



PLANNING COMMISSION

Planning & Development Services Department • 201 N. Stone Ave. • Tucson, AZ 85701

DATE: September 13, 2017

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Scott Clark
Executive Secretary

SUBJECT: *Grant-Alvernon Area Plan* Amendment PA-17-01, Amendment to Allow Commercial Use Study Session (Ward 3)

Issue: This application is for a plan amendment to the *Grant-Alvernon Area Plan* submitted by Brian Underwood of the Planning Center on behalf of Abraham Slilaty / Fort Lowell Park, LLC, to allow commercial uses in an area currently designated on the *Grant-Alvernon Area Plan* Conceptual Land Use Map for office and high-density residential uses. The 7.92-acre subject property (hereafter referred to as the “amendment site”) consists of an assemblage of eight vacant parcels located on the south side of Fort Lowell Road approximately 700 feet east of the Alvernon Way and Fort Lowell Road intersection, and approximately 4,000 feet west of the Swan Road and Camp Lowell Road intersection. Attachment A provides the amendment site location, while Attachment B shows the context.

Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Planning Commission set this item for public hearing on October 11, 2017.

Applicant’s Request: The applicant is requesting to change the *Grant-Alvernon Area Plan* Conceptual Land Use Map designation for the 7.92-acre amendment site from office and high-density residential to office, commercial, and high-density residential. Attachment C presents the existing Area Plan Conceptual Land Use Map applicable to the amendment site, and Attachment D shows the proposed Area Plan Conceptual Land Use Map

Amendment Site Background: The amendment site was annexed into the City of Tucson in 1959 and was originally designated in the *Grant-Alvernon Area Plan* (1999) as low-to-medium density residential. In 2007, preceding the economic downturn of 2008, the *Grant-Alvernon Area Plan* was amended to allow for office and high density residential (Resolution No. 20819) on the amendment site and subsequently the western portion of the amendment site was authorized for rezoning (#C9-08-01) from R-3 and MH-1 to O-3 to accommodate a market demand for office uses within the vicinity of the amendment site.

Due to the economic recession and the continued absence of demand for residential uses, the *Grant-Alvernon Area Plan* designation on the eastern portion of the amendment site was amended to allow office and high-density residential (Resolution No. 21381), and in 2010 this portion of the site was authorized for rezoning from R-2 and R-3 to O-3 (#C9-09-11).

Existing Zoning & Existing Land Uses on Site & in the Surrounding Area: While the existing zoning on the 7.92-acre amendment site is currently specified as MH-1, R2, and R3, a large portion of the site is authorized for O-3 (office) zoning until 2018 when the rezoning expires and the remainder is authorized for O-3 through 2020 when the rezoning expires. The site, generally in the shape of a ‘U’, surrounds a separate site zoned R-3 and occupied by an apartment complex. The amendment site is vacant with the exception of several residential structures set back from Fort Lowell Road on the east side of the boundary between the apartment complex and the amendment site. The property north of Fort Lowell Road is zoned R-1 (residential), MH-1 (mobile home), and C-2 (commercial), and is occupied by single- and multi-family residential uses and commercial uses, including self-storage facilities. The property east of the amendment site is zoned as R-2, and is occupied by single-family uses. The property west of the amendment site is zoned MH-1, O-2, and C-1, and is occupied by residential mobile homes, and commercial uses. The property south of the amendment site is zoned MH-1, and is occupied by a mobile home community. A drainageway runs along the southeast side of the amendment site.

The amendment site has current access onto Fort Lowell Road, which is directly adjacent to the site on the north side. Fort Lowell Road is a designated arterial street on the City of Tucson *Major Streets and Routes Map*. Uses along Fort Lowell Road to the west of the site on both the north and south sides of the road are a mix of office and commercial. Additionally, since 2000 there has been an increase of new development and redevelopment along Fort Lowell Road east of the amendment site, spurred by the extension of Fort Lowell Road east to Swan Road (Camp Lowell Road). A commercial/medical/office node is located at the intersection of Swan Road and Camp Lowell Road, and redevelopment continues along both roads. *Attachment E* shows the existing zoning and existing land uses.

Land Use Policy Direction: Policy guidance is provided by *Plan Tucson, the City of Tucson General and Sustainability Plan* (2013) and by the *Grant-Alvernon Area Plan* (1999). *Plan Tucson* policies are long-term, broad-based, and apply to the entire city, whereas *Grant-Alvernon Area Plan* policies are more narrowly focused and apply only in the plan area. Key policies are summarized below; a complete policy listing is provided as *Attachment F*.

