



This project is managed by the City of Tucson.

For more information please visit www.grantroad.info or call the project hotline at 624-4727.

Ward 6 Community Character & Vitality Conversation November 30, 2011

Comments Received and Responses

This document provides a listing of the comments received during the Community Character & Vitality Conversation at Ward 6 and responses that include refinements to the initial responses provided at the meeting for clarity and correctness.

Grant Road District Overlay function:

- Regarding the overlay and existing zoning - is it a dual track process for the property owner to consider? So if there is a questionable use which use would dominate? With the overlay zone and form based code..let's say someone develops using current zoning and then wants to use the overlay zone, how would that work? I thought the idea of form based code would be to get away from uses..strict separation of uses...so then who defines the uses?

Property owners must choose one of the two processes. They can develop under the current zoning or opt to take advantage of the Grant Road District overlay. Once they choose the overlay, the current underlying zoning goes away. Uses will be defined in both the current zoning and the overlay. The overlay will include a more significant focus on the form of development and how it relates to the form of surrounding existing development along the roadway.

- Wouldn't the overlay include the current zoning?
Once a property owner or developer opts into the Grant Road District overlay the new zoning will take effect and current zoning will no longer apply to the property.
- If you develop with the overlay zone is that for perpetuity?
Yes, unless the property owner or developer chooses to go through the City of Tucson re-zoning process.

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.

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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- Since this is new, when will the process for amendments (to the overlay zone) be created? Maybe it better be considered now. What if I want to use the overlay zone but I need a tweak/variance, what do I do and how would the overlay zone have an incentive for me?
The process for amendment to the overlay zone will be the same process as the original adoption. It will require public meetings and hearings. The variance process will always be an option for a property owner. The project team's intent is to develop the optional overlay district in a manner to avoid that eventuality as much as possible. There will be a variety of incentives from which to choose. Each individual property will be unique and can take advantage of the appropriate incentives.
- The overlay zone is optional - what happens in the future when a property is sold? So your hypothetical 100' building will go away when? So in the future if you've opted into the overlay zone your building could still be sitting next to the 100' building because this can still be constructed under current zoning? [This question is related to the fact that a small number of properties along Grant Road that have a C-3 zoning designation which allows up to a 100' tall building, although other zoning and site conditions typically make the likelihood of achieving this height rather difficult]
The Grant Road District optional overlay will be available to all future property owners of properties included within the district boundaries. The owner of property with zoning that permits higher building heights can develop that property in accordance with current zoning standards. Because of Proposition 207 the City must be careful not to take any action that could be construed to diminish the value of the property. That is why the overlay zone is an optional and voluntary process.
- I keep hearing about this 100' height [allowed under current C-3 zoning], what would the new building height be [with the overlay]?
Different building heights will be part of the design standards developed through the planning process for the Grant Road District, including multiple opportunities for public review and input, and could vary for different sections of the roadway. The planning process is anticipated to take approximately one year to complete (fall 2012).
- There will be an issue with shared parking, too.
These types of issues are what the project team needs to know about as they develop the design standards for the overlay zone.

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- When you've got Country Club and Grant, current parking will be taken. Are you taking the colorful antique buildings and if so how far back? Parking would go toward the back? The thought is you'll maintain the character of the antique district?

The 30% design of the roadway improvements that has been developed to date does not impact the existing buildings, but does impact on-site parking. Moving parking behind structures where parking in the front will be acquired for the road widening is one option for replacing parking. The replacement of parking will be determined during the completion of design for each phase prior to the start of construction for that phase. The Country Club phase is the final phase scheduled for construction and is anticipated to take place in the RTA's Funding Period 4 sometime between 2022-2026.

Open Space and Parks:

- Will there be public parks along the roadway?
Public parks and open space is one option that could be implemented through the Grant Road District. The City will need to consider the cost of park construction and maintenance when deciding if new public parks along the roadway are a viable option. In addition, the Grant Road District will likely have open space requirements for both residential and non-residential development.

Extent of the Grant Road District Overlay:

- Overlay zone - how will it apply to narrow remnant parcels? I look at the plans to push buildings closer to Grant Road - what about the future buildings?
In some cases remnant parcels may be too small for anything other than landscaped open spaces. In other cases they may be combined with adjacent properties to provide redevelopment opportunities.
- One of the concerns in our neighborhood - a Seneca boundary is shown can you come up with a better hand out to explain this.
This boundary has been changed on the draft Grant Road District maps. The maps are available on the project website at www.grantroad.info and at the Ward 6 Office.
- How would this apply to the other (road widening projects) areas?
Should the community have a vision for change along a roadway, when undertaking the planning for other road widening projects the potential for location-specific overlay districts may also be considered by the City of Tucson.

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Business and Economic Development:

- What about a business that is marginal vs. moved? They can't afford higher rent in a new/redeveloped area. I think that we will end up with a sterile streetscape and we'll end up with chain and big box stores. I'm in favor of walkable streets, but you need to have something (local businesses) for people to walk to.

