

Grant Road Improvement Plan Public Meetings – Comments Heard

Q: What do we already know about Grant Road?

There are safety concerns (crossing streets)

- Currently, dangerous, slow for vehicles, bikes, pedestrians.
- It is difficult for pedestrians to cross.
- It's scary (unsafe?).
- Hazards for bikes and pedestrians.
- There are many gas stations, which are biohazards.
- It's hard to cross.
- Business' access near intersections makes it unsafe.
- Much of it is not handicap accessible.
- "Particularly Alvernon in the last few years, increased pedestrian traffic means increased hazards."
- Campbell is a mixed-use intersection and presents a hazard for where cars, bicycles, and pedestrian interconnect.
- There is a safety concern with cut-through traffic to neighborhoods off of Grant Road.
- "The Dodge/Grant intersection is used a lot by high school students from Catalina; it is dangerous and needs improvement. "
- No clear sidewalks or not well shaded.
- "Parts of Grant have no bike lanes or are not well marked and/or are not respected by traffic. An example of a better-marked bike lane is along Campbell. "
- From 1st to Stone there are bike lanes and then they disappear to Oracle.
- Bike lanes also disappear at mayor Grant intersections.

Multi-modal usage (auto, bike, bus, pedestrians)

- "All walk and bike along Grant Road and we don't think the city knows or recognizes this "
- The proximity to UA means additional cars, buses, and bicycles.
- Currently, some areas have room for bikes and parking with frontage property.
- There are more bicycles on Mountain Ave than any place in Tucson.
- Alvernon is a high pedestrian intersection.

Major East-West transportation artery

- It's a major cross street.
- "Traffic volume is determined by characteristic outside of Grant Road, I.e. from N/S traffic patterns. "
- It is a main E/W corridor.
- Grant Road has many major access points for going North and South.

Poor aesthetics (not a pretty streetscape)

- It's ugly (utilities, billboards).
- It's one of the ugliest roads in town.
- Grant is not very pretty.

Noisy

- "Need noise abatement and space between the road and the school. [Note: participant said you can hear the road from inside the school rooms]."

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Poor infrastructure (utility lines)

- It floods.
- Utilities are overloaded.
- Lots of drainage problems that extend beyond two blocks off Grant.
- "There are water/drainage problems at most of the major intersections (Treat, Country Club, Tucson Blvd., Alvernon, Columbus) which extend into neighborhoods such as Cabrini."
- Look at the 20-year City storm drainage plans.
- Challenges with sewage, water drainage.

New businesses coming in

- "City acquired small buildings years ago and these have not been maintained. We think this is a deliberate policy, which will lead to the replacement of small businesses by retail chains. "
- "There are many residential areas with high traffic, with strip development, and currently lack sufficient noise buffers."
- New structures (development) are appearing.

Historic area/pockets

- There are many historic homes.
- There are historic neighborhoods.

Too busy/high traffic volume

- Congestion.
- Buses slow traffic.
- The narrower roads around Campbell slow traffic.
- Traffic doesn't flow.
- Lots of fast traffic, particularly at Alvernon and Country Club.
- Traffic into/ out of businesses creates hazards.

Business district/many different businesses

- "There are many small businesses that are affordable to business owners because of low rent/costs."
- From Stone to Swan, there are lots of businesses.
- Businesses are frequented by drive-thru customers.
- "The area is commercially underutilized and current businesses are supported and liked by customers. "
- Businesses are present.
- "There are many local businesses in the area that many people depend on: Bookman's, Walgreen's."

