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# PLANNING COMMISSION

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

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**DATE:** July 10, 2025, for July 16, 2025, Scheduled Meeting

**TO:** Planning Commission

**FROM:** Patrick Hartley, Administrator, Planning and Programming Division,  
Department of Transportation & Mobility

**SUBJECT:** Update to the City of Tucson's Major Streets and Routes Plan (City Wide)

**Issue:** On October 3, 2023, Mayor and Council directed staff to initiate the process of updating the Major Streets and Routes (MS&R) Map, which was last updated in early 2016. Staff analyzed the current conditions and has prepared a list of proposed changes to update the MS&R Map, with the goal of better reflecting Tucson's urban environment and to facilitate mixed-use, mixed-income, transit-oriented development, and equitable mobility for all.

This is a continuation of the June 4, 2025, Planning Commission Study Session for this item. Based on the previous meeting, staff made the following changes to the proposed MS&R map update:

- Removed Dodge Bl as a Collector from Fort Lowell Rd to Speedway Bl
- Removed Fort Lowell Rd as a Collector from Swan Rd to Craycroft Rd
- Updated future roadways in the SE region of Tucson
- Updated intersection future right-of-way allocations
- Updated proposed future right-of-way values in the vicinity of Tucson International Airport
- Updated proposed future right-of-way value for First Av from Wetmore Rd to Grant Rd

The process to adopt or amend the MS&R Plan is described in the Unified Development Code (UDC), Section 3.6 Land Use Plan Adoption and Amendment Procedures. This process includes:

1. Initiation of plan amendment by Mayor and Council
2. Planning Commission study session

3. Planning Commission public hearing and recommendation to Mayor and Council on the proposed amendment
4. Mayor and Council public hearing and decision

This presentation represents the second step in the process to update the MS&R, as outlined by the UDC.

**Recommendation:** Staff recommends the Planning Commission set the Update to the City of Tucson's Major Streets and Routes Plan for a Public Hearing on August 13, 2025.

**Background:** The City of Tucson's Major Streets and Routes (MS&R) Plan, and associated Map, was originally adopted by Tucson Mayor and Council on November 15, 1982, under Resolution 12045, which amended Tucson's General Plan by adding a Major Streets and Routes Plan as one of the plan's elements.

The MS&R Plan has subsequently been amended over 30 times reflecting annexations and changing conditions in the City, with the most recent amendment occurring in 2016. The purpose of the Major Streets and Routes Plan is to facilitate future street widening, to inform the public about which streets are the main thoroughfares, so that land use decisions can be based accordingly, and to reduce the disruption of existing uses on a property. The MS&R Map is the means by which the Plan is implemented.

The MS&R organizes streets into arterial and collector streets (local streets are not included in the MS&R), as well as identifies Scenic and Gateway Routes with their own specific development provisions.

To facilitate future street widenings, the MS&R Plan establishes a Setback Zone. The Setback Zone is the area within the future half right-of-way where structures, off-street parking, vehicular circulation, off-street loading, or maneuvering space, landscaping, or screening improvements required by the Zoning Code, are prohibited from being constructed, erected, placed, or extended unless specifically allowed. The future right-of-way line used to determine the Setback Zone is established through the MS&R Map, which identifies the future right-ofway based on projected traffic growth. Right-of-way needs are computed using a desired operation of Level of Service C for all roadway segments.

MS&R standards are applied to new structures, changes of use, or where there is an expansion of use to structures adjacent to routes designated on the MS&R Plan, as described in Section 5.4 of the Unified Development Code.

The MS&R Map is built upon car-oriented designations and assumptions, with its emphasis on facilitating road widenings to meet future vehicle demand. This results in large setbacks on major streets that pose a challenge to comfortable and appealing pedestrian networks and is counter to the intent of Tucson's Complete Streets Policy, which was adopted via [Ordinance No. 11621](#) on February 5, 2019. Moreover, the MS&R's right-of-way requirements present a

significant barrier to infill development in established areas of the City and can inhibit the type of development that supports vibrant, walkable communities and multimodal connectivity.