The *Plan Tucson* Future Growth Scenario Map shows the amendment site adjacent to a suggested “Mixed-Use Center.” “Mixed-Use Centers” are described as combining a variety of housing options, retail, services, office, and public gathering places, located close to each other, providing occupants of the center and the residents and workers in the surrounding neighborhoods with local access to goods and services. *Plan Tucson* policy supports development in which residential, commercial, employment, and recreational uses are integrated; there is close proximity to transit; multi-modal transportation choices exist or can be accommodated; there is potential to develop moderate to higher density development; and existing or upgraded public facilities and infrastructure provide required levels of service.

The *Grant-Alvernon Area Plan* covers an approximately three-and-a-half-square-mile area bounded by Fort Lowell Road and Grant Road on the north, Speedway Boulevard on the south, Swan Road and Columbus Boulevard on the east, and Country Club Road on the west.

Development in the area covered by the Area Plan generally occurred from the mid-1940s near Speedway Boulevard and Country Club Road, to the late 1970s near Fort Lowell Road and Columbus Boulevard. The predominant land use is medium-density, single-family residential in the interior of neighborhoods and along many major streets, and office, commercial, and high-density residential along major streets. The Area Plan (pg. 7) states that in the Grant-Alvernon area “Major commercial streets are Speedway Boulevard, Grant Road, and Fort Lowell Road.”

Since it was adopted, the *Grant-Alvernon Area Plan* has been amended five times as follows.

- Amended September 9, 2009, Resolution 21381; allowed office and high-density residential uses on two parcels on the south side of Fort Lowell Road east of Alvernon Way.
- Amended November 13, 2007, Resolution 20819; allowed both office and high-density residential uses on several parcels on the south side of Fort Lowell Road east of Alvernon Way (east of the Sycamore Avenue alignment).
- Amended March 20, 2007, Resolution 20609; allowed office, commercial, and high-density residential on parcels at the northeast corner of Alvernon Way and Lee Street.
- Amended June 14, 2004, Resolution 19849; allowed the Tucson Botanical Gardens on Alvernon Way south of Grant Road to expand eastward as a special exception cultural use in the R-1 zone.
- Amended November 13, 2000, Resolution 18770; allowed the expansion of commercial uses along Alvernon Way at Fairmount Street, north of Speedway Boulevard.

Both the September 2009 and November 2007 amendments addressed the same parcels that are the subject of this currently sought plan amendment. The amendments, however, were to allow office and high-density residential uses. Neither amendment requested commercial, the additional use designation now being sought.

The proposed amendment is consistent with the *Grant-Alvernon Area Plan* general goal of identifying appropriate locations for residential, commercial, and industrial development, while supporting policies that encourage the development of vacant property to complement the existing scale, character, and identity of the surrounding neighborhood and that provide primary access to an arterial street.

Public Contact: The applicant held a neighborhood meeting on Thursday, June 1, 2016, 6:00 p.m., at the Davidson Elementary School, 3950 E. Paradise Falls Drive. Eight people signed in for the meeting.

No letters of support or protest have been received to date.

Conclusion: The 7.92-acre amendment site is a vacant site the uses for which are shown on the *Grant-Alvernon Area Plan* Conceptual Land Use Map as office and high-density residential. The applicant is seeking an amendment to the Conceptual Land Use Map that would allow commercial

along with the current office and high-density residential uses. The proposed amendment is supported by the following:

- The amendment site has primary access onto Fort Lowell Road. Fort Lowell Road is identified as an arterial on the City's Major Streets and Route Map, and is called out in the *Grant-Alvernon Area Plan* as one of the area's three "major commercial streets."
- Amending the Area Plan to allow commercial uses at this site would be consistent with the mix of office and commercial uses located around the intersection of Alvernon Way and Fort Lowell Road west of the amendment site, and with the mix of office and commercial uses that have been developed east of the site since the extension of Fort Lowell Road to Swan Road was completed in 2000.
- The amendment site is of a size and configuration that affords allowance for site design compatibility with the single family residences to the east and the residential mobile homes to the south and west.

If the proposed amendment to the *Grant-Alvernon Area Plan* Conceptual Land Use Map is successful, the applicant intends to follow up with a request for rezoning to allow a mix of uses on site, including retail, restaurant, self-storage facilities, and other commercial services, accompanied by parking and landscape buffering and screening. The proposed uses will complement the current area uses, particularly the properties adjacent to the western boundary of the amendment site, which are currently designated for office, commercial, and high-density residential on the existing *Grant-Alvernon Area Plan* Conceptual Land Use Map as shown in Attachment C. Attachment G presents the application for this plan amendment request, and if approved, the property owner plans to apply to rezone the property to C-2 (commercial).

Attachments:

- A: Location Map
- B: Context Map
- C: Existing *Grant-Alvernon Area Plan* Conceptual Land Use Map
- D: Proposed *Grant-Alvernon Area Plan* Conceptual Land Use Map
- E: Existing Zoning & Existing Land Use Map
- F: Land Use Plan Policies
- G: Application & Materials