Mixed and low-income neighborhoods

- Many working class neighborhoods [implied with economic fragility].
- "There are three distinct areas: Commercial (west), Residential (Park to Country Club), and Commercial (east to Swan)."
- "The area is mostly made up of low income neighborhoods and the City needs the assistance of community based orgs such as nonprofit orgs and community development orgs. "

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Miscellaneous

- "Area has been and will be [note: there was a discussion over this is a question- will it be?] targeted for grade separation intersections. "
- It lacks services.
- There is a school (Doolen).
- There is a lack of adequate bus routes.
- Ward III has the lowest homeownership rate in the city.
- The area had active neighborhood associations.
- The street doesn't work as it is.
- Current zoning allows and encourages parking on frontage/buffer areas.
- The current (low) speed limits on Speedway cause more spillover traffic onto Grant.
- Previous downtown urban renewal results in a loss of residential populations.
- "Current pedestrian crosswalk at 22nd Street doesn't allow enough time for pedestrians to cross and is a safety hazard."
- The #20 bus route only runs on M-F.

Q: What characteristics along Grant Road should be preserved?

Population diversity/mixed use areas

- "The population diversity. Currently the access to retail and to public transportation allows low income people to live in the area."

Historic places and homes

- The historic style of houses- houses may need to be moved back.
- "Older homes east of Campbell on both north and south sides; anything taken away should be offered fair market value by the City. "
- Historic Brick TB home on Los Altos; can it be moved back but saved?
- "Keep noise buffer at Catalina Vista neighborhood because it's a rare, historic, planned area. "
- Older homes near Mountain and within the study area.
- Prioritize historic homes (to be preserved).
- "Save the affordability of homes and businesses: example, Chinese market at Grant & Stone. "

Unique and local businesses

- Unique, local businesses that cannot be easily replaced. Example: Kingfisher restaurant.
- "Keep the existing character of the business service centers, i.e. we do not want a freeway. "
- Existing buildings, as much as possible because it will be less disruptive.
- "Little stores such as House of Treasures, neighborhood businesses which offer walkability, all storefronts. "
- "Keep family owned businesses such as Wags, Robert's Restaurant, Casa Molina, Las Margaritas and others. "
- Keep Automax and Cimarron Services.
- "Bookman's - ""it rocks!"" Because of it's location, it serves as a community center, it is affordable and a good book store. "
- Good local restaurants and businesses.
- Dunkin' Donuts on Swan is a gathering place for elders, i.e. "The Geezers Club."
- Mandarin Grill: good, affordable, has a history.
- Kingfisher: it's non chain and successful.
- Established businesses such as Oak and More, the Antique Shopping District.
- But the local businesses should be preserved; example: Bookman's.

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Public buildings (schools, fire)

- Ward III Office: used by neighborhoods, convenient.
- Doolen School and its' connect to Boys & Girls Club= youth gathering places.
- Fire station because of safety and too expensive to move.
- The Boys and Girls Club.
- Schools-Doolen, Jefferson Park, Catalina.
- Grant and Campbell mini-park.
- The park at NW corner of Grant and Campbell: "I eat lunch there."

Miscellaneous

- Easy access to retail, which is close-by.
- Mixed uses.
- "All of it."
- Utilities should be moved not the homes or businesses.
- Street lighting and bus transportation should not be changed.
- "Existing vegetation (example: 1101 E. Grant - Fontana Ave. - has a mature saguaro; to move it would kill it). Also, mature trees provide shade. "
- Mountain Ave. area, particularly north of Grant is of concern.
- Condemn the least amount of vacant land.
- Not much; many of the strip shopping areas aren't well maintained.
- Preserve existing residential frontage roads.

Q: What do you think will change in the future? How will these changes affect the area?

Increase in traffic

- "There will be heavier traffic; thus Grant Road will be less [not more] efficient, more cars and more commercial property; the pollutant level will be maintained [not improved]."
- More traffic will lead to more pressure to redevelop and people who are currently living there will move out.
- "More traffic will lead to both more local business income and more noise. "

Change in businesses in operation

- A loss of local businesses will mean a loss of tax revenues.
- "Loss of local businesses means more chain businesses that can afford higher costs and rents."
- "A loss of character (Grant Road is ""totally Tucson"") will result in bland, ""anywhere" "place and it will be more expensive to live and work there [NOTE from Anita: could ""totally Tucson"" be a brand?]."
- "Business areas will be more upscale and the current business owners will leave because they cannot afford [higher rents, costs, etc.] and their customers will also leave [as the businesses leave]"

Change in residents in area

- Owner occupied residences will become renter occupied.