**Present Considerations:** The MS&R Plan requires that the plan be reviewed and amended periodically to reflect changes in the Pima Association of Governments (PAG) Regional Transportation Plan (Regional Mobility and Accessibility Plan – RMAP 2045) and Tucson's general plan (Plan Tucson) including the completion of transportation corridor projects and designation of new routes.

In the years since the last amendment to the MS&R the City of Tucson has enacted the Complete Streets Policy, approved its own long-range transportation plan known as Move Tucson (adopted 12/7/2021 by Mayor and Council via [Resolution No. 23420](#)), and approved the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan, known as Tucson Resilient Together. Additionally, PAG has completed two updates of the RMAP.

The Move Tucson plan, specifically, recommends that the MS&R plan be updated using the needs identified in Move Tucson as the new foundation. It provides the following framework for the update:

- Maintain the existing regulatory structure of the MS&R. This includes both the Map, which identifies where regulating policies apply, as well as associated public right-of-way and private property standards.
- Update regulating policies to establish a minimum right-of-way width based on the Complete Streets design guidance and desired development contexts, rather than requiring a specific ROW width.
- Provide for modal priority streets, such as bicycle or public transportation, through overlay designations. This is consistent with the Street Design Guide.
- Utilize the updated MS&R to reflect the preferred organization for each roadway, with final street design determined through community input and project-specific analysis of the corridor.

The MS&R can be updated to better reflect Tucson's current transportation priorities represented in recent planning efforts, with the focus shifting away from requiring large setbacks to facilitate road widenings and towards encouraging development that enhances the pedestrian environment and supports other multimodal connections.

To achieve the goals set forth by Mayor and Council, staff assimilated guidance from the planning documents and policies listed above, along with current data including traffic volumes, development plans, and other transportation-related metrics, and are proposing a number of changes to the existing MS&R Map. Every roadway within the City of Tucson jurisdiction was analyzed on a segment-by-segment basis in order to formulate a recommendation that best matches the unique operational and community needs of the corridor.

These recommended updates generally fall into one of two categories: changes to future right-of-way widths or the reclassification of routes within the existing MS&R Map.

*Proposed Changes – Future Right-of-Way Widths*

Each street segment needs to be assessed for its future needs and have a right-of-way value that correlates to the ultimate width for that future right-of-way. For example, a built-out street may have a current right-of-way midblock width of 90' but a future right-of-way midblock width set at 105', which means that additional area should be reserved for those future needs and has impacts on adjacent land uses and development potential. In addition to the future right-of-way needs at the midblock, expanded future right-of-way will also be required at major intersections to accommodate extra capacity.

Staff analyzed each segment of roadway, to ensure that the future right-of-way value includes adequate space to accommodate all present and future public improvements such as pavement, medians, curbs, sidewalk, bike facilities, utilities, drainage, and landscaping. This analysis yielded several types of recommendations related to future right-of-way widths detailed below (note: the associated percentage next to each category represents the amount of systemwide roadways, by percentage of total centerline miles, which fall into the category of recommendation):

- **Less than MS&R Existing (≈43.2%)** – A proposed reduction in the future right-of-way width from the existing planned width. An example of this scenario is a road with a planned project that includes a lane reduction or a road where traffic volumes are lower than expected. Future right-of-way width can be reduced to deliver any planned improvements, and excess right-of-way can be sold or used for adjacent development.
- **Equal to MS&R Existing (≈31.8%)** – No proposed change in future right-of-way width. For example, this recommendation applies to roads where the existing future right-of-way width is sufficient for a planned modernization project to deliver improvements.
- **Right-of-Way To Match Existing Property Line (≈22.2%)** – Maintains designation as a Major Street; the existing built width would match the current private property line (indicated by a zero value on the map). An example of this situation is a street in the Downtown Tucson core which cannot accommodate a right-of-way widening since existing properties would be impacted, requiring property acquisition or demolition, which is to be avoided.
- **Proposed for Removal (≈2.8%)** - Removal of a segment from the existing MS&R Map. Roads in this category have typically been determined to no longer be included as a part of long-range regional transportation plans, have private ownership, or have current traffic volumes that are no longer supportive of a Major Street classification.

