



# PLANNING COMMISSION

Department of Urban Planning & Design • P.O. Box 27210 • Tucson, AZ 85726-7210

**DATE:** September 17, 2008

**TO:** Planning Commission  
*Albert Elias*

**FROM:** Albert Elias, AICP  
Executive Secretary

**SUBJECT:** Jefferson Park Neighborhood Plan  
Public Hearing (Ward III)

**Issue:** This draft of the Jefferson Park Neighborhood Plan (the Plan) is before the Planning Commission (Commission) for a public hearing. The Plan is the result of a two-year effort by the Jefferson Park Neighborhood (the Neighborhood) involving residents, property owners, and other stakeholders with interest in the neighborhood.

**Recommendation:** Staff recommends that the Commission consider the issues elaborated on below, as well those that may be raised at the public hearing, in anticipation of forwarding the Plan to Mayor and Council with a recommendation to adopt the Plan. A copy of the draft Plan was provided to the Commission with the August 20, 2008, Study Session packet. An updated copy of the Plan with several non-substantive edits was passed out to Commissioners at the August 20, 2008, meeting. (An updated copy is attached.)

**Background:** Currently, the City of Tucson has 28 neighborhood plans and 17 area plans, many created years ago and amended subsequently. The Neighborhood Plans are more detailed and refined than the Area Plans, which incorporate multiple neighborhoods. Both the Neighborhood and the Area Plans are advisory documents that have been used by the City primarily to inform rezoning reviews. In recent years, there has been increasing interest by neighborhoods, particularly in the central city, to create or update neighborhood plans. The Jefferson Park Neighborhood Plan is one of two neighborhood plans that the Department of Urban Planning and Design selected to undertake with the goal of creating a model for future neighborhood plans. The objective is to create neighborhood plans that serve as advisory documents for City land use decisions, while also serving as strategic documents for neighborhoods to address such issues as infrastructure enhancement, safety and maintenance, and social interaction.

**Jefferson Park Neighborhood Plan Overview:** The Jefferson Park Neighborhood is located in central Tucson and is bounded on the north by Grant Road, on the south by Lester Street, on the east by Campbell Avenue, and on the west by Euclid Avenue. The Neighborhood is currently included in the *University Area Plan* (Adopted 1989, Amendment 1991). The

Plan includes a section (Neighborhood Past and Present) that highlights the Neighborhood's development over time, as well as its physical and demographic attributes.

The Department of Urban Planning and Design and its consultant, the University of Arizona, College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture's Drachman Institute, managed the preparation of the Plan. The work included an interactive process among Jefferson Park neighbors, stakeholders, and planners and featured Neighborhood public meetings, Citizen Steering Committee meetings, a design charrette, one-on-one discussions, and surveys.

Property owners and residents of the Jefferson Park Neighborhood were notified by mail of a public meeting to be held on February 14, 2008, to review and receive feedback on the draft Plan. The notification also provided information on how to obtain a copy of the Plan and by when and to whom to provide comments. Sixty-eight people signed in for the meeting. Staff provided a page-by-page review of the Plan. The presentation was followed by attendees' comments and questions, which were either asked verbally and transcribed or written on question cards and read aloud. Additionally, questionnaires were distributed to obtain participants' feedback on the Draft Plan. Twenty-two questionnaires were completed and returned. On a scale of "1" (not satisfied) to "5" (very satisfied), 27% of respondents indicated they were very satisfied, 50% indicated they were quite satisfied, and 23% indicated they were satisfied. No respondents indicated they were not satisfied. In response to the second question as to whether the Draft Plan was ready to take through the City review process, twelve respondents indicated "Yes," and ten respondents indicated "No." The transcription of the February 14, 2008, public meeting is provided as an attachment.

The Steering Committee members reviewed and discussed the public meeting input on the Plan. Committee members decided that while the overall tone of the meeting was generally supportive of the Draft Plan, feedback from the first meeting warranted a second public meeting to review revisions made to the draft Plan in response to the first meeting and to address several comments received from the City Attorney's Office. The second public meeting was held on Monday, August 18, 2008. A sample of the notification postcard is attached. Urban Planning and Design will include in its presentation to the Planning Commission Study Session a summary of comments received at the August 18<sup>th</sup> public meeting.

