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MEMORANDUM

TO: Grant Road Task Force
FROM: Phil Erickson and Tim Sullivan, Community Design + Architecture
DATE: July 28, 2006
RE: Summary of June Character Segment Workshops

This summary of the June Character Segment Workshops focused primarily on the report outs by the groups with supplemental review of the detailed mapped comments added at key points. The input from the workshops will inform:

- The development of planning objectives for further work on the project (see the planning objectives memorandum for further information)
- The preparation of alternative design concepts for parcels and focused urban design issues which will be reviewed with the community in the November Character Segment Workshops.

THEMES FOR ENTIRE STUDY AREA

There were over 800 individual comments made by the 22 small groups during the three (3) June workshops. There were common themes to all segments and key contrasts between segments that are evident from the workshop input:

Landscape, Streetscape, and Water Harvesting: There was broad support for the proposed improvements with concerns expressed about the long term maintenance of improvements, and the need to design landscaping with safety in mind.

Safety: Concerns about making improvements for pedestrians that walk along and cross Grant Road. There were also concerns about safety and crime expressed about certain locations along Grant Road.

Neighborhood Character: There was much input provided around the issues of benefiting and protecting existing neighborhoods. While the specific goals or emphasis changes from segment to segment and for some specific locations, the general themes are:

- Revitalize Grant Road and provide opportunities for services that better meet the needs of residents;
- Provide a buffer (i.e.; noise, light, visual, etc.) between Grant Road and adjacent neighborhoods, some comments focused on providing a noise wall, others on rubberized pavement, landscaping, and buildings as buffers;
- Encouraging homeownership was a theme, but how the Grant Road Improvement Plan can address this is a challenge; and,
- Protection from cut-through traffic and speed control within neighborhoods.

This is a project of the
Regional Transportation
Authority.

The voter-approved,
\$2.1 billion RTA plan will
be implemented through
2026. 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.

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Intensity and Type of Development: A broad range of interests and concerns were raised in regards to development along Grant Road. There is support for intensification and mixed use in particular locations by some. There are some specific locations where the scale of existing development is particularly valued and where there may be opportunities to shape development to complement historic patterns and character. There was also a range of interest and concerns about the potential for residential development along Grant Road. This is discussed further below for specific segments and presenting alternatives for public comment is a major focus for the November workshops. A related topic, is the wide range of comments and ideas about the future use of property that may remain after acquisitions are made for Grant Road improvements.

Economic and Social Vitality: There was input and concern about supporting small and independent businesses in terms of affordability and type of commercial spaces that will be available along Grant Road in the future. There was also a desire for providing places (i.e. plazas, courtyards, small parks, etc.) for positive social gathering; alternatives for satisfying this desire will be explored in the November workshops.

1. WESTERN SEGMENT WORKSHOP

This workshop had 3 tables and we received over 150 comments.

Exercise 1 – Report Out Themes

Landscape and Streetscape: Use landscaping to provide a visual buffer while being careful to maintain safety.

Crossings: One specific comment, but not a focus of this workshop.

Water Harvesting: No comments regarding water harvesting, may be considered a given or not be a major interest in this segment.

Parking: Concern that enough parking is maintained for businesses and that parking restrictions are enforced.

Safety: Some focus on safety both in terms of personal safety and crime, as well as in relation to pedestrian safety.

Transit: Not discussed in report out, but several specific comments including desire for light rail on Oracle.

Neighborhood Character: One table had a lot of ideas about the desire to maintain the variety of uses in the segment while improving the aesthetics, particularly valuing the small businesses and desiring to avoid a cookie cutter character. One table expressed desire for more interactions with the neighborhood groups in the area. Many specific comments to build concepts and guidelines from.



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Economic and Social Vitality: Focus on supporting small businesses and providing places for positive social activity.

Open Space: Recognition of Mansfield Park as major open space asset that could be used to further advantage and could be improved, as well as a desire for additional smaller open spaces.

Buffer: Buffering from Grant Road is mentioned but bring up that elevation changes make walls difficult. Increase in landscape seen as important. Need to provide proper orientation to industrial uses and loading or provide a buffer.

Reuse and Revitalization: Many ideas for reinvigorating businesses with focus on small businesses and some expressing desire for more residential to support retail uses.

Exercise 2 – Report Out Themes

All but one of the centers or districts was discussed at one table, at least, and there is a diversity of information and opinions that will help us to determine a range of alternatives to present to the community at the next round of Character Segment Workshops in November.

Oracle Center: No specific comments in report out, but many comments on maps, including: conflicting opinions regarding height and some having desire to maintain and enhance historic character.

Balboa to Castro District: One specific regarding providing incentives for small businesses in this area, with one table having detailed map comments about using acquired properties for open space.

Stone Center: No specific comments in report out, but many comments on maps to build alternative concepts from.

7th Avenue to Fontana District: Only one table had specific comments which focused on expanding the dog park at 7th Avenue and Rillito Street to here, and providing youth-oriented activities.

Fontana Center: Two of the tables were interested in this center and its relationship to Mansfield Park with all the tables providing detailed mapping comments that identify opportunities for community serving uses and uses that complement the park.

Geronimo/4th Street to Park District: Only one comment specific to this district – “no need for tall buildings”.

1st Avenue Center: One table was very focused on the potential revitalization of this center.

Park to Martin District: No comments about this District, not seen as part of this segment.



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2. CENTRAL SEGMENT WORKSHOP

This workshop had 6 tables and we received over 225 comments.

Exercise 1 – Report Out Themes

Landscape and Streetscape: A few tables specifically mentioned turning acquired properties into open space in their report out. One table expressed concern that landscaping creates the illusion of noise buffering and that parks along the street attract a bad element and should instead be within a neighborhood. In detailed comments others bring up concepts for open space and/or a wall while others focus more on landscape.

