

10 major events of past 10 years

Tempe has long been more urban than its peers, but its active, urban lifestyle took center stage this decade. Today, we look back at the 10 ideas or events that have most influenced this city in the 2000s. On Jan. 2, we'll look ahead to what must happen in 2010 and beyond.

What do you think? Did we leave something out? Send your thoughts to se.letters@arizonarepublic.com, or leave a brief message at **602-444-2475**.

T Rap 12/26/09

1. High-rise plans flood downtown

Landlocked Tempe can't grow out, but it can grow up. That idea has been around since the '80s, but it wasn't until this decade that it appeared to be coming to fruition. High-rises were proposed on just about every parcel downtown during the housing boom, promising to forever change the area's look and character. The tallest, Centerpoint Condominiums, was mostly built but has yet to open after its financiers declared bankruptcy. Many other projects have been put on hold due to the economy.

2. Development emerges at Town Lake

Tempe Town Lake has been wildly popular since it opened in 1999, but it had an early string of bad luck in attracting lucrative development. A posh, massive Peabody Hotel was a bust. A project on the lake's north side was delayed; another proposed to cut away part of Hayden Butte. Years of litigation followed. But the impressive Tempe Center for the Arts debuted in 2007, and several office and residential projects now dot the lake's banks.

3. Light rail bolsters city's cachet

Tempe has long been ahead of the curve when it comes to transit, and the debut of light rail in 2008 only bolstered the city's urban, pedestrian-friendly image. The city was quick to enact a transit-oriented development ordinance, attracting a slew of mixed-use projects along the line, though several have been put on hold due to the economy.

4. New leadership, housing at ASU

Though not always the most popular man in Tempe, it's hard to deny the impact Arizona State University President Michael Crow has had on the city. Since taking office in 2002, Crow has moved programs and some students off the Tempe campus, beefed up research that has attracted several companies to the city and built much-needed on-campus housing, relieving some of the student pressure on nearby neighborhoods.

5. City loses Cardinals, keeps Angels

Losing the Arizona Cardinals to Glendale was a huge black eye for Tempe. The economic loss stings, sure, but even worse were the nasty tactics and lack of regionalism that characterized the years-long debate. People still don't like to talk about it. Tempe officials, determined not get a second black eye over losing the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim, refurbished Diablo Stadium in time for the 2006 spring-training season.

6. Tempe Marketplace opens

After the loss of the planned Cardinals stadium, Tempe officials turned their attention to assembling industrial properties southwest of the Red Mountain Freeway and Loop 101, cleaning up toxic waste and building one of the region's premier malls. Tempe Marketplace opened in September 2007.

7. Hugh Hallman shakes up City Hall

When former Councilman Hugh Hallman ran for



CITY OF TEMPE

Hugh Hallman, elected mayor in 2004 and 2008, has had a positive effect on Tempe governance.

mayor in 2004 against then-Councilman Dennis Cahill, he promised to apply an independent perspective and fiscal prudence. His practical approach to problem-solving and zero tolerance of an entrenched City Hall culture that winked at racial discrimination in some quarters have made a positive and, we hope, lasting impact on Tempe governance. He handily won re-election in 2008.

8. Baracy redefines Tempe Elementary

Given a background in business and marketing, John Baracy turned around a district that was facing the closure of several schools because of sustained enrollment drops. From 1999 until 2004, the Tempe Elementary School District superintendent insisted on quality, safety and order, and he shared those improvements with slick advertising.

9. Gateway secures commercial flights

When Allegiant Air began regularly scheduled service at Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport in 2006, few people knew how successful it would be. But Tempe has ample reason to cheer: Growing passenger counts at Gateway could negate the need for a fourth runway at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport.

10. City fights U.S. 60 widening

Tempe successfully postponed an expansion of U.S. 60 in 2000, arguing a narrower-freeway would force people out of their cars and into transit. Actually, it just forced more traffic from the congested freeway onto arterials. Given the Valley's anemic transit system, a too-narrow freeway aggravated congestion on city streets and caused pollution to pile up as cars idled in gridlock.



CHARLIE LEIGHT/THE REPUBLIC

Centerpoint Condominiums, which has yet to open, is the tallest of the high-rises going up in Tempe.