpectedly dynamic.”

MATTHEW G. TRZEBIATOWSKI, AIA
BLANK STUDIO DESIGN + ARCHITECTURE
Everyone, at some point, is looking for the center. We search for the center at occasions that are momentous, grave or joyful. We seek the center as we look for evidence that we, as a society, have a pulse, passion, a conscience, connection, memory and imagination. We seek out the center when we want to be of consequence, when we want to contribute, to be generative and relevant. The center is the place that summons us to step up, to be counted, seen and heard, to be stewards and makers of Phoenix, the place we call our own.

A vibrant community with robust civic engagement, defined broadly to include formal and informal political and non-political processes intended to impact community quality of life, relies on places that call us to be our best selves. These are places that allow and inspire us to act with heart, mind and spirit, in our full humanity, mindful of our differences and our collective destiny.

What are the qualities of those places? They are accessible, safe, inclusive and inspire stewardship—tangibly and intangibly. These places are easy to get to whether one is dependent on public transportation, drives, walks or relies on other means. There is evidence of universal design that maximizes accessibility by all people regardless of various characteristics including age, size, disability or ability, language, socio-economic status and other demographic characteristics. All people feel like they belong, in part, because we can see ourselves, our histories and aspirations in the physical characteristics of the place resulting from design features, public art and programming that is not static and not only reflects our presence and contributions to the community, but also encourages curiosity and respect for our diverse origins, beliefs and opinions. Vibrant civic places also hold the promise of discourse, reflection and enlightenment through civil exchange and an understood set of norms that energize and strengthen the social bonds of community.
The center is the place that summons us to step up, to be counted, seen and heard, to be stewards and makers of Phoenix, the place we call our own.”

At their best, design, public art and programming, in part, rely on the participation and contributions of citizens themselves; that participation itself is a manifestation of civic engagement.

Vibrant civic places also include spaces that people themselves can enliven—open spaces, public squares, stages. These are spaces that provide outlets for individual and collective voice and agency about both the civic and the personal. These are also the spaces that allow us to share publicly what might otherwise only be private—the familial celebration, the long-awaited milestone. These spaces allow us to infuse personal meaning in public space, often creating the bridge between private and civic life.

These aspirational places don’t always emerge naturally in optimal form. They require leadership, intention, resources and co-creation with diverse communities that must be engaged. That co-creation isn’t always easy or swift, but the often hard won end-result can be deeply meaningful, impactful, inspiring and catalytic.

Everyone, at some point, is looking for the center that part of Phoenix that summons us to show up, that place that grounds us in the present, allows us to look to the past and to the future, that place that is deeply personal and public, that place we made together.
HOW PUBLIC AREAS ARE EXPRESSLY ESTABLISHED, SHAPED AND POPULATED IS A LEADING INDICATOR OF THE VITALITY OF A CITY.
Phoenix enjoys some of the largest urban parks in the nation. As the region matures and densifies, attention is also being directed to sites of smaller proportion and more concentrated use. Establishing a thriving civic realm in a place more frequently associated with the suburbs demonstrates a transformed mindset and perception of the city. It is imperative that these spaces serve as models of climate responsiveness.
The least a democratic society should do is offer people wonderful public spaces. Public spaces are not a frivolity. They are just as important as hospitals and schools. They create a sense of belonging. This creates a different type of society — a society where people of all income levels meet in public space is a more integrated, socially healthy one.”

ENRIQUE PEÑALOSA LONDOÑO
MAYOR, BOGOTÁ, COLOMBIA
After 50 years of growth based on typical sunbelt sprawl patterns, we’ve entered a period of change, and things are becoming a lot more interesting. Developers are increasingly turning their attention to infill, redevelopment and re-use opportunities, strengthening our urban core areas and creating vibrant mixed-use environments. Investments in rapid transit, university expansion, healthcare facilities, artistic and cultural uses, and sports venues have created new energy in the downtown areas of the Valley.”

