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(South Arizona Avenue Traffic Study as Appendix 5 under separate contract)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>PAGE</u>	<u>SECTION URBAN DESIGN PLAN</u>
10	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
11	CHAPTER 1
11	Background
14	Project Methodology
14	The Vision
14	The Goals
15	CHAPTER 2 - THE OPPORTUNITY
15	Assets
18	Issues and Problems
20	CHAPTER 3 - THE STRATEGY
20	The Strategy
24	CHAPTER 4 - LAND USE CONCEPT
24	Residential Land Use
24	Residential Development Sites
27	Retail and Restaurant Uses
29	Open Space
33	Future Land Use Category Descriptions
35	CHAPTER 5 - CIRCULATION
35	Circulation and Roadway Capacity
35	Circulation
37	Alternatives Evaluated
38	Roadway Capacity
40	Walkability
41	Parking
42	Transit
43	CHAPTER 6 - IMPLEMENTATION
43	Public and Private Roles
43	Recommended Zoning Actions
46	Phasing
46	Public Improvements
47	Development
48	CHAPTER 7 - PROPERTY ACQUISITION AND RELOCATION PROGRAM
48	Acquisition Process
49	Relocation
49	Property Assembly by Developers

PAGE	SECTION 2 DESIGN STANDARDS
52	CHAPTER 8 - INTRODUCTION
52	Purpose of Design Standards
52	Organization of the Design Standards
52	Area of Application of Design Standards
53	Design Review Process
54	CHAPTER 9 - PUBLIC DESIGN STANDARDS
54	Streetscape
55	Street Trees
56	Street Furniture
57	Lighting
58	Pedestrian Network
59	Sidewalk Design
	Type 1 Sidewalk
60	Crosswalks and Intersections
	Type 1 Intersection/Pedestrian Crossing
	Type 2 Intersection/Pedestrian Crossing
	Type 3 Intersection/Pedestrian Crossing
	Type 4 Intersection/Pedestrian Crossing
63	Paving and Sidewalk Materials
64	Gathering and Open Spaces
65	CHAPTER 10 - PRIVATE PROPERTY DESIGN STANDARDS
65	Building Design
65	Building Orientation
65	Building Setbacks
66	Massing and Articulation
66	Building Heights
67	360 Degree Architecture
67	Storefronts
68	Active Street Frontages
68	Awnings, Canopies, Arcades and Shading
69	Building Materials
69	Fenestration
70	Building Lighting
70	Building Signage
71	Storage, Equipment and Loading

<u>PAGE</u>	
72	Site Design
72	Landscape
73	Site Buffers and Screening
73	Landscape Materials
74	Site Lighting
75	Site Signage
76	Utilities
76	Parking
76	Surface Parking Lots
77	Structured Parking
79	CHAPTER II - DESIGN STANDARDS FOR SPECIFIC BLOCKS
80	Site 7
82	Site 6 and Block to the South
84	Civic Campus
86	Steel Yard and Blocks to the South
88	South of Frye Road East Side of Arizona Ave
90	Residential Mixed Use Blocks on South Arizona Avenue
92	Trailer Park and Fairview Street
94	Northeast Corner of Pecos and Arizona Avenue
97	APPENDICES
98	A Metro Phoenix Market Analysis
132	B Community Comments
137	C Market Analysis
	D South Arizona Avenue Traffic Study

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>PAGE</u>	
12	Aerial Map of the Corridor
17	Recent and Current Projects
22	Elements of the Vision
23	Existing Land Use
26	Residential Development Sites
28	Retail Diagram
30	Open Space and Streetscape
31	Future Land Use
32	Illustrative Site Plan
36	Circulation Improvements
39	Conceptual Section and Plan
45	Zoning Recommendation
50	Implementation Schedule

Section I

URBAN DESIGN PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The South Arizona Avenue Entry Corridor Study is prompted by a Mayor and Council goal for redeveloping the section of Arizona Avenue from Pecos Road to Boston Street as a new entryway to downtown from the Santan/ Loop 202 Freeway. The plan was created with extensive neighborhood participation, which included six neighborhood meetings and individual meetings with property owners. The comprehensive approach to this study can be broken down into four primary areas: Land Use, Traffic Circulation, Conceptual Design Standards, and Neighborhood Planning. The following are the major elements of the study:

