



## City of Phoenix

### **"Greening Lower Grand Avenue" A demonstration project along Grand Avenue between 7<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Avenues**

#### Background

In September 2011, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) selected the City of Phoenix to receive design assistance for a revitalization project on Grand Avenue. The EPA worked with the Parks and Recreation Department, Street Transportation Department, Office of Arts and Culture, and the Grand Avenue Merchants Association (GAMA) to hire a local consultant and study the corridor. A three-day community design workshop was conducted to develop a long-range revitalization plan for Grand Avenue from 7th Avenue and Van Buren to the I-10 freeway. This is a historic corridor located north of the Arizona state capital building and west of downtown Phoenix. It is home to a mix of artists and industrial businesses in a transition zone from the high speed US-60 highway, which is located to the northwest and maintained by the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT).

The Greening Lower Grand Avenue project is focused on developing a streetscape design that uses techniques to make Lower Grand Avenue more sustainable by:

1. Engaging the public
2. Encouraging community events
3. Enhancing economic development opportunities
4. Supporting existing businesses (*visibility, parking, etc.*)
5. Providing a variety of mobility choices (*bicycle, pedestrian, etc.*)
6. Reducing stormwater runoff and increasing recharge areas (*future*)
7. Contributing to a reduction of the "Urban Heat Island"
8. Developing a model for streetscape design and community outreach

The community design workshop was held from February 28th to March 2nd, 2012 at Bragg's Pie Factory, a local gallery located at Grand Avenue and McKinley Street. The workshop was a transparent process that allowed the public to get directly involved in the design process. The facility was open to the public from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. for each of the three days at which the consultant, City staff, and EPA representatives gathered feedback and developed possible design options for Grand Avenue's streetscape. More than 200 residents participated in the process with over 100 residents in attendance at the kick off meeting held on February 28, 2012.

#### Other Public Notice

On August 31, 2011, City Council authorized staff to apply for a Greening America's Capitals grant and accept technical assistance from the Environment Protection Agency for the development of design schematics for the Grand Avenue improvements. The Greening Lower Grand Avenue planning efforts were first presented to the Transportation and Infrastructure

Subcommittee on October 9, 2012; and to the Parks, Arts, Families and Seniors Subcommittee on October 24, 2012.

### Recommendation

**The major concerns that the community expressed were high traffic speeds, the lack of on-street parking, and the lack of bike lanes.** One of the proposals was to reconfigure the travel lanes on Grand Avenue to provide additional areas for parking, bike lanes, and pedestrians. This design focuses on enhancing the pedestrian environment through the potential incorporation of mid-block crossings, artistic way finding, and enhanced landscaping that may incorporate future water harvesting capabilities.

### Why A Demonstration Project?

The selected design will reconfigure the travel lanes on Grand Avenue to provide additional organized areas for parking, bike lanes, and pedestrians. The full permanent implementation of this plan would require significant reconstruction and generate significant cost impacts that are not currently budgeted. However, the Grand Avenue Merchants Association has expressed a desire to see some portion of the project advanced. In response, City staff developed a plan to install basic treatments that will provide a demonstration of the desired elements from the plan and utilize Complete Streets strategies along the corridor.

### Traffic Analysis

The current vehicular traffic volumes on Grand Avenue within the project limits are roughly 12,000 vehicles per day (with 6,000 vehicles in the northwest bound direction and 6,000 vehicles in the southwest bound direction) and the speed limit is 35 miles per hour. On average, one lane of traffic can carry approximately 10,000 vehicles per lane per day. With two through lanes on Grand Avenue, the new capacity is a total of 20,000 vehicles per day after the demonstration project is implemented. Grand Avenue is a high commuter corridor and so the driver expectancy is focused on throughput, however, the corridor can still accommodate the current traffic volumes but in a more organized fashion and at more appropriate speeds. Alternate routes from Grand Avenue at the end of US-60 are south on 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the Capitol Mall area and east on McDowell Road to the Central Avenue corridor.

### Schedule

The demonstration project is anticipated to be completed by October 19th, 2013. Since the majority of the treatments are temporary in nature, this provides an opportunity for input on the refinement of elements or roadway layouts prior to full implementation.

