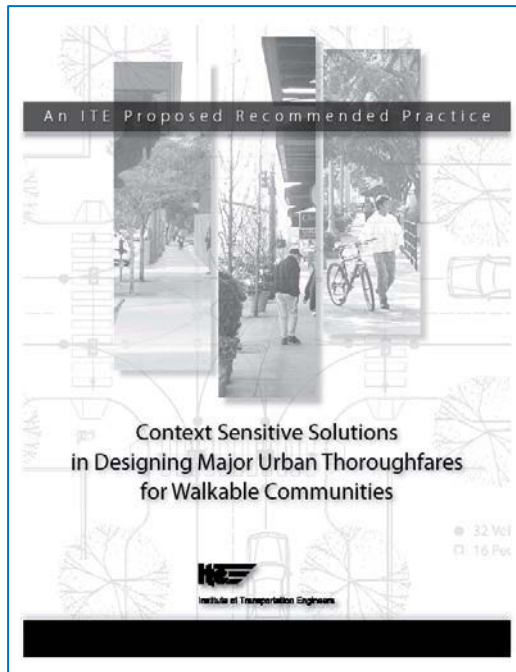


2 PLANNING AND PRELIMINARY DESIGN PROCESS

2.1 Context Sensitive Solutions



The City of Tucson selected the Institute of Transportation Engineer (ITE) proposed recommended practice, *Context Sensitive Solutions in Designing Major Urban Thoroughfares for Walkable Communities*, for planning and preliminary design of the Grant Road Improvement Plan. The Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) process, seeks to combine the art and science of developing places (including streets) in harmony with surrounding areas. CSS seeks to balance safety, mobility, community, and environmental goals in planning and designing a transportation project. It involves the early and continuous interaction with various community groups as stakeholders, uses an interdisciplinary team tailored to project needs, and addresses all modes of travel. It applies flexibility inherent in design standards and incorporates aesthetics as an integral part of good planning and design. In 2010, *Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares; A Context Sensitive Approach* (RP-036A) was approved by ITE as a recommended practice.

2.2 Planning and Preliminary Design Scope of Work

The Grant Road Improvement Plan began in April 2007 and proceeded in accordance with a detailed scope of work outlining project work activities, deliverables, and milestone deadlines. As the project evolved, the scope and schedule were refined to allow for more comprehensive public involvement, more interaction with the Citizen Task Force, and additional technical work associated with developing preliminary design plans for the 5-mile project, and land use policies and design guidelines for consideration by the Tucson Planning Commission. The project consisted of the two project phases described below and a scheduled completion in the fall of 2011.

Phase 1. Technical Assessment, Design Concepts, and Roadway Alignment Concept (completed January 2009)

In Phase 1, an extensive public involvement plan was implemented and a series of technical assessments were prepared to serve as input to the Task Force in developing a vision statement and guiding principles. This was accomplished during the 10-month period from May 2007 to February 2008. The remainder of 2008 was devoted to developing design criteria, design concepts, and a recommended preliminary roadway alignment that was approved by Mayor and Council in January 2009.

Phase 2. Preliminary Roadway Design and Community Character & Vitality Plan (to be completed fall 2011)

In Phase 2, development of preliminary roadway design plans and a community character and vitality plan were prepared in parallel during the period February 2009 through fall of 2011. Roadway design plans and community character and vitality planning include meetings and coordination with the Citizen Task Force, the Grant Road Technical Advisory Committee, and the Tucson Department of Transportation (TDOT) Management Team. Phase 2 also includes community workshops, informational open houses, reports to the community, and website maintenance. The Design Concept Report (this document) documents Phase 1 and Phase 2 recommendations related to the preliminary roadway design. The recommendations related to the community character and vitality plan will be documented in a separate report (Community Character and Vitality Plan and Implementation Strategies).

