



DOWNTOWN PLANNING EFFORTS ZONING PERMITTED USES AND DENSITY WHAT'S NEXT FOR DOWNTOWN?



COUNCIL WORK SESSION

NOVEMBER 16, 2020

OVERVIEW

- Pictorial History of “Downtown”
 - Previous planning efforts
 - What has been realized as a result of Planning?
 - Zoning Parameters - Height, Permitted Uses
 - What is the Vision for the Heart of the City?
-

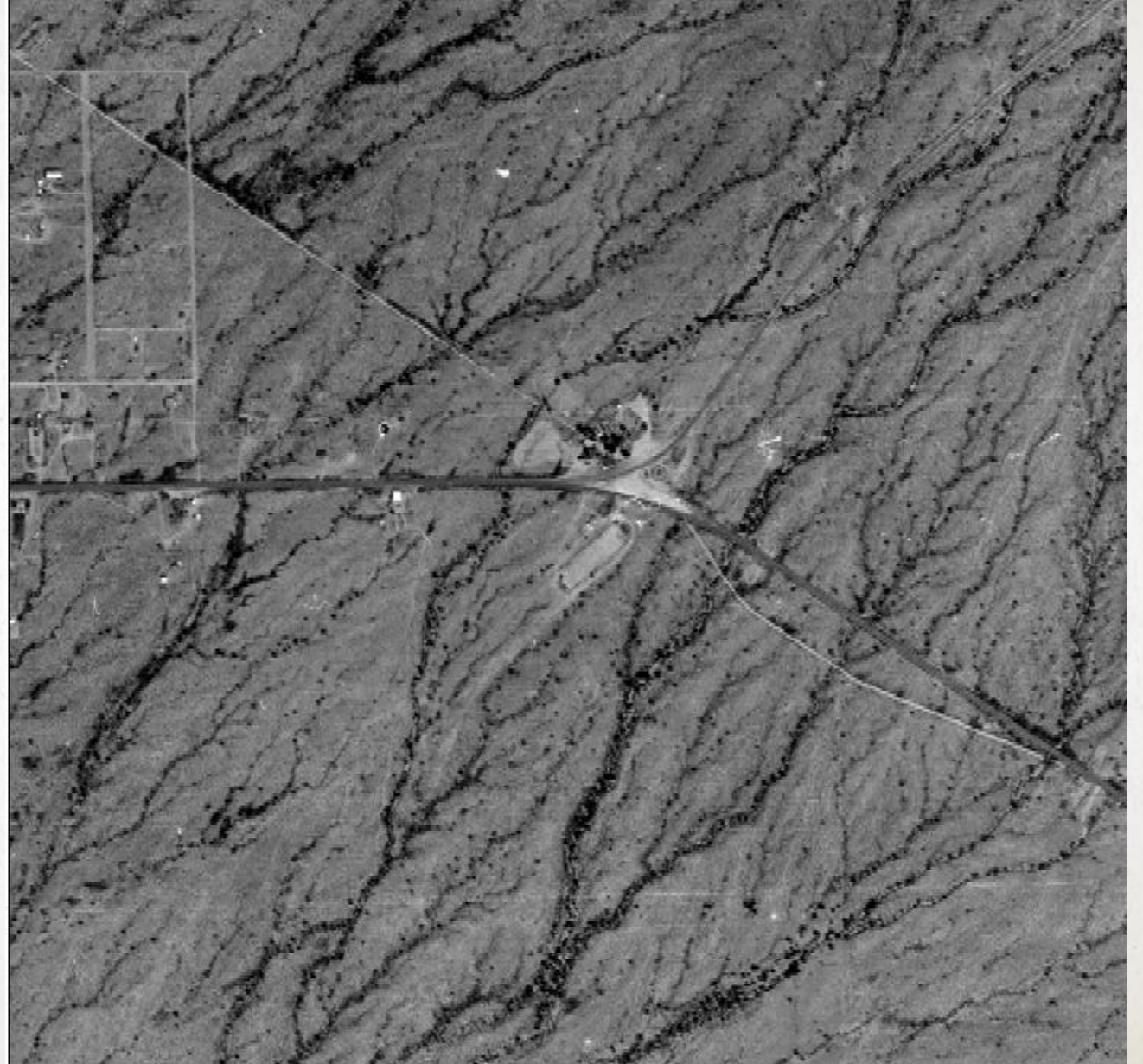
1937 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH

- Almost no development
- US 60 through the center of AJ
- Apache Trail appears as a wagon road



1953 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH

- Beginning of development
- Apache Trail appears be paved
- The Grand Hotel will be built in 1960



1972 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH

- Expanding trailer parks surrounding Downtown
- Minimal commercial development near Grand Hotel
- AJ Bayless (Basha's)



1981 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH

- Modest commercial growth Downtown
- Superstition Plaza
- Grand Hotel
- Original City Hall complex



1992 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH

- Minimal change
- Post office
- County government facility
- City Hall complex expands



2004 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH

- Grand Hotel closes in 2002
- Fry's Center
- County Complex Grows
- New City Hall Complex
- Pizza Hut, Lost Gringos Locos, ~~Feedbag~~, Medical Office, etc.



2010 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH

- Grand Hotel demolished 2010
- Recession 2007-2012



2019 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH

- New Fry's shopping complex
- Apartments demolished for new Downtown Park (Flatiron Park)

