



The Grant Road Improvement Plan is Funded by the Regional Transportation Authority.

Arcadia Alamo Area Plan Proposed Amendment Meeting
Thursday, April 12, 2012
Ward 6 Office - 3202 E. 1st Street
5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

11 people in attendance
5 people from the Arcadia Alamo Area Plan

The following are the comments received from participants at the Arcadia Alamo Area Plan Proposed Amendment Meeting held on April 12, 2012 and the responses provided by Grant Road Improvement Plan team members. Clarifications and additional information to the responses are provided in brackets [].

Questions and Comments Received and Answers Provided Related to the Arcadia Alamo Area Plan

- If you live in a residential neighborhood (for example, south side of a street is residential with houses and on the other side it is commercial) are you saying if those properties opt in then across the street a building could be built that is 40 ft high? I'm talking about the Dunkin' Donuts on Grant Road (at Swan); behind it there are houses in the zone. So potentially those houses could be turned into commercial homes and they would be on the other side of the street (from residential properties)? But they are houses right now. My concern is that you would have a business right on the other side of your house because it is a neighborhood.
- Houses shouldn't be included unless the property is being acquired for the new roadway. Those properties are already zoned commercial. Let us take a look at that. We'll double check that. These are the kinds of comments we are looking for. Thank you.
- I live on North Street and it is just a cul de sac of five houses. But on the North side they're currently zoned as commercial houses so they are in the zone (Draft Grant Road District boundary). On the south side they are residential. So that is my concern.
-That could be a problem and we'll have to take a look at that and see how we would handle that. Our next step is to review the boundaries. We've had a lot of people request to opt-in or express concerns that they don't want to be included so we're going to take an in-depth look at all the boundaries one by one and go through and see if it really makes sense where it is.

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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- Has anybody mentioned anything about the residential area east of Arcadia which is on the south side of Grant on just east of the border of Arcadia there's residential properties (mobile home park). Could they be affected? East of Swan. That would be a boundary of your overlay and just on the other side is residential. Will that area be affected by mixed use?
-It doesn't apply to this property (identifies on the PowerPoint slide) but whatever is re-developed there would have to meet the design standards that I talked about. They would have to have the kind of setbacks, building heights, buffers that would respect what is going on over here (identifies mobile home park on the PowerPoint slide). They would probably need to do traffic calming for the streets that are adjacent to it as well. So that would be the impact on that. They would get more protection as result of the re-development.
- Let's go up-just north on Swan where the boundary is at Water and San Carlos, those are residential properties -what happens to them?
-Nothing happens to them. It's the same thing. Where the Walgreens is (identifies on the PowerPoint slide), if they were to re-develop they would have to make sure the buffering was sensitive to these edges adjacent homes and keeping in mind that this is already a commercial zone so it could also re-develop under the existing zoning. But they wouldn't have to meet any of those standards, buffers that we talked about and so forth (if developed under existing zoning).
- The border where it goes north and you see San Carlos and that whole area that goes east of there cannot be more than 25'?
-Right, along that boundary. But it would be setback a certain distance, at least 22 feet. And then it would be 25 ft for the first level.
- On the overlay, the map shows Arcadia as a boundary. It shows Water Street as another boundary north of Swan. On the east on Grant Road, Arcadia is a boundary of the overlay, is that set in cement by the development?
-No, it is not set in cement today because this is a draft boundary. What we are trying to do is get input from people. We've heard from a number of people who want us to change the boundary in certain places and we're evaluating that. We'll be coming back with a revised boundary soon we hope.

Questions and Comments Received and Answers Provided Related to the Overall Grant Road District Optional Overlay Zone

- You talked about buffers and walls to discourage driving through neighborhoods, can you elaborate on that?
- There are some standards in the Draft Grant Road District document and they vary a little bit. The idea is that there will be buffers in between the non-residential uses and the residential areas that are in the neighborhood. The idea is that there would be a wall required to be built by the developer and landscaping that screens it. I don't off the top of my head remember the amount of landscaping, the depth of it the walls, typically a 6' wall, though there are allowances for walls higher than that. This would be part of the process as the City reviews the application from a developer. They would make that decision. Do they need to have a higher wall or a deeper landscape buffer?

