CAMPBELL GRANT TIMES

NEWSLETTER OF THE

CAMPBELL GRANT NORTHEAST NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

FALL

CAMPBELL-GRANT-TUCSON-GLENN
TUCSON, AZ

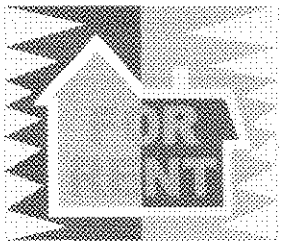
2005

"Mini-dorms" coming soon? By: Steve Miller & Ken O' Day

A house is usually a homeowner's biggest investment and the value of homes in our neighborhood continues to keep pace with the better central locations. In the last six months, homes in our neighborhood have sold for an average of more than $246,000 and it is expected to remain strong so long as interest rates remain around 6%.

It is no wonder then that homeowners are concerned about protecting their investment. Keeping up with repairs and maintenance is part of looking after your home's value, but another important factor contributing to the value of your home is the quality of the neighborhood. At our July meeting housing was identified as one of four important issues for us to address.

Our neighborhood's central location, close to the U of A, is a desirable feature, but means there is also a high demand for rental properties. While it is impossible to account for the number of rentals in our neighborhood, the increase of absentee owners is an indicator of increasing rental levels. Students make up a large part of the rental demand. Most students make good neighbors, but there continue to be occasional reports of problems. The main concerns involve loud late night parties, lack of property maintenance, and an excessive number of vehicles parking on and near the property.



The recent development of "mini-dorms" has significantly contributed to these problems in a number of University area neighborhoods. Jefferson Park has probably been impacted the worst and is currently in a zoning battle over an 11 bedroom mini-dorm. Our neighborhood has been spared the worst of this trend, but there are concerns that we may be next in line.

Recently, a property in the Campbell and Glenn area of our neighborhood had a lot split and a multi-unit rental property was built. Investment buyers are also avoiding lot splits by converting single family dwellings into multi-bedroom homes to accommodate five or more renters (often students).

Mini-dorms are the creation of real estate investors seeking to take advantage of the high demand for inexpensive student rental properties. After purchasing a house on a large lot (10,000 sq ft or more), a second larger structure is built with, in some cases, up to seven or more bedrooms. The result may be over 10 rooms available to rent to 10 students with 10 cars and insufficient parking. The architecture and construction usually do not match the local neighborhood architecture. The properties threaten neighborhood integrity by permanently reducing the number of owner occupied properties and creating potential hot spots of bad student behavior. Unfortunately, the University has done little to address the problem.

The Ward III Office and City Council have recently sought to place limits on mini-dorm development, but the zoning changes they have adopted have failed to stem the trend. Mini-dorm developers are finding creative ways around the rules. In response, a group of neighborhood advocates, called the Neighborhood Infill Coalition, was formed recently to work on ways to address the issue. They have been collaborating with the Drachman Institute on trying to find better zoning solutions.

In the meantime the issue is still very much with us and a concern to many in our neighborhood. If you are concerned about this issue and would like to help out, please contact Steve Miller (smiller@longrealty.com) or Ken O'Day (kenoday@gmail.com).

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Next neighborhood association meeting is October 17. Mark it on your calendar!

Our Annual Neighborhood Association Picnic is Sunday, Nov. 6 at 1:00 pm in Conner Park. Come join us for a fun time!

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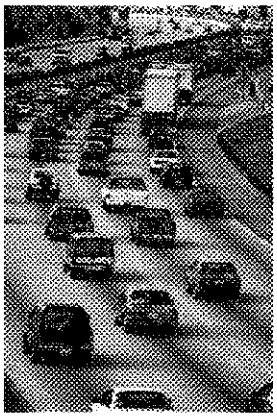
THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY PLAN

BY J.M. "MIKE" HAYES & KEN O'DAY



The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) rolled out its plan for solving transportation problems in the greater Tucson metropolitan area this summer. Initial reports praised the regional approach to transportation planning, but recently some serious questions have been raised about the $1.9 billion plan.

