

Overall Goal

Transform Stone Avenue from a declining corridor to a thriving urban corridor by creating a balance of uses that:

- Serves adjacent neighborhoods.
- Capitalizes on nearby educational institutions and Downtown.
- Enhances businesses that are compatible with residential uses.



Looking south along Stone Avenue toward Downtown Tucson.

Recommendations

Stone Avenue should be designated as a special district to allow a combination of transportation, streetscape, and economic development improvements to be coordinated and occur simultaneously when possible.

Create a special district that will allow revisions to existing zoning codes (for example, parking and signage requirements); utilize targeted incentives and funding; customize design standards; and allow property owners to decide on the creation of special funds through tax increases to accomplish specific goals. By creating a special district, emphasis can be placed on retaining the special characteristics of this historic corridor through the creative reuse of existing buildings and by allowing multiple, unrelated businesses to share parking facilities. Without a special district in which codes can be adapted to address the conditions of this historic corridor, the ability to both retain the unique characteristics of Stone Avenue and achieve economic success will be greatly diminished.

Major development projects are needed to make a significant impact on Stone Avenue.

Target commercial or mixed-use developments as the catalyst needed to make a significant impact on Stone Avenue. The commercial ventures should not be big box development. Instead the businesses should be single or multiple with adjoining walls and located close to the street front.

Each economic development project needs to be large enough – at least one half block – to make an impact on the streetscape and the amount of activity in the surrounding area. Well-placed major development projects will encourage investors, including small investors, by making the statement that Stone Avenue is a corridor in which it is worthwhile to invest. New development will also serve to enhance existing businesses.

Major development projects must be planned and designed to support urban life and encourage use of alternative modes of transportation.

Attract potential customers who travel through the corridor and who live in the adjacent neighborhoods by providing mixed-use developments that combine different commercial or commercial and residential uses. With a mix of uses within walking distance of each other, pedestrian activity should increase, reinforcing the visual message that this is a thriving area. Through design, commercial projects, particularly those with retail services, can be made accessible from both the Stone Avenue and the neighborhood sides, which should further encourage pedestrian and bicycle use. Specialty grocery stores, coffee shops, and restaurants are examples of services desired by corridor residents that should also appeal to commuters.

Economic Development

Recommendations Continued



A mix of retail, commercial, and residential uses should be encouraged throughout the corridor and on individual sites. To provide guidance regarding appropriate uses and design along the corridor, prototypes should be adopted. (See Study Cards titled *Urban Design Concepts*, *Mixed-Use Development Prototype*, and *Adaptive Reuse Development Prototype*.)

Building Reuse – Reuse of historic buildings will help maintain the distinct character of the corridor. The existing configuration of the buildings will determine the way in which the buildings will be reused. For example, older buildings located along the southern portion of the study corridor present a distinct urban form close to the street. These buildings generally provide a front entrance close enough to the public right-of-way that the sidewalks can be shaded through the use of awnings and other façade treatments. True shade should contribute to greater pedestrian traffic. These buildings can also be opened up in back to allow easy access by residents from adjacent neighborhoods.

Vacant Lot Infill – The many vacant lots along the corridor can be used to create pockets of mixed use and other forms of economic development. Smaller vacant lots can also provide mid-block parking to serve new and existing businesses.

Together the creative use of underutilized buildings and vacant lots will help revitalize the corridor and reverse the impression of an area in decline. Following are some recommendations on the size and location of economic development projects throughout the corridor.

6th Street to Drachman Street – In this segment of the corridor, there should be two major economic development projects to reverse the appearance of an area in decline and to capitalize on the proximity to the Downtown. Each project should be a minimum of one block. There are several blocks of abandoned or underutilized buildings that present the best opportunity to make a significant impact on the corridor.



Drachman Street to Grant Road – Along this stretch of Stone, there should be a minimum of one major economic development project located on a lot no smaller than one half block. At the time this card was being prepared, there was one very large vacant lot on the market in this area. This particular lot would be a good site for a major mixed-use project that could serve as a model for other mixed-use projects throughout Tucson.



Economic Development

Grant Road to Prince Road – In this segment, there should be a minimum of one major economic development project located on a lot no smaller than one half block. This segment of Stone Avenue includes several larger intersections with adjacent abandoned or underutilized buildings. The city may have to assist developers in amassing enough land for a successful project.



Prince Street to Wetmore Road – Here the emphasis should be on residential infill. This area has significant pressure from commercial uses in all directions. Since services are relatively close to the residences in this area, the city's focus should be on promoting development that creates a greater proportion of home ownership to help ensure the stability of the surrounding neighborhoods.



The City of Tucson must provide assistance and incentives to insure that model projects occur along Stone Avenue.

Consider tools that allow assemblage of land to form parcels large enough for significant development projects. In Arizona, cities such as Tempe and Mesa have used the power of eminent domain to get development underway in declining areas. Funding for development can be pursued through such sources as:

- **108 Loan:** This loan is given by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for areas specified as “Action Zones.” A city can take a loan up to five times its Community Development Block Grant (see CDBG below). The city should also apply for an Economic Development Initiative (EDI) Grant, which can secure the 108 loan because the loan cannot be repaid by user fees or any other direct user penalties. A 108 loan can be used only for dispersed low-income housing and commercial revitalization.
- **TEA-21:** Given by the United States Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), money from the Transportation Efficiency Act (TEA-21) can be used to reduce environmental impacts of transportation and create strategies that encourage private sector development patterns for more efficient transportation systems.
- **CDBG:** A Community Development Block Grant is money from the federal government that is allocated to cities for a variety of uses. The City of Tucson can redistribute CDBG funds that it already receives or apply for more funding to undertake economic revitalization projects. Presently the city uses its CDBG funds to assist non-profit organizations within the city.
- **Joint Public/Private Cooperatives:** Cooperatives can be organized to market and implement redevelopment projects. This allows municipal fiscal resources and land acquisition powers to be coupled with the private sector in planning and negotiation. In Tucson, such organizations currently include the Downtown Development Corporation and the Business Development Finance Corporation.

Economic Development



Neighborhood-scale businesses of earlier days. Intersection of Stone Avenue and 3rd Street.

Recommendations Continued

- **Back to Basics:** This is an existing City of Tucson program that targets investment in concentrated areas to help revitalize and stabilize older neighborhoods. Back to Basics funds are distributed by the city to selected neighborhoods to provide or enhance such infrastructure as sidewalks and lighting. This program can strengthen linkages between neighborhoods and commercial areas.
- **Revolving Loan Funds:** The city can take existing revolving loan funds and apply them to designated areas as seed fund investment, similar to the downtown revolving loan fund.
- **Business Development Finance Corporation:** This is a city-sponsored, non-profit corporation that gives loans ranging from several thousand up to \$50,000 for business start-ups. The corporation determines eligibility and level of funding on an individual case basis.
- **Special Tax District:** Merchants can choose to create a special tax district. Excess tax money is returned to the special tax district to be applied to projects within the district. These districts are created and terminated by the merchants within the district and by the city.

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