A visual summary of these systemwide recommendations are detailed in Attachment A– City of Tucson Major Streets and Routes Recommendations. As noted, future right-of-way widths

should be given special consideration at intersection approaches where additional capacity is typically required. Staff analyzed the existing guidance for future right-of-way values at intersections and proposes a revision to those values, including the taper and storage lengths, which is in conformance with the Pima County/City of Tucson Signing and Pavement Marking Manual and DTM's Street Design Guide. The proposed revision to future right-of-way values at intersections represents a reduction from the values in the existing MSR Map.

#### *Proposed Changes – Roadway Reclassifications*

Reclassification can be a useful tool to update roads that are now used differently or carry different travel volumes than what is reflected in the current MS&R. The Major Streets and Routes Plan includes Collector and Arterial classifications. Arterials are generally higher speed streets with higher traffic counts, typically above 12,000 vehicles per day. Collectors are generally governed by lower speeds, connecting neighborhoods to other destinations, where traffic counts are consistently less than Arterials, in the vicinity of 2,500 to 12,000 vehicles per day. Local streets, whose primary purpose is to provide access to property, not through movement, typically serve fewer than 2,500 vehicles per day. By default, any street that is not identified in the Major Streets and Routes Map is considered a local street. To determine whether a roadway should be reclassified with this update, staff examined the totality of the following metrics:

- **Traffic volumes** – as previously noted, current traffic volumes can be a key indicator of the role of a roadway within a given network. Typically, local streets carry fewer than 2,500 daily vehicles, Collectors carry between 2,500 and 12,000 daily vehicles, and Arterials carry more than 12,000 vehicles per day.
- **Federal Functional Classification** – a designation determined by the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) which defines the role that a particular roadway segment plays in serving the flow of traffic, assists engineers in planning for the efficient conveyance of vehicles, and is used to identify which roads are eligible for federal aid funding to cover the costs for road development, improvement, or maintenance.
- **Location on the grid** – Tucson's street network is typically laid out on a mile-grid, based largely on Public Land Survey System (PLSS) section lines. Within this network, Arterials are generally spaced one mile apart (section lines), while Collectors are usually located halfway between Arterials (quarter section lines).
- **Existing traffic controls** – traffic control elements such as signalization, lane markings, and increased signage can be indicative of streets functioning as an Arterial or Collector within the network.

In this update, reclassification could mean changing a Collector to an Arterial, or vice versa, if data indicates the functionality of the roadway has changed based on the list of metrics noted above. Designation as a Major Street in the MS&R Map is retained, but streets are reclassified based on current conditions. Additions and removals to the MS&R Map are also included in this category of proposed changes. A roadway may be added to the MS&R Map for reasons such as increased travel volume or a new or planned roadway that was not included in previous

updates. A removal may be recommended when a Collector acts as a local street with very low travel volume and can be removed as a Major Street. A removal of an Arterial may be recommended when that previously planned roadway is too infeasible to build in the future.

*Not Subject to Revision*

While staff has performed a systemwide analysis of the current Major Streets and Routes Map and is proposing numerous changes to both future right-of-way widths and roadway reclassifications, there several plan elements and associated programs that will not be impacted by proposed updates:

