

Stone Avenue's History

Stone Avenue is a historically important roadway corridor in central Tucson. As one of the oldest corridors in the city, it has accommodated a range of uses through the years. In the late 19th century, a streetcar line ran along Stone Avenue and served as a primary attraction for industrial and commercial enterprises. These businesses, which were originally scattered among residences along Stone Avenue, eventually dominated the street front. Over time the corridor transformed into the center of automotive-related businesses, ranging from dealerships to specialty services to junkyards. In the early 1900's, the avenue was designated as part of State Highway

80 and later Highway 89. Stone Avenue was in its heyday. Motels, restaurants, and other uses catering to travelers located along the roadway. Then, in the 1950's Interstate 10 was built. Travelers bypassed Stone Avenue, and the corridor began to deteriorate. The large automotive dealerships moved, and the motels and restaurants closed or downscaled. What remained were small businesses, such as automotive specialty services and discount retail, interspersed with some institutional, social service, and residential uses. Today, the avenue no longer carries a state highway designation, and all public responsibilities for the corridor rest with the City of Tucson.



Stone Avenue Citizen Task Force monthly meeting.

How the Study Got Started: The Stone Avenue Coalition

Although Stone Avenue's vitality has dwindled over the years, it remains a highly visible north/south corridor into Downtown Tucson, and it serves as the common link for neighborhoods that lie to the east and west of the avenue from 6th Street to Wetmore Road. These neighborhoods have offset their limited financial resources with time, energy, and a commitment to improving their surroundings. In recent years, however, the residents have observed that the deterioration along Stone Avenue is making their efforts to improve the neighborhoods increasingly difficult. To combat this trend, eight neighborhood associations came together to form the Stone Avenue Coalition. The coalition was dedicated

to pursuing improvements on Stone Avenue that would benefit both residents and businesses and return the avenue to its historical prominence as a gateway corridor.

The coalition approached the City of Tucson for help. Impressed with the dedication of the coalition and recognizing the importance of the corridor to the city as a whole, the Mayor & Council funded a multi-disciplinary study with the goal of identifying a series of actions that could be implemented over time to upgrade Stone Avenue.

Study Background

Summary of Study Goals & Recommendations

This matrix presents a summary of the recommendations that grew out of the Stone Avenue Corridor Study and indicates how each contributes

to key goals for the corridor as identified by members of the Task Force and of the general public who participated in various study activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS	GOALS	Strengthen corridor continuity & identity	Contribute to beautification of corridor	Contribute to "greening" of corridor	Increase shade	Encourage pedestrian activity	Encourage bicycle activity	Encourage increased bus use	Provide uses that meet neighborhood needs	Strengthen individual neighborhood identity	Celebrate and preserve historic resources	Encourage economic development	Increase after-hour activity	Limit right-of-way impact on adjacent properties	Seek measures to calm traffic	Make safer	Relieve congestion	Address drainage issues
Four-travel-lane cross section with varying length landscape islands and continuous bike lanes and sidewalks Continuous, ADA accessible, 6-foot sidewalks Reduction in number of access points along Stone Avenue		<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>				<input type="radio"/>			<input type="radio"/>			<input type="radio"/>	
Landscape islands at various intervals Raised median pedestrian crossings (e.g., PELICAN) Raised median bicycle crossings (e.g., TOUCAN)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>									<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		
5-foot bike lanes with signage, markings, and/or colored blue Local street north/south bicycle route alternatives Street trees		<input type="radio"/>					<input type="radio"/>								<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		
Pedestrian nodes Green nodes Markers noting points of historic and other interest along pedestrian way		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>							
Landscaping of adjacent drainage ways Widening confined to major intersections Traffic signal timing adjustments			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>													<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Underground utilities and fix sagging lines where possible Bus pullouts at locations of heavy use or transfers High quality bus shelters at all stops		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>			<input type="radio"/>								<input type="radio"/>		
Additional bus service Public art integrated in nodes and artistic treatment of functional elements Neighborhood entry markers		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>					<input type="radio"/>										
Special treatment of high point at Jacinto to accentuate north/south views Special gateway treatment at Stone/Speedway intersection Special district designation to allow more flexible zoning, design guidelines, and financial incentives to encourage economic development		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>						
Creative alternatives to existing parking accommodations Vacant lot and underutilized property development and redevelopment Mixed-use development (prototype)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			<input type="radio"/>			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>					
Adaptive reuse development (prototype)		<input type="radio"/>									<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>						

Study Background

How the Study Was Conducted

In undertaking the study, the City of Tucson built on the Stone Avenue Coalition's efforts, reaching out to involve an even wider group of citizens and businesses through the formation of a citizen task force. The Stone Avenue Corridor Task Force membership, which totaled 23, represented a cross section of people who live, work, or have an active interest in the corridor. Similarly, the City Study Team included representatives from a variety of departments, who could address the different elements that contribute to making a corridor more livable, such as streetscape beautification, economic development, urban design, historic preservation, and public art. Working collaboratively through a series of meetings, workshops, and open houses, the City Study Team and the Citizen Task Force first examined existing conditions within the corridor,



Citizen Task Force and City Study Team on bus tour of the Stone Avenue corridor.

next identified key goals for revitalization, and finally created a set of recommendations to meet those goals. (Note: A matrix summarizing the goals and recommendations is included in this card.)

Study Recommendations

The study recommendations, which are elaborated in these Study Cards, were presented to the Tucson Mayor & Council on Monday, June 26, 2000. The Mayor & Council approved the recommendations and requested that several follow-up steps be taken. The first two steps included appointing a

Stone Avenue Coordinator and continuing the City Study Team to help with the implementation of the recommendations. The third step was to pursue funding for the infrastructure improvements; the fourth step was to develop a proposal for the designation of a special district to help foster economic development; and the fifth step was to prepare an interim brochure to inform developers who have an interest in new construction or renovation on Stone Avenue about the study objectives. As of the preparation of these Study Cards, the appointment of a coordinator and the continuation of the City Study Team had been carried out, and the other three steps were being actively pursued.



This view along Stone illustrates the corridor's historic linkage to the Downtown from the north.

**Have questions about the study results?
Contact the City of Tucson
Comprehensive Planning Task Force
at 791-4505.**