BRENT HERRINGTON
PRESIDENT AND CEO, DMB DEVELOPMENT LLC
3,872 HRS OF BRIGHT SUNSHINE YEARLY, PHOENIX RECEIVES THE MOST SUNSHINE OF ANY MAJOR CITY ON PLANET EARTH. (33)
CIVIC REALM

12%
PHOENIX DESERT
CANOPY COVERAGE
TODAY 2017

25%
REDUCING HEAT ISLAND BY
CARBON SEQUESTRATION (*)
2030 GOAL
“Calculate the pluses and minuses, and it’s hard not to conclude that Millennium Park looks even better now than it did when Daley sliced through a red ribbon to officially open it on July 16, 2004. It is a great work of civic art, a robust generator of jobs and construction and the latest demonstration of Chicago’s audacious ability to invent the urban future.”

BLAIR KAMIN
Architecture Critic, Chicago Tribune, July 21 2014
Hance Park is uniquely positioned to become the grand urban park for Phoenix. It’s surrounded by a host of rich cultural and community institutions including Phoenix Center for the Arts, Japanese Friendship Garden, Irish Cultural Center, Burton Barr Library and the Great Arizona Puppet Theater. There are light rail stations to the north and south, and it is within walking distance of both the ASU Downtown Campus and the vibrant arts and culture district. Hance Park will be a major component of our resurgent downtown.”

PHILIP WEDDLE, FAIA
PARTNER, WEDDLE GILMORE ARCHITECTS
CITIES ARE ABOUT OPTIONS—VARIED IN TYPE, INHABITED BY OTHERS, OPEN AROUND THE CLOCK AND WITHIN WALKABLE PROXIMITY
Walkability is a feature of the well-planned city, a basic connection with our physical surroundings despite the isolating effects of technology. Just as northern cities budget for snow removal in the winter, so too must Phoenix manage our summer heat. Shade must be incorporated into our architectural vernacular at all scales of our built environment. Though lacking a waterfront, we can develop a shade front, and Central Avenue can become one of the great, climate-conscious city walks.
A city’s identity is found in its roots, culture, and heritage that come from the nature of the people and place. The development of the city and its culture is strongest when it responds to these permanent identifiers in its architecture, parks, workplaces, housing and amenities. Focus on highly responsive design that veers away from “ornament” and “themes” and finds its character by revealing and responding to the essential and subtle environment and place of Phoenix. Respond to the heat. Respond to the landscape.”

JACK DEBARTOLO III, FAIA, PRINCIPAL, DEBARTOLO ARCHITECTS
I’m interested in cultivating and enforcing the reputation of Phoenix and Arizona as an anchor for artists, a place that supports generative creative work, cross-sectoral collaboration, invention and innovation through an affordable cost of living, growing creative infrastructure and new professional opportunities.”

GREG ESSER
ARTIST AND FOUNDER, ROOSEVELT ROW COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
The Museum of Walking (MoW) is committed to the everyday experience of walking as it relates to people, land, action and site. Walking allows us to be in our bodies and experience beauty and culture between the buildings, buses, and motor vehicles of a city. Beauty begins outside the museum.”

ANGELA ELLSWORTH
DIRECTOR AND CO-FOUNDER, MUSEUM OF WALKING (US)
The Strategic Plan envisioned “a series of oases that could be linked to achieve greater synergy and connectivity.” It saw shade, in the brutal summer climate of the Valley of the Sun, as perhaps the crucial unifying quality for the downtown area. “Use shade everywhere,” the plan urged, “especially in connected and civic spaces, so that shaded spaces become Phoenix’s signature.”

ALAN EHRENHALT
AUTHOR, “THE GREAT INVERSION AND THE FUTURE OF THE AMERICAN CITY”
ON THE 1994 PHOENIX STRATEGIC PLAN
Whether in the form of performance, experience, sculpture, or architecture, cities need exclamation points.
There are singular moments in a city which are engineered to produce an elevated awareness of self and community. Few encounters with a work of art illustrate this better than “Cloud Gate” in Chicago, which allows one to be reflected, literally, in the city and as a member of a tribe of strangers. A city confident in its mission marshals the resources to connect its citizens through immersive experience and wonder.
The familiar becomes unexpected: The ordinary, extraordinary—and the central facts of the city become new and strange.”

DAVID ROCKWELL
AUTHOR, "SPECTACLE"
“Feast on the Street, inspired and organized in part by artist London Clare Patey and Phoenix artist Matthew Moore, was a free community event held in downtown Phoenix. More than 9,000 visitors from all walks of life to celebrate food and art in the desert, connect with community, and to envision a vibrant and walkable urban core. A half-mile long dining table covered with white linens served to re-imagine First Street as a pedestrian promenade and connect local growers, artists, performers and community members.”

