



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

Blenman Vista Neighborhood Plan Proposed Amendment Meeting
Thursday, March 22, 2012
Ward 6 Office - 3202 E. 1st Street
5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

30 people in attendance
19 people from the Blenman Vista Park Neighborhood Plan

The following are the comments received from participants at the Blenman Vista Neighborhood Plan Proposed Amendment Meeting held on March 22, 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 Blenman Vista Neighborhood Plan

- Is the Arizona Inn included in the Grant Road District?
- The Arizona Inn is not included in the Grant Road District boundaries. It is in the Blenman Vista Neighborhood Plan under the office and commercial existing zoning.
- Two things - one is the issue of the need for a wall between Campbell and Tucson (like the one the Catalina Vista neighborhood has on Campbell). There is even more need for a wall because of more commercial properties (that could be developed under the Grant Road District). It is needed to protect the homes. Second is that Catalina Vista has an active set of deed restrictions and we don't want those weakened in any way, because once they are they all fall down like a set of dominos.
- Whatever the City does has no impact on deed restrictions. Those are private documents that are between property owners and neighbors. The City is almost never part of deed restrictions.
[The Grant Road District is not including properties that have deed restrictions related to Catalina Vista].
- Regarding the wall, as you can see in the area you are talking about (Grant Road between Campbell and Tucson) there is a local access lane, a 12' landscape buffer and 8' sidewalk planned.
[The future southern edge of Grant Road actually shifts to the north by about 9 to 10 feet].

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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The need for a wall will be determined during the final design of this segment. Remember what I said about getting more businesses to generate more sales tax. Then we will have more money for walls. I understand you would like this wall placed in the separating median between Grant Road and the access lane. We will pass your comment on to the design team to consider during the final design for this section.

- I live in Catalina Vista, a historic neighborhood, it is very laid back. Having a 5-story building at Campbell is ridiculous, even worse is a 5-story building at Tucson Blvd. It would ruin everything. Do the planners go out and look at these neighborhoods?
- Building height is an issue everyone is concerned about. We are going to go back and re-visit this, but keep in mind the existing zoning in some cases could allow more than 5-stories, it just hasn't been developed that way. You can't just look at the maximum heights themselves because there are other considerations.
[Note that the current draft of the Grant Road District does not allow 5 story buildings in the Tucson Center. The Center Hub designation reduces the 65 foot maximum to 45 feet for the Fontana, Tucson, and Country Club Centers. This would allow a 4 story building. Maximum building heights will be reviewed and some adjustments will likely be made in the next draft of the proposed Grant Road District zoning document.]
- Stepbacks are not clear-what about 2', 1', added, or multiplied—needs clarification. These are not spelled out. You indicated that our neighborhoods plans could be superseded by the overlay so can we put added language into our neighborhood plan to build in more protection.
-Those are the types of comments we are looking for. We're trying to simplify the articulation of the heights.
[The step backs apply to any property that backs or sides onto existing residentially zoned properties. Once over a certain base building height the part of the building that is above the base height must be stepped back away from the residentially zoned property by 2 feet for every 1 foot of additional height, in some zoning categories after a certain additional height the step back is 1.5 feet for every additional foot of height up to the maximum height. There is text and diagrams describing how this works for each zoning category in the Draft Grant Road District document, available at - http://www.grantroad.info/pdf/workshops_feb_2012/optional_overlay_zone.pdf. The resulting step backs meet the solar access controls of existing zoning.]
- Build to and setbacks mainly apply to properties fronting on Grant Road at major intersections.
[Build to lines and perimeter yards (setbacks) apply to all street and open space frontages for the entire Grant Road District overlay.]
- How does the overlay relate to Blenman Vista Neighborhood Plan? Where it does apply, what's the relationship?
-It only relates to the two corners, Tucson Blvd. and Campbell Ave.
- So which documents need to be modified? Both Grant Road District and the Neighborhood Plan? Simplify or clarify?
- What we are trying to do is an optional overlay zone. Part of this process is to get input on what you don't want - certain heights and uses in the Grant Road District. You would

want to modify the language in the Grant Road District. Our task is to simplify and clarify the document.

