

# Discover the Discovery TRIANGLE

Public-private initiative seeks to position local geographic area to compete in global marketplace

**I**n the current economic environment, even small strategic advantages can have significant rewards. For an initiative such as the Discovery Triangle, which leverages the resources and potential of the geographic center of our region, expect those advantages and rewards to be considerable and vital to the Valley's future economy.

The Discovery Triangle will enable the area to compete in the global marketplace by more effectively packaging assets, highlighting opportunities and creating an environment that will attract investment to the area. Spanning 25 square miles, 16,000 acres and two municipalities, this urban planning approach creates new opportunities for citizens, business owners and other stakeholders in the region to participate in shaping the characteristics of their community.

The Triangle is anchored by Downtown Phoenix and the Biomedical District to the west; Tempe and the Arizona State University Tempe campus to the southeast; and Papago Park in the northeast corner. Organizations participating in the public-private initiative include the City of Phoenix, City of Tempe, APS, SRP, Schaller Anderson, ASU, the University of Arizona, Gateway Community College, Cox Communications, Apollo Group, Support Sky Harbor Coalition, Sundt and CB Richard Ellis.

### ▷ BEGINNINGS

Twenty-five years ago, there was no Loop 101 or 202, Chase Field, Tempe Center for the Arts, a state-of-the-art Phoenix Convention Center or TGen. These landmark initiatives required public and private sector leadership, regional collaboration and determination — the same characteristics driving the Discovery Triangle today.

The Triangle started as Phoenix Mayor Phil Gordon's proposed Opportunity Corridor four years ago. With the support of Tempe Mayor Hugh Hallman, it has expanded in scope and participation.

"I applaud the regional cooperation that is taking place and am encouraged by the thoughtful approach of our leaders in setting forth a promising vision for our future," says Martin Shultz, chairman for the initiative and vice president of Government Affairs for Pinnacle West Capital Corporation.

### ▷ OPPORTUNITIES

Within the Discovery Triangle are 3,296 properties. Of those, more than 330 are vacant parcels and 510 are classified as properties with potential.

These properties are located within a thriving community, rich in the arts, culture, recreation and employment. One of first initiatives of the Discovery Triangle Development Corporation was to develop an asset inventory of the area. This CBRE-developed database, which can be viewed on Google Earth, documents information on the Triangle's commercially zoned properties, transportation corridors, recreational and cultural amenities, schools and educational institutions. This database is an important new tool that will be used by the economic development teams from the cities, GPEC, chambers and state to attract industries.

Additionally, the asset inventory served as a demographic analysis of the region. Who lives in the area? Do we have the lifestyle, cultural

and educational opportunities that can attract and retain technology-oriented companies and their employees? Do we have the raw space and type of facilities required by these companies? What educational facilities are located in the region?

Following are a few key discoveries:

- » The region has a young and diverse population.
- » There are 20 venues for the performing arts, 21 museums, 25 parks and more than 50 miles of bike paths.
- » More than 7,000 businesses are located in the region, with more than 150,000 employees.
- » Eighty-one businesses are bio-tech or solar power-related companies.
- » The employment density in the region is high relative to the entire Valley.
- » The 10th busiest airport in the U.S. is located at the center of the Triangle.
- » Half of the current 20-mile Valley Metro Light Rail system runs directly through the Triangle.

#### ▷ EXPERT GROUPS

The Discovery Triangle has undertaken a visioning process with 10 expert groups in areas ranging from sustainability and education to entrepreneurship and transportation. More than 120 experts — all public and private sector volunteers — are creating a 20- to 30-year vision for the region. An initiative of this magnitude, incorporating many of Arizona's best minds, would be cost prohibitive for any single municipality.