Crossings: Not raised in report out; likely because the focus of the workshop was on character and vitality. There are some detailed comments.

Water Harvesting: One table mentioned water harvesting in report out or in detailed comments; may assume it is a given?

Parking: Not raised in report out or in detailed comments.

Safety: One table expressed that there is property damage as you move west along Grant in this segment. Some tables have specific concerns about safety, but several also had no notes related to safety.

Transit: One table expressed a desire for a trolley stop at Campbell and Grant while all other tables had no general or specific comments about transit.

Neighborhood Character: Several tables desire neighborhood-serving uses along the segment. One table in particular focused on protecting single-family character of neighborhoods and discouraging lining the street with commercial uses. Several other specific comments.

Economic and Social Vitality: Several tables expressed importance of pedestrian supportive character in this segment. One table thinks we should be thinking about shrinking population not a growing population. One table very interested in mixed use activity centers at Campbell and Park.

Open Space: One table stresses need for open space on acquired properties, although concerned about parks that front onto streets and a feeling that they should be in neighborhoods for safety reasons. Some others express desire for acquired residential properties to become open space. One table in particular wants the open spaces to be active and possibly include a skate park. Other specific uses include a community garden.

Buffer: Several tables mention desire for a buffer including a wall with some expressing particular desires that the wall not be too tall or located up at the street with other interested in the wall that varies in height and location. While some tables did not mention desire for a wall at all.



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Reuse and Revitalization: Several tables mention specific locations for mixed use or commercial revitalization – 1st Street, Park, Campbell. But majority had no specific comments about this topic in Exercise 1.

Exercise 2 – Report Out Themes

Two tables specifically noted that Sam Hughes Place should not be used as a model (a photo was shown in the PowerPoint presentation). There are also a number of general comments that can inform the preparations for the November Character Segment Workshops.

Geronimo/4th to Park District: No comments about this District, not seen as part of this segment.

1st Street Center: A broad range of opinion about this center. One table only expressed safety concerns about the center and the multifamily housing around it while others see the potential for revitalization with building heights ranging from 2-3 stories to one table considering 5 stories.

Park to Martin District: No specific comments in report back, but a range of comments on maps from open space to development, concerns about safety as well as desires about buffering and potential open space..

Campbell Center: Broad range of ideas and concerns about this center and what it means now that UMC has purchased the theater and parking structure. Some see potential for vibrant reuse while others a primarily concerned about potential traffic impacts.

Norris to Wilson District: Similar to other district there were no specific comments in the report back, fewer specific comments related to this district but still a range of ideas.

Tucson Center: One table desires a focus on entertainment, retail, and outdoor plazas.

3. EASTERN SEGMENT WORKSHOP

This workshop had 7 tables and we received over 425 comments.

Exercise 1 – Report Out Themes

Landscape and Streetscape: much discussion about landscape focusing on use of native species, water harvesting, the need for trees and shade, and also a concern about maintaining landscaping. Some expressed a strong interest in integrating public art into the streetscape.

Crossings: not raised in report out; likely because the focus of the workshop was on character and vitality. There are some detailed comments.



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Water Harvesting: Several mentioned along with concerns about flooding.

Parking: Several expressed concern about loss of parking and need for district parking (some concern that district parking will not work), as well as desire to locate parking behind or to the side of buildings. One table with a strong focus on parking with need for it to be free, and near transit and crossings.

Safety: a few reported out on safety concerns, one specific to safety being an issue around Doolen School. Some specific concerns noted on maps about safety, but generally light discussion of safety.

Transit: No mention of transit in report outs. Some detailed comments about character and quality of bus stops in mapped comments and references to particular bus pull-outs.

Neighborhood Character: Some comments about small business character, particularly antiques area; and there are a broad variety of comments from the maps related to businesses and character issues at many places within this segment. No comments about relationship to surrounding neighborhoods in report out.

Economic and Social Vitality: Concern about affordability of new development for both small businesses and residents. Desire expressed to create districts of particular uses or focuses of use.

Open Space: One table mentioned open space and parks as a way to build community in the report out; and few comments on the maps in this regard.

Buffer: One table included noise and buffering in their report out. One specific comment related the need for buffering because of loss of existing buildings that currently serve as a buffer.

Reuse and Revitalization: One table elaborated on concern for existing businesses that are displaced and the possibility of moving them to acquired properties. Focus on antique cluster and some other unique businesses.

Exercise 2 – Report Out Themes

While some centers and districts were not specifically mentioned in the report out everyone of them was at least discussed by one table, and there is a diversity of information and opinions that will help us to determine a range of alternatives to present to the community at the next round of Character Segment Workshops in November.

General Comments Regarding All Centers and Districts: several tables made general comments about building height, character, parking location, etc. in their report out for this exercise. Several expressed desire for a Tucson character in building and landscape design and unique artistic elements.

Tucson Center: No comments in report out specific to this center.



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Forgeus to Margaret District: One table liked the idea of mixing commercial and residential in this district.

Country Club Center: One table wanted an art focus at this center. One focused on need for parking behind antique businesses, while another wanted to reorganize the antique stores around courtyards.

Camilla to Elaine District: No comments in report out specific to this district.

Alvernon Center: One table wanted the Botanical Garden to be integrated with this center. Another had broad vision for revitalization of this center with professional office buildings, improved landscape and pedestrian circulation, but also having a concern about safety; others share the concern about aesthetics and pedestrian circulation.

Sycamore to Fair Oaks District: No comments in report out specific to this district.

Columbus Center: No comments in report out specific to this center..

Orchard to Venice District: No comments in report out specific to this district.

Swan Center: One table specifically mentioned this as an example of a good regional center with mix of businesses and cleanliness.