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## Ward 3 Community Character & Vitality Conversation November 28, 2011

### Comments Received and Responses

*This document provides a listing of the comments received during the Community Character & Vitality Conversation at Ward 3 and responses that include refinements to the initial responses provided at the meeting for clarity and correctness.*

#### **Grant Road District Overlay function:**

- Explain how the overlay district would function differently from the current zoning process? How is it faster, more efficient? Who establishes the overlay district design standards?

*The Grant Road District optional urban overlay would provide property owners and developers who opt into it a swifter and more efficient City of Tucson review process. Through the development of the optional urban overlay district the re-zoning process will be completed for the area and will ONLY take affect if a property owner or developer chooses to opt into it. Once someone chooses to opt into the Grant Road District they will no longer need to go through the re-zoning process for the property as it will already be complete. This will save time and allow the property owner or developer to skip a major step required to re-develop a property.*

*By opting into the Grant Road District property owners and developers will have to adhere to a set of design standards currently being developed by the Grant Road Improvement Plan design team which could include different mixes of land uses, lower or higher building heights and buffering of residential properties. These design standards will be developed over the next year during the Grant Road District planning process with input from the community, review by the Grant Road Citizens Task Force, and ultimately determined by the Tucson Mayor and Council.*

- What is the advantage to a property owner to go with the overlay? What's the incentive? Mixed use is like what is at 6<sup>th</sup> and Campbell (Sam Hughes Place)?

*The incentives for opting into the Grant Road District optional urban overlay will be that the property owner or developer can skip the City of Tucson re-zoning process as it will have already been done through the Grant Road District and will automatically take effect when the property*

This is a project of the Regional Transportation Authority.

The voter-approved, \$2.1 billion RTA plan will be implemented through 2026. Details about the full plan are available at [www.RTAmobility.com](http://www.RTAmobility.com).

The Regional Transportation Authority has a nine-member board with representatives from local, state and tribal governments.

This project will be managed by the City of Tucson.

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*owner opts into it. Other incentives could include: allowing for different mixes of land use and higher or lower building heights as well as more flexible parking standards. These design standards and incentives will be developed over the next year during the planning process for the Grant Road District.*

*Sam Hughes Place at 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Campbell Avenue is one type of mixed use development.*

- Is this an all Grant Road area rezoning? (Subject to opt into the overlay)  
*The re-zoning will only take effect if the property is within the Grant Road District optional overlay boundaries, which focus on properties that front onto Grant Road and other major arterials, and the property owner or developer decides to opt into the overlay district, otherwise current zoning will stay as it is today.*
- When you use the words “new development”, what does this mean?  
*Typically “new development” refers to development that will occur now or in the future; in some cases the “new development” is illustrative of what could be developed once the Grant Road District overlay is in place.*
- Will the overlay district supersede the Jefferson Park Neighborhood Preservation Zone?  
*No. The overlay is an additional option for property owners and developers to choose from. With the exception of the commercial areas at Euclid and Campbell there is little opportunity for redevelopment along the Grant Road frontage in the Jefferson Park area.*
- Step down heights on buildings - how high? (Note: the pictures in the PowerPoint look like 8-9 stories). Can block neighborhood’s view of the mountains.  
*The conceptual simulations of potential new development shown in the PowerPoint showed buildings between 3 and 4 stories. Depending upon the location along Grant Road and its relationship to existing surrounding development heights will likely vary between 1 to 6 stories maximum.*
- Regarding parking relocation, will it be adequate so as not to impact neighborhoods (ex. Jefferson Park, Catalina Vista neighborhoods).  
*Yes, parking could be relocated behind or to the side of buildings, where some portion of parking is provided in many developments along Grant Road today, or become shared parking between two or more properties that have different hours of operation. Substandard parking at impacted businesses will be addressed during the redevelopment process thereby minimizing or*

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*eliminating overflow parking that may currently be occurring in the neighborhoods.*

- Competition of cars from parking in the back of buildings will increase traffic intensity (at neighborhood access points).

*This type of concern is what the project team is looking for so as to be able to address it during the upcoming planning process through access options and traffic calming improvements.*

- What is the timeline and paperwork involved with opting in to the overlay district?

*Once the optional overlay district is adopted a property owner can opt in to the district at any time by submitting a development plan demonstrating compliance with the development and design standards of the overlay district. This is subject to administrative review and approval. A timeline for that review will be established upon adoption of the overlay district.*

- Are there any approved overlay zones in Tucson to date?