"In the short term, the Discovery Triangle will have a streamlined and expedited development approval process spanning several

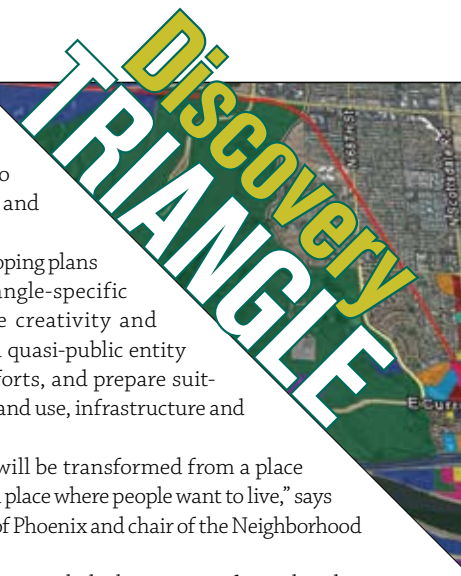
jurisdictional boundaries," says Darin Sender of Sender Associates, who also is chair of the Development and Planning expert group.

This expert group is developing plans to establish Discovery Triangle-specific zoning codes to encourage creativity and drive reinvestment, create a quasi-public entity to support city planning efforts, and prepare suitability studies and plans for land use, infrastructure and transportation.

"The Discovery Triangle will be transformed from a place that people drive through to a place where people want to live," says Paul Johnson, former mayor of Phoenix and chair of the Neighborhood Revitalization expert group.

The group's recommendations include the creation of a market-driven housing plan based on surveys of stakeholders to determine what would encourage them to move into the area, and assistance to Phoenix and Tempe in the creation of flexible processes for urban development that allow for constant market fluctuations.

Tools recommended by the Public Policy expert group include the use of the new Revitalization District to support development of key infrastructure in the Triangle, the creation of tools to establish and support dedicated funding sources for the Discovery Triangle infrastructure improvements, and the cataloging and packaging of existing development tools to make them accessible to businesses of all sizes.



#### ▷ AREAS OF FOCUS

Initial areas of focus have been initiated and include:

- » Serving as the catalyst for regional collaborations to stimulate high-value projects with Triangle partners.
- » Analyzing current Arizona public policy for urban redevelopment, researching the best practices of other urban areas nationally to ensure competitiveness with other regions, and working to advance a comprehensive urban public policy for the region.
- » Promoting and packaging the assets of the area, celebrating the history and diversity of the neighborhoods within the Triangle.
- » Engaging expert groups and their stakeholders to create short- and long-term plans and collaborate toward a shared long-term vision for the area. The areas of focus include: public policy, sustainability, job creation, entrepreneurship, education, neighborhood revitalization, transportation, health and nature, and planning and development.

#### ▷ LOOKING AHEAD

The Discovery Triangle is not a short-term project nor a stopgap measure designed to temporarily boost the Valley's economy. It is a long-term vision designed to create a transformative urban model for redevelopment, foster regional planning and encourage partnerships that will grow. In time, the Triangle will become a hub for international, discovery-based companies, a showpiece for the region and an urban core connector. ■■■

Don Keuth is chief executive officer of the Discovery Triangle Development Corporation, [www.discoverytriangle.org](http://www.discoverytriangle.org)

## Who's Who Discovery Triangle Experts

### DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING EXPERT GROUP

• **DARIN SENDER**, *Sender Associates, Chair*

### EDUCATION EXPERT GROUP

• **PEARL ESAU**, *Teach for America, Chair*

### ENTREPRENEURIAL EXPERT GROUP

• **KIMBER LANNING**, *Local First Arizona, Chair*

### HEALTH AND NATURE EXPERT GROUP

• **DARREN PETRUCCI**, *ASU, Chair*

### NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION EXPERT GROUP

• **PAUL JOHNSON**, *Old World Homes, Chair*

### PUBLIC POLICY EXPERT GROUP

• **GRADY GAMMAGE**, *Gammage & Burnham, Chair*

### SUSTAINABILITY EXPERT GROUP

• **ED FOX**, *APS, Chair*

### TRANSPORTATION EXPERT GROUP

• **MARC SORONSON**, *HDR, Chair*

### JOB CREATION EXPERT GROUP

• **BARRY BROOME**, *GPEC, Chair*

### SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY EXPERT GROUP

• **DEBRA FREIDMAN**, *ASU, Chair* ■■■