

**Downtown Tempe Merchant Feedback
RE: Amended Right-of-Way Ordinance**

We have definitely noticed an increase in the number of transients sitting, sleeping, etc., and thus we've had to deal with more situations regarding them in general. We have a few "regular" transients who sit on the corner outside our store, which we feel is deterring to customers who do not wish to interact with them. Unfortunately this takes away from the service we are able to provide to our paying customers.

Vickie Robinson Hitzler, Store Manager – Store 022
Urban Outfitters on Mill Ave

We feel there is a huge increase in sleeping on the sidewalks. I think this is becoming bad for business and Downtown as a whole. This makes alot of our customers and even staff uncomfortable. We have families make comments about it all the time these days. The bus stop bench is right out in front of our store, this has become a favorite meeting spot for alot of them to all hang out and many are sitting on the sidewalks. People do not even like to walk past that area anymore. It is even to the point where my staff does not want to take the trash out at night after we close because they feel unsafe with all of them sitting around everywhere.

Zach Cobian, Owner
Rita's Ice Tempe

People sitting and lying on the sidewalks is a very real problem and is detrimental to retail stores, restaurants and hotels in downtown Tempe. Tempe Marketplace: not a problem. Scottsdale: not a problem. Downtown Tempe: would you choose to stay/spend where you felt unsafe? Something needs to be done.

Scott Price, Owner
CASA/Sunba

We have transients constantly sitting on the sidewalk between our branch and World of Beers. I have had multiple customers express concern regard using our ATM because of this. I have merchants who will have to come back to make deposits because they don't feel comfortable carrying in their cash. There have been situations when they are sitting around the entrance while I am doing opening procedures which is a major safety concern.

Angelica Seliga I Bank Manager
BMO Harris Bank, N.A.

Our business is contingent upon the positive experiences our guests have while staying with us. We work tirelessly to ensure that everything INSIDE the hotel exceeds their expectations of us and our brand. Unfortunately, there are time when guests experience things on the streets of Downtown Tempe that are beyond our control and negatively affect our guests overall impression of us and the area. We need to put, and keep, measures in place to keep things comfortable and orderly in Tempe. One of the issues we have is with people loitering outside our hotel on the sidewalks and in the city owned parking garage adjacent to our hotel. At this point, I can escort someone from my building if they are not a guest, but I cannot prevent them from sitting on the sidewalk immediately outside my front door. This has a negative impact on my guest and associates sense of safety and security.

Jeffrey Kempton, General Manager
Downtown Tempe Residence Inn by Marriott

The transient issue has been bad again. Often times they are laying around on the sidewalk right in front of La Bocca and Handlebar creating an uninviting atmosphere for my guests. The best remedy I've ever been able to use in the 15 years I've done business on Mill was the No Sit Ordinance which I used frequently.

I really hope council takes this issue seriously and reinstates it.

We already pay taxes to provide these folks with services, doesn't seem fair that they can also negatively affect our businesses and our employees' ability to make money.

Julian Wright, President
Fork & Dagger Restaurant Group

I feel like the situation with the transients is pretty bad at this point. Since they can sit, sometimes they gather in fairly large groups with their dogs and all of their stuff. It's pretty intimidating. I think they kind of egg each other on, and the behavior gets pretty bad sometimes. I'm thinking of one evening in particular, when a group had gathered between My Big Fat Greek Restaurant and the theater. There was yelling and arguing. They were panhandling, too, and sometimes one or two would follow people down the street. Some people thought it was funny. Others looked pretty uncomfortable. They also sometimes gather at and around the bus stop outside of CVS taking up the sidewalk there, which I don't like when I have to go to the bank.

Patti Rogers, Asst. Manager
Cactus Sports

Unfortunately, these are the behaviors that we have observed from Gordon Biersch’s operation on a daily basis:

- Transients loitering in the alley behind Gordon Biersch’s building, littering, sitting on the sidewalks, panhandling passersby for cash, cigarettes, etc...
- Transients sitting on the staircase and sidewalk directly across Gordon Biersch – again panhandling passersby and also blocking the egress/exit path of the stairway for our Guests.
- Transients sitting on either side of our entry doors – visually disturbing our Gordon Biersch Guests, making them feel unsafe.

Our overarching concern is that this situation is an immediate deterrent to the general public (our Guests)– including local businesses, residents, and students, the negative impression for our community & the impact to our tourism traffic, the on-going transient behaviors that generate petty crimes that will ultimately lead to less visitation to the Mill District; therefore, generating less sales and less prosperity to the Tempe community. We are in favor of and support re-instituting the “No Sitting” ordinance as a first level response to significantly reduce this nuisance issue. Please let us know how else we could actively support such an effort.

Paul Galvan, General Manager
Gordon Biersch Restaurant & Brewery

I am writing to you to let you know how people sitting on the sidewalk negatively affects my business. Often, it is not just one person sitting by him/herself. On the contrary, it can be a group of several people, with dog(s), trash, signs, food products and other miscellaneous items which creates a rather large unsafe obstruction for people walking to and from my business. I have also heard from aging customers and people with disabilities that it is especially to maneuver around the sidewalk sitters.

The situation seems to have gotten out of control. My customers, especially tourists, notice and they feel uncomfortable. It is frustrating that they spread out so much on the sidewalks. The dogs are also intimidating. I feel like there is less control than ever.

As a business owner in Downtown Tempe, I believe the customers deserve to have an easy and safe route to approach, enter and leave a business; otherwise they will go elsewhere to spend their money.

Mike Jennings, Owner
Campus Corner Stores

We have noticed an increase of a problem which was already problematic prior to the amended “no sit” ordinance. Downtown Tempe has experienced so much growth over the past twenty years and is such a special place with a great mix of retailers, parks, events and forms of transportation; it’s a shame that we have this issue. There are two major issues holding Tempe back from reaching its fullest potential and those are lack of parking and the homeless situation.

As a business owner on Mill Avenue, it’s our priority to create an environment where our guests feel safe and welcome and we work very hard at that. However it’s difficult to accomplish when our guests are eating on our outdoor patio and there are transients with their dogs sitting on the sidewalk a patio fence away from them causing a distraction.

We must mention and commend the Tempe Police Department; they are second to none when it comes to responding to a complaint, so that is always helpful.

I have never heard of anyone who thinks that having transients sitting on sidewalks is a positive thing, and you won’t hear that from me. I went to school at ASU from 1983-1988 and love what has happened on Mill, in order to complete the vision and create a welcoming Mill Avenue to the influx of students, work force and visitors we feel that this is something that needs to be addressed.

Todd Goldman, Owner
Zipps Sports Grills
