

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF CHANDLER, ARIZONA, October 13, 2009 held in the Community Room, Chandler Police Department, 250 E. Chicago Street.

1. Chairman Flanders called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
2. The following Commissioners answered Roll Call:

Chairman Michael Flanders
Vice Chairman Michael Cason
Commissioner Leigh Rivers
Commissioner Kristian Kelley
Commissioner Stephen Veitch
Commissioner Kevin Hartke

Absent & Excused: Commissioner Christy McClendon

Also present:

Mr. David de la Torre, Principal Planner
Mr. Jason Crampton, City Planner
Ms. Kim Gehrke, Clerk

3. DISCUSSION ITEM

- A. APL09-1001 SOUTH ARIZONA AVENUE DESIGN GUIDELINES

Request to adopt design standards that will guide the building architecture and site design of developments requesting Planned Area Development (PAD) zoning, which are located along Arizona Avenue between Chandler Boulevard and Pecos Road, excluding the historic downtown square. No action is scheduled to be taken at the October 13, 2009 public hearing.

MR. DAVID DE LA TORRE, PRINCIPAL PLANNER, stated the item on tonight's agenda is the review and discussion of the draft South Arizona Avenue Design Guidelines. The actual draft guidelines are very lengthy and staff tried to give the Planning Commission enough time to review them. Extensive notice was also sent to property owners, residents, business owners and other interested stakeholders in the downtown area. The notice provided a link to the Design Guidelines, which are available on the web at www.chandlersnewfrontdoor.com. Staff is looking forward to receiving feedback from the Commission and the public.

MR. DE LA TORRE continued he has a brief overview presentation on the Design Guidelines, and then Mr. Ken Anderson with RNL Design will go over some of the Design Guideline highlights. The presentation will be concluded with 'Next Steps' and then the floor will be open for questions and comments.

MR. DE LA TORRE began his presentation with the question 'Why Do We Need Design Guidelines?' In 2008, City Council adopted the South Arizona Avenue Corridor Area Plan. The plan originated from a City Council directive to staff, to figure out a way to improve the entryway to the Historic Downtown Square from the 202 Freeway. As a result of the area plan, a vision for Arizona Avenue was established as an urban and pedestrian-oriented corridor with mixed-use development on both sides. Mixed-use development is intended to mean multi-story buildings

with high-density residential over retail and office on the ground floor. One point he would like to clarify is the distinction between the Design Guidelines and the Arizona Avenue Street Improvements. The City is currently in the process of designing street improvements for Arizona Avenue between Chandler Boulevard and Frye Road. Some of the improvements include widening sidewalks, installing street furniture, lighting, new landscaping, and providing bicycle lanes and two vehicular lanes in each direction. These improvements are limited to the public right-of-way. The Design Guidelines, on the other hand, apply to private property, not the public right-of-way. There is some overlap because the building architecture contains certain elements, such as canopies, awnings and signage, that may project over into the public right-of-way. However, generally speaking, the Design Guidelines refer to building architecture and site design on private property, not the public right-of-way. More specifically, the Design Guidelines apply to properties located along both sides of Arizona Avenue between Chandler Boulevard and Pecos Road, excluding the historic downtown square. It should also be noted that if the Design Guidelines are adopted, it would not rezone anyone's property. It will also not require any existing buildings to comply with the design guidelines. It is important to note that the only instance the design guidelines would be applied is if a property owner approaches the City and requests to have their property rezoned to Planned Area Development (PAD) zoning for the purpose of redeveloping their property. Existing buildings and businesses can remain as they are unless the owner, or a new property owner, requests to have their property rezoned to PAD.

MR. DE LA TORRE continued the guidelines are lengthy, as mentioned earlier. They are also very comprehensive and cover a variety of design standards and topics. He is going to go over three themes that are recurring throughout the guidelines. The first theme is promoting a unique mix of architecture. The design guidelines don't prescribe a specific architectural type for the entire corridor. Instead, they set parameters that are general enough to allow flexibility in the architecture and varying types of architectural styles. But they also guide the architecture and site design to achieve the vision for the South Arizona Avenue Corridor. The second theme is creating successful pedestrian places. We want to see pocket parks, outdoor dining along Arizona Avenue, people just relaxing with a cup of coffee and maybe watching their kids play on a sculpture or water feature. Building architecture and site design play an important role in encouraging pedestrian activity. If not done correctly, it could also discourage pedestrian activity. The third theme is sustainable design. Shade is important for a desert region, but also sustainable practices such as using regional available materials, providing green roofs to mitigate the urban heat island effect and using low water landscaping. With those three themes in mind, Mr. Ken Anderson will go over the design guideline highlights.