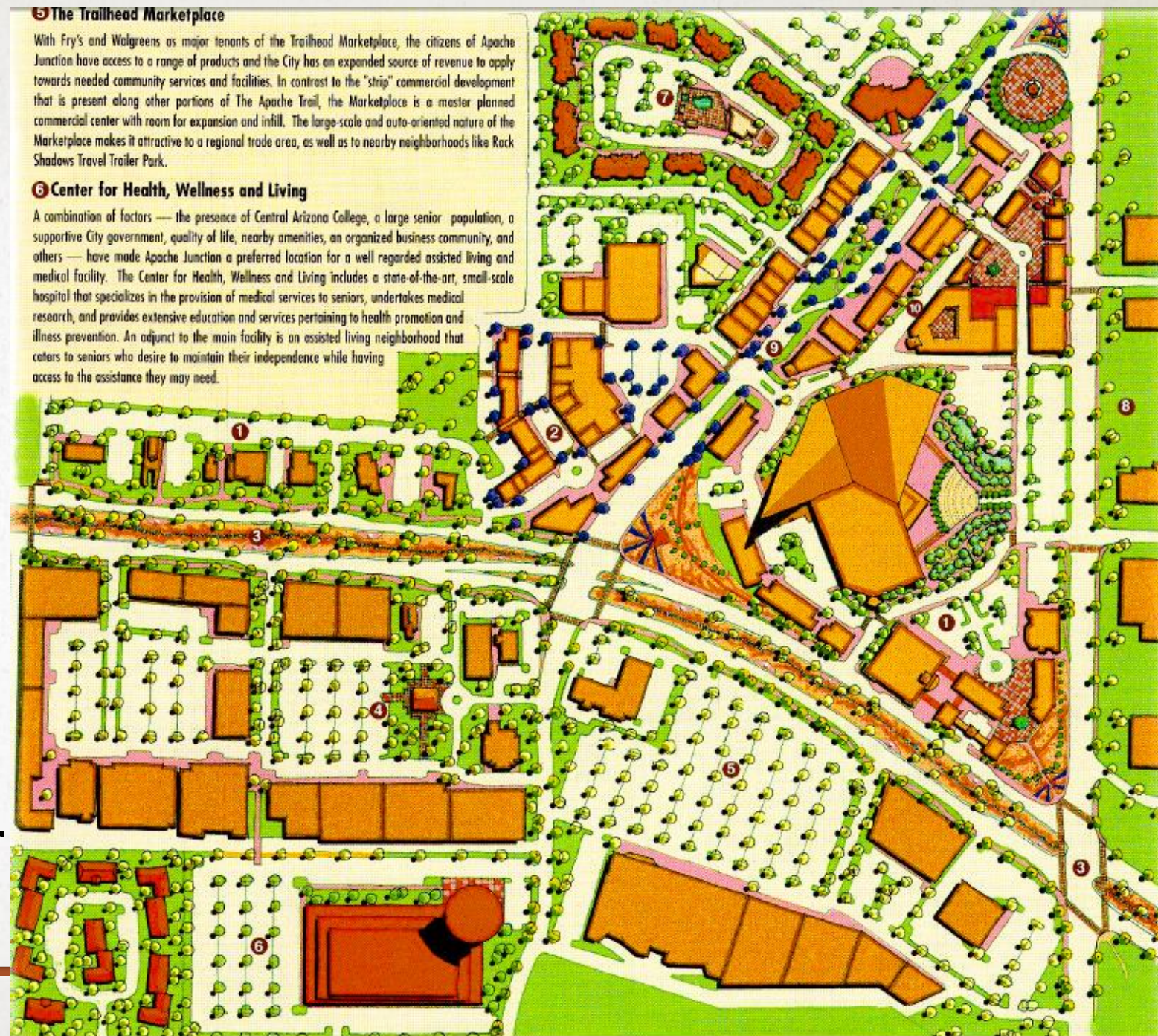


SEQUENCE OF PLANS

- Visualize Downtown Apache Junction - 2020 (Late '90s)
- “Downtown Alive-How to make it happen” – 2002?
- Superstition Square (2006/2007 Circa)
- Crossroad Revitalization/Redevelopment Improvement Plan (1996, 1998, revised/reaffirmed 2008) – now known as the Old West Highway Redevelopment Area (2020)
- Downtown Revitalization Implementation Strategy (DRIS 2010)
- Development Services- Downtown Conceptual Plan 2011 (2011)
- ASU - Urban and Environmental Planning Downtown Plan (2012)
- ASU – Urban and Environmental Planning Capstone Project (2016)
- Development Services/Public Works Downtown Development Map (2016)
- 2020 General Plan – Downtown Element (2020)

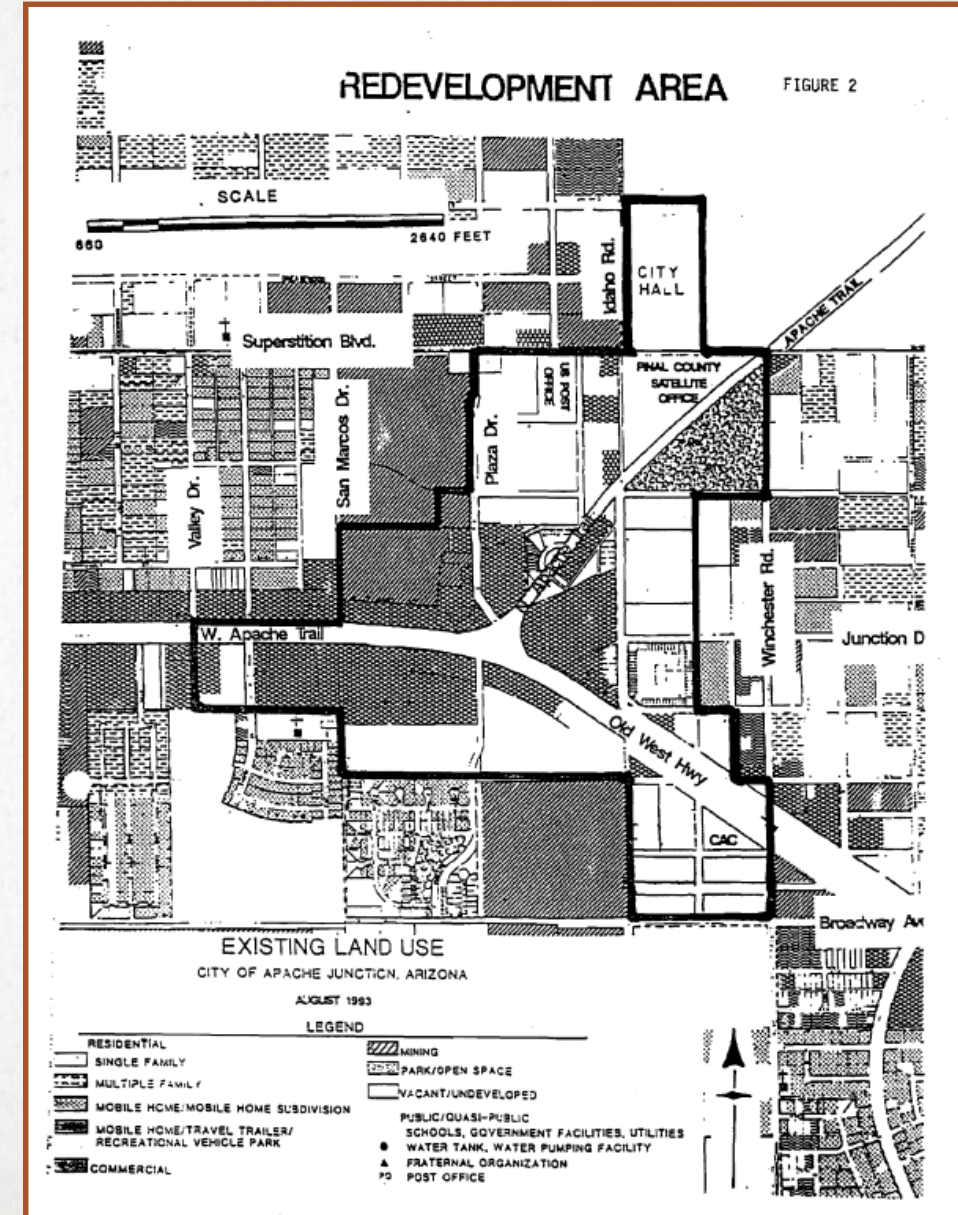
VISUALIZE DOWNTOWN 2020

- From the late 1990s??
- Things that happened...
 - Focal Point
 - Restaurant Row, in part
 - “Trailhead Marketplace”
 - Main Street
 - Peralta Commerce Center



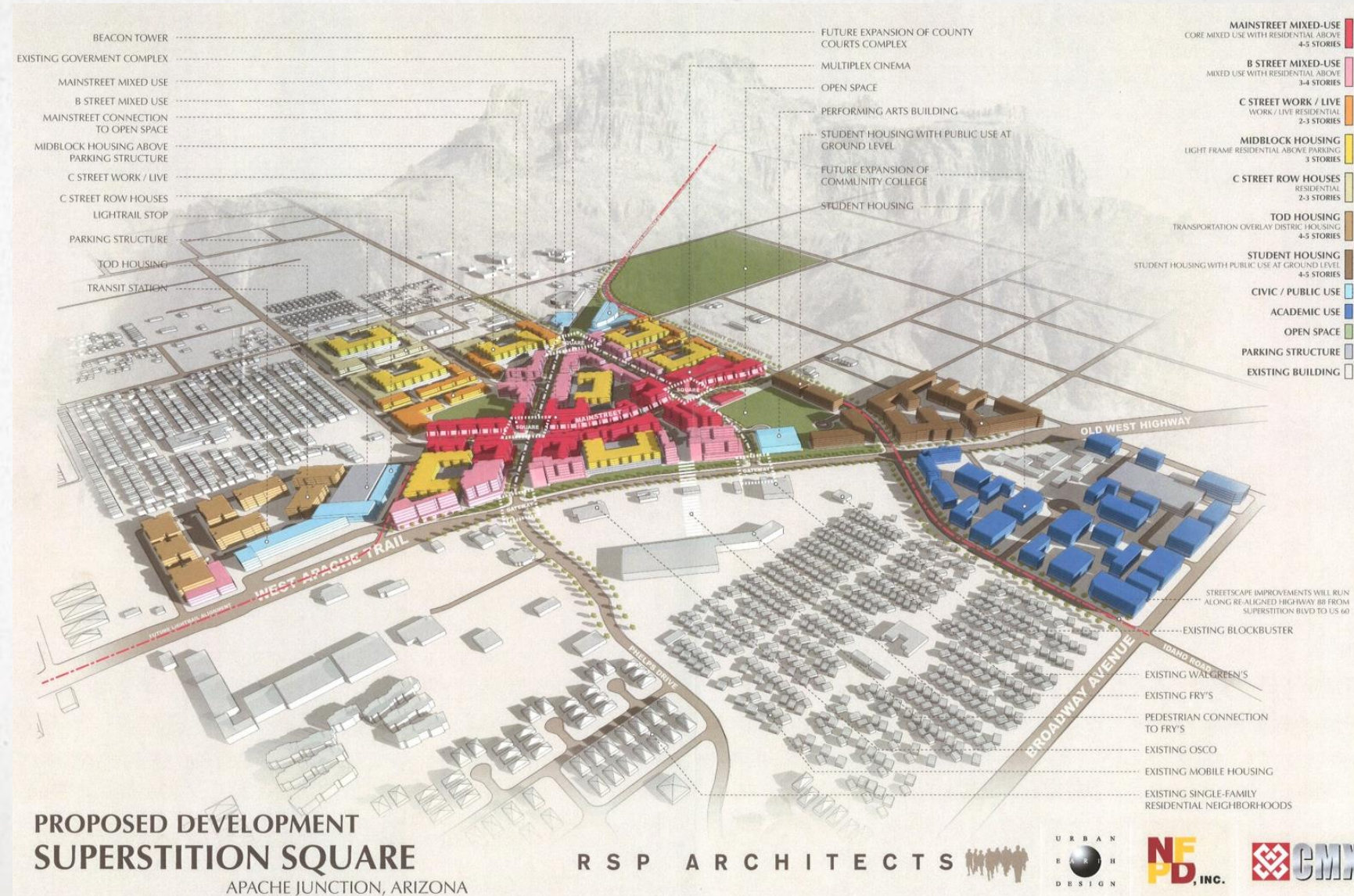
CROSSROAD REVITALIZATION/REDEVELOPMENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN

- 1996, 1998, revised/reaffirmed 2008
- City Initiated
- Projects completed:
 - ✓ Streetscaping and improve connectivity
 - ✓ Remove blight
 - ✓ Assimilation of 100 acres by Downtown LLC
 - ✓ Created TIF District Plan
- Objectives:
 - Pedestrian oriented, mixed-use
 - High-density, market-rate housing



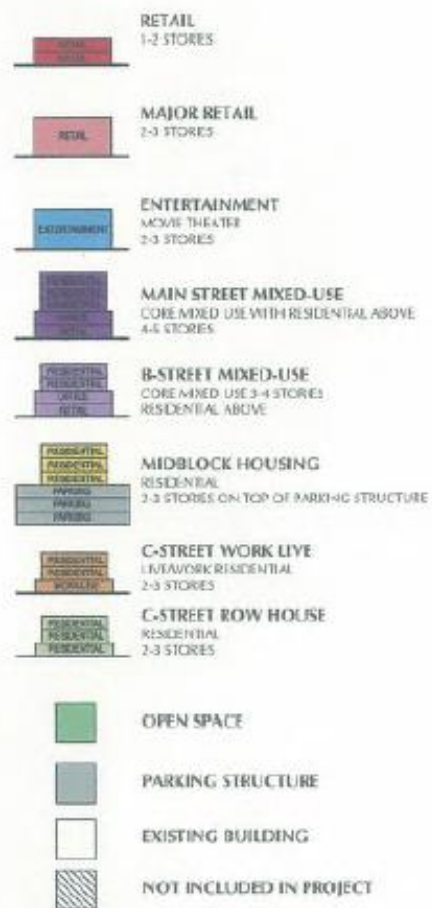
SUPERSTITION SQUARE 2006/07 (CIRCA)

- By RSP Architects/Nielson-Fackler Planning for AJ Town Centre LLC
- TIF Driven
- Key Points:
 - Retail, entertainment
 - Entertainment
 - Mixed-use
 - Work/Live
 - Open Space
 - Parking



SUPERSTITION SQUARE

CONCEPT LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT PLAN

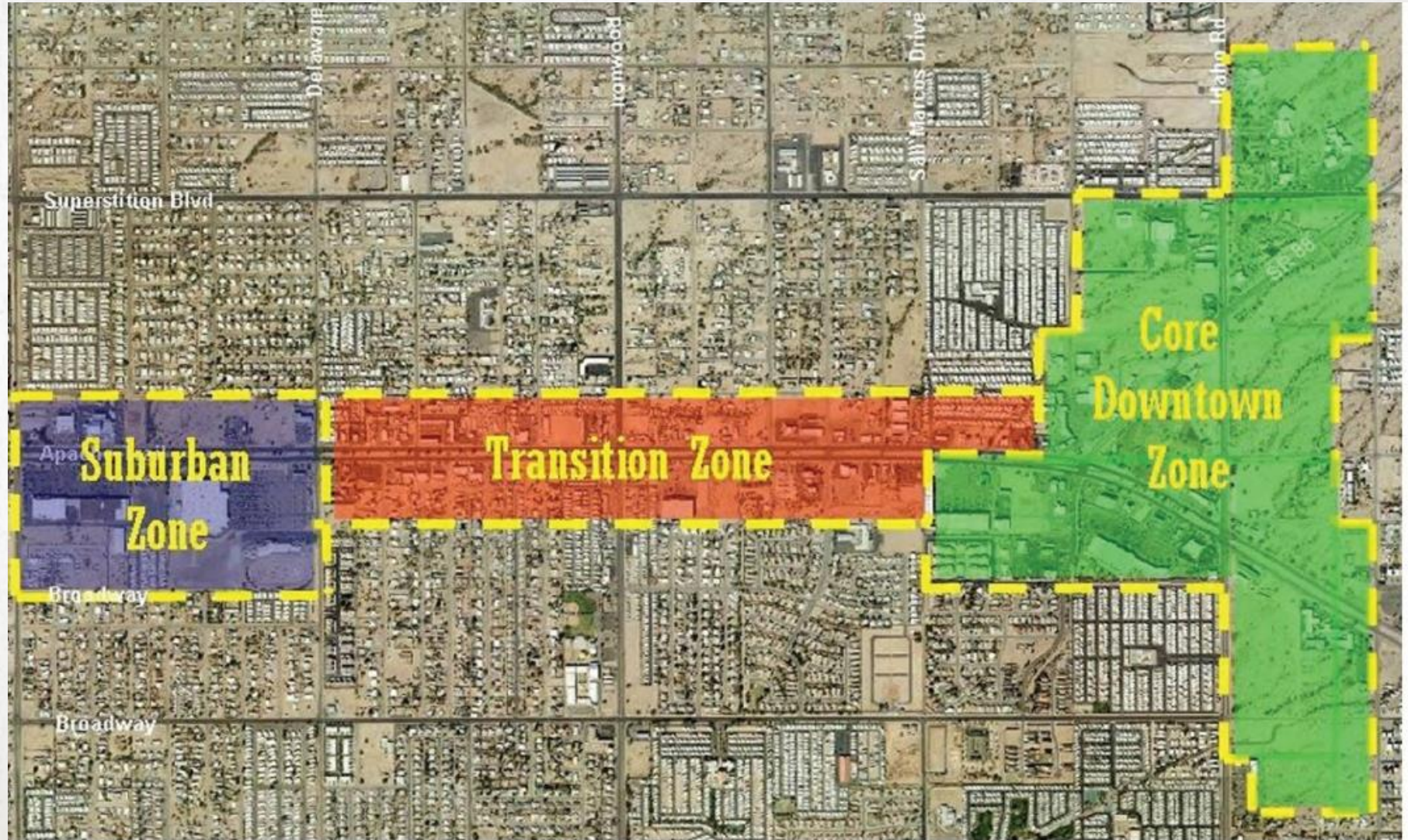


DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY (DRIS)-2010

- By G&G Consulting

- Objective:

To present a **framework** for creating a downtown that is **vibrant** and reflects the **heritage** of the community as it **evolves** into a 21st century city.