*An overlay district was approved by the Tucson Mayor and Council as part of the Downtown Links project. Also, another overlay district is being developed for the Main Gate area. It is important to recognize that overlay zoning and the use of a form-based code format are only methods for defining and implementing zoning standards, the content of the zoning, such as building heights, relationship to adjacent streets and neighborhoods, etc. is customized for each overlay zoning district. So, the development that results from the Downtown Links overlay would be quite different from that that would result from the Grant Road District overlay.*

- Can you get into the overlay district buy-in process as an individual property owner? Need to avoid a piecemeal process.

*Yes, but it is hoped that the overlay district will provide incentives and opportunities for multiple owners to join together for redevelopment, and that initial developments that opt-in will encourage additional properties to opt-in.*

- If you have an adjacent property how do you start to get in to the overlay district process?

*The reason that the overlay district map is labeled “draft” is that during the public process of refining and adopting the overlay district, there will be opportunities to either expand or contract the boundaries if appropriate. If you want to propose an adjustment to the district boundary you should provide a comment to the design team, through the website, an email, or at a public meeting, defining the proposed adjustment and the reasoning for the request.*

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- If you have property currently within the overlay district can you opt in now?  
*No. The Grant Road District optional urban overlay is still in draft form. The planning process will take approximately one year to complete (fall 2012). The Grant Road District will then be considered by Tucson's Mayor and Council. If the Mayor and Council approve the Grant Road District it will then be implemented and property owners can opt into it.*
- Let's not forget that we need someone at Development Services who will make sure this grand design (overlay district) is followed.  
*The Grant Road Improvement design team is working with City staff to ensure that the overlay zoning can be effectively implemented to achieve the community's vision for the future of development along Grant Road.*

**Open Space and Parks:**

- Will there be small land parcels owned by the City that can be developed into pocket parks?  
*There is the potential for small remnant land parcels to be developed into pocket parks. The areas along Grant Road where the community desires open space or pocket parks will be determined during the next year of planning for the Grant Road District. The city will also need to give consideration to both the development and maintenance costs for additional public parks. In addition, the Grant Road District will likely have open space requirements for both residential and non-residential development.*

**Neighborhood Protection and Enhancement:**

- The "optional" overlay could possibly lead to intense development. So why should the neighborhoods support the overlay?  
*The possibility for more intense development exists; however, one of the primary goals of the Grant Road District optional overlay will be to protect the neighborhoods from the effects of development by keeping the intensity concentrated at the street frontage with parking and landscape buffers at the rear of the property. It could also provide the adjacent neighborhoods with more convenient services within walking distance.*
- Have you done research on what kind of development neighborhood areas could use? (Example: Need more entertainment places, a gas station ...)  
*There have been 28 opportunities for the public to provide input on the character and vitality of Grant Road to date. Questions asked at these public input opportunities included what type of development neighborhoods would like to see in their area. The project team has kept track of this input. Also, the design team has included economic consultants*

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*and has received a range of comments from Tucson real estate developers in terms of what the market can build and local demographics and household economics can support.*

- Jefferson Park neighborhood is pending historic (needs to be visible from the road) designation so please consider this.  
*This is being considered in the development of the Grant Road District, and there will be additional opportunities for Jefferson Park residents and landowners to provide input (see the Public Input and Review section below).*
- Noise and smells added to criteria for aesthetics. I would like to put on record an addition to the stated aesthetics criteria - I generally heard “what it looks like” - but the noise generated by businesses (generators, fans, music) and smells (smoke, chemicals) are also important.  
*The Grant Road District overlay is being developed to include performance standards to mitigate and avoid potential impacts, such as noise, odors, and traffic.*

**Extent of the Grant Road District Overlay:**

- Who makes the overlay district boundary decisions?  
*Tucson’s Mayor and Council will ultimately decide on the Grant Road District boundaries with input from the Grant Road design team, city staff, the community, property owners, and the review and comment of the Grant Road Citizens Task Force; much the same as was done in the approval of the Grant Road Improvement Plan’s design for the roadway alignment and features.*
- Could the overlay district boundaries change? What is the timeline for this?  
*The Grant Road District optional urban overlay boundaries are draft and have the potential to change through the planning process. The planning process is anticipated to take approximately one year to complete (fall 2012).*
- My property at 2854 E. Grant Road has been cut (approximately) in half with the southern boundary line. Why have other properties on the map had deep boundaries to include the entire site?  
*Several requests from property owners with similar situations have been received and the project team is considering revising the Grant Road District boundaries to include individual properties fronting on Grant Road that have areas with existing commercial and R-2 zoning designations.*

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**Business and Economic Development:**

- It would be helpful to attract businesses and developments to promote aesthetics (clean up the area from trash, get rid of billboards, put utility wires underground).  
*Yes, the Grant Road Improvement Plan team is planning to define a set of implementation strategies to support revitalization of uses along Grant Road, in addition to the incentives of the Grant Road District which will promote improved aesthetics.*
- So we should look at this as a “business friendly” zone?  
*Yes, one of the goals of the RTA improvements is to encourage economic development in areas appropriate for those types of uses such as along major arterial streets. The resultant sales tax revenues help generate future funds for additional roadway improvements throughout the community.*

