

# MEMORANDUM



**TO:** Chair and Members, Development Review Commission  
**FROM:** Ambika Adhikari, Principal Planner; and Robbie Aaron, Planner  
**DATE:** June 22, 2021  
**SUBJECT:** Character Area 1 – Papago/North Tempe Outreach and Planning Process

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## **PURPOSE:**

This memo provides an intro and progress report on the planning process for Character Area-1: Papago/North Tempe.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Tempe's General Plan 2040 provides a vision of what Tempe will look like, and how it will function as a community. Compared to the population and employment in 2020, Tempe is expected to grow by more than 57,000 new residents and to add nearly 57,200 new jobs by 2040. Although this growth can be accommodated in the City, more important than numeric change is Tempe's ability to maintain sustainable and livable communities.

Character Area Planning is one of the central ways to accomplish the goals of General Plan 2040. Themes woven throughout the Plan include developing Tempe as a leader in urban living; expanding pockets of urban activity centers or "hubs"; and enhancing pedestrian, bike, and transit connections to produce a "20-minute City". A Character Area Plan is a policy-level plan to help guide the new development, redevelopment and public investment in the area that would be consistent with the character of the area and reflects the aspirations of the residents.

## **Character Area 1 – Papago/North Tempe**

Character Area 1 consists of approximately 3.35 square miles that is roughly bounded by the Loop 202 on the south, McClintock Dr. on the east, the City Boundary to the north and Priest drive on the west. It has a population of 10,134 (2019 est.) Outreach for the planning process during this vital process includes input from area residents, students, stakeholders, and the business community to create principles that will be taken through the Tempe City Council adoption process. The plan will provide an enhanced policy framework to guide area planning processes and land use decisions throughout the area.

## **Scope of Work**

The people who live, work, learn, and play in each area are the daily experts of the community. Through the several public meetings, we are looking to the community to help define issues related to the following Plan elements:

- *Scope:* A high-level vision and policy-level plan for CA-1 area. (Non-regulatory).
- *Vision:* Diverse housing options, increased transit options, ease traffic congestion, maintain and expand open spaces, increased residential land use, shaded trails, bike paths, low to medium building heights
- *Character Defining Elements:* History, Design aesthetics, Landscape, Open spaces, Papago park, Cross-cut canal, Landmarks e.g., Eisendrath House, Sandra Day O'Conner House
- *Design Guidelines/Principles:* Walkability, bikeability, multi-use trails, connectivity, durable materials, energy efficiency, historic preservation

The scope of work for the Character Area Plan also included elements not specifically addressed in GP 2040 or Tempe's Zoning and Development Code, including answers to the following questions:

- What sets this area apart and makes it unique from other parts of Tempe or the Valley?
- Does this area include the types of places, businesses, and infrastructure people look for when deciding where to live or invest?
- What elements should be preserved, enhanced, changed, added, or connected in a meaningful way?

- Is this an area where one can be young and old; can one age-in-place here?
- How can we provide a vision which enhances human health, options, prosperity, and our environment?
- What design criteria can we put in place to improve the quality of projects, sustainability and community living?
- How will this plan carry out the vision of a “20-minute City” approved by voters in GP 2040?

### **Outside the Scope of Work**

There are several factors which fall outside of the scope of work for the Character Area Plan, many which already have legal systems in place to regulate, protect, and/or control their purview. The Character Area plan cannot supersede any existing legal processes. These include, but are not limited to:

- Changes to a parcel’s legal Land Use / Density. General Plan 2040 ratified by voters (May 2014)
- Changes to a parcel’s legal Zoning. Zoning & Development Code
- Changes to Private Property Rights. Property Right Laws including AZ Proposition 207 “Private Property Rights Protection Act”
- Rental vs. Owner for parcels zoned Multi-Family / Mixed-Use. No legal control process
- Prohibiting specific brand-name businesses / retailers. Against the law
- Residential / Commercial Code Compliance. 311 – Call to City Hall; Online complaint form

### **More Information**

This exciting community-driven process is a great opportunity to help shape the future of Tempe. Questions or comments on Character Area Planning can be directed to [characterareas@tempe.gov](mailto:characterareas@tempe.gov). Additional information including examples of previous Character Area Plans, as well the 2021 Public Meeting Series, is available at [www.tempe.gov/characterareas](http://www.tempe.gov/characterareas).

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