DRIS - 2010

- 81 of 161 tasks have been completed or are in the works.
- Some have not been done by choice, others due to lack of funding/timing.
- Revisit/prioritize remaining tasks

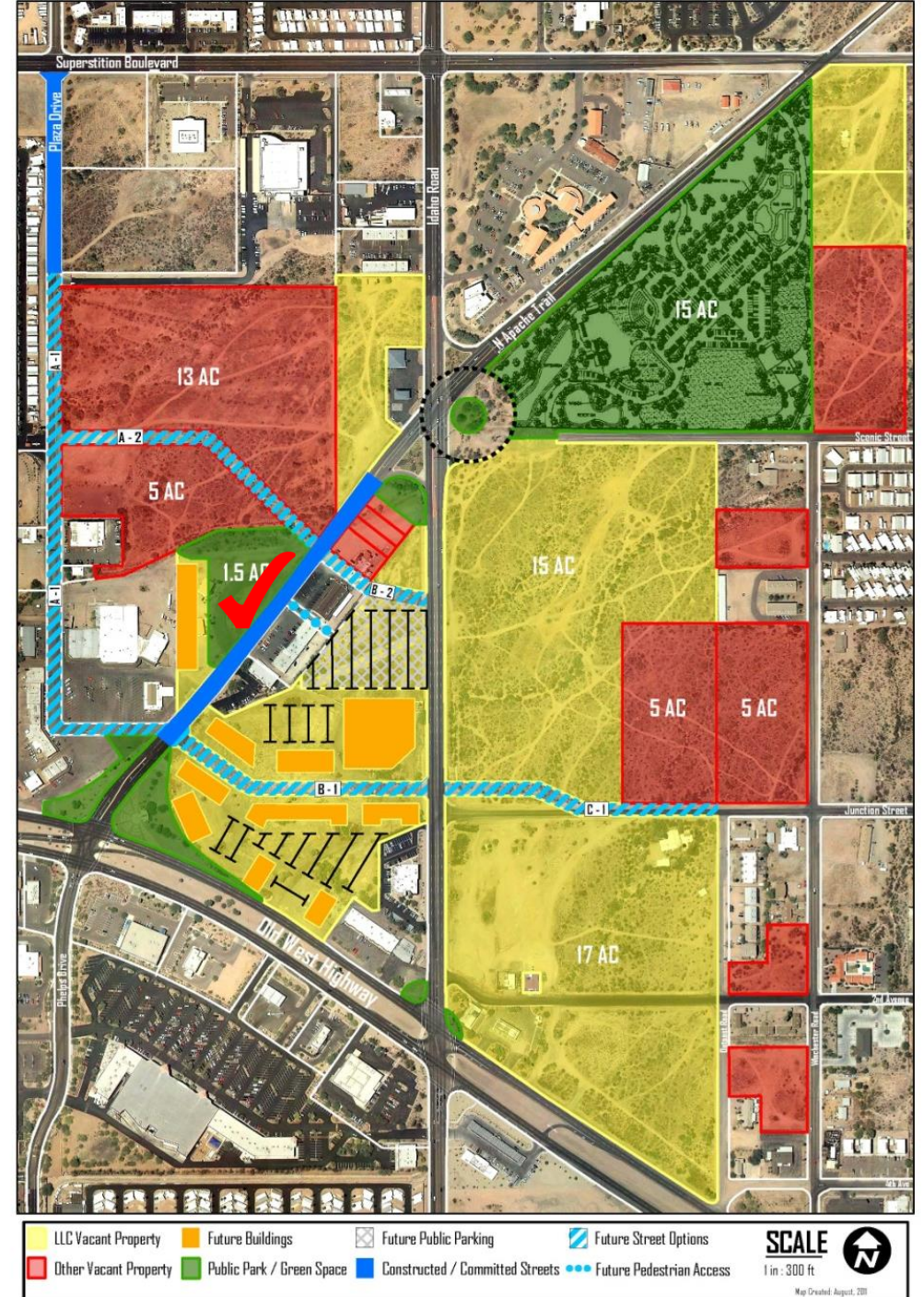
Downtown Core

- **Town Center**
 - Pedestrian
 - Town Center
 - Specialty Retail
 - Office/Residential
 - N. Apache Trail
“Main Street”
- **Governmental Center**
 - City Complex
 - Pinal County
 - Federal
- **Educational Center**
 - Central Arizona College



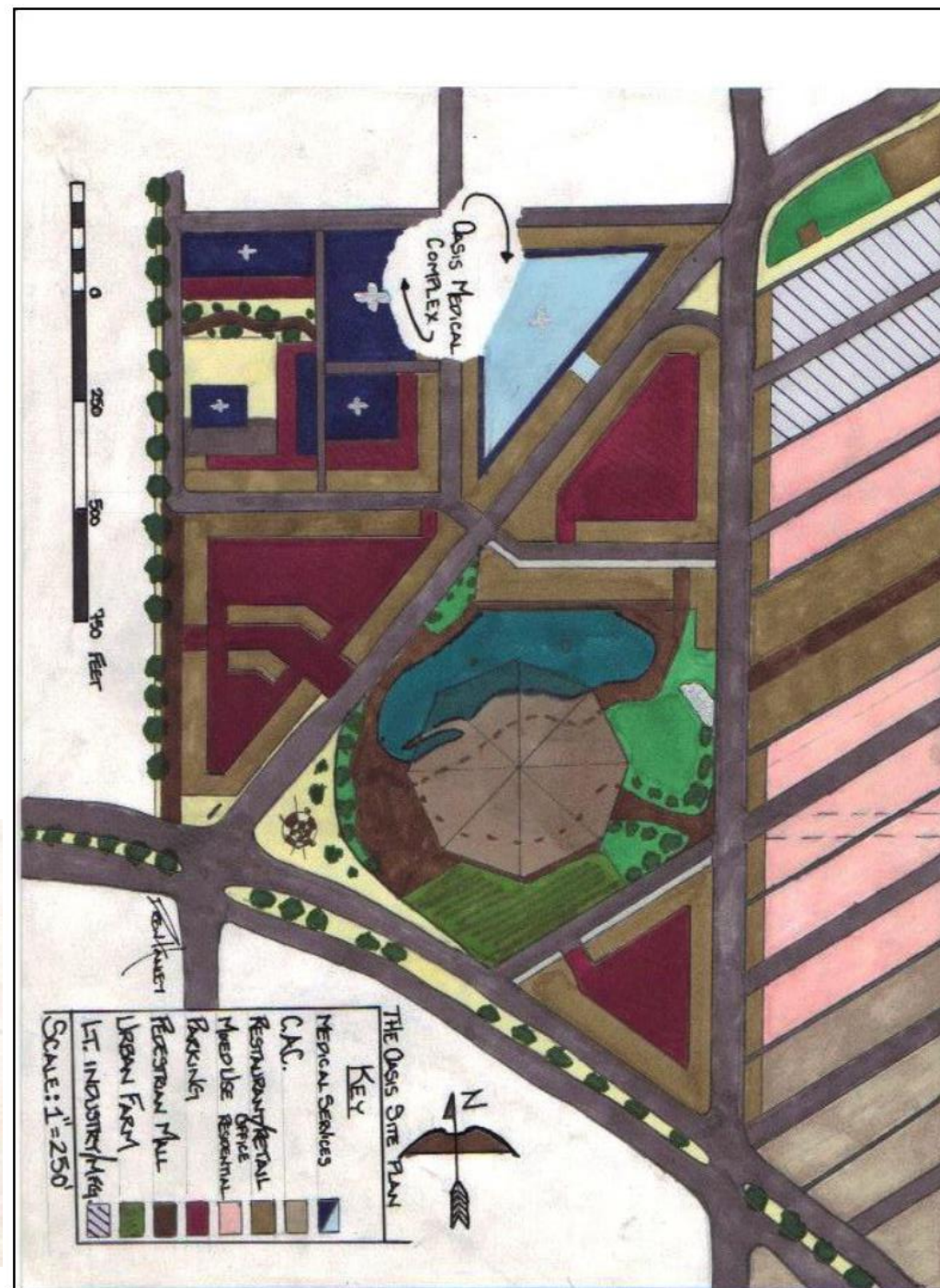
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

- Downtown Conceptual Plan 2011 (internal document)
- Key Points:
 - Public Parks/Green space
 - Street alternatives/upgrades
 - Concentrate new development near Focal Point



