

May 15, 2022

Dear Property Owners, Merchants and Stakeholders,

What a wild ride the past couple of years have been. For our organization, it has been a challenge to shift our work in such grand ways. We are conveners ... we incentivize gathering ... we plan events and we conduct marketing campaigns ... all for the purpose of getting people to this place. We clean streets, remove graffiti, plant flowers and pick up litter to keep our downtown ready for visitors. We want to ensure that at any given moment, we are putting our best foot forward. But for eighteen months we weren't able to gather.

When the pandemic reared, we put a great deal of resources into sanitizing, cleaning, and extending resources to our business community. We connected merchants to grants, we advocated for funding through municipal, state and federal levels, and we did extensive campaigns around carry out and delivery options. Our operations team spent all their time sanitizing every touch point in the district to stop the spread of the virus. We never took a day off as our team was considered essential from day one.

Around November of 2021 we began producing large events again and we were cautious but eager. We held the Tempe Festival of the Arts in December 2021, which was the first in two years. We brought back our holiday parades, both in the street and on water. We also started new events to encourage a stimulus in our downtown economy. Events showcase our neighborhood and create future consumer opportunities. "See that great spot, come back and enjoy it!"

As we look toward 2022-2023, our spirits are up and we believe that the next year will be extraordinary. All indicators are pointing at a return to 2019 numbers. We saw 24 businesses open in first quarter of 2022. There are multiple projects under construction right now in the district and more seeking approval. Our office workers are returning to their physical location and visitors were over 1.2 million in 2021.

As we move into this next fiscal year, we are revisiting our security and safety function to see how best we can serve our stakeholders and advocate for more services through partners. When we ask our merchants what they want/need to be successful, they overwhelmingly ask for events and infrastructure improvements. To that end, we are pleased that the City of Tempe is executing a Streetscape plan along Mill Avenue and 5th Street. We will be producing our large community events and new events for a total of over 30 event days in the next year. We are proud to be bringing back Kickball in 2022, since we finally have office workers to justify this league! We are also partnering with the City of Tempe on a Transportation Demand Management program that will aim to reduce congestion and create alternate ways for people to commute to and from our downtown. In our

public spaces, we will look to implement an increase in public art and placemaking to make downtown vibrant and memorable to our residents and visitors.

Through all our programming efforts, we will be applying a lens of equity and inclusion to ensure that all voices are heard and that this is a downtown that is welcoming and comfortable to everyone. We must make a place where all feel connected and all are proud to call their downtown.

We are looking forward to a great year for 2022.2023. Thank you for your support as we continue to work hard for this great downtown.

Respectfully,



E. Kate Borders
Executive Director
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