

GLENDALE  
▶ CENTERLINE ▶



Introductory Urban Planning Studio  
School of Planning  
December 2008



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Matthew Magaletti, Teaching Assistant  
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### R.A. Bowers & Associates:

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### City of Glendale Council Members:

Mayor Elaine M. Scruggs  
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Councilmember Joyce Clark  
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### City of Glendale:

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Staff members from the City of Glendale

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# PREFACE

In the City of Glendale, Arizona, a new project was initiated to revitalize its historic downtown. City leaders began creating a future vision for the area. In an effort to stimulate new creative thought into the revitalization project, the city decided to partner with a group of introductory planning students from Arizona State University to spearhead the project. In the summer of 2008, City of Glendale consultant Dick Bowers approached the Phoenix Urban Research Laboratory (PURL) to commission an urban planning studio to study and come up with innovative redevelopment recommendations for Glendale Avenue and the downtown area. Also discussed was a follow-up urban design studio that would focus specifically on design visions. The urban planning project not only provided students with the opportunity to apply their new planning skills in a real urban setting, but also to work with civic leaders and professionals in the planning field. The City's project was named Glendale Centerline and was a chance both for the City of Glendale and ASU students to grow and learn together.

The project was kick-started with a guided bus tour, which was facilitated and narrated by city staff. The two-hour tour was the first time many of the studio students had been to the Downtown Glendale area. Students were able to see firsthand the canvas in which they were going to research and provide recommendations for in the coming months. After the guided bus tour through the Centerline,

the students were asked: "What excites you about working on this Glendale Centerline Project?" Below is a sample of their responses:

- To be able to work hand-in-hand with a city.
- This is the first time that I have done anything like this. I'm really excited to have a hands-on opportunity.
- The potential to improve the usefulness of the Centerline area.
- It's real life. It's not something that the teacher will just look at. We are actually working with a city.
- The negative aspects about the area are what make redevelopment possible. There is a lot of underutilized land with a lot of possibilities for our project. I am looking forward to hearing and seeing all of the new ideas we come up with.
- Gives us a great opportunity to work on a "real" project with very highly respected officials/planners.
- The Glendale Centerline Project will provide opportunities to look at different areas of planning which I have been interested in, but have not studied in detail.
- I am excited to do my part to create change in the Glendale community.

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After the bus tour in August, students were ready to do fieldwork in teams on a visual assessment and land use study of the area. Imagine the studio's surprise as fieldwork was about to begin when, City staff alarm bells went off about the safety of areas that the students would be visiting. Frantic phone calls by city staff to the Police Department asked about which areas would require a police escort. After discussion between the city and ASU, it was agreed that students could drive and walk around the entire Glendale Centerline area unchaperoned as long as they has police-supplied emergency cell phone numbers and a bilingual flier in hand if a problem arose (none did). In other words, all went well.

For the remainder of the semester, students spent countless hours volunteering at public participation events, going on field visits to the study area, preparing presentations, and finalizing team assignments. Whether it was spending all-nighters in studio finishing reports or discussing the day's presentation over a cold beverage at Four Peaks, the students developed firm relationships with one another over the course of the semester, which in return made this project a truly collaborative effort.

On November 3, 2008, the students presented their research and a draft of possibilities to a group of department directors and the project's consultant at the City of Glendale. This presentation was the turning point for the studio. Students were no longer divided into teams, but functioned as one group to refine their research, make redevelopment recommendations, propose redevelopment possibilities, and create the final report for Glendale Centerline. The

semester formally ended on December 5, 2008 when city staff and ASU faculty members joined the studio for their PowerPoint presentation about the project. The students were recognized for their hard work and excellent presentation. In the final hours, students worked diligently to make edits, design posters, and graphically prepare the report.