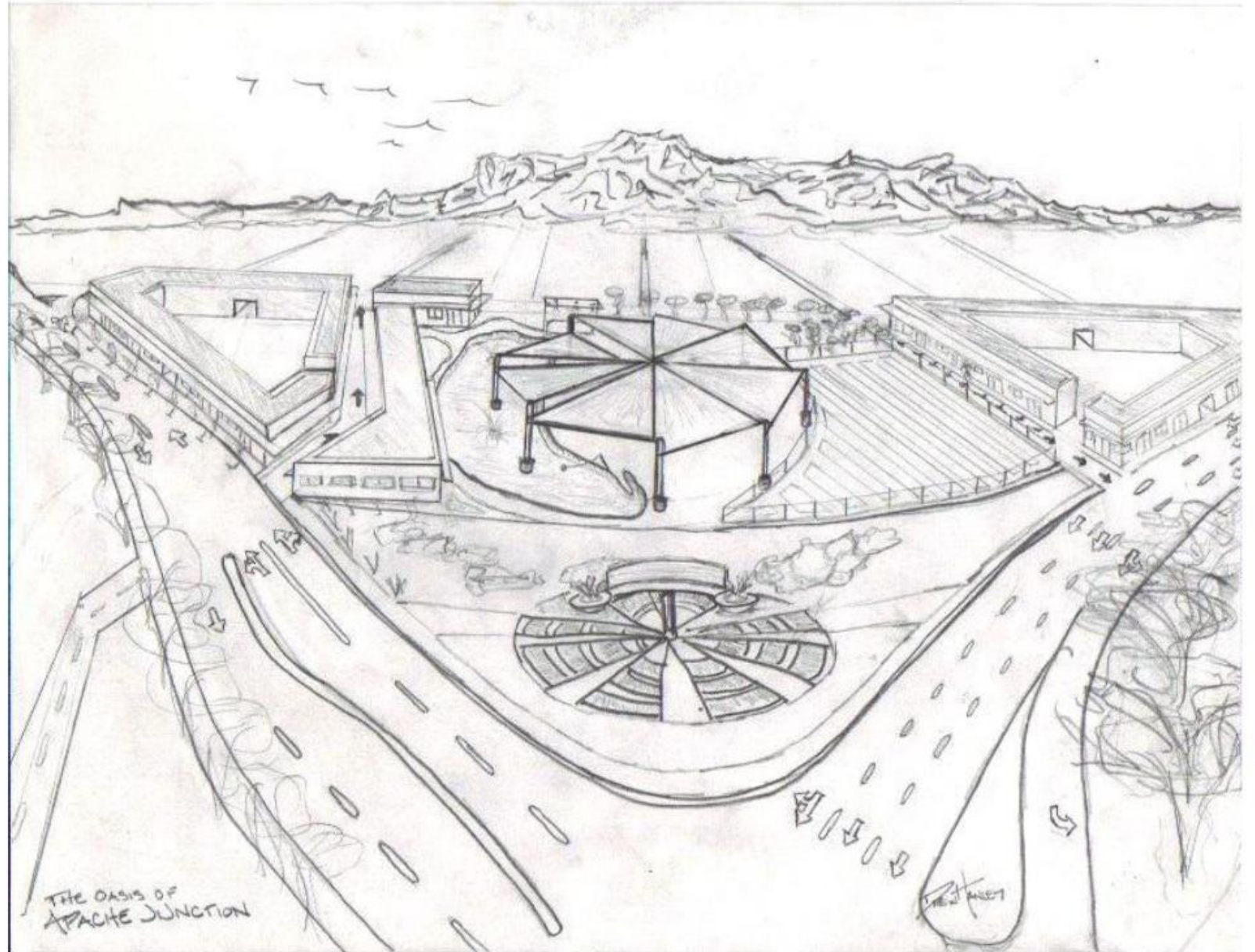
ASU DOWNTOWN PLAN - 2012

- Class project never presented to the public
- Proposes high density and form-based code zoning
- Proposed an “Oasis Medical Complex” where Flatiron Park is located
- Promote connectivity with horse trails



ASU DOWNTOWN PLAN-2012

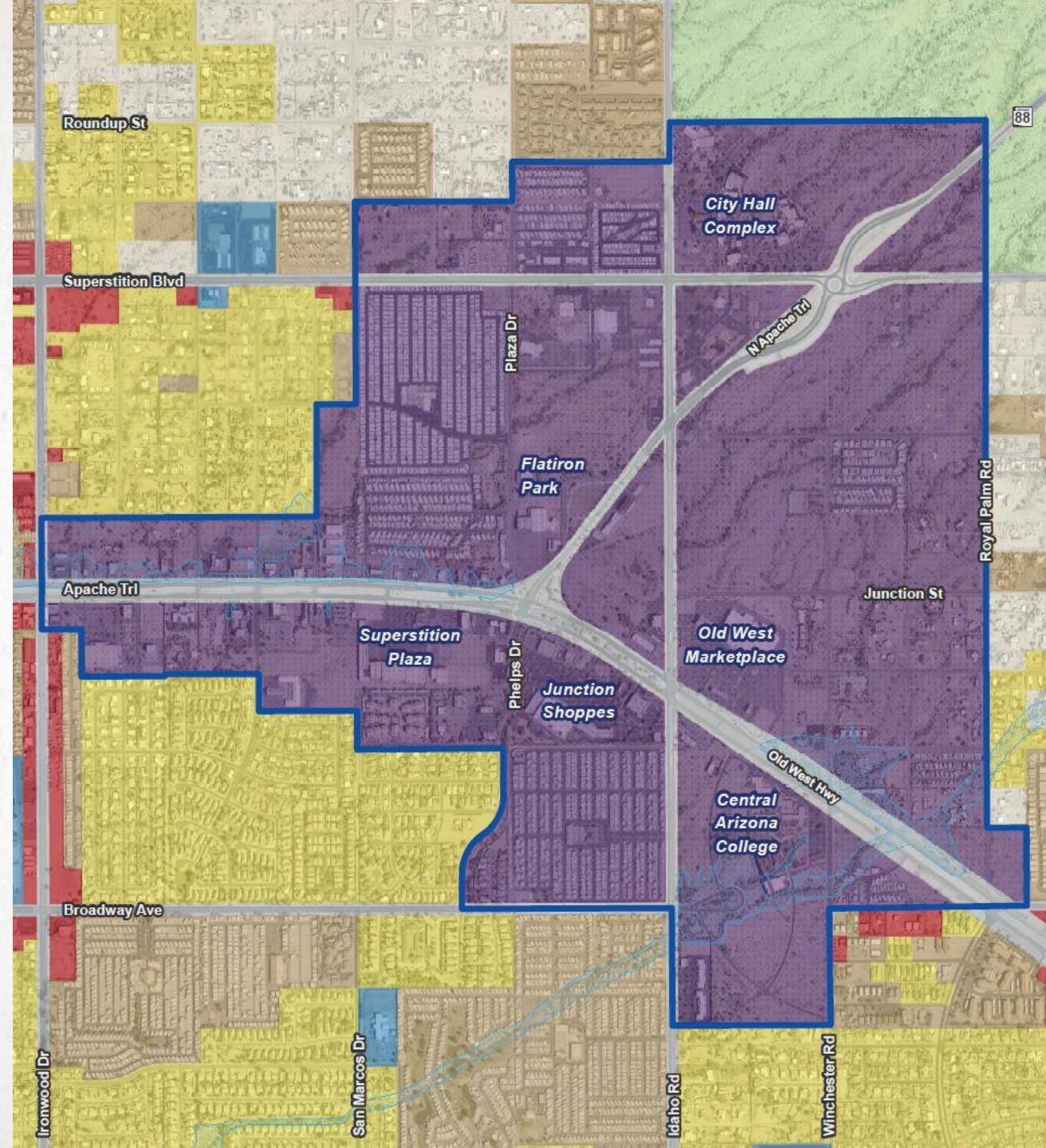
- Incentives
 - Reduce development fees
 - Business assistance options
- Business Enterprise Zone Downtown



2020 GENERAL PLAN

- Reinforces previous plans as a Mixed-Use (higher density residential, commercial office) destination
- Main Goal calls for a Downtown Master Plan
- No downtown master plan since late 1990s

**VISUALIZE DOWNTOWN
2020**



ZONING PARAMETERS -BUILDING HEIGHT

- Original **CB-2 zone**: Max 35 feet (higher thru a PD rezoning process); Inherited from Pinal County
 - Former **C-2 zone**: Max 20 feet (higher thru a CUP process);
 - Former **C-3 zone**: Max 30 feet (higher thru a CUP process);
 - C-2 and C-3 districts split up the uses allowed in the old “wide open” CB-2 zone into the less intense uses. Building height was reduced from 35’ to 20’ (C-2) and 30’ (C-3) for unknown reasons.
-

