

Sustainability Initiatives: Repurposing and Greening Structures

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Repurposing and Greening Structures

Repurposing buildings involves taking existing structures and giving them **new life**. This refers to buildings that have gone unused for years, as well as those recently in use. Instead of tearing down a structure and building a new one, repurposing allows for **sustainable action** as it makes use of what is already in existence.

Repurposing structures helps create **character** and a **unique sense of place** by adding to the cultural identity of a community. **Historically significant** buildings are one type of structure that should be saved and repurposed, as they create a nostalgic connection across generations. From visitor centers and museums to office buildings and hotels, the possibilities for repurposing structures are endless.

Many older buildings were not built to be **energy efficient** by today's standards. In order to repurpose buildings with sustainability in mind, the infrastructure needs to be refurbished and updated. This presents an opportunity to green the structure. **Greening** involves implementing energy efficient systems, water management, and native landscaping that uses less water and provides shade. Greening infrastructure creates healthier environments for people and nature and enhances quality of life.

Economic Impact

Repurposing and greening structures is good for the environment, communities and the economy. Utilizing structures that already exist can save money in construction costs, reduce waste and attract travelers who are interested in sustainability and local character.

Repurposed buildings attract tourists and **tourist dollars**. Travelers interested in responsible tourism practices seek out places that are authentic and historical and that the community has preserved.

Greening infrastructures has significant long-term economic benefits as it saves in energy costs, water, and brings beauty to construction materials.

The 2015 Green Building Economic Impact Study commissioned by the U.S. Green Building Council reports that by 2018 green construction will directly create 1.1 million jobs and contribute **\$29.8 billion** to GDP.

Utah Heritage Foundation found direct and indirect spending by visitors to Utah heritage sites and special events resulted in **\$717,811,000** (www.utahheritagefoundation.org).

Tax credits for creating green infrastructure and using historical buildings can save money for investors. Increased property values have also been related historic structures and neighborhoods.

Arizona Assets: Historical Buildings

While a young state, Arizona is full of **rich history** and many historical buildings. Previously used buildings have been converted into museums, hotels, restaurants and more.

The **National Register of Historic Places** accepts nominations from states, tribes, and other federal agencies for buildings that meet certain criteria, such as being 50 years old or older and having historical significance. Arizona already has a number of sites on the National Register of Historic Places. Continuing to promote these designated sites and submitting other qualified locations is advised. This designation **connects** Arizona destinations to sites across the country as itineraries have been created and continue to evolve.

An April 2016 article from Meetings Today highlighted historic buildings throughout Arizona that have been repurposed into restaurants, attractions and meeting venues. This shows both media and **consumer interest** in repurposed sites.

Historic and repurposed venues flourish in Arizona

<http://www.meetingstoday.com/Magazines/ArticleDetails/tabid/136/RegionID/204/ArticleID/28071/ViewAll/True/Default.aspx>

Arizona Assets: Historical Buildings

Once a bank, one downtown Phoenix property is now a Hilton Garden Inn hotel and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The **integrity** of Phoenix's downtown structures and history remains, adding to the **uniqueness** of the destination.

Any **opportunities** for signage, tours, and storytelling about the history and significance for buildings such as these will add to **visitor experiences** and connection to the destination.



<http://hiltongardeninn3.hilton.com>

Arizona Assets: Historical Buildings

Repurposed historical buildings and **tours** go hand in hand. Tours can be of a region, specific building or a piece of a larger itinerary.

The Chicago Architecture Foundation offers a number of successful tours of historic buildings throughout the Chicago area. One tour (Hotel Boom) takes visitors to repurposed buildings that have been **converted** into luxury hotels.

Mayslake Peabody Estate in Oak Brook, IL conducts **Restoration-in-Progress** tours. As the building is in the process of being restored to its original state, tours provide history of the building and the area. The building is also now used for weddings and events, holding theater productions, lectures and events such as art exhibits.

Historic and repurposed buildings also provide travelers with great photo opportunities to **share** via social media, and with pictures and stories to friends and family.