- My property is zoned commercial and it was cut right in half (by the Grant Road District draft boundaries). The line should be corrected but if it is not corrected whom do I talk to? Is there a timeline on drawing property lines? Do you have latest updates for the map?
-We can look at your property when we break. I don't think the boundaries have been changed yet.
[Requests for Grant Road District boundary revisions are being reviewed by staff. Meetings with the property owners who have requested that their property be added to the Grant Road District will be set during the next month. Proposed boundary revisions will be reviewed with the public in the next phase of public involvement in the Grant Road District planning process].
- I wanted to say I've lived in Catalina Vista for 42 years and so many of us have put a lot of love into Catalina Vista. I completely re-did my house, I could have moved up to the Foothills, but I didn't want that, I wanted to live in Catalina Vista. I do not want to see a 5-story building on the corner of Campbell and Grant and I really don't want to see one on Tucson and Grant. We don't need 5-story buildings. We need protection. We didn't expect The City to sell us down the river.
-Thank you for your comment.
[The intention of the Grant Road District is to expand beyond the neighborhood protections of existing zoning and to provide additional definition and certainty to those protections. The planning team has heard and understands the comments we have been receiving in regards to height, and we will be proposing some changes to heights in the next draft of the Grant Road District zoning document.]
- I'm confused about the purpose of this meeting. I thought it was about the neighborhood plan and the impact of Grant Road and the overlay zone on the neighborhood plan, but I haven't heard that talked about . . . what happens if the neighborhoods don't agree to the neighborhood plan changes?
- That's what the basic intent of this meeting is - plan amendments required in Blenman Vista Neighborhood Plan for the Grant Road District. The plan amendments are to put a line (map) identifying which properties are eligible to opt into overlay zone and the other is to incorporate text to acknowledge the Grant Road District. Once the team decides what they want to recommend it will go to public hearings, first with Planning Commission, then Zoning Examiner, and ultimately Mayor and Council.
- Do they have the option to opt out?
- Sure you have the option to opt out. It's your plan, but we are also looking at right-of-way acquisitions.
[The planning team is also trying to identify what changes; less height, increased setback, elimination of particular land uses, etc. that might make the overlay option acceptable to a majority of the neighborhood and property owners within the proposed Grant Road District boundary].
- Concerns regarding the overlay zone between (Grant Road) Campbell and Country Club - particularly the area in Catalina Vista: 1.) Height of commercial buildings should be limited

to 2-stories, 2.) We must have a wall between Campbell and Tucson matching that on Campbell between Elm and Grant Road, 3.) Catalina Vista deed restrictions are in effect - no action on the part of the City should weaken them. (Comment Card)

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

- What are the sunset provisions you mentioned for the overlay zone?
- Some people were interested in having this overlay zone go away at some time in the future. For instance 20 years from now it would automatically be rescinded, but that defeats the whole purpose of something like this. A sunset provision is not something we are going to be recommending. We are just recognizing that there are some concerns about that.
- I don't buy the argument that traffic will be the same whether or not this plan moves forward. The primary purpose of widening Grant Road is to get more traffic. It was a compromise for a cross-town freeway. I think a bunch of developers saw this and saw all of the potential traffic and said "I can get more customers to come to my business". Whose idea was it for the overlay?
- We have been trying to get developers to come to these meetings and get involved. So far we haven't had a lot of interest, which is discouraging. When we did talk to a few developers what they told us was that most of these properties were too small to re-develop. The overlay is to encourage someone to come and do something with these properties, particularly the properties that are being impacted where buildings will be acquired for the alignment.
[The overlay is being proposed by the City, because it has been identified as the most effective tool for achieving the Grant Road Improvement Plan guiding principles related to economic vitality and community character. The guiding principles were established with the community during the roadway design process, including - improving economic vitality, protecting neighborhoods, and creating a character of development and mix of land uses that can provide desired services and activities for local and citywide residents of Tucson].
- What percentage of the overlay district hinges on the properties the City will take as right-of-way acquisitions? So the overlay district ... the City has to purchase all of the right-of-way, and what's the percentage of the properties that will be impacted (and how much)? It seemed like a tight relationship between overlay zone and Grant Road.
-All of it is subject to acquisition. There are approximately 517 either full or partial acquisitions. 176 total acquisitions and 361 partial acquisitions where the owner could retain ownership.
[The relationship between Grant Road and the overlay is that the transportation improvements have been designed to provide a better environment for pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as for regional traffic, these are the needs and desires that were heard from the community during the alignment and roadway design phase of the project. The Grant Road District overlay is intended to provide a zoning framework for future land use to complement the new character and function of Grant Road, as well as the other guiding principles mentioned above].