While revisions were made to the draft Plan following the first public meeting, overall the Committee determined that the substance and direction of the Plan remained the same. The Committee, therefore, requested that the draft Plan be presented to the Planning Committee.

**Key Elements of the Plan:** The key elements of the Plan include a vision statement; an explanation of the use of the Neighborhood Plan; and three goals that evolved from the vision statement. The three goals, which are listed below, include a total of 10 policies and 41 strategies. The goals, policies, and strategies are divided between those that address Land Use and those that address Community as shown below.

*Land Use Goals, Policies, and Strategies*

1. Neighborhood Preservation
2. Neighborhood Landscape and Streetscape

*Community Goals, Policies, and Strategies*

3. Development of Community

**Several items of particular note regarding the draft Plan:**

- In addressing future land uses in the Neighborhood, the Steering Committee reviewed the conceptual land uses specified for the Jefferson Park Neighborhood in the University Area Plan. In several areas, the committee's recommendations for future land uses differ from those recommended in the Area Plan. Specifically, the Jefferson Park Neighborhood Plan recommends against the conversion of residential uses to commercial uses (O uses or C uses) along the three adjacent arterial streets (Grant, Campbell and Euclid). (See page 10 of the draft Plan.)
- The Jefferson Park Neighborhood is one of two neighborhoods initiated by the Mayor and Council for the Neighborhood Preservation Zone (NPZ) process. The first step in this process is the development of a neighborhood design manual. The Jefferson Park Neighborhood will begin development of their design manual upon completion of the individual property inventory that will be conducted as part of the neighborhood's National Register nomination as an historic district. While the NPZ process is separate from the Neighborhood Plan development process, the Plan identifies the NPZ and the associated Design Manual as a possible mechanism for implementing strategies presented in the draft Plan to preserve the traditional low-density single-story character of the Neighborhood's traditional density, fabric and form without discouraging its healthy diversity of architectural styles.

Among these strategies are: limiting the Residential Floor Area Ratio (RFAR) in the R-1 zone to 0.35; limiting the second floor area to 5.25% of the total lot area and limiting the height of the portion of roof over the two-story area to twenty feet; limiting the height of single story development to sixteen feet; limiting the size of a secondary structure to 50% of the square footage of the principal structure, locating the secondary structure behind the main structure, and keeping the secondary structure's height the same as or shorter than the main structure; reducing lot coverage in the R-1 zone from 70% to 50%; and prohibiting group parking in front yards, parking in the back-of-curb area on the street, jumping curbs to park, and parking lot-style parking in the rear of a lot. (See pages 10 – 11 of the draft Plan.)

**Planning Commission Study Session:** At the August 20, 2008, Study Session, Urban Planning & Design staff gave a presentation highlighting the Plan's public process and content. Dyer Lytle, Chair of the Jefferson Park Neighborhood Plan Citizen Steering Committee, made additional comments regarding the process and Plan content.

Commissioners then asked questions and made comments on the Plan. At the conclusion of the discussion, Commissioner Williams made a motion, duly seconded by Commissioner McBride-Olson, to set the item for public hearing at the September 17, 2008, meeting. Motion passed by a voice vote of 10 to 0 (Commissioners Sullivan and Watson absent).

### **Issues and Staff Responses:**

- Greenways/Alleyways: A question was asked as to whether there is potential for the alleys to be developed as greenways, given the desire to keep recycling and trash pickup in the alleys. Mr. Lytle said the idea of greenways had not been discussed specifically, rather the emphasis from people coming to the meetings was on having garbage and recycling collection in the alleys.

*Staff Response:* Staff concurs that the comments heard regarding alleyways were focused on using them for recycling and garbage pick-up to eliminate the unsightly containers from streets and to make improvements that would further encourage pedestrian activity along the more highly visible streetscapes.

- Non-Residential Zoning: It was noted that the Plan did not provide for the possibility of rezoning currently zoned single family residential property to non-residential uses along the major arterials within the Neighborhood (i.e., Grant Road, Euclid Road, and Campbell Avenue). A comment was made that appropriately scaled office uses could be a good alternative to residential uses along an arterial such as Grant Road where houses often end up as rental properties that are not well maintained.