Preliminary Roadway Construction Plans: Preliminary roadway design refined and advanced the conceptual alignment approved by Mayor and Council in January 2009 into initial geometric roadway centerline and right-of-way alignments for Grant Road for use in preliminary property acquisition. Preliminary roadway construction and associated right-of-way plans for Grant Road infrastructure include roadway, drainage, access, intersections, landscape, and utility improvements. During preliminary design, support was provided to the City Real Estate Division in the form of property access design, mitigation for property impacts, and legal descriptions. The City Real Estate Division is responsible for property acquisition for Grant Road improvements. The outcome of Phase 2 design activities is preliminary (30 percent) construction plans, construction cost estimates, and reconstruction sequencing recommendations. Roadway plans and typical cross-sections from the 30 percent construction plans prepared in Phase 2 are included in **Appendix A** of this report. The 30 percent plans will be advanced by the City through contracts for final project design and right-of-way acquisition.

Community Character and Vitality Planning: Community character and vitality planning defines an overall vision for the future of the land uses that front onto Grant Road, as well as provide policy direction for the reuse of excess properties that are acquired for the Grant Road improvements. The Community Character and Vitality Plan contains guidelines for development and redevelopment for properties that front Grant Road. The guidelines seek to:

- Refine current area and neighborhood plan land use and design guidance for properties along Grant Road—through an amendment to Area and Neighborhood Plans;
- Guide future land use change to achieve the community’s vision for the form and scale of future development;
- Primarily dealing with non-residential and mixed use properties, not existing single-family residential uses;
- Focus on the relationship and buffering between development along Grant Road and the neighborhoods behind;
- The City will not initiate rezoning of properties as a part of this planning effort.

The terms “community character” and “vitality” are used because the goals of this phase are more than a simple land use map; they are also related to making Grant Road more vital in terms of:

- The character of development and landscape that form the community context for Grant Road.
- The economics of the businesses along Grant Road;
- Community life along Grant Road and in the adjacent neighborhoods;
- The urban form of development (including scale and intensity of use) and the character of development and landscape that form the community context for Grant Road; providing illustrations and recommendations to communicate the design and scale of development along Grant Road. The guidance are not prescriptive, but provide guidance that can be adopted as an amendment to the Area and Neighborhood Plans along Grant Road; and,
- Identification of opportunity sites for new development and revitalization of existing development (this would be linked to access management, replacement parking, and other land use and urban design issues that result from impacts of the roadway improvements).

2.3 Citizen Task Force

A 19-member Citizen Task Force was formed and approved by Mayor and Council to work with the Grant Road Design Team to develop, evaluate, and select alternatives and to develop stakeholder-supported project recommendations for consideration by Mayor and Council. Task Force members were also tasked to provide effective communication between the neighborhoods, businesses, and other stakeholder groups they represent and the Design Team.

The Citizen Task Force represented the following groups and stakeholders.

- Neighborhood Associations
- Businesses
- Citizen Transportation Advisory Committee
- City Manager’s office
- Disabled community
- Alternate modes community
- Regional travelers
- City Planning Commission

The following ground rules were established to define the basic responsibilities of the Task Force.

- Work as a team with community residents, business owners along Grant Road, and residents of the larger Tucson region to select the best alternatives for roadway alignment, streetscape design, and revitalization for Grant Road.
- Be subject to the Citizen Advisory Committee rules contained in the Arizona Open Public Meeting Law (ARS Sec. 38-431, ET DEQ.).

- Limit discussions to issues relating to the development of the Grant Road Improvement Plan and Grant Road between Oracle Road and Swan Road and within one-quarter mile of the existing Grant Road centerline and endpoints.
- Work with the Grant Road Design Team to identify and evaluate alternative Grant Road improvement concepts and identify preferred concepts.
- Represent the interests of the stakeholder groups they represent and help provide effective two-way communication between them and the Design Team on key issues.
- Develop consensus recommendations regarding preferred concept alternatives, along with any applicable comments, for consideration by Mayor and Council.
- Mayor and Council will make final decisions regarding the project guided by a number of factors including Task Force recommendations, technical and planning analyses, community input, legal and regulatory considerations, and financial considerations.

2.4 Technical Advisory Committee

The City organized a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to provide technical guidance to the Grant Road Design Team throughout the development of the Grant Road Improvement Plan. The TAC consisted of representatives from the following technical organizations within and outside of the City.