GREG ESSER
ARTIST AND FOUNDER, ROOSEVELT ROW COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
“Providence was called ‘a smudge beside the fast lane to Cape Cod.’ WaterFire used the arts, along with spectacle, scale, surprise and beauty to entirely transform the city into a destination. Using symbols of renewal, WaterFire sparked new community engagement and helped citizens build a city with a bright future. WaterFire has been called ‘the crown jewel of the Providence renaissance’.”

BARNABY EVANS
Executive Artistic Director, WaterFire Providence
There’s such an opportunity to make [the public realm] beautiful in a way that only Phoenix can be—one that is sustainable in a desert environment, with a consistent sense of form creating the feeling of a complete city.”

JASON SCHUPBACH
DIRECTOR, THE DESIGN SCHOOL AT ASU
The rebirth of the historic First Baptist Church building as the Monroe Street Abbey comes literally out of the ashes. Undeterred by a devastating fire over 30 years ago and multiple demolition attempts, this noble lady is standing tall. With a grateful nod to our City’s high quality design and construction heritage and in expectation of a future downtown rich with pedestrian experiences, the Abbey will be a destination for entertainment and scholarship, with great food and drink in authentic surroundings. Older buildings connect our past and future and give a context and grounding in the sometimes chaotic fabric of Phoenix.”

TERRY GODDARD
DEVELOPER AND FORMER MAYOR OF PHOENIX
Arts and culture are essential to the core of a dynamic community. Just as a quality public education system is the foundation for economic success and quality of life, so is a vibrant arts and culture scene. Arts is a strong economic driver whose benefits spread throughout the economy and enrich the quality of life for residents and visitors.

According to the Arizona Cultural Data Project and research conducted by the Arizona Commission on the Arts—in 2013, the arts generated over $580 million dollars and over 56,000 jobs. The arts not only attract visitors and residents, but provide a diverse employment base that strengthens our economy.

Only strong leadership will ensure our diverse arts base has the revenue stream it needs to grow and remain competitive. We know this cannot come solely from the public sector, and Phoenix business leaders have been working together to create multi-sector solutions. Several of our arts institutions faced elimination during the last recession. It was a wake-up call that a sustainable funding structure was needed and strategic partnerships were imperative to building a sustainable model.

Phoenix is a relatively new city and that has its challenges and opportunities. The greater Phoenix area has a wealth of arts offerings and is home to innovative and culturally-based arts landmarks that define Arizona’s unique history and place, including Frank Lloyd Wright’s Taliesin West, Paolo Soleri’s Arcosanti, Turrell’s skyscapes and creative murals and art forms created out of the Arizona-Sonora border experience. While being a young city allows for more innovative art forms to grow and leave a lasting legacy, it also means that funding a world-class arts environment is not ingrained in our community’s culture. As leaders who want to shape the long-term growth of our state, we know that fostering an innovative and
compelling environment for world-renowned artists to create visionary public art and various art forms is key to our economic development and city planning. Business leaders know that a city’s quality of life is a primary factor in recruiting new talent and jobs. The economic vitality of the greater Phoenix area depends in large part on our ability to support and grow our competitive arts and culture destination. Artists are drawn to our unique landscape and history—past and present. Parts of Phoenix have been transformed by compelling mural art and plays and operas have come out of challenging political issues. In 2014, the Arizona Opera presented the world’s first Mariachi opera, Cruzar la Cara de la Luna, To Cross the Face of the Moon. These powerful inventive art forms make the greater Phoenix area an internationally known center for innovative and experimental art and keep us a competitive destination for arts and culture.

The business community is engaged with arts organizations and thought leaders in the public and private sectors to craft a strategic plan that includes education about the powerful economic impact of the arts. We are committed to preserving Phoenix’s rich arts and culture and look forward to working with other leaders to make the business case for the arts.