ZONING PARAMETERS IN B-3

- Former CCD zone: Max 75 feet (higher w/ Council approval, after a P&Z recommendation);
 - The CCD zone greatly increased building height to 75', based on the uses envisioned in the Nielson-Fackler downtown conceptual plan. They envisioned something similar to downtown Tempe and wanted maximum flexibility on building heights. Allowed for a tourist attraction view elevator, constructed in the form of an old mining rig.
 - Current B-3 zone: Max 60 feet (higher thru a PD rezoning process).
 - B-3 zone kept many of the ideas of CCD zone, but tempered building height to 60', still envisioning a flexible and dynamic downtown with taller buildings as is fairly normal for developing, modernizing cities.
-

PROPOSED B-3 USES TO ELIMINATE

- Automotive Uses - (service, sales and repair)
 - Ex: Semi-truck service, vehicle and RV sales lots, rental and leasing lots, general automotive repair, transportation terminals
 - RV Parks and Campgrounds (currently CUP)
 - Contractors Office/Building Materials Supply Sales - indoor/outdoor (currently CUP)
 - Ex: decomposed granite/rock, wholesale tile sales, wholesale lumber yard, granite slabs sales
 - Machinery and Equipment Rental (currently CUP)
 - Ex: Sunstate Equipment, Sunbelt Rentals, Empire Rentals
-

PROPOSED B-3 USES TO ELIMINATE

- Mini-Warehouse/Storage Facilities (currently CUP)
 - Stand-alone retail kiosks
 - Repair businesses (ex: appliances, household goods, electronic, furniture)
 - Laundromats
 - Agriculture/Crop Production
 - Retail Warehouse Clubs
 - Assisted Living
-

PROPOSED B-3 USES

- Density Housing (townhouses, apartments, small lot single-family at edge)
 - Restaurants and Bars/Breweries and Micro-distilleries
 - Civic and Government Uses
 - Parks and Open space
 - Professional Offices
 - Mixed-use Development (office, commercial retail, residential uses)
 - Educational Institutions (colleges and universities)
 - Specialty Retail
 - Entertainment Uses (movie theatres, museums, arcades, etc.)
 - Hotels and Resorts
-

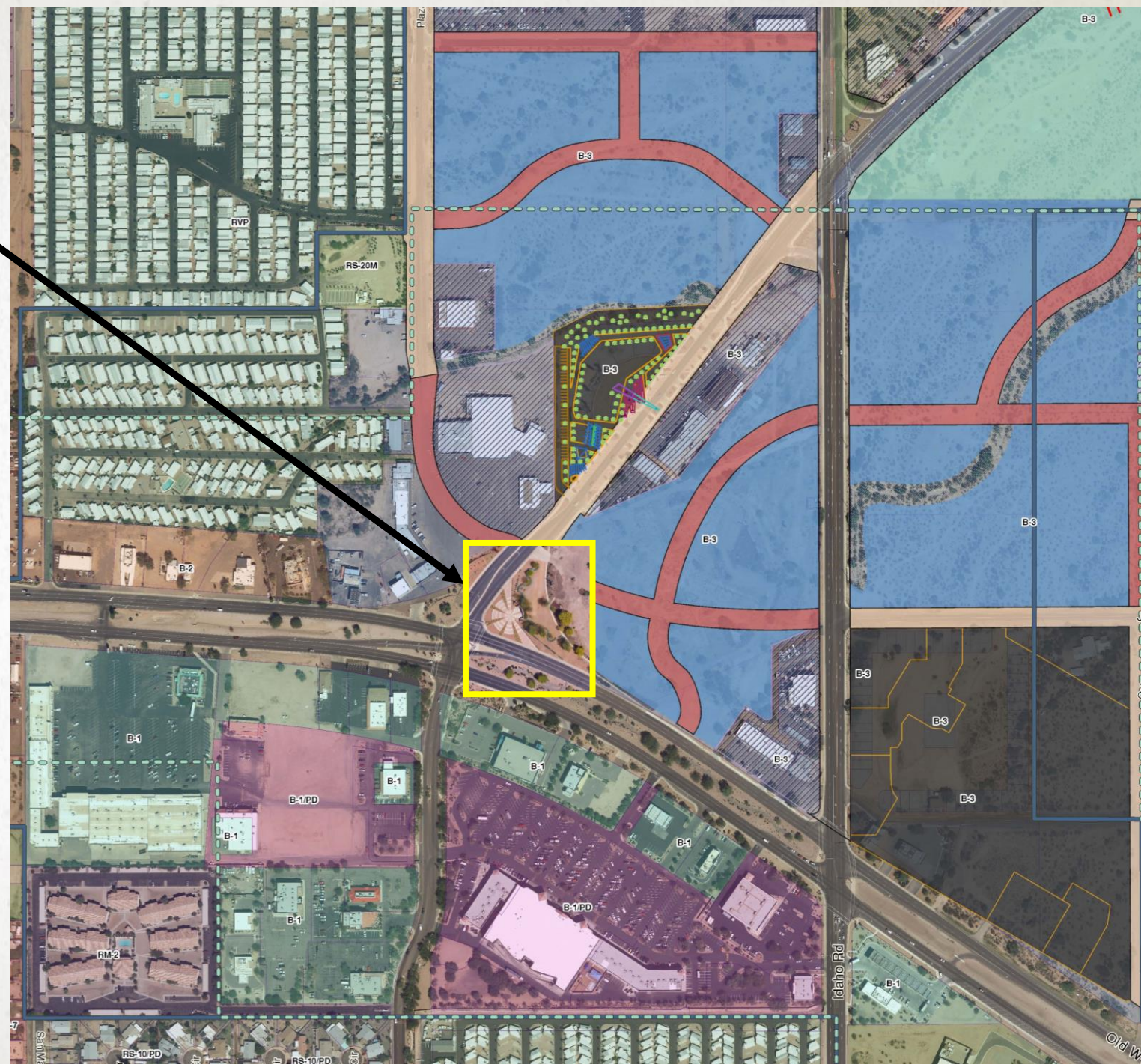
WHAT HAS BEEN REALIZED AS A RESULT OF PLANNING?

- Streetscaping: Phelps Drive, North Apache Trail, Plaza Drive
- Median enhancements: Apache Trail, Old West Highway
- Public Art/Downtown marquee
- Commercial Rehabilitation Program
- Flatiron Park
- Horizon Health & Wellness