Hotel Boom

 - EXPERIENCE CAF - TOURS - HOTEL BOOM



www.architecture.org



www.mayslakepeabody.com

Arizona Assets: Repurposed Structures

Arizona has many structures ripe for new life and new purpose. Examples of repurposed structures across the globe can provide inspiration for Arizona **developments**.

In Traverse City, MI, what was once an asylum and hospital has been repurposed into a **flourishing** site for both the community and travelers. The Village at Grand Traverse Commons includes retail shops, dining establishments, hiking and biking paths, and event space and more.

The unique nature of repurposed structures garners **media attention** and captures the interest of consumers.



The Village at Grand Traverse Commons
www.thevillageetc.com

Arizona Assets: Repurposed Structures

Repurposing structures includes more than pre-made buildings. **Cargo containers** are being used to create buildings, houses, art galleries and more. Cargo containers are **durable** and an overabundance of them in the U.S. makes for a smart, sustainable structure for repurposing.

On popular Rainey Street in Austin, TX visitors will find Container Bar, the first bar in the U.S. made from cargo containers.

MUVBOX in Montreal, Canada has converted cargo containers to solar-powered restaurants.

Cargo containers are being repurposed in Arizona as well. A number of homes have been built using cargo containers and visitors to First Fridays in downtown Phoenix will encounter **art displays** in repurposed containers.

www.facebook.com/MuvboxMontreal



Arizona Assets: Greening Infrastructure

Arizona receives more annual sunlight than other state in the U.S and in 2014 was ranked second in the nation for total installed **solar electric capacity**. For businesses, and homeowners alike, adding solar systems to a structure adds value and can be used for state tax credit or exemption.

Another greening infrastructure design that could be added to repurposed structures is a sustainable roofscape. **Green roofs** are known for improving storm water management (through reducing runoff on impervious surfaces), relieving heat gain on individual roofs, and reducing energy usage/extending roof life. Maintaining green roofs in arid conditions, such as Arizona, may be difficult, however, as case studies have shown in Tucson and Phoenix. Evaluating other types of materials for sustainable roofs would be beneficial, although may not have the same outcomes as traditional “green roofs.”

Arizona Assets: Greening Infrastructure

Adding green infrastructure to multiple structures within a city can eventually lead to **awards** and **specialty designations**. In 2013, Tucson was designated as an “**Emerald City**” by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC). This designation promotes cities that maximize green infrastructure investment through six key actions, developed by NRDC. Designations such as these can lead to media buzz and can be leveraged in marketing efforts.



Pictured to the left are three different types of sustainable roof options that could be utilized in Arizona: solar panels, clay tiles, and cacti.

Arizona Assets: Greening Infrastructure

Green infrastructure can include a number of other practices including water management, lighting systems, and landscaping.

Cat Mountain Lodge, a bed and breakfast in Tucson, AZ, is setting an example for green infrastructure. Their green initiatives include conserving energy, using native plants for landscaping, using rain barrels to harvest water, and storing graywater for irrigation.



www.catmountainlodge.com

Other Best Practices: Upcycling

In addition to repurposing structures, pieces of buildings and unwanted items can be **transformed** into art, furniture, building decorations and more. **Reusing materials** in this way is referred to as upcycling. Things like pieces of wood, old lighting fixtures, piping, and an endless list of items can be transformed to create unique and **memorable** environments that travelers treasure.

Hotel Mockingbird Hill in Jamaica takes sustainability to heart by upcycling wine corks from their restaurant, creating lamp shades from old washing machine drums, and decorating with wine bottles. www.hotelmockingbirdhill.com



Resources

Arizona Solar Center
www.azsolarcenter.org

Arizona State Parks
<http://azstateparks.com/SHPO/nationalregister.html>

Cultural Heritage Tourism
www.culturalheritagetourism.org

National Register of Historic Places
www.nps.gov/nr/

National Trust for Historic Preservation
www.preservationnation.org

Natural Resources Defense Council
www.nrdc.org

Phoenix Revitalization Corporation
www.phxrevitalization.org/tours/

PlanetReuse
<http://planetreuse.com>

U.S. Energy Information Administration
www.eia.gov

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
www.epa.gov/green-infrastructure

U.S. Green Building Council
www.usgbc.org