“Just as a quality public education system is the foundation for economic success and quality of life, so is a vibrant arts and culture scene.”
THE CITY OFFERS MORE THAN A SITE FOR EDUCATION. IT IS THE INSPIRATION, THE CHALLENGE AND THE SOLUTION—WAITING TO BE DISCOVERED.
The launch of ASU downtown was predicated on leveraging the city as a site of exploration and engagement. The notion of a Creative City Center pushes the outward orientation of the educational enterprise even more explicitly into the world. The arts and design serve as magnifiers to reveal aspects of our community and environment which might otherwise go unseen. These insights, in turn, become prompts for partnerships, problem-solving and entrepreneurial opportunity.
THE CREATIVE CITY CENTER (CCC)
is proposed by ASU in Downtown Phoenix with the express purpose of leveraging the urban setting for teaching, making, research—and a more direct engagement of the community. As imagined, the CCC will be the most ambitious university-based arts and design accelerator and connector—an anchor creative space like no other in the city. The CCC will be home to more than 500 students each year, local creative professionals, and international artists-in-residence in a live-work-learn environment. The intent is to support arts and design-led community projects, creative ventures and enterprise development related specifically to this place.
ASU GRANT STREET STUDIOS (44)
The next decade will see a cultural and culinary renaissance in downtown. ASU hosts the largest design and arts school in the nation at a public university. Our 5,000 students and 1,000 graduates each year can and should help drive this creative transformation of the city. We can be an incredible catalyst.”

STEVEN TEPPER
DEAN, ASU HERBERGER INSTITUTE FOR DESIGN AND THE ARTS
In fact, my research shows empirically that artistic and cultural creativity acts alongside the high-tech industry and business and finance to power economic growth.”

RICHARD FLORIDA
AUTHOR, “THE NEW URBAN CRISIS”
“There were a series of moments when I decided that art was important, and it was an important vehicle for me to express my interest in spaces. Like: Oh, urban planning isn’t the way that I want to talk about urban planning, or talk about the city. Art is the way that I want to reflect on what works and doesn’t work in the city.”

THEASTER GATES
Social Practice Installation Artist, Chicago
Phoenix’s cultural scene, while rich and diverse, is also very young. So there are not a lot of rules and traditions. We can build a New American Creative City—building new relationships between the university, local creative professionals, and the cultural organizations across the Valley—a true integrated partnership where our creative assets are all working together to accelerate the cultural life of our city. And, importantly, we can emphasize the unique and authentic expression of our city and region—a place that is seeing rapid demographic change. Other great art cities have copied our European neighbors. We can continue to build something unique.”

STEVEN TEPPER
DEAN, ASU HERBERGER INSTITUTE FOR DESIGN AND THE ARTS
Our state, like many others across the nation, is at a crossroads. Our future will be dictated by the choices we make today. We have to decide that Arizona is a state that values education and a state that believes education changes lives and makes communities better. We have a tremendous opportunity before us. But there is an urgency to this opportunity. Our future leaders are sitting in classrooms today and it is critical that we ensure they are prepared for success in college and career.

At Helios Education Foundation, we believe that education, and specifically, postsecondary degree attainment, is the key to breaking the cycle of poverty which will help ensure a strong, qualified workforce pipeline and help put Arizona back on the path toward economic prosperity.

According to Georgetown University’s report, Recovery: Job Growth and Education Requirements Through 2020, 65% of all jobs will require some form of postsecondary education by 2020. Even so, as we look across our K-12 education systems in Arizona, the academic achievement gaps that exist among our students is cause for concern.

The Latino population is the fastest growing population in Arizona and Latino students make up the largest percentage of students in the state’s K-12 public schools, but Latino students lag behind their white peers in academic achievement across the K-12 education system and are underrepresented in postsecondary degree achievement. Only 18% of Arizona Latino fourth graders are proficient in math, compared with 44% of white children, and only 23% of Latino eighth graders are proficient in reading, compared to 51% of white students. Currently, only 19% of Latino adults in Arizona have an Associate degree or higher compared with 40% of white adults.
We have an opportunity before us to lead the nation in closing the Latino achievement gap and create an education system in which all children, regardless of zip code or background, are prepared for success.”

While some may view this as a dilemma, I prefer to look at as an opportunity. We have an opportunity before us to lead the nation in closing the Latino achievement gap and create an education system in which all children, regardless of zip code or background, are prepared for success.