MR. KEN ANDERSON, RNL DESIGN, stated the reason the City of Chandler first began thinking about putting design guidelines together was to show successful urban environments can have a unique mix of architecture; different styles of architecture and different materials that all come together on buildings and still create very enjoyable, attractive and successful streets. One of the reasons is because all of the buildings are in balance with one another. The heights and widths of the buildings tend to be similar. So it's not really the style, but the balance of the buildings. There are quite a few specific sections in the guidelines; he's going to talk about 8 or 9 of them. All of them talk about how we get to that balance, how do we get to that environment that is going to be pedestrian friendly and really attract people. Not only attract people who want to use the street in multiple ways, but also attract the desired type of development. All three things, a unique mix of architecture, sustainable design and successful pedestrian places, are very good selling points for development. They are things a developer can incorporate into a design to make it very viable to the community.

MR. ANDERSON continued with a slide presentation; starting with building setbacks. Basically, in the area north of Frye Road, a 'build-to line' will be used instead of setbacks. The development has to build up to the street, it can't set back very far from the street. That is done to create a certain density on the street and also to create the opportunity for window-shopping with retail development. The perceived width of the street from one side to the other also makes it more pedestrian oriented. When buildings are set too far back, streets feel more like boulevards. You feel comfortable in a car, but not necessarily if you're on a bike or on foot. When a build-to line is used, a pedestrian can see activity on both sides of the street. The guidelines state that 75% of a development has to be placed on a build-to line and 25% of the building may be set back up to 12 feet. That creates an in-out situation as someone moves down the street. The second slide highlighted awnings and canopies. Awnings being something attached directly to the building that cantilever out and canopies being something attached to the building and cantilever out but have some sort of support in the sidewalk area. Awnings and canopies need to be placed within the first floor of the business. If they're placed too high, such as the second or third level of the building, and they're 25 or 30 feet above the street, they don't create the type of enclosed pedestrian environment that makes people feel comfortable walking down the street. Canopies and awnings are encouraged, but they have to be done in the right way. They also have to project a minimum of 6 feet to have any sort of presence. Canopies could possibly have a support beyond the traditional sidewalk area. The support columns also have to meet certain dimension requirements so they're not too large.

MR. ANDERSON continued with the third slide referencing building height and transition. The slide depicts a building diagram showing the height is more significant on Arizona Avenue and is reduced as it heads back towards the residential neighborhoods. The goal is to have a balance between commercial and residential. The commercial side of a building may be 4 or 5 stories, but the residential side is much smaller. Special corner treatments on buildings are also encouraged. The fourth slide is on architectural articulation. The guidelines aren't intended to tell someone how to design their building; each development will be an independent design. However, there can't be full, blank walls on Arizona Avenue or anywhere on the pedestrian level. Blank walls do not create community and can be unsafe zones. If there are no windows on the street, then there is no 'passive surveillance;' someone on the inside looking at someone on the outside. It creates a comfortable environment for pedestrians and bicyclists. Articulation is varied, but there are certain things that we are trying to avoid, such as blank walls. As City staff receive projects, there will be flexibility to make determinations from project to project. The fifth slide, 360 degree architecture, is a term that means all four sides have to be designed. One of the problems often seen in an urban environment is that the front is nicely designed but the two sides and the back are just blank walls.

MR. ANDERSON stated another important component of the guidelines is how to deal with parking structures (highlighted on slide six). The guidelines are suggesting they can't simply be concrete boxes. One suggestion is to wrap parking with retail and office uses on the ground level and above is all parking. Slide seven deals with mid-level pedestrian paths. Pedestrians need to be able to get from one side of the street to the other without going all the way down to a stop light. There needs to be some type of connection in the middle of a block. It can be a simple walking path or it can have some sort of retail or restaurant. This guideline is flexible and will vary as development projects come in. The important part is to be able to get from one side to the other. Slide eight talks about lighting. Lighting can make or break a project. The guidelines suggest someone can't just light the entire façade of a building; it has to be done as accent lighting. Night sky preservation shall be achieved with cutoff and downward facing fixtures. Lighting is also very important from a safety standpoint. Building entries and other pedestrian

areas should be emphasized. The last slide refers to public art. The guidelines encourage public art to be interactive. It should also be incorporated as an integral part of the site, not just an add-on. The goal of all of these guidelines is to develop a unique character for Chandler and for South Arizona Avenue.