- **MS&R Plan** – with this update, staff looked specifically at the MS&R Map, which serves as the means by which the Plan is implemented. The MS&R Plan itself has no proposed changes other than any guidance directly related to the map update. The project team plans on performing an administrative update to the MS&R Plan to bring it into conformance with the Map updates once those changes are approved by Mayor and Council.
- **Gateway Corridor Zones (GCZs)** are routes with special provisions to enhance the pedestrian environment along major transit routes. These provisions include landscaping, limits of certain signage (like billboards), and requirements for undergrounding utilities to provide an attractive streetscape. GCZs are called out specifically as an overlay zone in UDC Section 5.5 and identified in the MS&R Map; however, they are not proposed to be changed with this update.
- **Scenic Corridor Zones (SCZs)** are routes with special provisions that apply 400 feet from the future right-of-way line. These provisions include the maintenance of a 30-ft wide natural buffer area from the future right-of-way and limits to building height and frontage to maximize scenic views of nearby natural resources. SCZs are called out specifically as an overlay zone in UDC Section 5.3 and identified in the MS&R Map; however, they are not proposed to be changed with this update.
- **Funding for Street Improvements** – the City of Tucson has secured funding through the Tucson Delivers initiatives and related policies to improve street conditions and safety. These funding sources, which include voter-approved bond and sales tax measures, have specific allocations designated for different types of streets. If a street is reclassified—whether up (from Local to Collector or Collector to Arterial) or down (from Arterial to Collector or Collector to Local)—this change in classification does not impact its eligibility or selection in any approved programs. For any future funding sources or initiatives, the most current street classifications will be used to determine eligibility and funding distribution.

*Community and Stakeholder Engagement*

Given the substantive recommendations associated with this update, staff would like to outline the public and stakeholder engagement opportunities that have taken place over the past several months.

- **Tucson Development Stakeholder Group** – City of Tucson's Planning and Development Services Department (PDSD) holds monthly meetings for development stakeholders including representatives from developers, utilities, regional agencies, and City departments. Project staff provided a substantive update at the January 2025 (1/16/2025) meeting in preparation for the rollout of the proposed MS&R updates. Staff returned to this group for additional updates at the following meetings:
  - March 2025 (3/20/2025) ○ April 2025 (4/17/2025)
  - May 2025 (5/15/2025) – Slides provided, PSDS presented update
- **Press Release/Social Media Blast** – In coordination with the Department of Transportation and Mobility's (DTM) Strategic Communications Division, the project team issued a press release on 4/16/2025 advising the public of the open comment period for the MS&R update and opportunities to provide feedback. Local ABC affiliate KGUN 9 picked up the story and provided the opportunity for an [interview](#) with the project team, which was published on 4/24/2025. Included with the press release was a social media blast on DTM's social media accounts.
- **Online Public Survey** – The project team launched an online public survey to help capture comments about the proposed MS&R updates. The survey was live from 4/16/2025 until 5/25/2025 and collected over 120 responses.
- **Online Website (Story Map) and Interactive Feedback Map** – To help inform the public, the team launched a project [website](#) (as an ArcGIS Story Map), which included an interactive feedback map to help capture comments. Over 35 comments were received from the interactive map.
- **Complete Streets Coordinating Council (CSCC)** – A City-formed public commission responsible for actively overseeing and bringing accountability to the Complete Streets Policy implementation process. Project staff presented to the CSCC at the April Meeting (4/23/2025).
- **Virtual Open House** – Staff held a virtual public open house, hosted via Zoom, on 4/24/2025. There were 13 individuals logged into the meeting (excluding project staff). This meeting was recorded and subsequently posted to the project website.
- **In-Person Open House** – Staff held an in-person open house at Donna Liggins Center on 4/26/2025, 8 individuals signed-in for this event.
- **Tucson-Pima County Historical Commission (TPCHC)** – Staff presented and took questions from this group on May 7, 2025. The primary goal of this public commission is to confer with and advise the governing bodies of the county, city and town concerning various existing historical structures, sites, areas and districts in the community, and to compile and assimilate information and data relating thereto. TPCHC provided staff with a formal letter outlining their comments and concerns with the update; both the Planning Commission and Mayor and Council were copied on this response.