We should all be rallying behind an agreed upon set of goals for our education system that includes equitable school funding and resources, high-quality teachers and the need for a rigorous, high expectations, college-going curriculum across the K-12 continuum that ensures that every student is prepared to succeed beyond high school.

Improving educational outcomes for Latino students is critical for our state to attract, expand and retain vital growth industries and, ultimately, transform Arizona from a low-skill, service economy to a high-skill, knowledge-based economy. This is the opportunity that lies before us and the opportunity we must embrace.
THE DIVERSITY OF THE U.S. IS A MARVEL, A CONDITION BEST REFLECTED IN OUR CITIES—THE INDISPENSABLE LABORATORIES OF DEMOCRACY.
CITY AS CULTURE LAB

One could imagine Phoenix as the northernmost Latin American city. Its origins are more complicated, but there is no denying the trajectory toward “minority majority” population. Embracing this opportunity, lifting up new arrivals, and translating our youthfulness into a net gain is an imperative. The proposed Culture Lab of the Americas looks beyond the present and responds to our transborder past and future.
CULTURE LAB OF THE AMERICAS

is intended as a reflection of the common interests of the university and the major cultural institutions in the city. It also responds to the history and future of this region. Ideally located adjacent to the Phoenix Art Museum and the Heard Museum, the Lab will be the epicenter for contemporary scholarship, exhibition, and public programming around the cultural expression, language, and ideas of the Americas. Particular emphasis will be given to the Southwest, including indigenous, LatinX... Chicano and Latin American art, culture and design. The Lab will bring together ASU’s vast interdisciplinary expertise around the culture of the Americas including the School for Transborder Studies; The Hispanic Research Center; The Chicano Research Center; American Indian Studies; the Center for Indian Education; Performance in the Borderlands; Theatre and Performance of the Americas; and the ASU Art Museum.
“So whether it is entering a hospital and trying to find out where the emergency room is, or whether it is entering an art museum and trying to find out where the Frida Kahlo is, all these things were part and parcel of how the fabric of our city and state were changing. I wanted to be a part of that by embracing the cultures that were arriving to our city. I strongly believe that this should be what an institution, whether artistic or medical, should do as part of its civic and social responsibility.”

DIANE HALLE
PRESIDENT, DIANE AND BRUCE HALLE FOUNDATION
Phoenix has the advantage of youth. It isn’t as deeply entrenched as other major cities such as New York, Boston and Chicago. As such, it’s freer to define itself in the 21st century. It’s an exciting time to be in Phoenix. What can happen at the Heard Museum, in Phoenix, that can’t happen any other place? The answer is what will drive people to the museum and the city.”

DAVID ROCHE
DIRECTOR AND CEO, HEARD MUSEUM
Through arts experiences that engage the complex diversity of Latino stories in Phoenix, CALA Alliance celebrates the contributions of Latino communities, tells our stories in the present tense, and connects Phoenix more deeply with Mexico and Latin America.

CASANDRA HERNÁNDEZ FAHAM
CURATOR, CALA (CELEBRACIÓN ARTÍSTICA DE LAS AMÉRICAS)
THE CREATION OF COMMUNITY IS A PROJECT OF GREAT COMPLEXITY AND SUBTLETY, ONE REQUIRING TRULY MEANINGFUL POINTS OF ENGAGEMENT.
“...[A] sense of connection is the key predictor of citizen participation in such important actions as voting, volunteering and attending public meetings. The unique flavor and culture of each neighborhood, city or town can only be created when people feel like a valued part of it.”

Vision 2025: Arizona Comes of Age Report
The Center for the Future of Arizona, 2015
“The local movement has taken hold. People are proud to be from Phoenix for the first time in my lifetime, and that means they will feel more accountable for the city.”

KIMBER LANNING
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LOCAL FIRST ARIZONA & LOCAL FIRST ARIZONA FOUNDATION
FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION GROWTH ACCOUNTED FOR 23% OF OVERALL POPULATION IN PHOENIX BETWEEN 2010 & 2014.
$390M
BUSINESS INCOME GENERATED BY IMMIGRANT-OWNED ESTABLISHMENTS IN 2014
Measuring success in and of itself is complex and attributable to many indicators. As a city, we need to be more aligned and progressive in our thinking about how to define success. We need to remain agile, flexible, adaptive, and relevant to an increasingly diverse learner population.”