- Tucson Real Estate
- Tucson Environmental Management
- Tucson Roadway Engineering
- Tucson Historic Resources
- Tucson Traffic Engineering/ITS
- Tucson Arts Integration/Deployment
- Tucson Bus/Rail Transit Planning
- Tucson Police Department
- Tucson Bike/Pedestrian Planning
- Tucson Fire Department
- Tucson Landscape Architecture / Urban Forestry
- Tucson Utilities
- Tucson Neighborhood Planning
- Tucson Floodplain Management
- Tucson Community Services
- Tucson Public Relations
- Pima County Department of Transportation
- Tucson Transportation Development Services
- University of Arizona
- Regional Transportation Authority/PAG

To facilitate ongoing coordination with the TAC, a TAC Management Team was formed to meet regularly with the Design Team. The following ground rules were established to define the basic responsibilities of the TAC.

- Review technical decisions and technical documents relative to their areas of technical expertise.
- Meet with the Management Team and members of the Design Team to review and comment on technical issues.
- Meet with the Management Team and Design Team to provide technical guidance, information, and timely response to specific technical issues.
- Review or coordinate the review of technical decisions and technical documents at the request of the Management Team.
- Communicate project issues, accomplishments, status, and events with their respective management and organization members.

2.5 Vision Statement and Guiding Principles

The Vision Statement and Guiding Principles for the Grant Road Improvement Plan were created using extensive public input, technical data, and the Task Force understanding of the project. It was finalized at the February 19, 2008 Task Force meeting. The verbatim Vision Statement and Guiding Principles (provided below) guide the planning and preliminary design of the Grant Road Improvement Plan.

Vision Statement

The improvements resulting from the Grant Road Improvement Plan will enhance safety and balance mobility and accessibility for all users including motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and those with disabilities. The Plan will direct the widening of Grant Road to six lanes, also improving its function as an urban arterial street within Tucson’s network of streets. The Plan will balance the needs of those traveling through the area on Grant Road with those who live, work, and shop along Grant Road.

The community values the scale, character, and diversity of the neighborhoods and businesses along Grant Road and the Plan will reflect these values. The Plan will recognize the diversity of residents and independent businesses along Grant Road, and will help them to revitalize the places in which they live and work.

The Plan will strive to improve the visual character and quality of Grant Road and the land uses along it, and it will define Grant Road as a unique and vital place that ultimately enhances the community and region as a whole.

The Grant Road planning process and its implementation will balance a long range vision with the definition of improvements and programs that fit within the financial resources identified for this project. It will be forward-thinking in its design, consider likely future trends and work to effect positive change to the environment and public health. It will set high standards for community involvement while providing an inspirational model for future Tucson roadway enhancements.

Guiding Principles

The Guiding Principles are organized into the following subject areas.

- Mobility and Access
- Character and Vitality
- Aesthetics and Environment
- Vision and Implementation

Mobility and Access mean moving along and connecting with uses on Grant Road — both for people living and working nearby and those passing through; both freeing up motion (mobility) and getting to specific destinations (access). Through mobility and access, the Plan will work toward sustainable transportation both for the local community and the Tucson region by doing the following:

- Balance the transportation needs of those traveling locally with those passing through Grant Road by:
 - improving Grant Road’s role in Tucson’s street network and its role for neighbors;
 - recognizing all populations using Grant Road; and by
 - increasing the efficiency of traffic flow along Grant Road while designing Grant Road and the context along it to encourage drivers to travel at safe speeds.
- Improve mobility and safety for all those traveling along and across Grant Road, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and those with disabilities, by:
 - recognizing that Grant Road is not the exclusive domain of cars;
 - improving access for all modes of travel to neighborhoods, commercial districts, schools (including the University and community colleges), and other destinations;
 - improving the physical conditions of the roadway, and the pedestrian and bicycle environments along and crossing Grant Road and on connecting streets;
 - improving transit stops and access to them as well as considering the land uses around them; and by
 - considering land use and other needs of transit, bicycle, and walking dependent populations.
- Balance mobility along and across Grant Road with access to businesses, residences, and other destinations along and nearby Grant Road by:
 - providing safe vehicular access to properties on Grant Road;
 - facilitating regional access to businesses (including deliveries) that avoids cut-through traffic impacts to adjacent neighborhoods; and,
 - improving neighborhood access to businesses and other destinations by providing quality connections for all users.
- Ensure that roadway improvements support and enhance the community’s values regarding the character, vitality, aesthetics, and environment of Grant Road by:
 - recognizing that different sections of Grant Road may require a different balance of mobility and access

- Provide the potential for future transit options, such as bus rapid transit, modern streetcar, light rail, or other high-capacity transit in the design of Grant Road improvements with the goal of minimizing future costs for construction and right-of-way acquisition.