- **Courtesy Review Meetings with Neighborhood Associations (NAs)** – Project staff met individually with community members from various NAs to review the proposed changes and address specific questions and concerns from residents.
  - Old Fort Lowell NA (5/12/2025)
  - Palo Verde NA, Garden District NA, and Ward 6 Council Office (5/1/2025)
  - Rillito Bend NA with Ward 3 Council Office (5/15/2025)
- **Courtesy Review Meeting with Utility Providers** – Project staff provided a hybrid virtual/in-person meeting (5/14/2025) specifically to answer questions and address concerns about the proposed updates from local utility providers including Cox Communications, Lumen Technologies, Southwest Gas, and Tucson Electric Power.
- **Comments from Tucson Airport Authority** – Staff received comments (7/8/2025) from the Tucson Airport Authority related to the recommendations in the vicinity of Tucson International Airport. Upon review of these comments, staff has made some adjustments to the future right-of-way values for segments of Alvernon Wy and Los Reales Rd near the airport.

A summary of public comments and responses can be found in Attachment B – MS&R Public Engagement Summary.

*Suggested Revisions Based on Public and Stakeholder Comments*

Throughout the public engagement process, staff has received and documented many public comments which have been crucial in adding additional context to some of the proposed MS&R updates. After a careful evaluation of public commentary, the project team has prepared Table 1 to highlight draft recommendations, details/concerns resulting from community feedback, and any action taken to address the comments. In the previous Planning Commission Memorandum dated June 4, 2025, a similar table was presented, with staff recommendations for each of the outlined concerns. This revised table reflects actions taken since the previous meeting, which are updated on all related project materials.

Proposed Change to MS&R	Summarized Public Feedback / Concern	Staff Action
Addition of Dodge Bl as a Collector Street from Fort Lowell Rd to Speedway Bl.	Concerns related to increased traffic volumes through the adjacent neighborhoods as well as the impact of parcels along Dodge Bl that would gain CCT eligibility. Noted that current Grant Rd Phase 3/4 project will limit thru-access on Dodge Bl at Grant Rd and will likely decrease future traffic volumes.	<b>Removed Dodge Bl as a Collector from Fort Lowell Rd to Speedway Bl.</b>



Addition of Fort Lowell Rd as a Collector Street from Swan Rd to Craycroft Rd.	Concerns related to increased traffic volumes through the adjacent historic neighborhood. Noted that there is a traffic calming strategy planned for this segment which will likely decrease future traffic volumes.	<b>Removed Fort Lowell Rd as a Collector from Swan Rd to Craycroft Rd.</b>
Decrease the future right-of-way width on Pima St from Alvernon Wy to Swan Rd from 90' to 76'.	By decreasing the future right-of-way value, there will be insufficient public right-of-way to complete future multimodal transportation improvements.	<b>No change;</b> kept recommendation to decrease future ROW on Pima St (Alvernon Wy to Swan Rd) from 90' to 76'.
Maintain Pima St as a Collector from Country Club Rd to Alvernon Wy.	Concerns related to traffic volumes and traffic safety through the adjacent neighborhoods. Noted that reclassifying this segment of Pima St (which is primarily residential) from a Collector to a local street could help to reduce future traffic volumes.	<b>No change;</b> kept recommendation to keep Pima St as a Collector from Country Club Rd to Alvernon Wy.

Proposed Change to MS&R	Summarized Public Feedback / Concern	Staff Action
Reclassify Pima St from Swan Rd to Tanque Verde Rd as an Arterial.	Concerns related to traffic volumes and traffic safety through the adjacent neighborhoods. Noted that maintaining this segment of Pima St as a Collector could help keep traffic volumes static and not induce increased future traffic.	<b>No change;</b> kept recommendation to reclassify Pima St as an Arterial from Swan Rd to Tanque Verde Rd.
Decrease the future right-of-way width on Prince Rd from Campbell Av to County Club Rd from 120' to 80'.	By decreasing the future right-of-way value, there will be insufficient public right-of-way to complete future multimodal transportation improvements.	<b>No change;</b> kept recommendation to decrease future ROW on Prince Rd (Campbell Av to Country Club Rd) from 120' to 80'
Elimination and change in future right-of-way widths for certain unbuilt roads on the current MS&R Map.	There are current development plans under review for areas in SE Tucson that do not align with some of the proposed changes for unbuilt roadways in this area.	<b>Updated future roadways in the SE region of Tucson.</b>
Totality of proposed changes as related to historic or otherwise preserved lands and structures.	As outlined in a letter from TPDHC dated 5/9/2025, concerns related to upclassifications of streets, additions to the MS&R Map, and proposed future right-of-way changes in areas adjacent to historic designations (lands or structures).	<b>No change;</b> kept recommendations related to historic or otherwise preserved lands and structures

