

Agenda Item 4

MEMORANDUM

TO: Historic Preservation Commission
FROM: John Southard, Historic Preservation Officer
DATE: February 10th, 2021
SUBJECT: Agenda Item 4 – Streetcar signage for Oidbađ Do’ag / Tempe Butte



Dr. Andy Darling of Southwest Heritage Research, LLC will present draft signage for for Oidbađ Do’ag / Tempe Butte. Upon completion, this sign will be placed along the Streetcar track at the southeast corner of Mill Avenue and Rio Salado Parkway.

Attachment A: Draft version of Oidbađ Do’ag / Tempe Butte sign

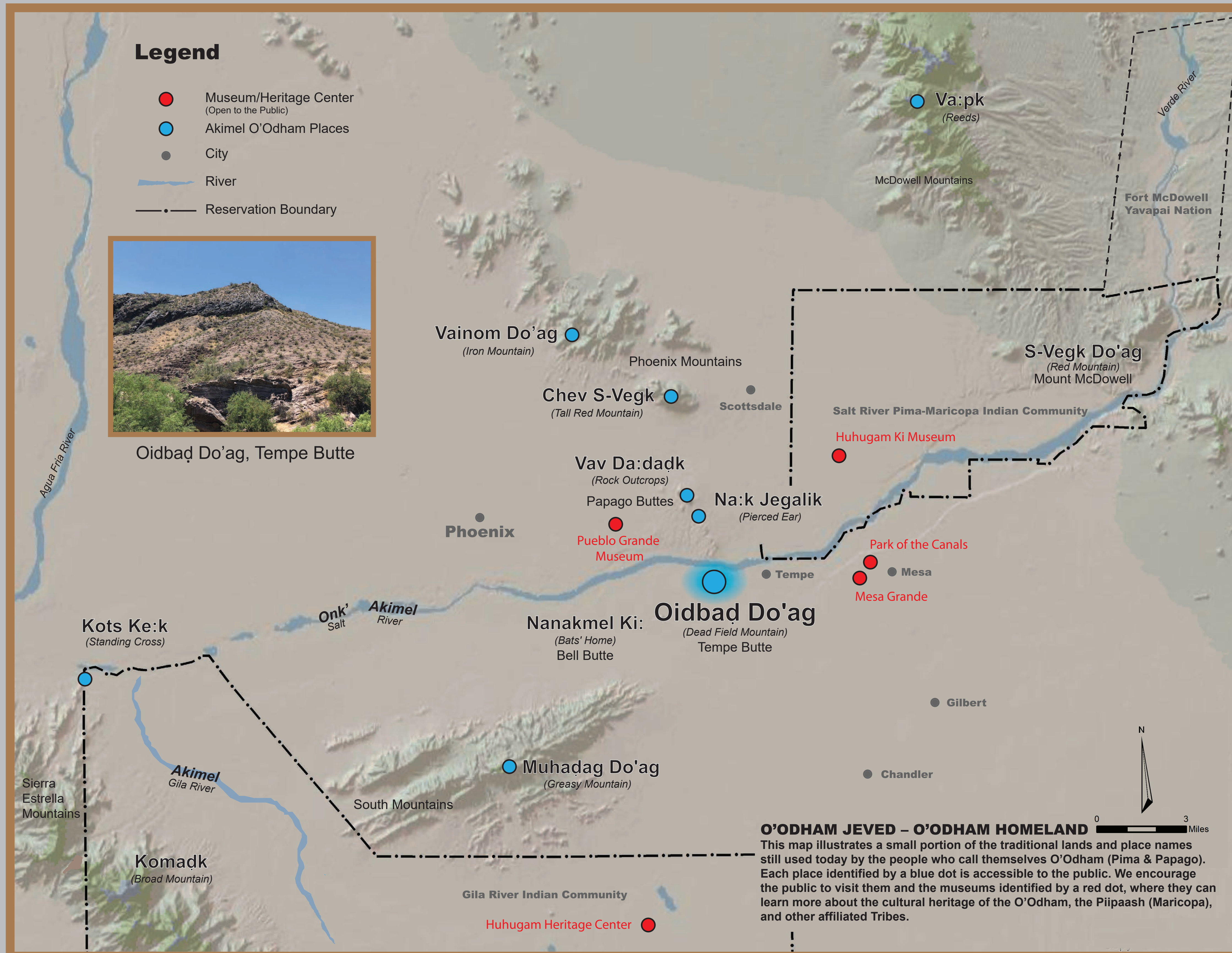
Attachment A

Oidbaḍ Do'ag

(oyd·bət daw·ahg, Tempe Butte)

**“Bluebirds assemble
And Oidbaḍ Do'ag trembles when lightning strikes the earth,
The birds dance along the scorched line,
as wind rushes from the mountain.”**

(Traditional O'Odham Social Dance Song)



Oidbaḍ Do'ag in the language of the Akimel O'Odham (ah-kee-mər aw-aw-tam), also known as the Pima Tribe, is the name of the butte that rises 350 feet above you. Many people know it as Tempe Butte. The traditional name means 'dead field mountain', recalling the ancient agricultural fields at its base that for centuries were irrigated with the waters of the *Onk Akimel* (awnk ah-kee-mər), or Salt River. Traditional O'Odham songs tell of flowers blooming on its slopes and celestial beings—the stars—which appear above its summit, of bluebirds and human beings who gather and dance, and the wind that whooshes forth from inside.



u's hikanaba (oos hee-kah-nah-bah) - O'Odham Calendar Stick

One night in the mid-1800s, four enemy raiders traveled south to the O'Odham villages on the *Akimel* (Gila River) where they rustled some cattle. The next morning, the O'Odham overtook them about three miles from *Oidbaḍ Do'ag*. One of the raiders crossed the '*Onk Akimel* (Salt River) and escaped, while the other three fled to the top of the butte. By the afternoon, the O'Odham assembled a large party that attacked them from all sides. The enemy put up a fight, but they did not survive. The O'Odham kept an account of this battle on knotted shafts of wood called *u's hikanaba* (oos hee-kah-nah-bah), or calendar sticks. Members of the Piipaash, or Maricopa Tribe, remember the fight, too, and named Tempe Butte *Xwe Nykuuly* (khwe nyə-kool), which means 'where the enemy climbed up'. This also became the Piipaash name for the City of Tempe.

Oidbaḍ Do'ag is a Traditional Cultural Property, and it is listed in the City of Tempe Historic Property Register and the National Register of Historic Places. The ancestors left many designs—over 500 petroglyphs—carved on the rock outcrops of *Oidbaḍ Do'ag*. Petroglyphs are sacred to the descendant Tribal communities of Arizona. To remove or deface them is not just vandalism, it is desecration.



Kahagam (kah-hah-gahm, Bluebird)