BEATRIZ RENDON
VICE PRESIDENT OF EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH AND CEO, ASU PREPARATORY ACADEMY
“The story of how [this] city turned from a town of oil industry roughnecks and white blue-collar workers into a major political centrifuge for immigration reform, demographic analysts say, is nothing less than the story of the American city of the future.”

BRITTNY MEJIA
Los Angeles Times
“There is tremendous opportunity to harness the energy and talents of the Latino and immigrant community in Arizona. Promise Arizona is committed to work towards fairness and inclusion so all can live their lives to their fullest potential that will bring prosperity to everyone.”

PETRA FALCON
PROMISE AZ
Growth is nothing new to the Greater Phoenix market. For decades, the region has led the nation in population growth. However, the recession highlighted an overdependence on consumption-based industries, such as construction and retail, and served as a reminder that a diverse, well-rounded economy is critical to withstand economic highs and lows.

In order to accelerate positive change in the region, leaders in Greater Phoenix have developed strategies to attract high-wage, high-growth industries that will further diversify and grow the economy. However, as resources at the federal and state levels have narrowed, a fundamental shift has occurred with city and regional leaders realizing they must drive their own destiny in the modern economy.

The measure of economic success is no longer simply tied to the number of jobs and new companies in the market, but rather gains in personal income, GDP per capita, innovation intensity, export capacity and educational attainment levels. The new approach to economy building is being guided by partnerships between cities, businesses and higher education institutions, all who have a shared interest in staying ahead of cutting edge innovations, rather than being left behind.

With most investments however, it isn’t about how much you put in, but where. In the 1980s and 1990s, metros around the country responded to major population booms with the infrastructure delivery of new roads, gas and water lines and electricity. New drivers of a modern economy, include intentional investments in talent and smart infrastructure, while supporting export intensity and community vibrancy. Often faced with battling limited budgets and constrained revenue pathways, cities are tasked with prioritizing where resources shall be directed to drive jobs, people and place.
For economic development, the issue of educational attainment is the equivalent of infrastructure planning in the 1980s. Those markets that invest in creating a world-class labor pool will become the differentiated winners. Partnerships between businesses, education institutions and communities is leading to new programs that deepens the talent pool, resulting in a diverse, inclusive, skilled workforce ready to take on the jobs of today.

Movements in urban regions are also coalescing around strengthening innovation ecosystems, connecting legacy companies with up-and-coming entrepreneurs, and providing resources for collaboration, sharing helpful tips on funding and developing business plans. Local and regional programs are connecting small business owners to export services and helping to enhance their customer base and supply chains.

For a region that is already known for year-round sunshine and an unparalleled quality of life, business, community and education leaders, are dedicated to building an environment where innovation can grow and companies can go to scale. The plans we make today won’t be realized for some time, but will require strong leadership and bold action. Fortunately for us, that is happening in Greater Phoenix.

Chris Camacho is the President & CEO of the Greater Phoenix Economic Council. He also serves as a member of the U.S. Investment Advisory Council and the Economic Innovation Group Policy Council.

“The new approach to economy building is being guided by partnerships between cities, businesses and higher education institutions, all who have a shared interest in staying ahead of cutting edge innovations.”
The public realm of great cities is woven of the acts of institutions and individuals, both public and private.
Downtown Phoenix is the beneficiary of transformative public investments: museums, libraries, parks, educational institutions, light rail and arenas, for example. However, the cities we admire and the venues we visit when traveling are frequently a function of philanthropic initiative overlaid upon a foundation of public commitment. The maturation of Phoenix will require combinatory funding streams for the amenities which are the attractors of entrepreneurs—the philanthropists of tomorrow.
$8.2B
INVESTED IN DEVELOPMENT ALONG PHOENIX AREA LIGHT RAIL SINCE 2008
PLANNED PROJECTS ADD AN ADDITIONAL $346M
It is remarkable in this most suburban of places that the back-to-the-city movement is so pronounced. Downtown Phoenix is emerging as an urban place/community at an accelerated pace and is being repopulated for the first time since the early 1970s. The most interesting recent trend is the wave of creative and tech companies moving to the core to gain access to educated employees. If we can sustain the current level of activity and augment it with an emerging bioscience cluster, we will be well positioned for the future.”