[The initial draft of the Grant Road District design standards generally requires a minimum buffer width of 8 feet when adjacent to existing residential zones and a screen height of 8 feet. As mentioned, these requirements will be reviewed in preparation of the revised draft Grant Road District design standards.]

- As someone outside of the boundary I don't really have any input in the conversation, right?
- We are recording your comments. That would be a concern, that the adjoining adjacent residential properties are concerned about potential commercial development being included.
- In this little segment the Grant Road District boundaries include properties north and south of Grant, but in other segments it's not, it's only on the north. When you start this you are going to change the character of the properties on the south side, so I wonder why those properties aren't included. Not for this area, but in general. Why would you skip one side of the road?
- For the most part we have not skipped. The Grant Road District is in different Area and Neighborhood Plans so when we show them we only show the part that is applicable to that particular Area or Neighborhood Plan. For instance at the west end, the Cragin Keeling Plan is everything to the north of Grant, while the University Area Plan on the other side of the street is everything south of Grant. We showed generally the area, but focused specifically on the parts included in the Grant Road District draft boundaries.
- Where my house is you are going to put one of those delayed left turns, but I am not in the Grant Road District, yet you are certainly altering the character.
- The Grant Road District draft boundaries were drawn to reflect existing zoning along Grant Road. In some cases they tried to respect ownership, so there may have been a situation where a property owner also owned the piece of property behind the property fronting on Grant Road which wasn't zoned commercially, but because of the similar ownership it was included in these boundaries. The idea was to minimize the amount of area that this overlay zone applied to, without people requesting to be included in it. That's how the draft boundaries were determined - a combination of existing zoning, what the Area and Neighborhood Plans currently recommend, and property ownership.
- If I understand correctly, the current zoning allows pretty much no more than 40' in height. But you are going to be allowing more intensive heights in particularly the Center Marketplace example, which includes Crossroads Festival. If the overlay were adopted and they were to opt in then they could potentially re-develop up as high as 65', which is a 5 story building. Even though they may have 25' at the property line, and after 15' in they could still step up to 65' if they wanted. I'm guessing you guys did a lot of research before you made the decision to opt for this concept that is basically generally raising the heights along Grant Road. I'm wondering what precedents, what other cities you studied where this model was implemented and what were the affects, not only on commerce, but also on the surrounding neighborhoods with this increased height?
- The authors of this particular document have done a lot of work in a variety of cities and they wrote this based on their experiences working with cities in the southwest and different codes they have been exposed to. Again the project's guiding principles are what gave them direction to do this. To achieve those guiding principles sometimes more intensity had to occur. With the depth of some of these properties the only way to address

that is to go up and do mixed use in that way, rather than just spreading out and affecting more adjacent properties.