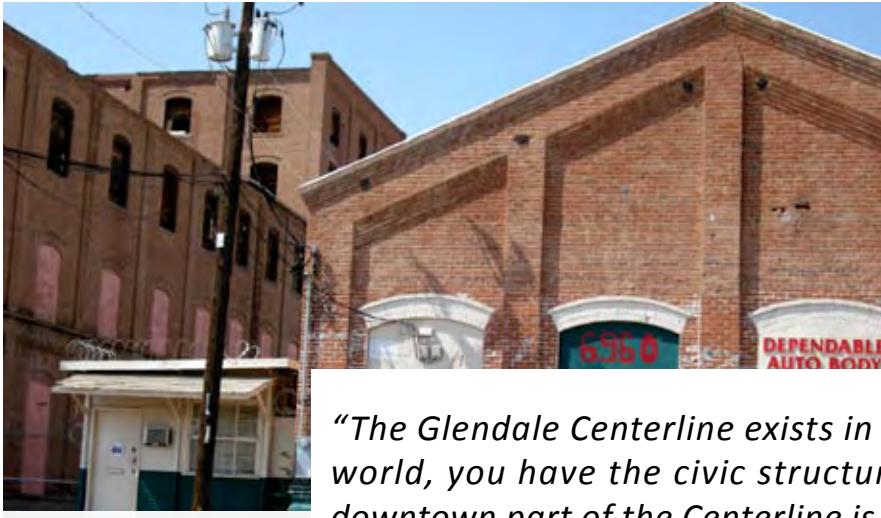
Before the end of the semester, students were asked to reflect about working on this project for the past four months. Here is what students had to say about what they learned and experienced throughout the entire process in their own words:

1. I expected to learn how to work with a variety of different people to accomplish a single task. I also learned how a city is organized to come together to create options for the community.
2. I learned that redevelopment is a lot more complicated than it seems. Stakeholders have a say in everything, and they always have an opinion. Politics comes into play a lot. Also, don't cut corners when it comes to research. Taking more time to do it right in the beginning will save lots of time and headache in the end.
3. In order to be a successful leader, you need to listen to your teammates, [and] never put down their work or ideas, because when you allow them to perform at their best ability, you get work that is from passion. It might not always be the best design or concept, but we aren't all designers, we are planners. In order to succeed in this field, you need to be a TEAM and realize that the next best idea is sitting right next to you.... And you need to listen.

4. I need a more diversified portfolio!! That is skills associated with urban planning. You need so many different skills: design, computers, writing, policy, politics, urban design/architecture, sociology and more. All of these others make you stronger in planning.
5. [I experienced] the challenge of producing a product that has to be usable.
6. Being able to host a workshop and having hands on interaction [was something I gained].
7. Each assignment helped further my knowledge in various technical skills. Each assignment served as a new chance to attempt to find a better way to accomplish the task at hand.
8. I will use my leadership skills, and my love for planning in future classes and as a planner. I learned that you need to love what you do, or it isn't the right thing for you.

Collectively, students spent many hours working on the project and was guided throughout the semester by Dr. Ruth Yabes, Teaching Assistants Matthew Magaletti and Pei-Ying Ho, and various professionals from the City. Without their guidance and support, this project would not have been possible.

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*"The Glendale Centerline exists in a very interesting, dual world. In one world, you have the civic structure of Glendale and Catlin Court. The downtown part of the Centerline is a very nice, sheltered area. However, in the other world of the Glendale Centerline, a mere block from the downtown, economically depressed areas exist."* - Student Reflection



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## CHALLENGES

Downtown Glendale is the historic, cultural, and civic heart of the City of Glendale, Arizona. The area contains many of Glendale’s historic neighborhoods and landmarks, as well as the Glendale City Hall, Civic Center, and various municipal structures. Since the city’s foundation in 1892, Downtown Glendale has experienced many changes. Recently, the area has been characterized by its auto malls, antique stores, and industrial complexes. However, the character of the area is shifting and these industries are moving to other places. Downtown Glendale is in a phase of transition, and the City of Glendale has recognized this time as an opportunity for redevelopment.

The City has partnered with Arizona State University’s (ASU) Introductory Urban Planning Studio in the Glendale Centerline revitalization project, which covers the area north to south from Myrtle Avenue to Ocotillo Road and from east to west from 43rd Avenue to 67th Avenue along Glendale Avenue. The studio completed preliminary research on the area, studied redevelopment cases and principles, and hosted events for public involvement. Through these activities, the class created general recommendations and site-specific development possibilities for the revitalization of the Glendale Centerline.

The Glendale Centerline has several tangible and intangible challenges. Currently, the area contains an unattractive mix of land uses, with industrial businesses, automotive shops, tattoo parlors, and payday loan dealers spread throughout commercial, residential, and culturally significant areas. Visually, some of the area is depressed, containing numerous vacant lots and blighted buildings. The downtown is also located on a major thoroughfare, and the fast-paced traffic discourages pedestrian-friendly design.