- I have a comment. I see this project as a tragic one for The City. In 2002 the citizens defeated the plan to make Grant Road a north-south freeway to cap with the River Parkway. We had the problem for many years and that was the solution. It was heavily defeated because that wasn't the kind of urban development that we really wanted. When the RTA came out this particular project was the most controversial and it was the last project that was negotiated. It was negotiated that the powers that be weren't going to drop this project with the RTA and then there was a compromise that was reached that we thought would transform this project and make this in fact. Almost everything we are talking about tonight has to do with land use. I say it is a tragedy because we needed form based codes in the city for many years and this may be the first moment that promise may be coming true. The reality is that we don't need to widen the road to seven lanes because look at the national traffic counts; it is down 20 percent. This is all hype about 50 percent traffic increase. This was the motivation to drive voters to pass this plan. We have no control over this right now. We do have the option of transforming this plan before this project is built. A review of the RTA is planned based upon a review of the assumptions that went into this project. Now going forward if we implement this project it is colored by the budget because it didn't include all of the funding right away. There are so many issues with this project - local economic and demographic trends we've had for the last 6 years. Where is the economic driver to make this project . . . I don't see it. Sometime in the next 5 years we are going to need to shift back and we're going to have to put a stop to it.

- Thank you for your comment.
- I have a business at Grant and Country Club that I manage and I also live one block off of Grant. All of my parking is being taken and replaced with trees and sidewalk and so we will have no parking and my views will be obstructed by a possible building. I am in an area also in the design of the development which is not necessarily related to this area, but we do look forward to a lot of the changes as they sit on Grant. Our neighborhood is concerned about the heights. We've told you that 3 stories is the maximum and now you show higher. Grant Road is eclectic, but sometimes it is a little too eclectic and I'd like to see some of the changes but there's not enough money to develop this. Our Neighborhood Association looks at this plan and says don't worry about it; it's never going to happen because there isn't enough money. We can't get a market built off of Congress and that is a small footprint . . . our biggest concerns: zones to protect our businesses at night when we're away; for residents, protecting us, as neighborhoods - protection from crime; we don't want walls and don't want to deal with graffiti, we want less smoke shops, we don't want convenient stores/ liquor stores providing alcohol to our area residents.

-Okay, good comments. Thank you.
- How are you addressing parking concerning restaurants? How are you making sure that there is sufficient parking so it doesn't go into the neighborhoods? Can you address the sites for restaurants with restricted parking?

-We don't have anything that specifically addresses those uses. Shared parking is one option. Remnant property in certain situations could also be used for parking when you turn in your development plan to the City you have to adhere to parking requirements and show that you meet those requirements or you don't get approved.
- Refers to PowerPoint slide with stepback heights, references the lowest level to neighborhood: Is it like to like (for example 1 story to 1 story) for building heights? So

anything that isn't an R1 lot . . . you're going to use that as the yard stick for the first stepback level/25' . . . so most won't be like to like in height?

-Stepbacks will be like to like. Building heights adjacent to residential areas will be restricted to what they are adjacent to for what is permitted on that property. I believe that is correct or very close to that.

- How deep is that step? 15'?

- Yes 15 ft (stepback).

- You are putting together the Grant Road District and some of these portions won't be built for 15 years, when will the Grant Road District overlay be finished? So you're asking neighborhoods to make changes that won't happen in 15 years?

-We have abandoned our previous schedule because we recognize that we need to come back and meet again.

-Yes (making changes now), as opposed to allowing parcels to re-develop with what's allowed under existing zoning. We are trying to anticipate what people want to do instead of doing it piece-meal.

- You're asking for a lot of trust.

-We are.

- The overlay is a fabulous deal for a developer. I'm amazed if the development community isn't up in arms. I don't think they'll like all the details. Who wrote the overlay? Who paid for it? How long did it take? At what cost?