- That's based on the Grant Road plan principles, the idea that people generally wanted to increase intensity along Grant Road?
- Right. That was the message that came through from all of the workshops and meetings that were held earlier in the process. We're in our fifth year with this project, so it's been a long process and a lot of people have had input in to it. We have all of that recorded and archived, and it's all available on the website.
- What were some of the cities (where the authors of the draft Grant Road District document have worked)?
- They have worked in Virginia, New Mexico, in Arizona they have worked in Tempe, Mesa. They are based out of Berkeley, CA and have done a lot of work all throughout California.
- Have they (authors of the Draft Grant Road District document) come up with any data to show that it does in fact increase the commercial viability of the area, with the kind of designs they are proposing?
- Not that I recall specifically, but we'll find out.
[The development of the concepts for future development along Grant Road included analysis and input from an economics firm that has done multiple projects focused on corridor revitalization throughout the western U.S., the Mountain West, and Texas. Their analysis was customized to the specific conditions of Tucson and Grant Road. The initial draft of the Grant Road District is designed to fit with the recommendations of this market economics analysis and create opportunities that are viable for developers and for future businesses and residents].
- I was wondering if you could compare this to anything that has been done recently in Tucson. Campbell was widened but that's not really commercial, between Speedway and Grant.
- Probably the best example that we've been able to use for mixed use is the Sam Hughes Place at the southeast corner of Campbell and 6th Street. There is a restaurant on the bottom and other uses up above. The Williams Center at Broadway and Craycroft on the southwest corner is an example of something way bigger than what you could do along Grant, but it is mixed use where the heights are lower closer to the street and as you go back into the center of it the buildings go up.
- Can you talk a little about the incentives for someone to opt in to this?
- If you want to re-develop and the zoning you have isn't adequate, then you would want to opt into this because you wouldn't have to go through a plan amendment or re-zoning process. For a developer that is a fairly significant incentive because it's saving time and money. The other incentives are that it allows a mix of uses which are hard to achieve under the current land use code. Being able to be creative with parking arrangements is another incentive.
- How can you ensure the continuity and compatibility in design with the Grant Road District?
- This is the big challenge. We don't have anything that requires people to re-develop and re-design. The idea is that we have to encourage them to do it and the hope is that as

somebody starts and opts into this and develops, and they hopefully experience a better return on their investment, then people will start to see what that is like. We are then hoping that other people will want to do this and developers will come in and see the improved street and developers will want to assemble properties and want to opt in and use this tool as a way to implement. Realistically, even in 50 years we will probably have a couple of hold outs who are happy the way they are and don't want to change anything.

- Just reading through the overlay criteria, when you get to the part about traffic calming there are at least four criteria that it talks about needing to be met, two of which talk about increasing the ADT by something like 15% over what is currently being generated, plus having another additional 100 vehicle trips through the neighborhood at peak hours either in the morning or in the evening. There is nothing in there that says how you are going to find out whether that criteria is met. Are you going to spell out the criteria that will require somebody to do the traffic studies? If so who is going to pay for it? How are you going to make the determination before anything is built? Or is the developer going to have to come in after the fact and do it? Or does the developer get out of the project and the neighborhood has to do it?
-You are making some good points. The intent is that the developer would not get out of it, and that this would be something that is built into the review process and the requirements for submittal. Admittedly, that is a section that is not complete yet. The intent is not to let developers get out of it. The intent is to have a traffic element in their submittal. If it requires a traffic engineer to do it or something that the City can look at and agree that it needs to happen, and therefore do the traffic calming.
- For those of us who have already put traffic calming in our neighborhood and know by and large that it does not discourage people from cutting through, is there an option to close the street off?
- That could be an option. I don't see why not.
- Do you know if there is any plan to implement growth boundaries around the city? Because these sorts of density things don't necessarily do what you expect them to do. Sometimes they just drive people further out, so you have to have a counter balance. Do you know if there is any plan to implement growth boundaries?
-I'm not aware of anything specific, but the City is going through their General Plan revision right now. This may be something you want to take a look at and we can also visit that and get back to you on it.
- The overlay concept - is that a state statute or is it a City code?
-It is a City code. It's been used a couple of times in the City already, one is the Downtown Links project, which has an overlay zone, and the other is the Main Gate overlay zone, which had been the newspaper a lot lately. We are trying to learn from some of the issues that arose as part of that overlay.
- What is the citation?
- Someone else asked this at another meeting and it is posted in the comments and responses from that meeting. We can email it to you.
[General Plan Element 2: Land Use, Policy 6.14.A Investigate zoning overlay zones for areas suitable for redevelopment or enhancement.

Land Use Code 5.1.2.2 Specific Plans and Regulations. The Mayor and Council shall adopt specific plans, regulations, programs, and legislation as described in Sec. 5.2.3 and as may be needed for the systematic implementation of the General Plan and provided for in the Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS) Sec. 9-461.08.]

