

Executive Summary Grant Road Corridor Community Conversations



City of Tucson
October-November, 2006



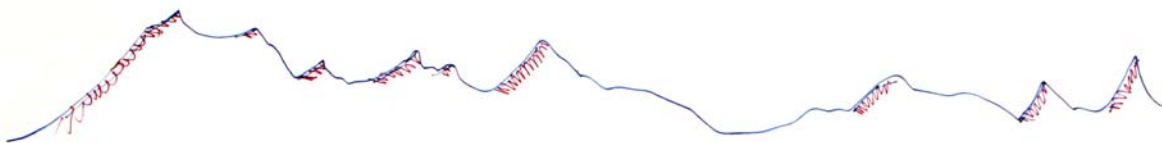
City of Tucson Department of Transportation

Themed Public Responses:

- The Grant Road corridor has a rich and diverse character, mainly due to the “quirky” “eclectic” “rough around the edges” mix of local businesses; residents enjoy this mix and feel it makes the corridor unique.
- The “sense of place” on Grant Road is based mainly upon the public’s anecdotal experiences. Residents have a lot of knowledge about the history of the corridor and its current everyday uses; they are concerned about maintaining the history of their neighborhoods and the businesses that are within walking distance of those neighborhoods.
- Grant Road was developed by land/business speculators and, therefore, has always looked like a strip/commercial development. People are aware of the degraded conditions along Grant Road and that it (as well as some of the specific physical structures along it) is “ugly”.
- The diverse mix of neighborhoods and original local businesses makes Grant Road different than other major arterial roadways such as Speedway or some roadway sections in Oro Valley.
- Grant Road is not just a corridor to its residents—it’s a community.
- The mountain views create a defining visual backdrop for Grant Road.

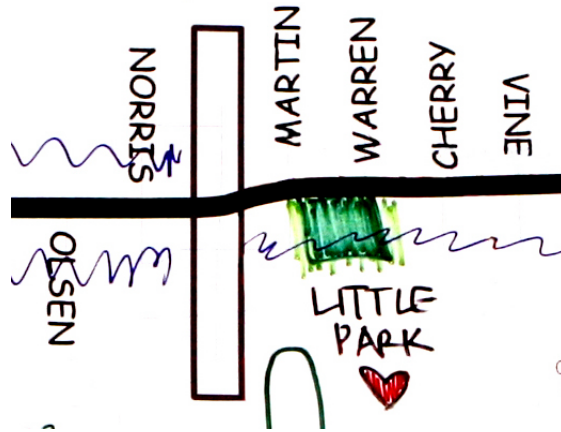
Suggested Planning Principles:

- ✓ Maintain and protect the diverse local and historic character of the corridor.
- ✓ Protect mountain vistas.



Question 2:

What elements of the Grant Road corridor have and/or will have lasting, positive community value for decades and why?



“Grant Road contains sights that are almost forgotten in Tucson, like people walking with children and strollers.” (October 11)

“The mountain views and natural plants, and the animals.” (October 21)

“Pocket parks, the scale and orientation of buildings to the street.” (November 15)

Themed Public Responses:

- Residents want “walkable” neighborhoods—those with businesses and services they can easily walk to. Their vision of Grant Road is that of a pedestrian-friendly, neighborhood-oriented corridor.
- Grant Road can be a multi-modal (pedestrians, bicycles, buses and cars) project but safety is an issue; there must be prominent, easily accessed, and safe pedestrian/bicycle crossings. Consideration must be given to the people with disabilities (e.g. wheelchairs) who “navigate” along the corridor.
- The perspective of the commuter must be balanced with that of the businesses and residents along the corridor. [Note: There was little conversation regarding how Grant Road changes would affect the City/metro area as a whole.]
- Grant Road is an important roadway with distinctly different neighborhoods on either side. The road should not further divide these areas but should bring them together by making crossing easier.

- The aesthetics of the corridor and intersections are of high interest/concern to residents.
- Grant Road has been and should remain a “good neighbor place” where residents care about the area in which they live.

Suggested Planning Principles:

- ✓ Evoke a visual sense of the uniqueness of Tucson throughout the corridor.
- ✓ Reflect the character of the small local businesses and the neighborhoods in the planning and design.
- ✓ Take advantage of multi-modal opportunities for travel between neighborhoods and businesses to create interconnectivity and develop a comprehensive “sense of place”.



- It is important to retain local, historic businesses and restaurants that serve the neighborhoods (i.e., people who walk from home, commuters, and tourists).
- Grant Road could be a national model for something unique: e.g. a four-mile-long walking/multi-modal mall and/or a “Wi-Fi wired” corridor.
- Local businesses should be encouraged to incorporate unique logos (i.e., the concept of ‘branding’ as emphasizing sense of place) into a design that could be used along sections of the roadway.
- Connections to surrounding neighborhoods and beyond should be emphasized (for example, to the Campbell Road corridor, the University Medical Center, the University of Arizona, and Mountain Avenue Bike Corridor).

Suggested Planning Principles:

- ✓ Enhance the multi-modal functionality of Grant Road and adjacent areas.
- ✓ Enhance the quality and character by maintaining the local flavor of Grant Road.
- ✓ Maintain and enhance Grant Road’s “sense of place” by connecting local businesses and the neighborhoods using unique “branding”.



Question 4:

How can you contribute to developing a proactive connection with the Grant Road corridor as a “sense of place”?



“City should take these conversations ‘on the road’.” (October 11)

“As a neighborhood, we are willing to help...” (October 21)

“Willing to look at bigger picture—not just ‘my’ property.” (November 15)

Themed Public Responses:

- “Sense of place” continues to be influenced by doubts or questions over what was voted on (in the RTA). Some residents believe that widening the roadway will ruin their businesses and/or neighborhoods, while others welcome change. There is an awareness that the changes will affect them personally.
- Businesses and neighborhoods both expressed willingness to remain engaged in the process. Neighborhoods want to keep their identities intact. Some neighborhoods and businesses are willing to make sacrifices in order to achieve a livable Grant Road that preserves its character. They want to ‘make this work’ and be proud of it.
- Participants acknowledge that Grant Road will change, but many say they are open to change. Businesses and neighborhoods are interested in trade-offs that will preserve those aspects of the corridor that are most important to them. Each group demonstrated their appreciation for the opportunity to voice their concerns early in the process.

- Participants believe they have the capacity and the interest to creatively consider and clearly share their thoughts on what “sense of place” means for Grant Road. They feel they have good ideas and experiences to draw upon, and that concerns and ideas about the proposed design should be taken into account.
- There have been both expressions of concern regarding how “government” will handle this project, and indications of desire for transparent, open communication. Participants liked the dialogue format and want to be kept abreast of the process; they want City leaders and staff to be honest.
- Conflicting opinions were expressed regarding the value of the Community Conversations, including: this is a great ‘listening’ process that residents want to continue, residents could help host a neighborhood listening session, and this process should ‘go on the road’; AND this is a waste of time.
- Other comments: A segment of the community wants to be ‘heard’ and a segment wants to be ‘told’; although the City has a great public participation process with regard to larger, high-profile roadway projects, there is still mistrust toward City government, which hinders open and honest communication.

Suggested Planning Principles:

- ✓ Continue to educate the public and support active, open public engagement and communication.
- ✓ Build upon the community’s resources, insights, knowledge, and willingness to accept changes or trade-offs.
- ✓ Be open to learning from the community.



Doolen School, Northeast Corner of Grant and Country Club, circa 1940's