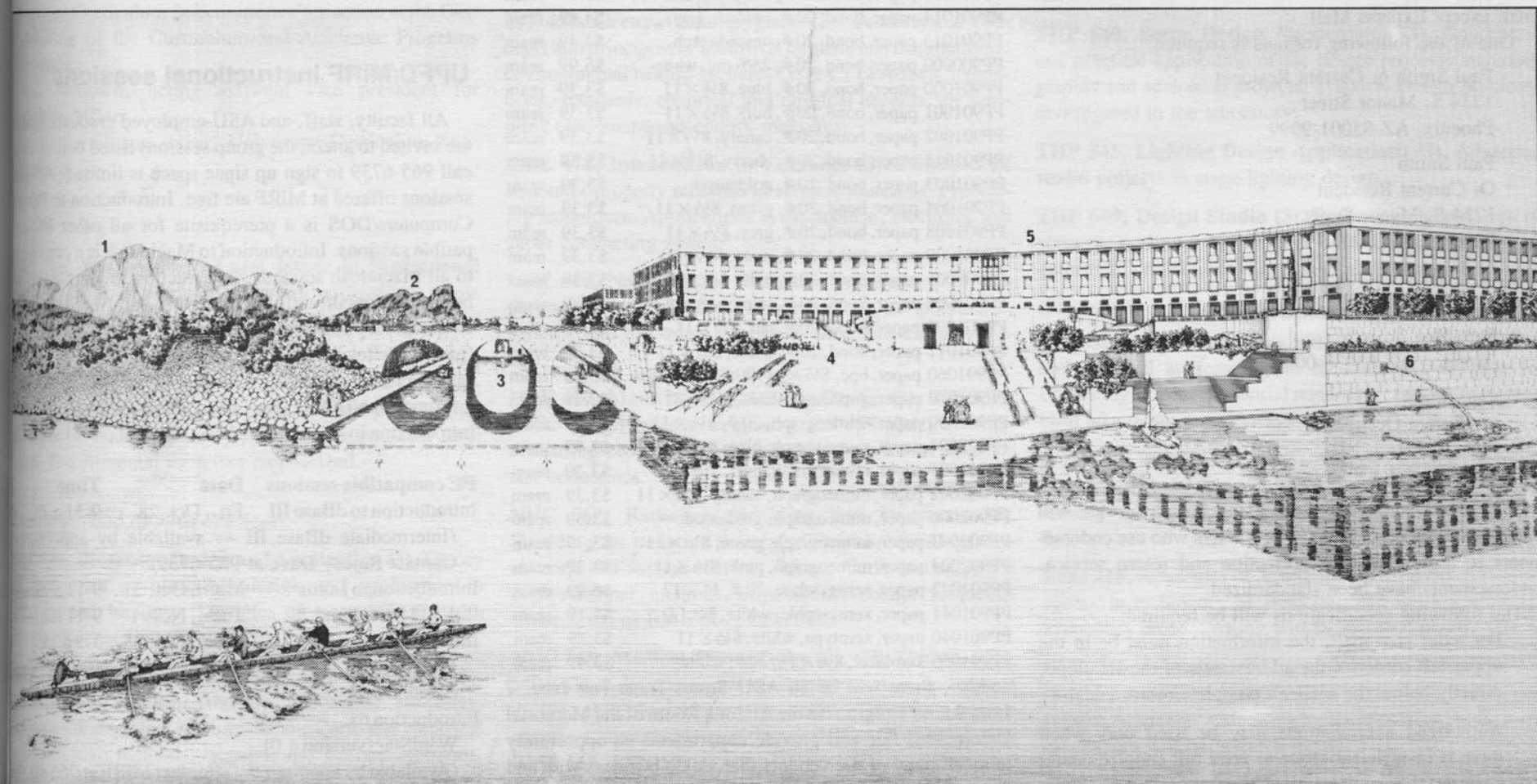


ASU Insight

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The Boardwalk

Could this be the dry, unsightly bed of the Salt River north of campus? Yes, it could, under a Rio Salado development plan proposed by faculty and students from the College of Architecture and Environmental Design. Number 1 is Camel-

back Mountain, 2 is Papago Buttes, 3 is a marina, 4 is a piazza, 5 is a crescent-shaped commercial building, and 6 is a water cannon.

Architecture College unveils Rio Salado model

Under a new Rio Salado development plan, a portion of the Salt River would assume a new cultural, recreational and economic importance in the East Valley. The plan, put together by the ASU College of Architecture and Environmental Design (CAED), is the result of a \$100,000 study funded by ASU and the city of Tempe.

The Salt River channel between Mill Avenue and Rural Road would be filled with recycled water to form a series of lakes separated by a couple of islands. "The lakes are meant to be reminiscent of the old channel of the river," said John Meunier, dean of the CAED. "They quite clearly have recreational possibilities," including rowing, canoeing and sailing from a boardwalk and marina on the north bank west of Rural.

Bridges on one of the islands would connect a trail for pedestrians, runners, bicyclists and horseback riders from Tempe Butte to Papago Park. The islands and the low land close to the water would be landscaped naturally to resemble the historical riverbed, before any upstream dams were built.

Along the historical Salt River there were cottonwood and willow trees and shrubs, much like the Verde River

looks today. Farther from the river were fairly dense growths of mesquite trees and shrubs.

Potential flood damage would be minimal in this area. "It is landscape that would regenerate itself," said ASU planning professor Ted Cook. On higher ground would go gardens and formal walkways that would be "an attempt to blend the urban ornamental environment with the natural landscape," Cook said.

A relocated Rio Salado Parkway and all buildings would be "way up and out of the 100-year floodplain," he said. The Salt River channel must be 1,000 feet wide and 30 feet deep to protect buildings erected along the banks from the 100-year flood level, according to hydrologists.

An amphitheater built directly north of Sun Devil Stadium would be a major element of the area. It would be suitable for pep rallies, tailgate parties and other activities. ASU could lease the facility to various groups to pay for its construction. A pedestrian bridge over Rio Salado Parkway would provide passage to the stadium grounds.

Commercial development could occur west of Rural along both riverbanks.

The city of Tempe might sponsor a development near the historical Hayden's Ferry location at the Mill Avenue bridge. A new ferry landing also would go there.

"We are suggesting a re-creation" of the original ferry, Cook said.

Meunier said the plans allow Tempe to "become much more of a destination" instead of a transit route. ASU would benefit, too. "The university is sort of lost behind 'A' Mountain (Tempe Butte) in the middle of Tempe," he said. In the Rio Salado plans, "this has become the front door of the university" to people coming off the proposed freeway north of the river.

ASU possibly could pay for its share of the development by leasing some of its land near the river for commercial use.

ASU and Tempe officials have reviewed the proposal, which includes plans for several thousand parking spaces.

"Both sides need to get together and decide where to go from here," Cook said. "None of this is really carved in stone yet," so no official cost estimates or timetables have been set. "Hopefully, within a few years we'll see the beginning," he said.—SK