- When you are finished here will you have one overlay zone, or will you have more than one in certain areas?
- It will be one overlay zone, but with eight sub-categories within it.
- So it won't be like a University one (overlay zone) and a Jefferson Park one (overlay zone)?
- No.
- So you are going to consolidate it and have one overlay zone for Grant Road?
- Yes. It will be called the Grant Road District Overlay Zone.
- Is there a target date for when you want to take this to the Mayor and Council for approval?
- What we are doing now is finishing up these Area and Neighborhood Plan amendment meetings which are required in the process before we move to the public hearings with the Planning Commission. We think there have been enough questions and concerns raised during these meetings that we need to go back and revise the draft document, and complete it before we move forward. So we will come back and do another series of meetings on this, and then it will go to the Planning Commission for public hearing. Then it will go to Mayor and Council to be considered. We don't know when that's going to happen. Originally we were trying to get to Mayor and Council before the end of this year, but I don't think that will be possible because we will also need to do a third set of meetings for the overlay zone itself. So the next set of meetings will be a little mixed but mostly focused on the overlay zone.
- On design issues, not adoption issues?
- Both. The next series of meetings will be on all issues. I'm thinking it is going to be early to mid next year before we get this complete, if not longer.
- I was at the last meeting and the question had come up that people would love to see a visual, right now we are seeing it top down. We would love to see it from a side where you are seeing a cut away to show what's the current height ability, current zoning allowed on every property, and then what does the overlay allow in terms of maximum heights. How close are you guys to getting that up on the web page?
- Once we get it done we could put it right up on the web page. I'm not sure if that is the way to go or to make it part of the next set of meetings, so we can present it so people can understand what it is that we are showing.
- So your target is the next set of meetings to have those visuals for us?
- Right. The map we have here tonight does show existing zoning compared to what is proposed with the Grant Road District, but it doesn't show the heights. This is also on the website.

- The overlay document stipulates that both the lighting and sign code are going to be superseded by whatever goes in the overlay. Those two codes were arrived at by quite a long process by people who understood them. Do you know the people who are writing the new overlay codes? Have you even talked to them (the people in the community who are experts at these codes)? They need to understand the nuances of those two codes.
- If it says supersedes it's probably incorrect and that is something that we will need to revisit. If anything it would be to supplement those codes. The basic parts of the code would stay in place, to differ or mediate or be more strict than that would be in the overlay. It would be subsumed under the code.
[There are only a few sign design standards in the current draft that are more lenient than the sign code; these will be eliminated in the next draft and only standards that are more restrictive will remain].
- Also, I want to clarification in the sunset provision. We want something in the overlay that will require a yearly review/ an automatic sunset that forces yearly review by Mayor and Council and then needs to be a provision to adjust it. Flexibility needs to be built in.
- Thank you.
[Note - we have received this, and similar comments, several times. The next draft will include an Administrative section that will address these and similar concerns].

Questions and Comments Received and Responses Provided Related to the Grant Road Improvement Plan and Roadway Design

- Will you repeat the last part (referring to the slide showing the new alignment for Grant Road and the indirect left turn)? It looks like a bottle neck.
- Swan doesn't change but it will change to make a left from Grant on to Swan. If you are heading east or west on Grant, you will need to go through the intersection, make a u-turn to come back to the intersection of Swan and Grant and make a right to complete your originally intended left to go north or south on Swan. (demonstrates this on the PowerPoint slide.)
- How many lanes are there (on the new roadway), before and at the indirect left turn?
- There are 6 lanes, even at the indirect left turn bulb out.
- Back to your making left hand turns off of Grant and Swan. How many feet before you can you make a U-turn. Is that sufficient for somebody to go from the left lane all the way to the right lane?
- 600-700 feet. There will be a traffic signal. There is a traffic signal here and you go through it and there is another traffic signal here if you are in the left-hand lane (refers to the PowerPoint slide). There is no traffic coming from this direction because you will have a left hand arrow coming from the traffic signal and you'll be able to move over to that right lane freely (refers to the PowerPoint slide). All of this traffic is stopped because there is a red light here. This traffic will continue to move along, and this traffic which is in the turn lane will get a green arrow, to go and this traffic (eastbound) will have a red light (refers to PowerPoint slide).