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Plan will change over time

- The political situation [will change] is unpredictable and inconsistent in the long run. Example: how will the city respond to proposed land use changes along Grant Road? [NOTE:I think this predicted change and expressed fear in the last question could be an opportunity to emphasize the importance of establishing the principles for the GR plan]

Need more accessibility options

- A loss of parking for businesses will mean a loss of business income.
- "Road will become a N/S barrier. Example: Speedway, which has become in accessible to people with physical challenges. "
- "The higher cost of fuel, lack of accessibility to fuel and global warming will lead to the need for more accessibility options rather than mobility options. [NOTE: some participants did not see this as accessibility or mobility options but one participant who voiced this, did see it as ""either, or."""]"

Change in amount of noise

- During construction, there will be cut through traffic, which will negatively affect the safety, air pollution, noise and overall quality of life for the neighborhoods.

Placement of utilities

- Placement of utilities.

More transit

- Add a mass transit lane in order to reduce smog and improve air quality.
- More growth is coming which means more density and mass transit.

More biking areas

- "We will run out of gas/fuel or fuel will cost more; thus we will have wider bike lanes [more bikes], more public transportation, a bigger Harley dealership [on Grant Road]. Also, we will have more smaller businesses, specialty stores, and Mom & Pop shops. "

Better environmentally

- "Water harvesting and desert water use means Grant Road can be an example of reusing stormwater, traffic mitigation, sidewalks that have natural vegetation, shaded bus stops. "
- "Solar lighting will be used more which will improve the optical sciences/astronomy industry/ profession. "

Miscellaneous

- "A continued lack of access to (affordable gasoline) fuel can lead to cleaner fuels; it could also mean ""the end of us.""
- "Population in Tucson will increase so more will be using Grant Road (this will be a benefit to Speedway)."
- "The I-10 freeway expansion will be completed so what will the impact on Grant Road be?"
- Reversing direction for six lanes will be a problem.

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Q: What characteristics along Grant Road should be changed?

Better bicycle/pedestrian areas

- Needs to be more bicycle and pedestrian friendly; people need to feel safe; need bus accessibility.
- Need compatible crossways for bicycles and pedestrians (this doesn't exist now).
- Create a pedestrian bridge at Country Club and at Fontana Aves.
- Create median barriers to discourage j walking.
- Need safety, i.e. ways for pedestrians to cross at Country Club bus pullouts.
- "Safe bike lanes [Note: participants had differing perspectives on what is preferred-separated bike lanes or integrated into traffic flow]."
- Need to control pedestrian crossings with an overpass by Doolen School.
- Need to promote safe public gathering places for pedestrians and others.
- "Need more safety for bicycles; will one more lane really make a difference [in safety]?"
- Need a pedestrian bridge or underpass.
- Use pedestrian and bicycle friendly design.
- "Urban trail (like the Downtown walking tour) with information and stories of the area; engage with the Historical Society to talk about ""then and now."""
- Drinking fountains for pedestrians and by bus stops.
- "Safer traffic for pedestrians, bicycles, vehicles, improves drivers' behaviors and awareness of other modes of traffic. "
- "Need pedestrian crossing at Grant intersections at 1st and 6th avenues; need HAWK lighting. "
- "Need longer timed crosswalks at intersections with timed clock and aural warning signal (for visually impaired)."