*Staff Response:* Jefferson Park Neighborhood Plan, Policy 1.3, calls for future land use being consistent with existing land use. More specifically, Strategy 1.3.1 says, "In contradiction to the 1989 City of Tucson *University Area Plan*," recommend(s) against the conversion of residential uses to commercial uses (O uses or C uses) along the three adjacent arterial streets (Grant, Campbell, and Euclid)." During the Plan preparation, participants noted that Grant Road, which is primarily zoned R-1, is going through a major and separate planning process in conjunction with the RTA Grant Road Improvement Project. Participants decided not to second guess that process, but rather return to the existing zoning until there was a proposal that could be reviewed and carefully considered in terms of its potential impact on Neighborhood goals. Participants did discuss potential increased development options along Euclid Avenue, which is zoned within the Neighborhood boundaries as R-2 for the majority of the avenue, C-1 at the northeastern corner, and R-1 for the remainder. Many participants expressed a reluctance to deviate from the existing R-1 given their feeling that the historic, single-family residential integrity and scale of the neighborhood has been increasingly threatened.

Since the Plan was begun, Jefferson Park and other inner city neighborhoods have been working with the City and other stakeholders in forming the Neighborhood Preservation

Zone (NPZ). Part of the discussion in the development of the NPZ included consideration of where more intense, non-single family residential uses might go if they were not to be located within the core of historic neighborhoods. The conclusion was to begin thinking about locating such uses along arterials. This conclusion is generally consistent with the general planning goals for the City. However, the placement of more intense uses needs to be done strategically, with careful consideration of the specific location and the surrounding uses. In the case of the Jefferson Park Neighborhood, single-family residences are located along the portion of Grant Road within the Neighborhood and along a much smaller portion of Euclid Avenue. The Campbell Street frontage within the Neighborhood was addressed with the widening of Campbell Road in the area and the location of a screening wall along this neighborhood boundary.

For Grant Road, staff agrees that a case could be made, as suggested in the University Area Plan, for non-single family residential uses that are developed with sensitivity to the scale, design, and historic integrity of the surrounding Neighborhood. Regarding Euclid Avenue, additional analysis is needed to determine the extent to which commercial or non-residential uses can be accommodated, while still respecting the character of the neighborhood.

- **Restrictive Strategies:** Several questions were asked about strategies in the Plan that were more restrictive than the Land Use Code and whether those were acceptable.

*Staff Response:* As staff explained during the Study Session, the Plan contains policies and strategies. The “policies” provide the guidance for rezoning review; the “strategies” provide possible approaches to meeting the policies and are considered informative. Neither the policies nor the strategies are regulatory. In a City review of a proposed rezoning or related action, the focus would be on the applicant’s ability to demonstrate consistency with the policies. This is further clarified in the Plan under “Plan Implementation,” Item #9.

**Subsequent Public Comments:** To ensure that all were informed about and had an opportunity to comment on the Plan, the public hearing notice was sent not only to property owners, but also to Neighborhood residents. The notice has resulted in several requests for a copy of the Plan, some phone calls requesting an explanation of the Plan’s purpose and the process used in developing the Plan, and some communication expressing concerns as noted below.

- Urban Planning & Design staff has heard several concerns about the Plan related to Policy 1.3 and its accompanying Strategies (1.3.1 – 1.3.4) as it may affect future development along arterials.

*Staff Response:* See “Staff Response” under “Non-Residential Zoning” bullet above.

- Additionally staff has heard concerns about what are viewed as restrictions to future development created by the standards presented in Strategies 1.3.1 – 1.3.4.

Staff Response: Regarding the latter, staff has noted what appears to be ongoing confusion regarding the distinction between the Neighborhood Plan and the Neighborhood Preservation Zone and related Design Manual. The Jefferson Park Neighborhood Plan presents strategies to inform the development of a Design Manual under the Neighborhood Preservation Zone Ordinance. The latter is a separate process that Jefferson Park has been selected to begin following the Neighborhood's establishment as an historic district under National Register of Historic Places criteria. The process to develop an NPZ Design Manual will consist of a separately selected citizen steering committee and public meetings. If and when such a Design Manual is completed, it would be advisory unless the Mayor and Council votes to make it mandatory. The Neighborhood Plan is only advisory and the land use portion is used for rezonings.

**Attachments:** Public Hearing Notice  
Jefferson Park Neighborhood Plan