

## 10 COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND VITALITY PLAN

The Grant Road Improvement Plan includes the creation of a Community Character and Vitality Plan (CC&V Plan) to guide the future land use patterns, urban form of development, and economic vitality of the properties along Grant Road with the intent of taking advantage of the public investment in the expansion of the roadway and the positive improvements of the road's design character.

The Community Character and Vitality Plan will:

- 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 any properties as part of the Grant Road planning effort.

### 10.1 Starting Points for the Plan

The CC&V planning efforts have been guided by the existing area and neighborhood plans for these properties, the Vision Statement and Guiding Principles of the Grant Road Improvement Project, and the on-going public involvement and education efforts of the project.

The concepts that have been explored have also been shaped by both technical considerations of real estate development, existing policies and practices, and the urban design and land use expertise of the planning team and city staff. The starting point for public input was the community conversations and the existing planning policies for the study area. Through a public involvement process and work with the Grant Road Task Force, this led to the definition of the Vision Statement and Guiding Principles for the Grant Road Improvement Project.

### 10.2 Vision Statement and Guiding Principles

The following are elements of the Vision Statement and Guiding Principles that are most related to the CC&V effort.

#### Vision Statement Excerpts

*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.*

#### Guiding Principles

##### Character and Vitality

*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:*

- 2.1 ***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.
- 2.2 ***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.
- 2.3 *Support the viability of small, local, and independent businesses.*
- 2.4 ***Preserve and enhance opportunities for a range of employment*** along Grant Road, including restaurants, retail, manufacturing, construction, repair, service, professional office and medical jobs.
- 2.5 ***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.
- 2.6 ***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.
- 2.7 ***Develop districts with multiple uses and shared parking*** that will be destinations for neighborhood residents as well as people from the region at large.
- 2.8 *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.*
- 2.9 *Work to create safer environments that discourage crime and increase personal safety.*
- 2.10 ***Support and build upon ethnic diversity*** in relation to the social and economic vitality in the Grant Road Study Area.
- 2.11 ***Encourage private investment*** that revitalizes opportunity sites along Grant Road.

### Aesthetics and Environment

- 3.1 **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.
- 3.2 **Enhance the identities** of Grant Road's Community Character Segments through the creation of business clusters, streetscape design, and other elements.
- 3.4 **Capitalize on Tucson's culture**, through urban form, architectural styles, public art, and other elements.

### Vision and Implementation

- 4.6 **Rely on policies and programs** in addition to physical improvements in achieving the vision.
- 4.7 **Coordinate new development and revitalization with new and existing amenities and multimodal infrastructure.**

## 10.3 Overview of Area and Neighborhood Plans

Area and neighborhood plans are an instrument of Tucson's land use policies that sit between the Comprehensive Plan of the entire city and the zoning ordinance that is applied to specific zoning districts. Area and neighborhood plans are the policy documents that are referred to when a property owner decides to rezone their property. The plans provide policies, and for some plans land use designations, that define the range of potential future zoning designations that would be applicable to a property; however, the policies of the area and neighborhood plans tend to be general, some plans are over 10 years old, and are not always strongly related to the goals and issues that stakeholders have identified during the Grant Road CC&V planning process.

Still, most of existing plans define centers and districts of activity along Grant Road, similar to what is being proposed in the Grant Road Plan.

## 10.4 Centers and Districts – an organizing structure for Grant Road

The CC&V planning effort has identified a series of centers and districts that have specific use, built form, and community character considerations (Error! Reference source not found.). These characteristics are based on a combination of existing conditions, market feasibility, and the desires and needs of property owners and the surrounding community.