Various changes to segments of roadways in the vicinity of Tucson International Airport.	Tucson Airport Authority provided comments back regarding the proposed changes to segments of E Los Reales Rd, S Alvernon Wy, S Country Club Rd, and S Craycroft Rd, in the vicinity of Tucson International Airport, with the goal of retaining future right-of-way values for corridor expansions.	<b>Updated future right-of-way values for certain segments of E Los Reales Rd and S Alvernon Wy. No change to the recommended future right-ofway values for segments of S Country Club Rd or S Craycroft Rd.</b>
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**Table 1: Summary of Major Public Concerns and Staff Actions.**

One area of particular concern that surfaced through public engagement was related to the interplay between the Major Streets and Routes Plan and the Community Corridors Tool (CCT), which was recently adopted by Mayor and Council via Ordinance No. 12152 on March 18, 2025. As a brief background, the CCT is a development tool that seeks to make infill development, especially affordable housing, simpler to build along corridors. One of the qualifying factors to be able to utilize the CCT is having a frontage along a Major Street. Through the outreach process, the project team received specific concerns about the proposed additions to the MS&R Map and impact to neighborhoods by adding properties that would now potentially qualify to utilize the CCT for redevelopment. Staff performed an analysis of this concern and determined that citywide, an additional 347 parcels would qualify to use the CCT if all the proposed changes were moved forward; conversely, 8 parcels would no longer be eligible to use the CCT. If both the proposed MS&R additions and removals were executed without any changes, the total number of CCT eligible parcels would increase from 9,442 to 9,781 (+3.6%). Some of these concerns have helped informed the revised recommendations outlined in Table 1. Please see Attachment C for a detailed map showing the locations of CCTeligible parcels should the proposed MS&R changes be adopted as-is.

#### *Next Steps*

As previously noted, the process to adopt or amend the MS&R Plan is described in Section 3.6 of the UDC and includes:

1. Initiation of plan amendment by Mayor and Council
2. Planning Commission study session
3. Planning Commission public hearing and recommendation to Mayor and Council on the proposed amendment
4. Mayor and Council public hearing and decision

The next step for the project team would be to return to the Planning Commission for a Public Hearing, pending direction by the Commission to do so, based on the outcome of the Study Session on July 16, 2025.

Plan Tucson Consideration(s) –This item is most closely related to the Plan Tucson Redevelopment & Revitalization, Business Climate, and Land Use, Transportation and Urban Design elements, specifically the following policies:

- RR1 – Redevelop and revitalize in areas with the greatest potential for long-term economic development by focusing public resources, tools, and incentives to catalyze private investment.
- LT1 – Integrate land use, transportation, and urban design to achieve an urban form that supports more effective use of resources, mobility options, more aesthetically-pleasing and active public spaces, and sensitivity to historic and natural resources and neighborhood character.
- LT11 - Adjust future right-of-way widths of major roadways considering their expected function for all modes of transportation and foreseen improvements.
- BC5 – Foster the success of commercial areas, including downtown; major corridors; and arts, entertainment, and business districts through targeted investment, incentives, and other revitalization strategies.

**Attachments:**

- A – City of Tucson Major Streets and Routes Maps (Current, Recommended Changes, Proposed Final)
- B – MS&R Public Engagement Summary
- C – CCT Eligible Parcels with Proposed MS&R Updates
- D – June 4, 2025, Major Streets and Routes Presentation
- E E – July 16, 2025, Major Streets and Routes Presentation