- A** Bring in high and medium density residential development to the southern half of the Corridor along South Arizona Avenue and on selected sites in the immediate neighborhood. New zoning encouraging higher densities will create an incentive for developers to assemble small parcels for development. Where possible, select commercial uses such as dry cleaners, cafes or offices will be included with residential units.
- B** Revise neighborhood streets in the southern neighborhoods to facilitate traffic safety and local circulation for residents, create opportunities for new development along South Arizona Avenue and reinforce the development of the Corridor.
- C** Re-build South Arizona Avenue with a more pedestrian-oriented street section, narrower lanes and wider sidewalks, new traffic signals, streetscape and landscape elements. Adopt design standards for the private development.
- D** Create a cultural and entertainment commercial zone on the west side of Arizona Ave and north of Fry Road. Chicago Street can become a pedestrian corridor linking cultural and entertainment uses on the west side of Arizona Ave to City Hall and the civic area on the east side of Arizona Ave. Furthermore, existing downtown commercial can be reinforced through shaded pedestrian walkway connections.
- E** Recommendation to study the feasibility for locating a new performing arts center and a convention center within the Corridor study area.
- F** Create Public and Private Design Standards to guide the quality and functionality of the development in the Corridor; both for private and public sector buildings and for streetscape and open space design.
- G** Locate City Hall South of Chicago Street and locate the Historic Museum on Site 6. The commitment of the new center of civic life will create a climate for new private development in the Corridor. The City Hall can anchor a new south civic campus around a new green civic commons where future municipal and county buildings will be a civic anchor to the corridor's revitalization.
- H** Preserve and enhance the residential neighborhoods in the southern half of the corridor through single family residential infill on small lots and renovation of existing homes.
- I** Continue to solicit and utilize the creative input of the neighbors, property and business owners in the Corridor; to create a plan that has unique public buy-in and enthusiasm.

CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

Background

The City of Chandler is a community of over 240,000 people located in southeastern Maricopa County, Arizona. Chandler has grown from its agricultural roots at the turn of the 20th Century into a high tech oasis. In 25 years, Chandler has grown from a population of 30,000 people to its current population of over 240,000 residents, and is planned for growth to 286,000 people in the next ten years. It is the 6th largest city in Arizona.

As Chandler has grown, the infrastructure of the Phoenix region has also been developing. New freeways now serve a fast-growing low density metropolitan region, changing access patterns and creating new economic development opportunities for cities at the periphery. Chandler, as part of the southeast valley, is destined to benefit from the recent addition of the Santan Freeway to the Phoenix metropolitan transportation system.

The South Arizona Avenue corridor under consideration is the location of a new interchange of the Santan Freeway. The corridor includes the area bounded by Chandler Boulevard, Pecos Road, South Palm Lane, and South Delaware Street. South Arizona Avenue bisects this area north to south, connecting the Santan Freeway to Downtown Chandler.

The northern portion of the Corridor from Chandler Boulevard to Boston Street encompasses the original historic Downtown of Chandler that today includes the City government center, the San Marcos Hotel, A.J. Chandler Park and a variety of historic buildings surrounding the park. The southern portion of the Corridor from Boston Street to Pecos Road is comprised of strip commercial uses and freestanding buildings situated on small lots (typically 50 feet wide by 150 feet deep) that front on Arizona Avenue.

Existing land uses along Arizona Avenue generally consist of retail with a mixture of office uses, quasi-public uses (churches) and retail/service uses. At the southern end of the Corridor is a large apartment complex at the northwest corner of Pecos Road and Arizona Avenue. South of Pecos Road are three large new shopping centers surrounding the intersection of the Loop 202 Freeway and Arizona Avenue. Those shopping centers include Kohl's department store at the southwest corner of the interchange, a Sam's Club and small shop space at the southeast corner and a Wal-Mart and small shop space at the northeast corner.