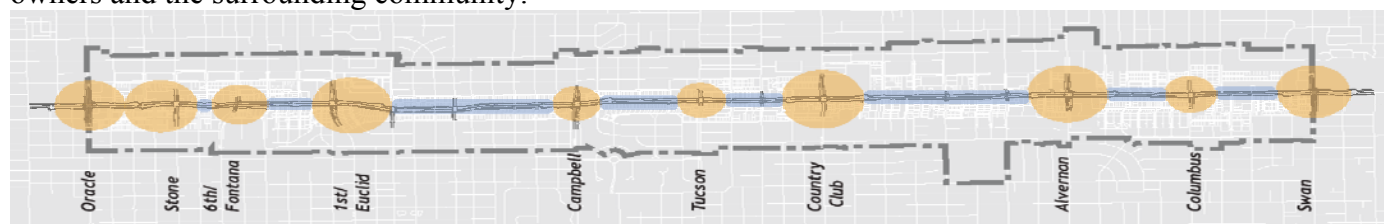


Figure 104: Centers and Districts along Grant Road

## Centers

Centers are areas where concentrations of activities occur around the intersection of Grant Road with other major roads, such as Oracle, Tucson Boulevard, and Alvernon. Centers are destinations with a mix of uses that vary in size, scale, and diversity of uses. Centers may provide services to the region, and may also be designed to be compatible with the residential neighborhoods around them.

## Districts

Districts are the more linear areas that line Grant Road between the Centers, and they provide support uses. Districts have a certain character and set of uses that typically includes a smaller scale and different building orientation. While some Districts contain auto-serving uses, they also should support pedestrian and bicycle movement along Grant Road.

### Center - Character Images



### District - Character Images



The location and design characteristics of the Centers and Districts along Grant Road are being determined by a combination of:

- Analysis of existing characteristics and market opportunities
- Existing policies of the Area and Neighborhood Plans along Grant Road
- Feedback from property owners and businesses
- Input from the broader public through the Grant Road public participation process

## 10.5 Key Community Character and Vitality Issues

The CC&V Plan will address a number of key issues. The following highlights several issues that are most strongly related to the design within the right-of-way of the future Grant Road.





### 10.5.1 Contribute to Pedestrian Activity and Safety

The use of a context sensitive design approach in developing the roadway and streetscape design for Grant Road will result in a future road that creates a more pedestrian supportive environment. The CC&V Plan will set guidelines and policies to create the pedestrian supportive context that will take best advantage of Grant Road's redesign. Design concepts that the CC&V Plan will support include:

- Providing for "eyes on the street" by orienting buildings so that they provide entries and windows in proximity to Grant Road. The occupants of the building see what is happening on the street, and people moving along Grant Road, particularly along its sidewalks and public spaces, know that they are being observed. This helps to create a safer and more active street life along Grant Road.
- Allowing for and encouraging outdoor seating for restaurants and cafes, and outdoor display for retail and service establishments in support of pedestrian activity.



- Provide on-site public gathering places with shade and shelter from the weather, and high-quality lighting at night.
- Provide pedestrian circulation from the public sidewalk to adjacent buildings are shaded and well lit.
- When parking must front onto Grant Road, provide a buffer between the parking and the sidewalk. The photos illustrate (above) a good and a bad example of how parking can front onto a sidewalk.