Character and Vitality mean the health of the places surrounding Grant Road — neighborhoods and businesses, public space and activity, and private investment. Character and Vitality define the overarching goals for aspects of the study area such as housing, neighborhoods, employment, and public space. Through character and vitality, the Plan will work to enhance, in a fair manner, the economic and social environment of neighborhoods and districts by doing the following:

- Preserve and enhance the scale and character of existing residential neighborhoods by providing appropriate transitions and buffering from Grant Road and the uses fronting onto it to the neighborhoods behind.
- Support opportunities for a range of options for housing tenancy and housing type, which serve and expand upon the diversity of residents who live along and nearby Grant Road.
- Support the viability of small, local, and independent businesses.
- Preserve and enhance opportunities for a range of employment along Grant Road, including restaurants, retail, manufacturing, construction, repair, service, professional office and medical jobs.
- Create a cohesive public realm that adds new public spaces to existing parks, plazas, schools and other community gathering places; forming an accessible network that supports and is supported by the design and function of Grant Road, and the neighborhoods and businesses along it.
- Build on the attraction and strengths of community and social service organizations to revitalize districts and enhance the public realm with activity along Grant Road.
- Develop districts with multiple uses and shared parking that will be destinations for neighborhood residents as well as people from the region at large.
- Recognize the differences in demographics, environment, scale, neighborhoods, business types, and other aspects of character; and use them to reinforce the identities of Grant Road’s Community Character Segments.
- Work to create safer environments that discourage crime and increase personal safety.
- Support and build upon ethnic diversity in relation to the social and economic vitality in the Grant Road Study Area.
- Encourage private investment that revitalizes opportunity sites along Grant Road.

Aesthetics and Environment build upon the principles set out in Character and Vitality by focusing on the details of key issues such as climate, utilities, views and the watershed. Through aesthetics and environment, the Plan will work toward human and ecological sustainability of Grant Road and the neighborhoods and districts along it to the benefit of those in the Study Area and the greater Tucson region by doing the following:

- Create an aesthetically pleasing, comfortable, inviting environment, both in the street right-of-way and in adjacent public spaces, that is framed by the buildings and landscapes that front Grant Road.

- Enhance the identities of Grant Road’s Community Character Segments through the creation of business clusters, streetscape design, and other elements.
- Capitalize on Grant Road’s natural environment and regional scenery through climate adaptation, utilization of desert plants (especially those native to the Tucson basin), topography, key views and the integration of aesthetic and environmental design.
- Capitalize on Tucson’s culture, through urban form, architectural styles, public art, and other elements.
- Mitigate utility issues including overhead wires, to the extent financially feasible.
- Mitigate watershed issues such as flooding, stormwater runoff, ecological health and water harvesting in a holistic manner.
- Mitigate noise impacts of traffic on Grant Road utilizing a range of techniques that are appropriate to the surrounding context.

Vision and Implementation mean making the vision for Grant Road’s future a reality. Through vision and implementation, in a fair manner, the Plan will work incrementally towards long-term sustainability in transportation, economy, livability and ecology by doing the following:

- Define a long-range vision as well as priorities that can be achieved within the budget and timing of the Grant Road Improvement Plan.
- Define cost-efficient and effective phases for successful implementation.
- Protect the viability of businesses during construction by maintaining their visibility, their parking, and access to them.
- Provide information and technical assistance to residential and business property owners directly impacted by the Grant Road Plan.
- Define the improvements so that the vision can be achieved incrementally with both the RTA funding base and additional public and private funding to enhance the improvements.
- Identify and give priority to the implementation of those improvements that provide the most benefit and that address those issues that are a priority concern to the public.