Downtown Chandler Gateway



New Development South of the 202 Freeway

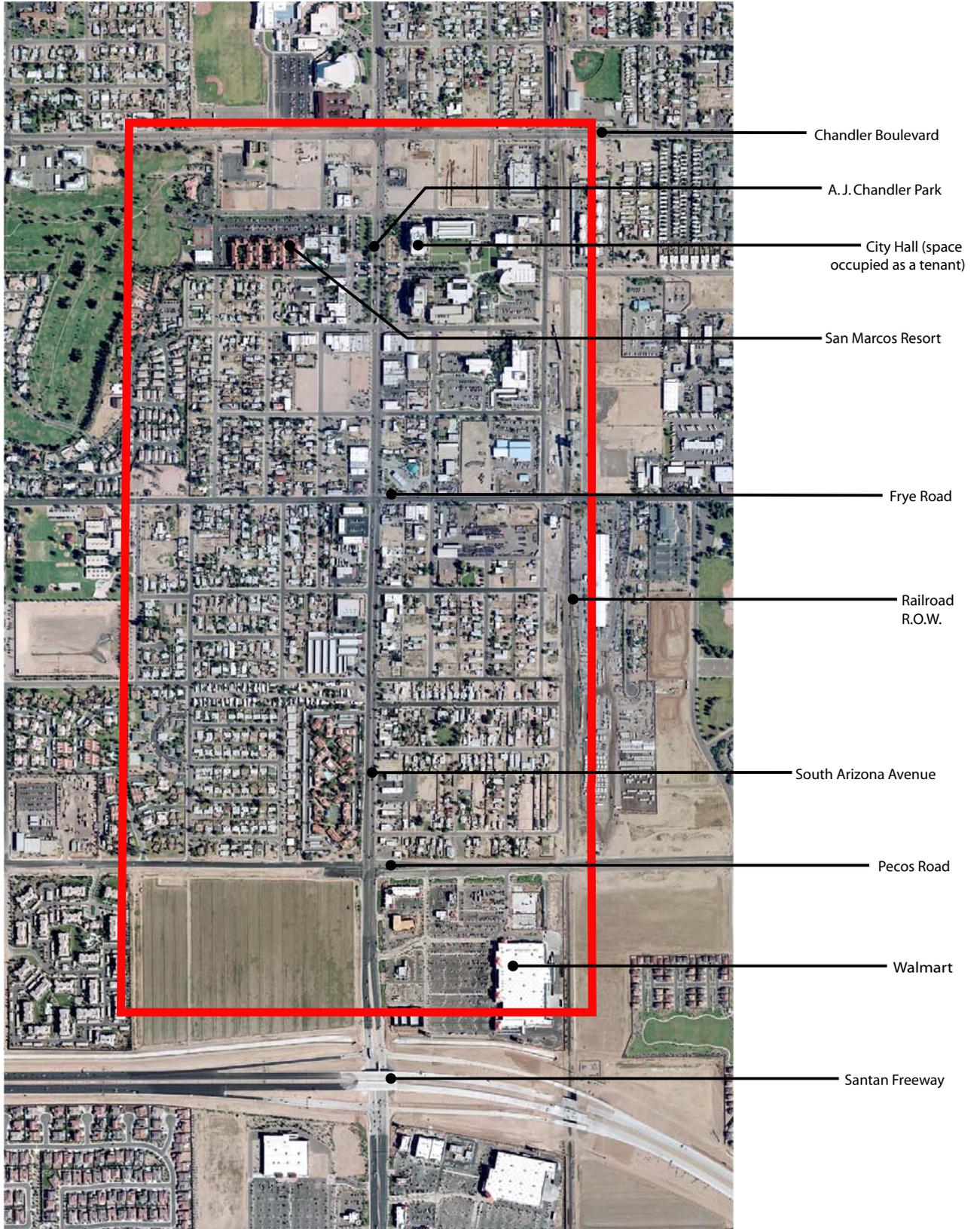


FIGURE I

Aerial Map of the Corridor

Taking advantage of the new Santan Freeway access will involve time and effort. The keys to new development are planning the Corridor's changing land uses, streets and other public investments in a strategic way and implementing a series of actions targeting developers who will provide the essential investment in the future.