A goal of the overlay district is to provide design and development standards different from those currently employed by the City of Tucson codes. These standards are being crafted to help avoid the "sterile", typical look of more traditional development.

- Who is looking at economic development and business development for the City? Is there a Task Force for that?

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 economic development.

- Any consideration to use tax breaks to help businesses develop?

The Grant Road Improvement Plan project does not have the authority to provide tax breaks to aide businesses seeking to re-develop.

- I think we help businesses all the time (for example Raytheon), why not help small businesses?

The Grant Road Improvement Plan project does not have the authority to provide tax breaks to aide businesses seeking to re-develop. 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 these incentives the Grant Road District will promote economic development and support of businesses that can be accommodated in the Grant Road District overlay.

- In the vision you already have, have there been feelers/interests for reinvestments?

A number of property owners have approached the City of Tucson with plans to redevelop parcels along Grant Road. Some are looking to redevelop in the short term and some are looking at how their property could be redeveloped after Grant Road is reconstructed.

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- I think you have done a great job with all of these meetings, but I need specific development help and to have MainStreet help us and have meetings with us.

The RTA's MainStreet Business Assistance program is available for free to property owners and tenants in construction projects. Call 838-4352 or email bdornquast@mainstreetinfo.org for more information.

Public Input and Review:

- So who gets to decide what the overlay zone will look like along certain chunks of Grant Road?

The project team has been and continues to collect public input on what type of character the community would like along Grant Road throughout the Grant Road District optional overlay planning process. The planning process is anticipated to take approximately one year to complete (fall 2012). The Tucson Mayor and Council ultimately determine what types of character and design standards will be included in the Grant Road District.

- So at this point in time this is how we talk to you (the meeting tonight) about what we want? The maps on the tables show the overlay zone boundaries?

There will be multiple opportunities for the public to provide input on the Grant Road District and land use planning for Grant Road throughout the next year. The public will be notified of these opportunities as they are scheduled. Public input can also be provided by calling the project information line at (520) 624-4727 or by sending an email to information@grantroad.info.

The map provided at the Ward 6 community conversation shows the draft boundaries for the Grant Road District optional overlay. The maps are available on the project website at www.grantroad.info and at the Ward 6 office.

- Maybe at future Grant Road Improvement Plan meetings we could have City staff from other departments (for example Planning and Development Services) be at these meetings.

We will take this into consideration and request attendance from appropriate other departments as needed. In particular, Planning and Development Services will be actively involved in the Area and Neighborhood Plan Amendments as well as the future optional overlay zone.

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- If it ends up looking like your drawings (in the PowerPoint), it could be really spiffy.
The project team is developing more detailed drawings and conceptual simulations to be shown in the future throughout the Grant Road District planning process.
- I applaud the way you're doing this because I'm aware how developers were hamstrung, if this works a property owner has more flexibility.

Grant Road Improvement Project

- What is the anticipated budget for the 5 miles? How much will be spent on public art out of the total budget? The wall design for Campbell was done by Kevin Osborne. Will there be another wall? We would like to have input on that.
The total budget for the project is \$166 Million. 1% of the construction budget for each segment is allotted for public art. The current total construction cost is estimated at approximately \$60 million. A Public Art Master Plan for the project was completed in fall 2010. Artists will be selected for each reconstruction phase. The public artist selection process is facilitated through the Tucson Pima Arts Council.
- There's a decent chance the project will run out of money, so have you thought about what you will do about that and amenities to the areas last on the project's schedule?
As of now the project is still on schedule and funding is continuing to be collected through the RTA's ½ cent sales tax approved by voters in 2006. During a Value Analysis process conducted by the RTA several months ago, a number of strategies were developed to reduce costs and will be considered during each design phase. However, the basic features of the concept design will not be compromised. The final report from the Value Analysis for the Grant Road Improvement Plans is available on the RTA's website at <http://www.rtamobility.com/documents/projectreview/GrantRoadValueAnalysis.pdf>
- Have you acquired property along Grant Road already? About how many millions of RTA money have you spent on acquisitions?
The Grant Road and Oracle Road intersection is the first phase of the Grant Road Improvement Plan scheduled for construction. Affected properties in this area have been acquired. Approximately \$6.5 million has been spent on right-of-way acquisitions at the Grant-Oracle intersection. Construction is anticipated to begin in early 2012.

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- There are so many hot spots along Grant Road; will some problems such as bus routes be addressed?
The Grant Road Improvement Project has not considered changes to bus routes. There will be a number of improvements to transit stops to improve the safety and convenience for transit riders. This will include bus pullouts to allow room for buses to get out of the traffic lane along with amenities such as shelters, trash receptacles, bike racks, lighting and improved signage.
- Are you considering a pedestrian cross over at Alvernon?
No. These structures are expensive and usually underutilized by the public. A variety of at-grade crosswalks have been incorporated into the Grant Road design to provide safe and efficient pedestrian crossings.