FOCAL POINT

- Entrance to Downtown
- Former site of the Grand Hotel
- Don's Monument

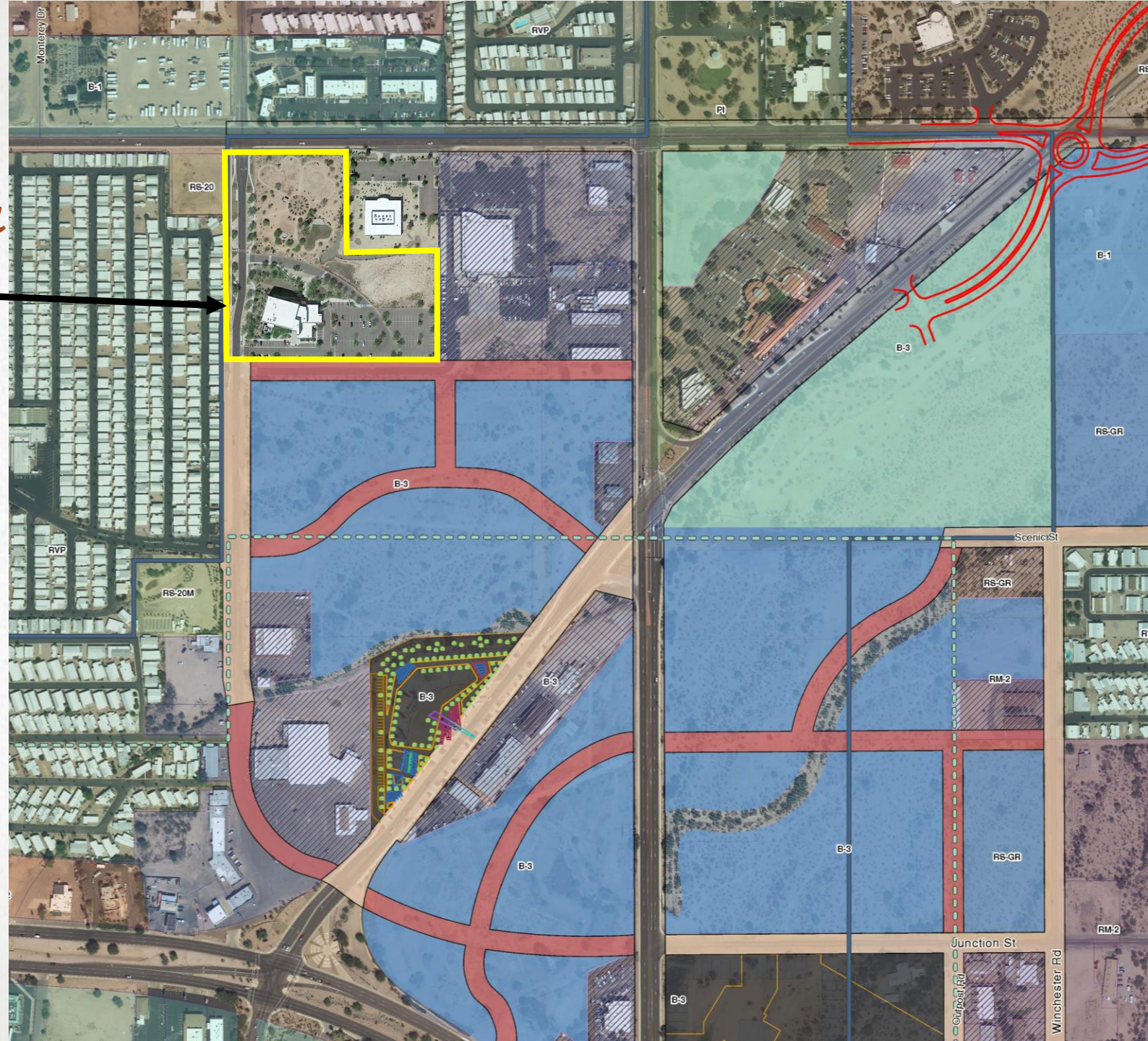


FOCAL POINT



HORIZON HEALTH & WELLNESS

- Built in 2011
- Saemisch & DiBella Architects
- Three-story, 35,000 square foot behavioral health care facility



HORIZON HEALTH & WELLNESS

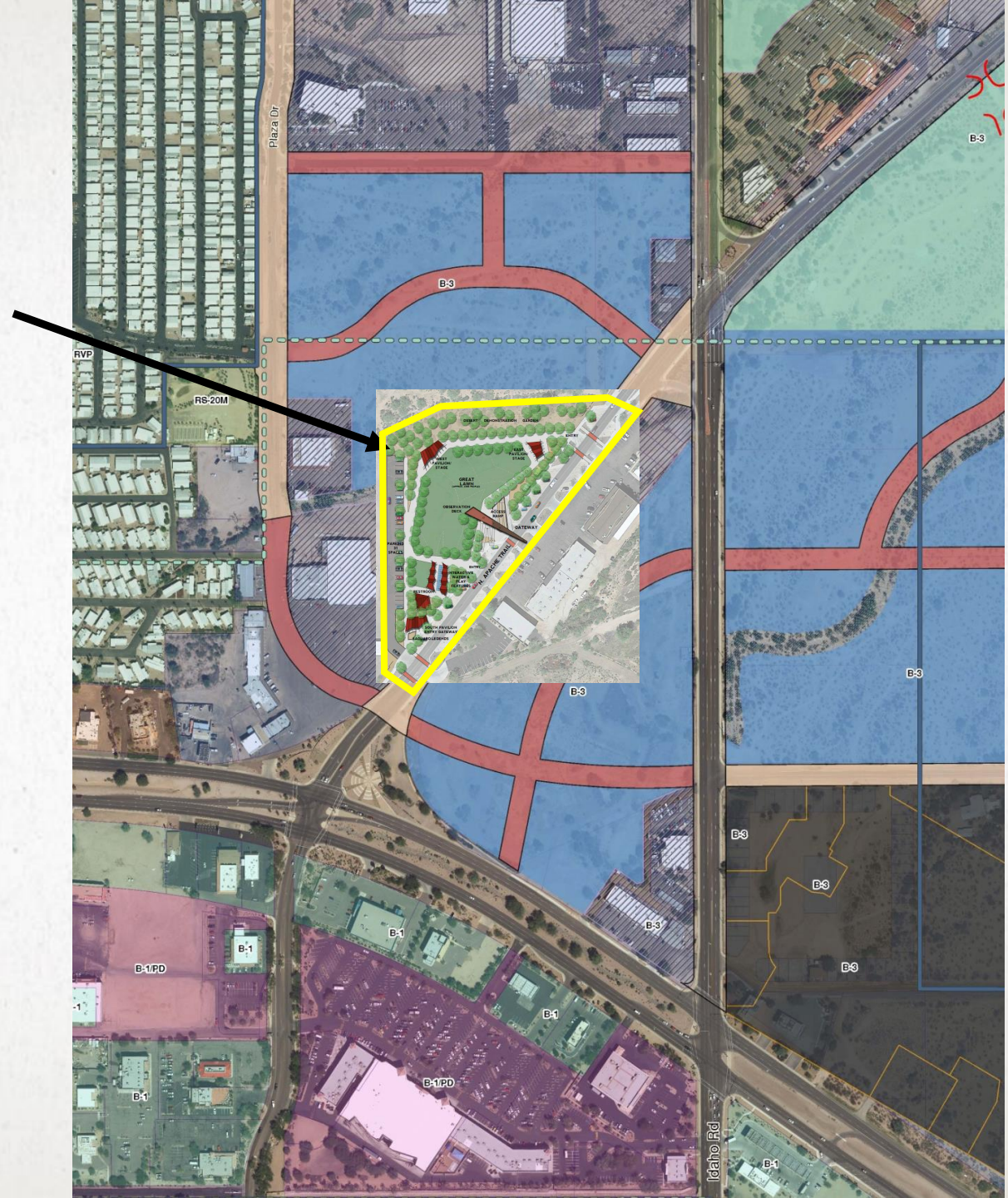


HORIZON HEALTH & WELLNESS



FLATIRON PARK

- Fosters Sense of Place for Downtown
- Formerly two apartment buildings
- City land acquisition through land swap
- Phase 1 completed



FLATIRON PARK

- Great Lawn
- Three Pavilions
- Interactive Water & Play Features Observation Deck
- Desert Demonstration Garden



STREETSCAPE

North Apache Trail

BEFORE



AFTER



STREETSCAPE

North Plaza Drive



HOW DOES AJ ENVISION THE HEART OF THE CITY?

STRENGTHS

- Still relatively a blank canvas
- Scenic views
- Flatiron Park
- Streetscaping implemented
- County/BLM open space