-Community Design & Architecture wrote it. It took approximately 4 years to write it. It was paid for by City of Tucson and RTA.

[The land use planning effort has been ongoing for 4 years with a vision for the future first defined in conjunction with defining the vision for the roadway. Land use alternatives have been explored with the public during workshops over about a 3 year period. The use of an overlay as the main implementation tool for achieving the vision defined with the community was decided about 18 months ago, and the initial public review draft was written over the last 18 months. Community Design + Architecture has been the lead author with other team members, including The Planning Center, TDOT staff, and DSD staff providing input and guidance.]

- Could you explain at one of the intersections about a worst case scenario with current zoning compared to a worst case scenario with overlay zone?

- We are going through that process right now. We are working on an example and will get it out to you once it's ready.

- The current zoning doesn't allow for input if there's a zoning change?

- No public input if you develop under existing zoning.

- How much time will there be if I don't want to be part of it now, but would in 10 years?

-If the Grant Road District is approved there will not be a sunset provision. You can opt in at any time.

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

- The optional portion is in conjunction with acquisition (related to the University Medical Center owned property at the southeast corner of Grant and Campbell, formally the Catalina Theater). Where are the acquisition lines, last I saw you'll be taking out Bookmans and Walgreens? Is this still correct? We need to know this information so we can start to plan for the area with the Catalina Vista neighborhood.
 - *Yes Bookmans and Walgreens will probably be acquired. Mike Holder is the Project Manager for the Grant Road Improvement Plan and he can discuss the new alignment for that corner with you.*
- We've watched the road grow over 22 years. Have you taken into consideration, health impacts for the people who will be within 500' of Grant Road? I'm talking about air quality, respiratory illness. Research I've read shows that more traffic will bring more illness.
 - *There have been some preliminary sound studies done regarding the impact of noise and the two things that are going to happen on Grant Road to mitigate noise are first it will be rubberized asphalt, which is much quieter than regular asphalt, and second the speed limit will be reduced to 35 m.p.h. The slower speed also helps with the noise.*
 - *This has come up once and a while and our position is that the traffic is going to be there regardless so should it be crammed into 5 lanes or spread out better in 6 lanes divided with better access and rubberized asphalt. Traffic projections are based on land uses and population growth. I'm not aware of any studies done in conjunction with roadway projects that deal with health issues.*
 - *The idea is to move traffic on Grant Road more efficiently, not faster, meaning less stops. That is why the indirect left turn is part of the design which creates less idling at the intersections. Idling is what causes air pollution, which is the biggest carbon monoxide problem. We are trying to keep the traffic moving to reduce the amount of time vehicles spend idling.*
- Regarding the big picture of transportation and the bike boulevards parallel to Grant Road - my concern is that the cross traffic will increase and mess up the whole idea of the bicycle mode. I'm talking about the bike boulevards on Seneca and the concern that there will be more traffic crossing these (bike boulevards) at Country Club.
 - *As part of the 7 indirect left turns there are three locations where pedestrians and bicyclists can cross. There has been some thought about how bicyclists will turn left at the intersections.*
 - *There will be traffic control signals all along the road and bike boulevards. It will be similar to the bike boulevard on 3rd Street where at certain points drivers can't turn onto the bike boulevard from the major roads.*

- So I have a business on Grant Rd. There is an element of height. You're taking part of the parking lot . . . Who can I talk to about timelines? I will be impacted by a long construction period-whom do I talk to?
-You can start with Mike Holder (City of Tucson/RTA Project Manager for the Grant Road Improvement Plan). You don't have to worry about construction in your area for about 12-14 years.
- Will there be right turns on Country Club to Grant? Currently, at Country Club and Grant Road when you want to right turn, you're backed up two blocks and with more traffic on Grant this could be worse.
-We can look at the 30% plans when we break. When we get into the final design of the segments things like a right turn lanes at certain cross streets will be seriously examined.
- The RTA election from May 2006 is in the courts for allegations of election fraud (0 media coverage of this). The integrity of this entire process is flawed. Regarding Grant Road - it does not need a widening. It needs its potholes fixed and more bus pullouts. A great start to attract businesses and residents. (Comment Card)