Economically, the Glendale Centerline is losing many of its income generating businesses, including several major auto dealers who are relocating, as well as a variety of industrial businesses which are not a part of the future vision of the area in the Glendale General Plan. Downtown Glendale is known for its antique and specialty shops. These are primarily run by hobbyists, some of whose odd business hours hinder the downtown from becoming a retail destination. Although a variety of restaurants pepper the area, most of the commercial and historic core of Glendale Centerline shuts down at sunset, with little nightlife activity.

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Demographically, the residents in the Glendale Centerline are typically renters, less educated, with lower incomes than the City of Glendale as a whole. There is also perceived and actual crime in the area, discouraging visitors and commercial investment.

## REPORT OVERVIEW

The report begins with an overview of the Glendale Centerline project and the city's partnership with ASU (Chapter 1). It is followed by an area profile including demographics, neighborhoods, historic areas, public facilities, arts and culture, and LEED (Chapter 2), after which is an inventory of land uses, zoning, conflicts, property owners, housing, and transportation (Chapter 3). Next, literature-based redevelopment principles and redevelopment case studies are examined (Chapter 4), as well as public participation and community involvement visioning activities for Glendale Centerline that included an ASU Community Workshop (Chapter 5). After that, general recommendations (Chapter 6) and site-specific development possibilities (Chapter 7) are offered. The report concludes with some final reflections and questions for future study in the next phase of the Glendale Centerline revitalization process (Chapter 8).

## General Recommendations

Based on research, community input, case studies, and City Council and staff feedback, seven general recommendations for the Glendale Centerline are made:

1. **Enhance downtown attractiveness through the design of the physical and built environment**, emphasizing pedestrian walkability and including streetscaping throughout.
2. **Create identifiable destinations, anchors, and niches** that retain a family-oriented, small-town feel in appropriate locations while encouraging entertainment and nightlife in other sites.
3. **Preserve historic character areas.**
4. **Promote mixed-used development.**
5. **Market and expand commercial and retail development.**
6. **Develop a marketing campaign** that educates retailers to the potential developments in downtown Glendale.
7. **Enhance transit and transportation options**, thus creating a smooth flow and connections between the different areas in the Glendale Centerline.
8. **Celebrate and build on public participation**, making sure to include all stakeholders in Glendale Centerline redevelopment visioning, planning, and implementation.

## NINE DEVELOPMENT POSSIBILITIES

From these recommendations, the studio designed nine site-specific development possibilities in Chapter 7 and prioritized them in order of their relevance for redevelopment and their subjection to current economic budget constraints. The top three possibilities included:

1. **A gateway entrance** between the City of Phoenix and the City of Glendale,
2. **A business park** replacing the vacant auto dealership lots and serving the new court house currently under construction, and
3. **The Beet Sugar District** that creates an anchor destination between the Beet Sugar Factory and Cerreta's Candy Company, blending old, historic elements with new, more modern ones.

The remaining six development possibilities for Glendale Centerline are:

4. **A light industrial park**, consolidating the Glendale Centerline's industrial businesses into a single location.
5. **A mixed-income residential development** that includes mixed-use commercial sites, green space, a spray park and mural.
6. **A traffic-calming and streetscape proposal** along Glendale Avenue to slow traffic, enhance pedestrian walkability and celebrate sustainable development.
7. **A pedestrian mall and courtyard** with outside dining, commercial retail and entertainment activities to draw nightlife into Glendale Centerline.

8. **A regional park and recreational facilities** for all ages to make use of vacant properties and to enhance the quality of life for surrounding neighborhoods.
9. **A theater** that would draw nightlife and enhance cultural opportunities along Glendale Centerline.

This report contains the details of the data used to make these proposals, and elaborates on the specific recommendations and development possibilities. In particular, the studio was able to create redevelopment concepts with public input from community events held over the course of the semester. These included a Business Breakfast, Congress of Neighborhoods, Visioning Fair, and Community workshop, in which students interacted with key stakeholders on both a general and more personal level. This report is put together largely based on the voice of the community. It is meant to be a tool used throughout the revitalization process, as well as a guide in considering future options for the Glendale Centerline.