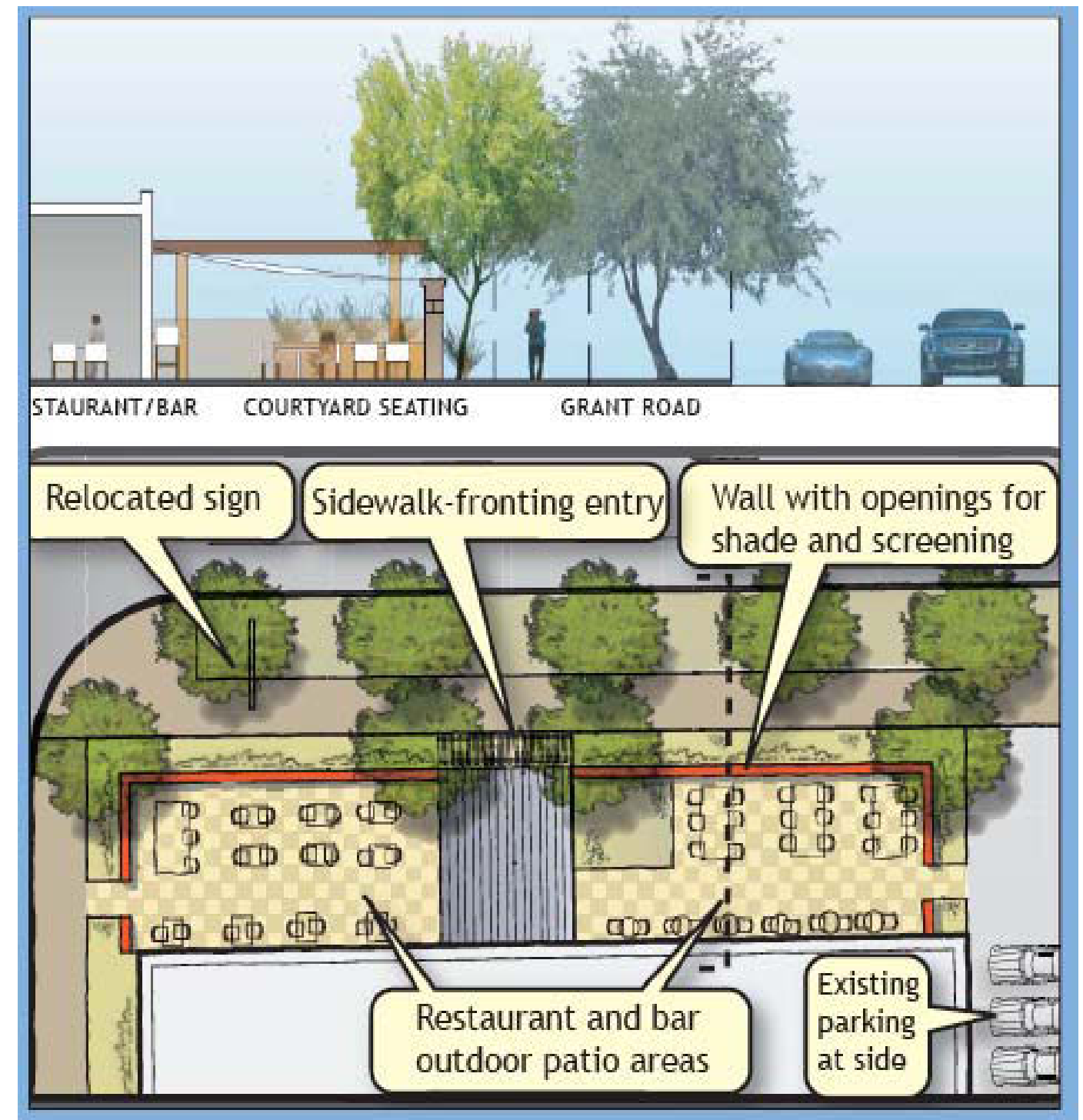
### 10.5.2 Outdoor Seating

The character and safety of the public realm along Grant Road can be strengthened by providing outdoor seating that brings activity adjacent to the sidewalk. To do this effectively, the visibility of dining and other activities must be balanced with the need to provide a comfortable environment for patrons. The illustrated design (right) concept provides a wall with some open areas so that this balanced character is achieved.

### 10.6 Protecting and Enhancing Neighborhoods

The existing mismatch between the regional traffic and auto-oriented nature of Grant Road and the quieter residential character of most adjacent neighborhoods has led to much discussion of the need to protect neighborhoods from the negative aspects of Grant Road; many policies of the area and neighborhood plans address this issue. The CC&V Plan will define guidelines for the transition of building massing to the

smaller scale of neighborhoods, buffering, and other site design issues. But it will also include discussion of design concepts that are more closely related to the transportation functions of Grant Road.



An urban design approach for the creation of “gateway” neighborhood traffic calming feature has been developed, **as illustrated in the concepts and photos below**. This design feature can be used at the transition point between neighborhoods and commercial areas on the smaller streets that intersect with Grant Road. The combination of a neck-down and speed-table can provide both a gateway and a small public gathering place.



### **10.7 Next Steps for the Grant Road Community Character and Vitality Plan**

Development of the Community Character and Vitality Plan (CC&V) will continue through the remainder of 2010 and much of 2011, and will result in a stand-alone document, focused outreach to the community to address key design and policy content, and on-going work with the Citizen Task Force to achieve their endorsement of the Public Review Draft of the CC&V Plan. It is currently expected that the Public Review Draft will be released in the early spring of 2011 with the Planning Commission and Mayor and Council hearings occurring in the late spring and summer of 2011.