- When you are crossing the street there at the light (referring to PowerPoint slide) is there a place to stop in the shade in the middle?
- I don't believe there is a shade plan for the middle for either one of these islands but the idea is that there will be landscaping there. That is a very wide median, so there are opportunities for landscaping but we need to make sure that cars can have a good sight line. There could be trees provided close enough for shade in some cases. The other idea is that again the distance from side to side of the street is narrower so that people can make it across, so that they don't have to stop in the middle.
- If you are in a wheelchair or something like that I really think that's hazardous and I think the City should have people who cross streets in wheelchairs have big flags over their chairs because people miss them sometimes if you had to stop. Is there room for someone in a wheelchair to stop? Because there are a lot of people who are impaired that will come to an intersection and they will stay there until the light turns green. It's already green when they get there, they'll wait through that whole cycle. My observation in Tucson is the lights turn yellow the people keep going through.
- Yes. The typical width of a median right there at the intersection is 6 foot. That width is 17 foot on the improved roadway. From here to the wall (demonstrates the width in the meeting room) that's the median width. There will be all kinds of room in the median. And there will be push buttons there if they can't make it.
- So they can stop there? They can push the button and that would direct the lights so they can go the rest of the way, is that what you're saying?
- Yes.
- Can you explain the rationale behind the hop scotching (referring to the reconstruction phasing for Grant Road between Oracle and Swan) from one end to the other and back and forth?
- We are starting at Grant and Oracle because that particular intersection had the biggest potential benefit for the new roadway, and sprucing things up. There were a lot of opportunities. They were also interested, with the Oracle Area Revitalization Program going on with the City. It was just the right place to start. Given that we then went to Stone all the way to Park, because we wanted to get that west end done before the RTA projects to replace the railroad west on Grant closer to the freeway and a study similar to this on 1st Avenue between Grant and River start. We wanted to get out of the west end and out of the way of those two studies. Then we went to Swan, we needed to start at an end, one of our neediest intersections is Alvernon. We needed to do Swan before we could do Alvernon. Alvernon had pedestrians, transit, bicyclists, heavy activity, and a lot of accidents. We wanted to get there as soon as we could. Then for reasons related to Campbell to Grant and Grant to 1st Avenue, the north-south ways to get into town, the Campbell project would work well because 1st Avenue will be done by then. It seems a little chaotic, but there are reasons for doing it this way.
[The project's Citizen Task Force and public also provided input that helped determine the reconstruction phasing for Grant Road between Oracle and Swan. A matrix developed by the project team and included technical information and information related to the social capital of areas along Grant Road was reviewed by the Citizen Task Force before they endorsed the phasing. Comment cards asking for input on the reconstruction plan for Grant Road were mailed to properties fronting on Grant Road and posted to the project website.]

- How long do you estimate the Swan portion will take to complete?
 - *It's my understanding that two design projects may go, Stone to Park and the Swan intersection. I've heard more certainty of the west end project (Stone to Park). If that is the case the design would take a year, the right-of-way acquisitions would take a year, the utility relocations would take place about the same time as the right-of-way acquisitions and then construction would take a year. It's about a three year process to design, clear, acquire and construct one of the segment projects. Whenever Swan went it would be about a three year process. You would probably only see construction for about a year and a half of this, the rest is all design.*
- During the initial four or five year meeting stage. I know there were issues with regards to relocating utilities. Are we leaving the entire region's rate payers paying the cost of moving the water lines, and are we as the ratepayers for TEP paying to move the electrical lines?
 - *The RTA does not typically pay for private utility re-location, so that would leave TEP to foot the bill, I'm not sure if through the rate payers.*