Northeast corner of Pecos Road and S. Arizona Avenue

The evolution of the South Arizona Avenue Corridor is a vignette in the history of Chandler. Dr. A.J. Chandler commissioned a plan for the city in 1911. It included a classic Beaux Arts park straddling the north-south line that would become State Highway 87, the current Arizona Avenue.

The State highway divided into two one way lanes, running around the edges of the park. Running east-west across the park's mid-section was the Commonwealth Canal. Cars and trucks detoured around the park on dirt roads, coming from both north and south. Few buildings defined the city at that time, but already there were the beginnings in Chandler of a memorable place on the expansive plain of the valley.

By the 1930's, traffic on State Highway 87 was creating safety concerns. The highway was re-designed to go straight through the middle of the park, creating the present configuration, with park land on both sides. Since that time, downtown Chandler has faced north toward the intersection of South Arizona Avenue and Chandler Boulevard as its gateway from the region.

For roughly 70 years, this has been the configuration of the corridor and the orientation of Downtown. In 2005 the Santan Freeway (Loop 202) was extended eastward, including on and off-ramps at South Arizona Avenue. The freeway now continues east to create Loop 202, connecting with the metro area's freeway system.



Santan Freeway Development

This new access will have a powerful effect on the South Arizona Avenue Corridor, as it now will become the front door into Downtown Chandler. At least three shopping centers will dominate this freeway exit $\frac{3}{4}$ mile south of Downtown, providing a strong attraction to a high exposure location.

At this time the Corridor resembles a barbell, with the Downtown at the north end and the freeway exit and centers at the south end. The South Arizona Avenue Corridor lies between these two. It will be heavily influenced by the new shopping centers and the new pattern of access to and from the freeway on the south, and the new public investments in courts and City Hall at the north end. The recommendations of the study are to include recommendations for Downtown's revitalization as well as the Corridor. The two areas are integrally related.

Project Methodology

In September 2005, the City of Chandler retained the services of RNL Design, architecture and planning firm, to develop an urban design study of the South Arizona Avenue Corridor; and make recommendations to revitalize the corridor; taking advantage of the new access presented by the Santan Freeway.

RNL began work in September, meeting with key City staff to initiate the study. For the corridor study, RNL held community meetings and open houses for residents and business and property owners in the corridor on both sides of South Arizona Avenue from South Delaware Street to Palm Lane.

These six neighborhood meetings were characterized by strong attendance and involvement by residents and owners. They were held prior to the Public Hearing process of Planning and Zoning and City Council. Attendance at these meetings also included City staff and elected officials.

The work has also included extensive coordination with the City Hall and Museum Relocation Study, completed by RNL Design and approved by the Mayor and Council. This study recommended a site, which was chosen by City Council, for the relocation of City Hall and a nearby site in the Corridor for the relocated History Museum.

The Vision

South Arizona Avenue will be a revitalized, lively, urban sector of Chandler; built on a foundation of high-density residential blocks of 30-40 units/acre. They will have some ground floor retail, neighborhood services such as dry cleaners and small offices to serve the residents living in downtown. The single-family neighborhoods on either side of South Arizona Avenue are well maintained and revitalized, consisting of small bungalow style homes.

Just to the north of the neighborhoods, the new City Hall and History Museum and cultural complex transitions into the historic Downtown square, enriched with some entertainment uses. For example, a new art theatre or performing arts complex. A new look for South Arizona Avenue will create a safer street to walk along, and a great streetscape as the major entry to a revitalized South Arizona Avenue Corridor.

The Goals

The major goals of this plan for the South Arizona Avenue Corridor are:

- To take advantage of the new accessibility from the region created by the Santan Freeway
- Creation of a new "front door" for Chandler
- Involve and get the buy-in of the residents and business owners in the area
- Create an economically feasible plan that capitalizes on the strength of the market
- To position Chandler's downtown as a unique regional center