MR. DE LA TORRE stated after this hearing staff will gather all the comments received, and will continue to receive comments from the public. An addendum to the draft guidelines will be prepared from the comments received. A formal recommendation to Planning Commission will be made on November 18, 2009 to include both the draft and the addendum. It will then move forward for City Council adoption on December 10, 2009.

CHAIRMAN FLANDERS called for questions and comment from the Commission.

COMMISSIONER RIVERS asked what was meant by the minimum of 6 and 9 feet dimensions on the 'Awnings & Canopies' slide. MR. DE LA TORRE responded that awnings and canopies can project out no further than back of curb, but at least 6 feet from the building façade. The 9-foot dimension is the minimum height. COMMISSIONER RIVERS stated that some of the photographs show curbside, nose-in parking along the street where the outside cafés are located and asked if there is going to be parking accommodations close to these businesses. MR. DE LA TORRE responded there will be parking opportunities along the street. At this time, the parking locations haven't been identified but the design guidelines state that architectural projections from the building shall be coordinated with the public street design, including on-street parking locations, trees and sidewalk furniture.

COMMISSIONER VEITCH referred to the slide on 'Building Height' and stated there appears to be substantial building mass across a fairly narrow right-of-way from what is now, and will remain, a low-density residential area. He understands the details would be addressed at the PDP stage, and asked staff for their thoughts on managing the transition from small buildings to large buildings across a narrow street. MR. DE LA TORRE responded the design guidelines refer to the mid-rise policy for building heights. At this point, the design guidelines also state that with buildings facing existing neighborhoods and areas designated as future Low-Density Residential, the face of the building can be no more than three stories high. Three stories is the maximum. When a project comes in for review under a PAD or PDP process, it could be determined that 3 stories is too high for a residential neighborhood. Washington Street is being conceptually designed right now. In the future it will be extended from Fairview where it currently ends, south to Pecos. One of the concepts being considered is narrowing the pavement portion of the street and providing a buffer on the east side; the buffer being next to the existing residential area. That may also help with determining how high is too high for a building. CHAIRMAN FLANDERS stated that would also help to vary the setbacks along the west side of the street and provide opportunities for landscaping.

VICE CHAIR CASON stated he didn't see anything in the guidelines that limited the length of a particular architectural design. His concern is that if someone develops an entire block, there is nothing that states, for example, you can only have 25% of a building in a particular design. There's nothing that lets a property owner or developer know that the City doesn't want them to build an entire block with the same design. We want them to limit the size of their buildings so there will be different types of architecture. He would like to see something in the guidelines that lets people know what is desired, rather than having four blocks that look the same.

VICE CHAIR CASON continued he's not convinced that a 15½-foot sidewalk is enough for pedestrians. In a lot of the slides presented, there is much more than 15 feet. It's closer to 18 feet. The build-to line is 15½ feet off the back of curb, 22 feet if the parking area is counted, but the parking area can't be counted when you're referring to pedestrians. He's not sure he's happy that the build-to line is only 15½ feet. In order to promote enough area for people to travel and enough area for restaurants that aren't just one table deep, he feels there needs to be more pedestrian footage and moving back the build-to line. He would also encourage that in the mid-block pedestrian paths, where there is a 6-foot minimum for a total of 12 feet, if people are going to be asked to purchase or lease those units in the mid-block pedestrian path, they also should have the opportunity to have deeper restaurant areas, and still have enough movement to get by. That is especially crucial where public art is concerned. If the sidewalk area is only 15½ feet wide, it would really limit the ability to have public art, even on a temporary basis.

MR. DE LA TORRE responded it is mentioned in the public streetscape standards additional right-of-way would be required to be dedicated to the City south of Frye Road. South of Frye Road will be redeveloped, so there is the opportunity to widen the sidewalk. Currently, the guidelines require sidewalks in those areas to be at least 18 feet wide. That is an extra 2½ feet of sidewalk area, but additional width can be considered if necessary. VICE CHAIR CASON stated he believes 18 feet would be fine, but anything north of Frye Road should still follow the same rules if someone purchases a property and wants to redevelop. They should follow the same guidelines as someone south of Frye Road.