**Public Input and Review:**

- Regarding the neighborhood and area plan recommendations - will we the neighborhoods get the specific amendment information? (For example page number, paragraph etc.)  
*Yes, the specific details regarding the amendments to the area and neighborhood plans will be provided to the neighborhoods for their review prior to the amendment being submitted to the Tucson Planning Commission and Mayor and Council for consideration.*
- Can you leave the big maps at the Ward office so we can study them?  
*The large maps showing the draft Grant Road District boundaries are available on the project website at [www.grantrroad.info](http://www.grantrroad.info) and at the Ward 3 office.*
- I like what I’m hearing. Do you have in mind the different views of neighborhoods regarding the overlay? Is consensus possible? Will there be more than one meeting with the neighborhoods?  
*There have been 28 opportunities for the public to provide input on the character and vitality of the roadway to date and the project team has kept track of the comments received. There were 10 presentations on the Grant Road District and land use planning for the roadway given to active Neighborhood Associations along Grant Road in October and November, 2011. The next time the project team meets with individual neighborhoods will be to discuss the proposed amendments to Area and Neighborhood Plans necessary to create the Grant Road District. These meetings will take place between February and April 2012. The neighborhoods will be notified of these meetings as they are scheduled. Also, the Grant Road District overlay is being developed to have different zoning categories to allow for*

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*variations in development standards that reflect the varied existing conditions, the relationship to surrounding development, and the varied real estate market support for revitalization along Grant Road.*

**Grant Road Improvement Project**

- Only right turns allowed into neighborhoods with the Grant Road design? *Right turns are allowed into the neighborhoods with the new Grant Road design. There will be a median dividing the 3 lanes of traffic in each direction on the improved roadway. Cut outs in the median will allow left turns at certain points along the roadway.*
- Red light running has an impact on neighborhoods. I am curious as to what the Grant Road Improvement Plan could do about this? Do you already have entry/exit streets identified within/to Jefferson Park neighborhood? *Entry and exit streets into Jefferson Park neighborhood have been identified during the roadway design phase. The improved roadway is designed for a 35 mph speed limit. The 30% design plans for Grant Road between Oracle Road and Swan Road are available on the project website homepage at [www.grantroad.info](http://www.grantroad.info) under the section titled Quick Links.*
- Bicycle boulevards - does that mean Seneca St.? What do we need to do to get these going? Bike boulevards could address speeding on neighborhood streets. *The concept design planning process for the parallel bicycle boulevards on Copper-Flower and Seneca is complete and available on the Grant Road website ([www.grantroad.info](http://www.grantroad.info)). The Department of Transportation is working on obtaining funding to implement the bicycle boulevards. The Regional Transportation Authority only funded the concept design and planning process for the bicycle boulevards through the Grant Road Improvement Plan. The bicycle boulevards could be constructed incrementally depending on when funding is secured. The Department of Transportation Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Manager, Tom Thivener is the appropriate contact for information related to the Copper-Flower and Seneca bicycle boulevards.*
- Campbell and Grant intersection - will it continue to have traffic lights? People use neighborhood streets to avoid this creating an impact on the neighborhoods. *There will still be traffic lights at the Grant Road and Campbell Avenue intersection. An indirect left turn will be constructed at this intersection, making the intersection much more efficient from a traffic engineering standpoint.*

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- How has the Park Avenue enhancement project been considered with this project?  
*During the design phase of the Park Avenue Transportation Enhancement project, the design team will meet with the Grant Road planning team to ensure that planned improvements do not conflict with the future widening of Grant Road.*
- There is a need for a buffer at 1<sup>st</sup> and Grant and Campbell and Grant...intense traffic impacts such as air quality..sound buffer?  
*As of right now there are no plans for a sound wall along Grant Road. Rubberized asphalt will be used on the new roadway and has been shown to provide the same noise reduction results as sound walls. However, buffers come in a number of forms such as buildings and landscaping and all forms will be considered.*
- Please do NOT use sound walls unless they are so heavily landscaped that they cannot be graffitied. Otherwise sound walls will just become an eye sore with graffiti. Please use lots of native trees for sound buffers.  
*Comments similar to these were taken into consideration during the roadway design phase of the project.*
- If you have Tucson Electric Power (TEP) lines and grow trees, TEP will cut down the trees when relocating their lines.  
*The roadway design has been closely coordinated with Tucson Electric Power Company and other utilities in order to avoid any such conflicts.*
- Will rubberized asphalt be used?  
*Yes.*