More/better transit, bus pullouts

- Have bus pullouts at every bus stop/all corners; particularly at Alvernon.
- "Consider incomes of business owners and residents; needs to maintained as affordable and improve bus services. "
- Connect bus service to Mansfield Park.
- Put pullouts everywhere.
- Extent Grant bus route pass Keeling neighborhood.
- Have bus pullouts at Broadway near Park Place.
- Have a HOV lane and transit lane.
- Bus pullouts
- "Look to enhance other transportation modes that automobiles [Note: multiple voices for this change]."
- Add bus pullouts.
- We hope for transit-oriented development [NOTE: a Hope response].
- Need to expand bus service; specifically #20.

Amount/flow of traffic

- "Road should be part of a comprehensive, regional - BIG PICTURE- transportation plan, not a piecemeal fix. "
- "Road should be part of a comprehensive, regional accessibility plan, i.e. move destinations to where people are and reduce distances. "
- Designed as a series of destinations/places to go and without car use.
- Traffic now moves too slowly.
- Have a four-lane bridge from Oracle to Swan.
- "Use rubberized pavement to slow traffic (similar to? Campbell and Mountain intersections)."
- "Limit neighborhood access to manage neighborhood traffic. Example: Catalina Vista. "

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- Put double lefts on Campbell.
- "Businesses and commercial properties could be developed so that customers come from adjacent areas, neighborhoods. "
- Cut down cross streets, access to driveways and neighborhoods.
- "Mitigate cut-through traffic into neighborhoods (such as Flower, Glenn, Bermuda- these streets could become the ""detour street from hell."" [NOTE: this is a Fear response, though the question about fears and hopes was not posed]."
- Need a successful detour set up during construction and note the effect of the detour on current businesses. [NOTE: another fear response].
- "We are concerned about putting businesses too close to the edge of the road [NOTE: another FEAR response]."
- Need a higher speed limit on Speedway so traffic won't spill over onto Grant.
- Want timing of lights to be lengthened.

Aesthetics/landscaping

- Create a pleasant environment with medians and vegetation such as east of Swan.
- Improve landscape for mass transit with shade.
- "Need shade bus stops, efficient design such as non-metal chairs and benches at bus stops. "
- Want billboards removed.
- "Add signage or color/shape of lighting to geographically identify Grant Road area's uniqueness."
- "Use storyboards to ""tell the story"" of Grant Road - past and present, how all of us ""came together."""
- "Lights on Grant Road could be shaped, designed or colored to be ""signature"" of the area."
- Public art, murals, mosaics- this is part of the RTA contract.
- Involve community participation in selecting art; involve local and historic stories.

Decrease amount of noise

- Where there are residential areas there need to be good sound barriers.
- Create sound barriers so that is less than now, particularly at Glenn and Columbus.
- With sound barrier placement, consider pedestrian walkway location.
- "Sound walls (such as that on south Campbell) with minimum landscaping are not friendly to pedestrian use [NOTE: another Fear response]."
- For a buffer zone, add a park such as along Campbell, Grant to Elm.

Better retail

- More rationally spaced retail areas.

Better infrastructure (flooding, water harvesting)

- Infrastructure such as utilities and sewers.
- Address flooding problem at all major intersections including Alvernon, Tucson Blvd., and Columbus.
- Improve infrastructure and utilities; bury utilities.
- Use water harvesting to mitigate stormwater problems.
- Use water harvesting.
- Use water harvesting with installed drinking fountains.
- Underground utilities- electric, phone, and cable.

More/better parking

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- Parking needs to be encouraged so that it can be used, us free or low-cost and accessible.
- "Parking needs to be designed as a way to rationalize retail for planned accessibility. "
- "Consider properties that some business want to give up as parking and access for businesses that want to stay. "
- New parking opportunities.
- Add parking to Campbell/Grant pocket park.

Environmental (trees, heat from street, solar lighting)

- "Create more curves and tree wells, bike paths, different textures such as along Mountain and Elm (by the Arizona Inn) because this will reduce speed. "
- Use alternative technologies for lighting, paving that are energy efficient such as solar lighting [Note: a gentleman approached me after the conversation and wanted to add rubberized treatment, like on Stone Avenue].
- "Mitigate the temp effects of the urban heat island; use alternative paving, add shading."
- Use solar lighting on a pedestrian scale.
- Use better/ natural vegetation.

