

# Redeveloping Downtown Amarillo

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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **I don't want downtown redeveloped because there's not enough parking now!**

The good news is that our redevelopment plans include parking strategies and management to ensure convenient, available parking. We recognize that Amarillo is an auto driven society and we must accommodate autos downtown. Did you know that parking is our Number One land use downtown? More land is dedicated to parking than to anything else. A recent Study for a 50-block area surrounding the civic center indicates that, on average, only 30% of available parking in that area is being used. There are more than 5,000 parking spaces in the civic center area alone. Safe, convenient, accessible parking is a benefit we enjoy now, and a major priority going forward.

### **I live in a neighborhood covered by the Downtown Urban Design Standards. One of my neighbors told me that if I want to replace some windows in my house, I'm going to have to replace all my plumbing, too. Is that true?**

No. Replacing your windows doesn't trigger replacing your plumbing. The Urban Design Standards don't trigger anything for you automatically. In fact, most people won't notice a difference at all. For existing homeowner permit requests (those that already required a permit before and still do), the Design Standards mean one simple internal step for folks at the City, who quickly review the permitting materials to confirm they're in compliance with the Standards.

### **How are Center City "façade grants" handled?**

Grants are awarded through applications to Center City Amarillo, Inc.. Please contact them directly at 806.372.6744 or via their web site: [www.centercity.org](http://www.centercity.org)

### **Will the public have a say in this project or is it already a done deal?**

Redevelopment it is not a "done deal," and yes, absolutely the public will have a say. As this very neighborhood meeting demonstrates, this is a transparent, open, public process. There has been and will continue to be a tremendous amount of public disclosure and conversation.

### **Will you use eminent domain to seize our homes for downtown redevelopment?**

Absolutely not.

### **Why are some dilapidated, abandoned buildings still standing in downtown? Why don't you tear down these dangerous eyesores and build something good for us?**

There are laws and regulations involving what we can do with private property. There is a process for having certain kinds of properties condemned. You can learn more about that through resources from the City of Amarillo: [www.amarillo.gov](http://www.amarillo.gov). Also, as we have seen along Polk Street, it is the existing buildings that typically develop first and foster redevelopment and progress downtown. Most times, it is less expensive to redevelop an existing building than to build new. Therefore, keeping existing buildings downtown will help us bring downtown back.

### **What's in it for me?**

Wise downtown redevelopment offers new and expanded opportunities to work, shop, play, live and worship. Our city will be stronger, and our quality of life will be better. Most companies heavily consider the quality of life and amenities, including the city's core, when considering location. Companies choosing to move here means more jobs. More private investment dollars will come into downtown and Amarillo as a whole, and our community will prosper both now and in the future.

### **How much will it cost to redevelop downtown?**

Costs will vary according to what is and isn't built or created. Our intention is that private investors will be attracted to Amarillo; therefore much of what is created will be done through private capital. Each project that involves public dollars will be evaluated on its own merit as it relates to economic benefits and other qualities it brings to the community.

### **How much will public components cost, such as a convention center hotel or parking garage?**

We don't know what costs might be yet, because we're still in the public comment process where everything is under discussion.

### **When will we have price tags for public buildings or venues?**

Once market feasibility studies are finished and options have been weighed, which will continue to be a transparent public process, we'll assemble both costs and level of benefits for the projects that will benefit Amarillo.

### **Have you done any traffic studies about the impact construction and increased traffic will have on nearby residential neighborhoods?**

Yes. Traffic and parking are two significant priorities for us. The good news about parking is answered in a previous question (scroll up to read). Let me answer your traffic questions in two parts:

- **Overall increase in traffic:** as we successfully redevelop downtown, we will see more people coming in and out of the downtown core. We're conducting traffic flow studies, and one early result is how fortunate we are to have multi-lane arterials providing access to and from downtown. These arterials, combined with existing spacious streets—particularly the one-way streets—will help us manage and route traffic appropriately. The downtown strategic action plan tells us that we have significant infrastructure to accommodate future development.
- **Construction traffic:** There's good news for construction traffic, too. The redevelopment of downtown will occur over many years, resulting in construction projects in different places at different times. While one particular block of a street may see temporary traffic cones or other temporary traffic guidance, we don't anticipate any large-scale or long-lasting traffic disruptions.

### **Why are we building a new ballpark downtown?**

Currently, we're studying the feasibility and benefits of a downtown multi-purpose event venue. Nothing will be built that isn't economically feasible or in the public good.

### **Isn't downtown redevelopment just a scheme by a few local people with land and money to exploit the honest citizens of Amarillo?**

No, absolutely not. It's the very citizens of Amarillo who have participated in focus groups all across the city, have served on committees, have volunteered countless hours, to ensure a transparent, open public process that benefits all the citizens of Amarillo.

### **Will the city raise taxes to build a new ballpark downtown?**

Our goal always is to keep taxes as low as possible. It hasn't been determined that we will build a new multi-purpose event venue downtown. We're studying the potential benefits of a downtown multi-purpose event venue, including its economic feasibility. Nothing will be built that isn't economically beneficial or in the public good. If a new event venue is recommended (or anything else involving the City), various financing options will be reviewed. Again: Our goal always is to keep taxes as low as possible.

**I've heard you're considering recommending a development firm to help redevelop downtown; how are you going about that process?**

DAI has conducted an extensive search for developers, having been instructed by the City to find and recommend the most qualified firm. After lengthy research and wide-ranging due diligence, we have recommended who we believe is the absolute best fit for the criteria. The criteria is: a firm with experience on both the public and private sides, a track record of success with similar projects, understanding of redevelopment issues, and the ability and willingness to bring private capital into downtown redevelopment. Experienced development assistance is not only wise; it leverages the public dollars to bring in additional private development investment.

**Don't we need a larger coliseum rather than a new baseball stadium? Are you considering that?**

Your question is included in the ongoing feasibility study. We're looking for the solutions that bring the most benefits to Amarillo and are economically sustainable, which will include looking at future needs of the Civic Center.

**When is downtown redevelopment really going to happen? We've been hearing about it for a long time.**

We've made significant progress with the redevelopment process, including having the TIRZ in place, recommending developers, and even holding these public meetings. Most buildings along Polk Street have come back to life in the last five years, including the Courtyard by Marriott at the Fisk Building. The Globe News Center for the Performing Arts was also a huge step forward. It took decades for downtown to decline, and it will take some time to rebuild it. To see a timeline of progress accomplished through the fall of 2010, download the latest "Timeline FAQ" pdf from our web site. Near the bottom of the DAI planning page ([www.downtownamarillo.com/planning](http://www.downtownamarillo.com/planning)) you'll see a list of documents available for download. Under the Project Updates heading, click on "Timeline."

**I support the redevelopment of downtown Amarillo; how can I get involved?**

Great! There are several ways to become involved:

- contact us via our web site: [www.downtownamarillo.com](http://www.downtownamarillo.com)
- join us on facebook: <http://on.fb.me/icy0Np>
- follow us on twitter: @ DwtmAmarillo

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