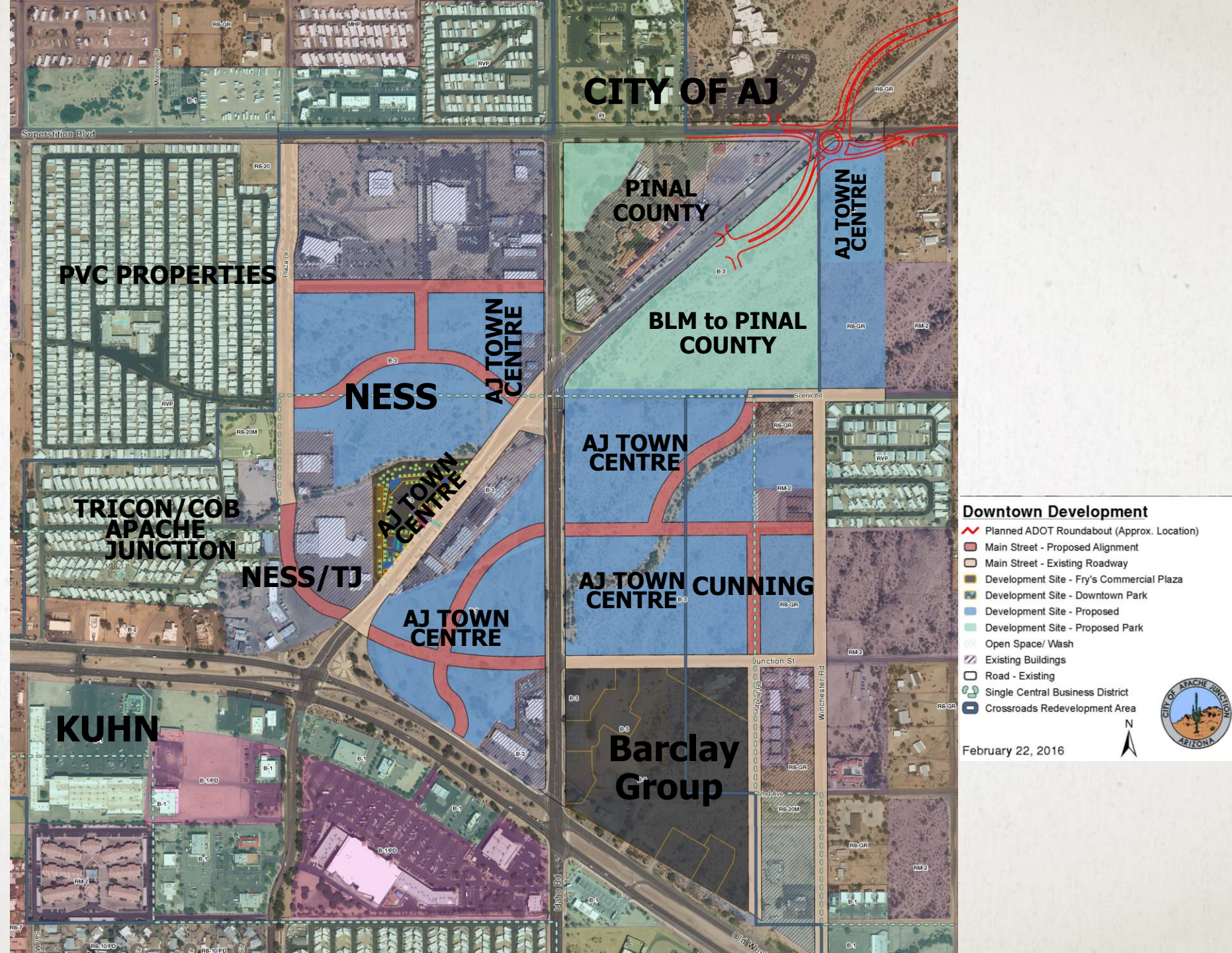


WEAKNESSES

- No clear vision for downtown
- Funding tools gone
- DRIS efforts running out of steam
- Lack of sufficient downtown density
- Blighting influences
- Poor Connectivity
- Lack of infrastructure

OWNERSHIP

- Major land owners
 - AJ Town Centre
 - BLM lease to Pinal County
 - Ness & TJ
 - Barclay Group



This aerial map displays a city planning area with various zoning districts. The map includes labels for different zoning types such as RB-GR, RB-20, RB-20M, B-1, B-3, B-1PD, RS-GR, and RM-2. A large, irregularly shaped area in the center-left is highlighted in blue and labeled B-3. A yellow rectangular area is highlighted in the upper right, showing a proposed development site. A black arrow points from the blue B-3 area towards the yellow area. The map also shows roads like Junction St, Winchester Rd, and 2nd Ave, and a red line indicating a boundary or easement.

- Potential green space
- Larger events and activities that may be regional in nature
- Trails, equestrian events, sporting events, etc.
- Could stimulate residential development on adjacent parcels

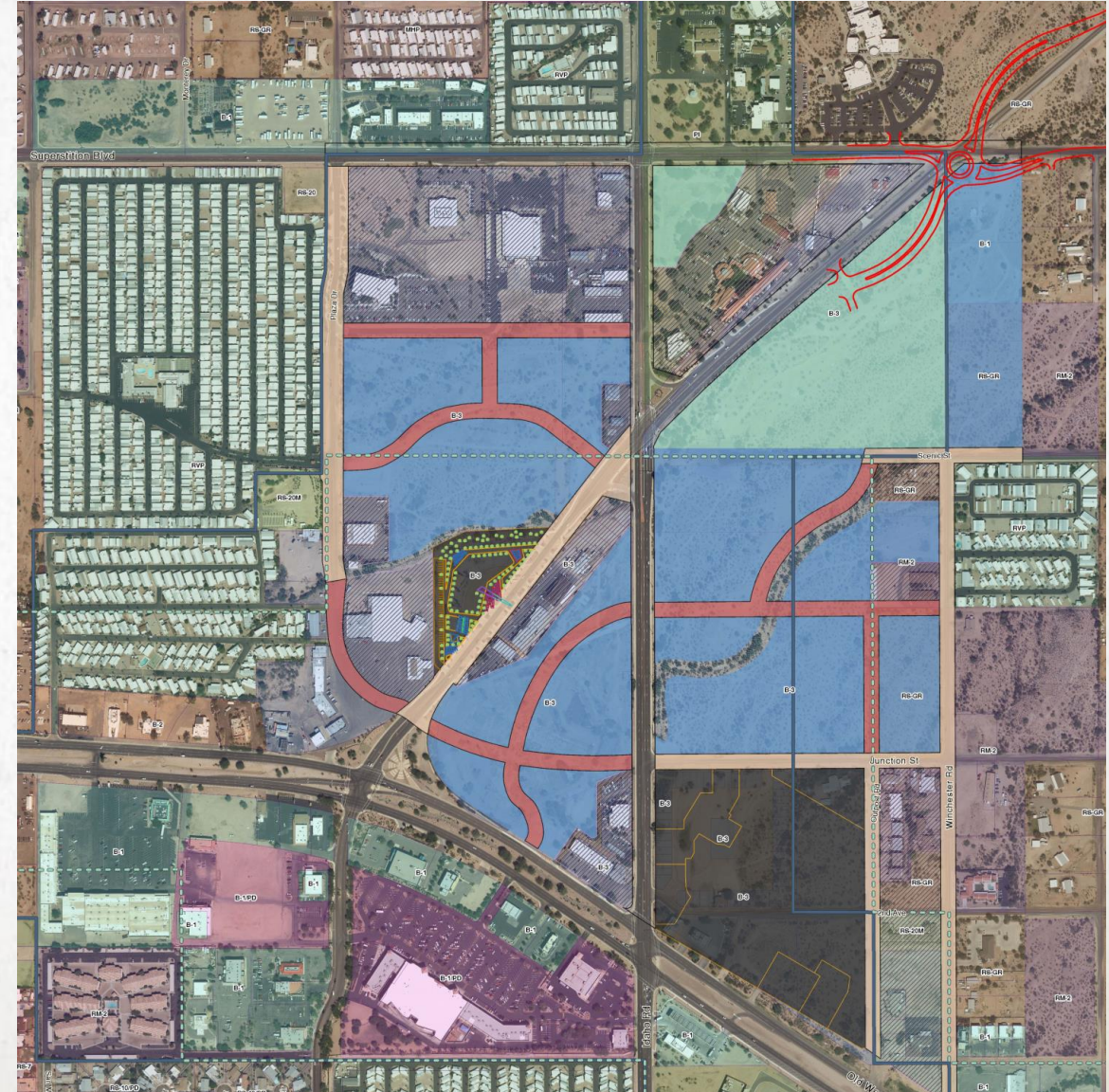
HOW DO WE (VISUALIZE) THE FUTURE OF DOWNTOWN?

- How does AJ create a connection between the **HEART** of Apache Junction and “new” Apache Junction?
 - How does AJ create a town center that encourages existing and new residents to experience downtown as a destination?
 - How does AJ convey to developers what the city doesn’t want?
 - How does AJ convey to developers what “we” do want as a community?
-

HOW DO WE (VISUALIZE) THE FUTURE OF DOWNTOWN?

COMMON THREADS OF "THE PLANS"

- Walkability/pedestrian friendly
- Improve connectivity with transportation grid network and trails
- Parks and Open Space
- Higher density, urban form
- Mix of commercial, entertainment, and residential
 - Built from institutional and medical facilities foundation in Downtown



HOW DO WE (VISUALIZE) THE FUTURE OF DOWNTOWN?

ANSWER:

Develop a Downtown AJ Master Plan

2020 GENERAL PLAN AND STAFF RECOMMENDATION

- **Develop a Downtown AJ Master Plan**
 - Work with community and owners of downtown properties to ensure **unified vision**
- Revise B-3 zoning to **eliminate unwanted uses**
- Create Development Design **Standards** rather than “Guidelines”
- Build out 15 acres of BLM land leased to County for recreation/stormwater