More parks

- Use utility space for community park.

Better, more efficient lighting

- Keep lighting for NW neighborhood center.
- Need better street lighting.

Miscellaneous

- Acknowledge that changes will come.
- Acknowledge [accept?] existing density for affordable/workforce housing.
- Make the design at a human scale.
- Workforce housing is needed for hospital staff from UMC and TMC.
- Enhance business opportunities and expand economic growth in the area.
- "Surplus property should be used for public good and not paid for twice. Currently, there is a cost for advance acquisition and then a second cost. (to the non-profit) based on today's market price. A different zoning tool is needed to address this practice. "
- Could there be a new type of zoning to encourage mixed use?
- Put local businesses into historic homes.

Q: What do you fear for along Grant Road?

Process/public input will not be inclusive/followed

- "All of our input will not make a difference 10 years from now and our time will be wasted. "
- That voices from the "outside" will be heard over residents and local businesses.

Quality of life will decline

- "Money will run out and one of the first things to be cut will be livability, amenities, landscaping."

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Plans will get changed/Not enough money for project

- Political changes will divert, undo and change plans.
- That "doing it right" will be too expensive and there will be cuts of "nonessentials" to a good plan.
- We will need more money than is allocated.

Where will expansion occur? (North or South side)

- That the north side (of the road) will be taken.

Emulating poor examples (poorly designed streets)

- Becoming a Broadway or Speedway.

Neighborhood concerns (displaced residents/lower property values)

- Loss of area values through devaluation.
- Houses will lose their financial value.
- Low rent occupants will be displaced and where will they go?
- "The areas around Oracle and Stone will not be treated fairly because lower income businesses and neighborhoods occupy the area."
- "Redevelopment may become gentrified with higher taxes and this will move out current businesses and residents. "
- What will happen to neighborhoods during construction; i.e. cut-through traffic.
- What will happen to neighborhoods during construction; i.e. need traffic calming.

Business will have to relocate

- Only a few small businesses will survive.
- Disruption to existing properties.
- Loss of businesses and services such as Kent's Tools, Mandarin Grill.
- Loss of parking for businesses.

Change/increase in traffic

- It will encourage more people to drive more.
- "Even with wider Grant Road there will be more traffic and less efficiency than there is now."

Miscellaneous

- That we are making the best of a bad situation.
- Utilities will move into neighborhoods.
- Additional two lanes are a temporary solution.

Q: What do you hope for along Grant Road?

Emulate other successes (well designed streets)

- "That the kind of road change implementation that has occurred at Camp Lowell, between Alvernon and Swan can be the kind of implementation for Grant Road. "
- It can become a nice, gracious boulevard such as those in Europe.

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Better/increased transit

- That smaller buses will run more frequently.

Good aesthetics/landscaping

- Shade and covered bus stops.
- Other aesthetic considerations.
- It would be greener, more shaded with trees; would be quieter.

Reflective of current community

- That we are rethinking what it means to live in Central Tucson.

Good planning/design

- That this will be a planned design to address needs of the area.
- That the design will be sensitive and logical.
- That there will be a human scale to the design- pedestrian crossings and signage.
- "Can use alternative technologies for paving that's more permeable and/or example: rubberized for noise migration. "
- Use new technologies such as solar lighting.

Business assistance for those relocating

- That there will be technical assistance funding to help businesses with relocation.

Better environment (less pollution, water harvesting)

- Water harvesting with neighborhoods.
- Less polluted due to more planted trees.

Safer for all (walking, biking, cars)

- It will be a safe place to walk, drive, and bike.

Improvements made on time/quickly

- That it will be done in sections/ not all at once.
- I hope to live to see it happen.

Miscellaneous

- It will demonstrate fairness in the impacts on businesses and neighborhoods.
- Lower taxes.