Overall the plan is heavily oriented toward roadways. Two-thirds of the funding will go toward highway improvements. In particular, questions have been raised about whether $300 million for the controversial Barraza-Aviation Parkway is a wise use of resources. About 20% of funds are to be devoted to transit improvements. The most controversial part of the transit package is a downtown streetcar operating between the UA and Rio Nuevo, which will not serve the many commuters from outside the downtown/UA area.

Of more concern to neighborhoods are the major midtown road widening projects. The plan proposes to widen Broadway (between Euclid and Country Club) to 8 lanes, 1st Ave. (between Grant and River) to 6 lanes, 22nd Street (between I-10 and Tucson Boulevard) to 6 lanes, and Grant (between Oracle and Swan) to 6 lanes.

The Grant Road widening, which would expand Grant to the north by 150 ft., would have a serious impact on our neighborhood. Three years ago our neighborhood and others opposed the building of a $20 million Grade Separated Interchange at Campbell and Grant because of concerns about the destructive impact that it would have on local businesses and the neighborhood. The proposed widening of Grant Road along this 5 mile stretch would result in the destruction of far more residences and businesses. The right-of-way costs for the project are extremely high, pushing the estimated project cost to over $150 million. The construction would take years to complete and would result in significant congestion during the process. Members of our neighborhood association have encouraged the RTA to consider less destructive and less costly alternatives to reduce congestion.

The Grant Road project would require the removal of the row of businesses and apartments currently acting as a buffer between Grant and the residential section of our neighborhood. Details are not yet available, but the project may require property acquisition all the way to Spring Street. The end result would be similar to what is currently found along the section of Campbell recently widened between Elm and Grant. What used to be a central city stretch of residential roadway would be lined with sound walls and have the appearance of a stretch of mini-freeway.

The RTA plan has significant road building on the northwest and southeast sections of metropolitan Tucson and will contribute to further sprawl. For instance, the plan designates $130 million to widen Houghton Road. This project will serve to help development in the Houghton area. The recently adopted Houghton Area Master Plan (HAMP) anticipates that Tucson's southeast side will become a gigantic addition to the city (some estimates are that as many as 625,000 people will live in the HAMP area). Current City impact fees do not cover the full cost of this growth, so a significant portion of the tax revenues in the plan would be used to pay for these roadways (which will include new sidewalks and landscaping). Meanwhile, our neighborhood continues to struggle to find funds to build missing sidewalks on Campbell Ave.

If the greater Tucson area is going to accommodate such massive growth, we do, indeed, need to plan how to move people about the valley. At this late date, it is not possible for Tucson to duplicate the Phoenix area's freeway grid. We are surrounded by state and Federal park land on which highways can not be built and acquiring right-of-way for a cross-Tucson freeway, according to the RTA, is simply too expensive.

What Tucson may need more than a transportation plan is a growth plan--something that requires homes to be built near places of employment, shopping, and sources of entertainment. Integrating transportation and land use, and building and preserving neighborhoods with a high quality of life (neighborhoods like Campbell/Grant Northeast), would help reduce the need for regional mobility and destructive road widening projects.

The RTA is currently in the process of considering feedback and revising its plan. We don't yet know what the final plan will look like. In the meantime, you can familiarize yourself with the plan at http://www.rtamobility.com/) and provide your input by submitting online comments. We'll have an update on the status of the RTA plan at our October meeting.

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NEIGHBORHOOD BEAUTIFCATION BY: CINDY SORRESEN

Enhancing the beauty of the neighborhood was one of the major agenda items that came up at our last neighborhood meeting. Our midtown location already has character, but there are lots of things we can do to increase its charm. We are just in the process of forming a **Neighborhood Beautification Committee** and welcome anyone who is interested in participating in this committee or just willing to give us their input. Thus far, the committee consists of Talena DeBaun (talenadb@earthlink.net, 881-6125), Jennifer Lloyd, and Cindy Sorrensen (csorren@email.arizona.edu, 323-4648), so you can contact one of us if you're interested.