COMMISSIONER HARTKE asked if there had been any discussion on minimum setbacks between existing residential. MR. DE LA TORRE responded that was originally in the guidelines but was taken out because of the conceptual design being developed for Washington Street. There is going to be a significant landscape buffer that staff felt would provide a sufficient transition area to the residential. That part can be put back in the guidelines if Commission feels like the buffer is not enough. COMMISSIONER HARTKE asked if part of the 360 design around the buildings would also include improvements to landscaping and sidewalks so the neighbors facing the back side of the buildings will also see an improvement in the way their neighborhood looks. MR. DE LA TORRE responded that is correct. The 360-degree architecture would require that all sides be aesthetically pleasing.

COMMISSIONER KELLEY stated that page 6 of the guidelines talks about land use saying 'The primary strategy for reinvigorating South Arizona Avenue is to bring in more high-density residential...' and asked if enough high-density residential has been provided to really invigorate the amount of new retail being proposed at this point. He feels a really lofty goal is being placed on how much residential can actually fit into this area. MR. DE LA TORRE responded this has been discussed extensively and a market study has been done. The market study determined there is a demand for new retail, but we don't know how much retail. A vision can be set and maintained to have new retail and office so it becomes a destination. If it isn't planned for now, the opportunity will be lost. COMMISSIONER KELLEY asked staff if there was any need to expand the area being studied; increase the amount of high density. MR. DE LA TORRE responded that was also talked about at the staff level. Possibly to amend the area plan to get rid of the maximum density so it's not capped at 40 du/ac. There are also certain areas, such as the northwest corner of Pecos and Arizona Avenue, that could be redeveloped in the future and be high density. Also the northeast corner on the land use map, which is shown as commercial, could be an opportunity to change over to high density residential. There may also be other areas to consider, but staff agrees there are more opportunities for residential to support the retail.

COMMISSIONER KELLEY stated there is also some density being allowed in the 'Cultural and Entertainment District' and asked if there could also be some density allowed in the 'Civic Campus.' There are pieces of land in the Civic Campus area that might be redeveloped as residential. The Civic Campus goes dark at 5 p.m. and leaves a large area that no one uses. Why not infuse some of the mixed-use ideas in that area as well. MR. DE LA TORRE stated that was an interesting idea. There is some opportunity for mixed-use office and retail, and possibly high-density residential in that area. COMMISSIONER KELLEY referred to page 17 in the guidelines about trees needing to be 25 feet on center, and that canopies were going to be allowed to come out within two feet of the right-of-way, and stated there will be times when those two items contrast each other. He feels maybe it shouldn't be a requirement to have a tree 25 feet on center when there is a canopy. A canopy does the same thing a tree will do; provide shade. He would hate to see the regular tree placement broken up by squeezing in two trees in an area that really can only accommodate one because of a canopy. Maybe the 25 feet on center requirement should be removed, and allow a canopy to take the place of a tree.

CHAIRMAN FLANDERS asked if an applicant would be allowed to provide a pedestrian pass-through in their building, if they desire to, through the PAD process. For example, if there are two buildings built side by side and connected with upper level corridors or bridges, is that something that can be encouraged. He feels that would offer some variety and break up the building facades a little. Also, he's seen a lot of applicants who have integrated their artwork into the buildings. He thinks that should be encouraged through the use of different materials such as masonry or some type of stone, metals, glass, etc. That would provide more variety and an eclectic look as far as public art. He also didn't notice anything in the draft guidelines relating to water features. He feels the guidelines should provide information for water features as it relates to 'green' issues, such as using gray water. The taller buildings will have chillers that use water. City Hall is a good example. He would like to see different areas in the downtown that provide shade and the sound of water. Places where people can sit and read a book or eat their lunch. As PAD cases start to come forward, he would like staff to provide Planning Commission and City Council how the buildings relate to each other. As a matter of process, they would need to see how a building being developed sits next to an adjacent mid-rise building.

There being no further questions or comment from the Commission, CHAIRMAN FLANDERS called for public comment.

