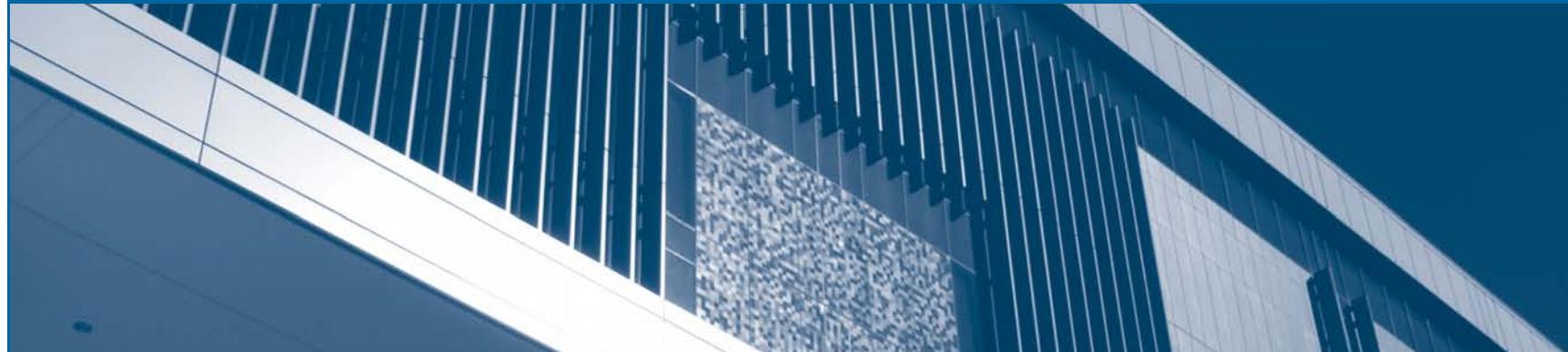


## CHAPTER 11

# Downtown Enhancement



**P**ima County currently owns 1.58 million square feet of building space in the downtown area, employing over 7,000 full- or part-time employees. Pima County is downtown Tucson's largest employer. A vibrant, successful downtown enhances the work experience for employees and leads to economic expansion. Due to the location of such facilities as the Temple of Music and Art, the Tucson Museum of Art, the Museum of Contemporary Art, the Tucson Convention Center and restored Fox Theatre, downtown is a regional arts and cultural center that should be expanded. The growing entertainment venues in the downtown also mean the area serves as a regional center; attracting residents from other communities, as well as Tucson.

### **A. Creating a Regional Arts and Cultural Center**

A number of proposals have been made to expand arts venues downtown. The most recent is to establish an Art of the American West center in collaboration with the Tucson Museum of Art (TMA). Discussions have also been held with The University of Arizona (UA) to display University-acquired, world renowned art pieces, which is made more attractive by the connection of downtown to the University via the modern streetcar. The current proposal, which is undergoing detailed review, is the partial or complete

conversion of the Historic Pima County Courthouse to an art museum in conjunction with the TMA or the University. Such a conversion would substantially increase museum quality art display capacity in downtown Tucson. If the entire courthouse is used for museum-quality art display, nearly 76,000 square feet of display area would be added.

### **B. Enhancing the Opportunity for Corporate Headquarters Location**

Pima County owns 23 separate buildings in the downtown area, including 6 parking structures. With the opening of the new Public Service Center, the county is now in a position to dispose of the office building located at 97 E. Congress Street, as well as 160 N. Stone Avenue. The county also owns vacant property in downtown at Broadway Boulevard and Scott Avenue across from the newly developed Tucson Electric Power Company Headquarters and at 332 S. Freeway. All of these county properties would be attractive facilities for new downtown corporate employers. The county will offer favorable consideration to any new corporate employer that desires to locate downtown in either the existing buildings at 97 E. Congress Street or 160 N. Stone Avenue or to construct a new building at Broadway Boulevard and Scott Avenue or 332 S. Freeway.



*Nearly \$1 billion in public and private investment has been made in downtown Tucson in the past 10 years.*

## C. Expanding the Administrative and Legal Center of the Region

In 1929, when the now Historic Pima County Courthouse was newly built, the county had one division of the Superior Court and three Consolidated Justice Court precincts. Today, there are 52 Superior Court divisions and 10 Justice Court precincts. The county employs over 215 attorneys in the County Attorney's Office or in our Public Defender functions. With Tucson being the county seat, downtown is the legal center for Pima County.

The newly completed Public Service Center holds 14 Justice Court precinct courtrooms and has the capacity to add 7 more courtrooms in the near future with no modification to the exterior building. The facility was constructed using \$80.6 million of General Obligation bonds of the county and an additional \$77 million in financing from the county. The building has been planned to add a north wing extension that would add another 12 to 16 courtrooms. As the population of Pima County grows, so does the need for legal services; for criminal law, civil law, probate, family court and other legal functions. The

### Action Items

**11.1** Facilitate the creation of a regional arts and cultural center by establishing, in collaboration with TMA, an Art of the American West museum in the Historic County Courthouse if the voters approve funding for such. Continue discussions with the UA regarding displaying University-acquired art pieces in the Historic Courthouse.

**11.2** Encourage new or expanded primary employment in the downtown by making available for such the County-owned office buildings at 97 E. Congress Street and 160 N. Stone Avenue, as well as the County's vacant property at Broadway Boulevard and Scott Avenue and 332 S. Freeway.

**11.3** Continue to work toward expansion of the downtown as the legal and administrative center for the region, including further discussions with the UA to increase its downtown presence for legal training for University law students.

The county also has had very preliminary discussions with the UA to increase its presence in downtown for legal training of University law students. In fact, the county has set aside two courtrooms in the new Public Service Center for trial practice of UA law students, as well as for administrative support space. Given the legal functions that exist downtown and the diversity of legal

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## ***As the population of Pima County grows, so does the need for legal services; criminal law, civil law, probate, family court and other legal functions.***

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new Public Service Center has the capacity to add 23 additional courtrooms, bringing the total to 37. It is likely the number of courts and attorneys operating in downtown will increase in the future.

processes and systems, it is appropriate that downtown also evolve and emerge as the legal training center for the region.