DAVE KRIETOR
PRESIDENT AND CEO, DOWNTOWN PHOENIX INC.
Hance Park is a 32-acre jewel located in the Phoenix city core that continues to experience exponential growth. It plays the pivotal role of gathering the facets that create great communities—art, education, commerce and recreation. This role is being elevated by a grassroots-led remaster plan that will secure the park’s position as a Phoenix icon upon completion.”

TIM SPRAGUE
FOUNDER AND PRINCIPAL, HABITAT METRO LLC
When I first started working in Downtown Phoenix 13 years ago, it was a destination for sports and entertainment events. Downtown Phoenix was a collection of office buildings and event venues, but now has a strong sense of place and community at the sidewalk level. Within the last five years, an amenities package has emerged that attracts an increasingly diverse number of people who want to live, work, study and play. Downtown Phoenix is now a more walkable, interesting and vibrant community.”

DEVNEY PREUSS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PHOENIX COMMUNITY ALLIANCE
The essence of a city can be seen in the authenticity, depth and scale of its celebrations.
The identity of a city can be shaped by identifying, owning and elevating the essence of the place. We are a desert city with all the beauties and challenges associated with such an environment. We are also on the leading edge of social change. With unquestioned authenticity and authority, Phoenix could own the “SXSW” of resilience and innovation. Ours could be on the list of annual “must attend” events of national/international significance. We could provide a knowing window on the future.
“In 2016, SXSW directly booked 14,415 individual hotel reservations totaling over 59,000 room nights for SXSW registrants. Direct bookings by SXSW alone generated $1.8 Million in hotel occupancy tax revenues for the city of Austin.”
Many outsiders think it is harder for a city to be sustainable in a desert, but it is well-suited to urban life. Our water planning is second to none, and the region uses more alternative fuel than any other city, more than all of Southern California. In their 2017 survey, Living Cities and Governing Magazine named Phoenix the city most Equipt to Innovate. The adoption of long term goals by City council—to become a carbon-neutral city, zero waste, clean air, 100-year water, parks and transit in every neighborhood—have catalyzed a conversation on what is possible.”

MARK HARTMAN
CHIEF SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER, CITY OF PHOENIX
CALA ALLIANCE FESTIVAL

“CALA is dedicated to inspiring and educating Arizonans and the international community about the richness and depth of artistic talent in our local community and to creating new understandings through art about Arizona’s relationship to the Americas. The hope is that at some point in the not too distant future, the centerpiece will be a biennale that raises Phoenix’s profile as an exciting destination for contemporary Latino and Latin American art nationally and internationally.”

JOSÉ CÁRDENAS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS, CALA ALLIANCE (CELEBRACIÓN ARTÍSTICA DE LAS AMÉRICAS)

PRECEDENT CERVANTINO FESTIVAL

“It is about the live experience and excitement when walking the streets of Guanajuato, to see the street shows and to discover what happens inside and outside the theaters and other venues. These experiences are unique to attending this festival. The beautiful thing is to live it. That’s why [people come], and because the programming is extraordinary, for all tastes, all audiences, and all budgets.”

MARCELA DIEZ-MARTÍNEZ FRANCO
General Director, Festival International Cervantino
EMERGE – A FESTIVAL OF THE FUTURE (76)
EMERGE is an annual transmedia art, science and technology festival designed to engage the public in the creative exploration of possible futures.”

emerge.asu.edu
The Phoenix area has long been a magnet for visionaries seeking a laboratory for experimentation. Frank Lloyd Wright found the perfect desert site for the open architecture of Taliesin West and fostering ideas about the future of the American city. Artists such as Robert McCall surely would not have found such parallels between the inhabitation of space and earth in any other setting. We have an obligation to continue this legacy of dreaming and doing, and to develop alternative models for the benefit of others in arid environments around the world.”

WELLINGTON REITER, FAIA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, UNIVERSITY CITY EXCHANGE AT ASU
How communities approach and respond to our ever-changing world determines whether they thrive or stagnate. What does it take for a community to both anticipate and react to the challenges and vulnerabilities of the 21st century? The ability of people, communities, and systems to rebound from shocks and flourish—through proactive planning, nimble actions, and openness to evolution—is key to building strong and resilient communities. By preemptively identifying the ingredients needed for resiliency, a community leverages its assets to mitigate economic, social, and environmental vulnerabilities.