MR. BRETT ANDERSON stated some of his questions have already been answered. He has some concerns about the 15½-foot build-to line as it relates to liquor in the public right-of-way. He asked if the standard liquor Use Permit was going to be used for these businesses or was there going to be some sort of overlay district that would allow the use. He is also concerned about whether there is sufficient room for both patio serving areas and a pedestrian pathway within the 15½-foot space. He also feels there should be a definition for Public Art. If the desire is to have interactive art, it will be hard to do in a small area. Lastly, the Corridor Plan talked about how some of these blocks worked; not only the front side along Arizona Avenue, but also the back side. He asked how parking structures and utilities, such as trash pickup, were going to be accessed. Would it be from the back side or the front side. If the access to parking garages is from Arizona Avenue, what would that do to vehicular stacking.

MR. DE LA TORRE responded staff is reviewing appropriate methods for serving liquor in the public right-of-way. Currently, the serving of liquor is only allowed with a Use Permit in the CCD (City Center District). Either City Code will have to be amended, or another way figured out, to allow serving liquor south of the CCD. Another good point brought up by Mr. Anderson

was having enough pedestrian clearance where there are patios. We don't want the outdoor dining patios taking all the sidewalk space. Staff is considering adding a new design guideline section specifically addressing outdoor dining concerns. As far as access to parking garages and utilities, access will not be allowed from Arizona Avenue. The access will preferably be along the east/west street and possibly on the back side of the development. These access points would be shared with traffic from the adjacent neighborhoods. The utilities will be required to be located in meter rooms so they're not visible from the street but are still accessible for those who need access. Regarding Mr. Anderson's comments on Public Art, Mr. De La Torre pointed out 'Item A' in the Public Art section of the Design Guidelines which encourages art as an integral permanent part of the architecture. That could be elaborated on, if necessary. As far as water features, there is a section in the design guidelines called 'Creating Successful Pedestrian Places' that encourages water features in developments, but discourages them as drive-by features. Staff could also create a new guideline to this effect.

CHAIRMAN FLANDERS stated the mid-block pass-throughs could be considered pocket parks. They could use landscaping in combination with, for example, a wall fountain.

MR. DE LA TORRE stated he had an additional point to make in response to Commissioner Hartke's comment regarding the setbacks on the east side of the development, facing the neighborhoods. Another concern is that there are two competing interests; one for more redevelopment space and the other for creating a transition towards the existing neighborhoods. In a previous draft there was a setback in the design guidelines but it was taken out to take advantage of the buffer being considered along Washington Street, while at the same time offer more space for redevelopment.

CHAIRMAN FLANDERS stated he would like to expand the discussion about outdoor dining. He's seen situations before where there is a fence and the front of the building. Possibly the dining room could be opened up with sliding doors so at least there would be somewhat of a seamless transition. A good example would be Brunchie's. On the weekends, they open up the sliding glass doors and bring the tables out. He feels that would be an interesting look with the fence. Also, a lot of the illustrations show different articulations on the front of the buildings. Would it be appropriate to include a percentage in the guidelines to allow projections off the buildings, for example, a parapet overhang or balcony. In residential, it would be desirable to have some sort of a balcony. Maybe through the PAD process some of those features should be allowed.

COMMISSIONER RIVERS stated the streetscape has to be a balance of what will work for any pop-out restaurants or other pop-out businesses, and the pedestrian traffic at the same time. He agrees with Vice Chair Cason that the 15-foot pedestrian dimension needs to be looked at. He is also concerned that if all the entrances to the parking garages are on the residential streets and all the trash collection is on the residential streets, it will turn those streets into, in effect, alleys. The good of the residents needs to be balanced with the good of the project. He would hate to see industrial-sized dumpsters sitting across from these residents' homes.

MR. PETER SCIACCA, 81 W. Boston St., asked if the private encroachment agreements between the City and a tenant for sidewalk overhangs will be going away; and if any of the guideline components could be used for existing buildings.

MR. DE LE TORRE responded the guidelines probably couldn't be applied to existing buildings because the chances are the property is zoned C-3. Any remodeling would have to meet C-3

standards. In order to take advantage of the design guidelines, the property would have to be zoned PAD. Also, encroachment permits will continue to be the process to allow encroachment into the public right-of-way.

CHAIRMAN FLANDERS stated he thinks the Design Guidelines is a good, comprehensive document for developers to get an idea of what the City and the residents are looking for in the downtown area. He thanked staff and the consultant for a good job.

4. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Michael Flanders, Chairman

Jeffrey A. Kurtz, Secretary