Our first goal as a committee will be to begin to develop a **neighborhood wide plan**, asking which areas can be beautified, how would we like them to look, and how would we like to see those areas put to use. The plan could include targeting public areas that may need cleaning up, adding vegetation cover, or even installing outdoor sculptures or art. Other things that we have been thinking about include the following …

Planting trees. Trees add shade and beauty to our neighborhood. They also help keep our air clean and reduce rainwater run off. Desert trees are available for a really inexpensive price ($5.00 per 5 gallon tree, $15.00 per 15 gallon tree) from the non-profit organization Trees for Tucson (TFT). Anyone in the neighborhood can apply for these trees by downloading an application from http://www.ci.tucson.az.us/tcb/tcbtft.htm, phoning 791-3109 or emailing tcb@ci.tucson.az.gov. Tree species available vary throughout the year, but Mesquite, Desert Willow, and Palo Verde are some of the ones currently available. As these trees are desert species, the watering needs are minimal. You can select a maximum of two trees and TFT will deliver them to your home. If you have a guest house on your property you can get an additional two trees. TFT also offers neighborhood projects, where we can obtain trees and locate them in public spaces throughout the neighborhood. If you are interested in having trees along the streets that border your property, contact Talena who will facilitate this process with TFT.

Reducing graffiti. The City of Tucson has a number you can call to report graffiti, 624-7833, and they will come and clean it up. The sooner graffiti is taken care of, the less likely additional graffiti will appear from competing groups. We thought it might be a good idea to take an inventory of just how much graffiti is present and where it is located. This might involve canvassing the neighborhood, so we'll definitely need volunteers for this.

Connor Park. We have a wonderful public space in our neighborhood. The Park's restroom facility was recently renovated, but more can be done and many parts of the park are underutilized. The City Parks Department has landscape experts that are more than willing to help us develop a plan for the park that suits our needs and aesthetic interests.

The Neighborhood Beautification Committee has potential to be an enjoyable way to enhance the visuals in our neighborhood so please, if you have ideas about our neighborhood look or would like to join us, contact one of us on the committee.

And a quick reminder: As we near the end of the monsoon season, our weeds and grasses have grown high. They will soon become dry fodder and a fire hazard, so please do your best to mow them down.

ANNUAL PICNIC: NOVEMBER 6TH BY: VICKI MILLS

The annual neighborhood picnic will be on Sunday, November 6, in Conner Park. The picnic will begin at 1 pm. The Neighborhood Association will supply hamburgers, hot dogs (and their fixings), ice cream and cold drinks. Please bring a dish to share with others and your own plates and utensils. You might also want to bring your own chairs or blankets to sit on.

As a part of the celebration, there will be a ribbon-cutting ceremony for our lovely newly refurbished comfort station (bathroom). The ribbon cutting will be at 2 pm.

Another popular part of the picnic is face-painting - which will also begin at 2 pm. It's fun for the whole family. So please put the picnic on your calendar for Nov. 6. Come, meet your neighbors, share good food, have fun, and get a free makeup job!

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Campbell Grant Northeast Neighborhood Association

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Vice President: Mike Hayes (795-8311)
Treasurer: Cynthia Sorrensen (323-4648)
Secretary: Vicki Mills (795-5299)
Newsletter: Christy Komoska (795-1030)

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Join our Neighborhood News List

E-mail us at:

CAMPBELLGNE@YAHOO.COM

NEXT MEETING:

7:00PM—8:30PM

WARD III MEETING ROOM, 1510 E. GRANT RD.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2005

October Meeting Agenda

- Meet your neighbors
- Announcements, updates, and reports
- Presentation by The Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection
- Neighborhood Beautification Committee
- Transportation Committee