Carrying out the mission of Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust is a privilege; our work is all about making investments in the lives of people. Many may see the work of philanthropy as straightforward when truly it is not. Daily, we challenge our assumptions and engage in rigorous deliberation about the questions we ask—a process that leads to more queries that often don’t have definitive answers. We believe that status quo thinking will not lead us through the extraordinary times ahead or build resiliency.

Traditional philanthropy often structures itself to support nonprofits in the day-to-day struggle to address symptoms of community distress. While this is critical, we also need cross-sector collaboration to address underlying sets of problems as part of an integrated system and generate more sustained, significant change for people and communities. Further, philanthropy often values the immediate rather than the long term. Audacious impact requires bold goals that change the game. And, bold goals may need more time for fruition. We need to act, but with a focus on the long term—learning and adjusting along the way.

Central Idea is a bold concept for building community resilience, fostering social cohesion and creating a regional identity. It represents all sectors connecting and partnering in new ways. By strengthening Phoenix’s Central corridor—home to everything from burgeoning artists, to our biomedical district, to nearly 12,000
Arizona State University students, to our Phoenix Symphony which celebrates its 70th season this year—we can advance resilience and create our regional identity. Central Idea carries this significant promise of opportunity and enrichment for the region in ways not even fully imagined.

Let’s look beyond short-term achievements that yield only incremental results and hold ourselves accountable for the harder to achieve, long-term outcomes that will ultimately address social problems and enhance well-being for all. Let’s leverage our region’s rich cultural diversity, embrace our economic, social, and environmental challenges, and forge a strong regional identity by applying a resilience lens to our thoughts, words and actions.

“It’s imperative to work collectively across all sectors and create long-term solutions. Moving forward in silos is not effective—systems change requires a diverse collective to bridge social, economic, and political divisions. By coming together in revolutionary ways as ‘cause-centered communities’ we can build a stronger, more resilient community capable of adapting and overcoming challenges.”
There is great potential for Phoenix to create a stronger identity and sense of place which we control, as opposed to passively allowing aimless or counterproductive perceptions to occur on their own. Our cultural diversity is a tremendous strength, as well as an opportunity and challenge, depending on one’s perspective. This is a unique attribute of our city and state, and we should celebrate and capitalize on that.”

GENE D’ADAMO
PRESIDENT AND CEO, NINA MASON PULLIAM CHARITABLE TRUST
This document and supporting economic study is the result of many contributors:

Diane and Bruce Halle encouraged us to imagine a comprehensive vision for the arts, education and a vibrant urban environment in downtown Phoenix resulting in the Central Idea framework. The project would not exist without their interest.

Several organizations and their very engaged leadership have generously provided support and keen insights for the subsequent work: Sue Pepin, President and CEO, The Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust; Gene D’Adamo, President and CEO, The Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust; Jack Jewett, President and CEO, the Flinn Foundation, and Steve Seleznow, President and CEO, the Arizona Community Foundation.

Thanks also to CEOs for Cities under the leadership of Lee Fisher for inviting us to present the Central Idea in Indianapolis and prompting the assembly of this document for the National Meeting in Phoenix.

We are indebted to the team at Gould Evans + Canary who provided much more than design services. This document benefitted greatly from the wisdom of Krista Shepherd, Trudi Hummel, Melissa Alexander, Amanda Harper, Nicole Norgren and the upbeat perspective and patience of Elisabeth Populo.
We would like to thank those who responded to survey questions about the identity of our city and contributed their voices to this document. We only regret not being able to publish all of them. Thank you to Meagan Ehlenz and John Owens at ASU for their assistance in executing this process.

The University City Exchange at Arizona State University is a reflection of the New American University agenda and especially the design imperative to “leverage our place.” We are grateful for the support of the Central Idea as an extension of this mission.

Finally, I would like to offer my personal thanks to Sabine Butler and Kate Carefoot in the UCX office who strive to keep our many obligations on track. It would not be an overstatement to suggest that this project would not have come to fruition without Kate’s extraordinary determination, focus and thoughtfulness throughout a lengthy process. For your efforts and good spirit, I offer my deepest appreciation.

-WR
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