

ORO VALLEY MAIN STREETS COMMUNITY WORKSHOP REPORT



EVENT SUMMARY

The Oro Valley Main Streets Community Workshop was held May 5-7, 2016 at the Oro Valley Public Library. This workshop was designed to be the central event during the community visioning stage of the project. The event included numerous opportunities for public engagement. Meetings included:

- Two open houses and a drop-in hour where people could get more info and leave comments
- Six focus sessions centered on different themes
- Two meetings for Town of Oro Valley staff to discuss services

In total, approximately 150 community members participated in the workshop, with the majority of those attending the concluding open house held on the final day. This open house was a family-friendly event with kid's activities as well as food. Over 40 children attended the final open house.

KEY FINDINGS

A large amount of feedback was garnered from the Community Workshop. Overall, participants were excited and optimistic. Broad ideas that emerged include:

- Build off our assets and amenities
- Plan well to mitigate traffic and compatibility issues
- Highlight OV's unique identity
- Generate business and economic activity
- Focus on local business, variety and character
- Provide transportation options for all modes
- Create people places that are welcoming, playful and social
- Imagine outdoor gathering areas and social opportunities
- Celebrate nature, open spaces and views and support conservation



Main Street Character

What places do you prefer?

Suburban



Traditional



Contemporary



Main Street Scale

What places do you prefer?

Low



Medium



High



INTERACTIVE DISPLAY: QUESTION BOARDS

Participants answered open ended questions on public boards throughout the workshop.

What should main streets in Oro Valley look like?

Participants emphasized unique, walkable shopping, dining and gathering places. People shared their favorite walkable main streets and neighborhoods from around the country. Oro Valley Main Streets should not have strip malls, but instead have a “sense of place”; unique Southwest and Spanish Colonial architecture, be walkable and bikeable, take advantage of the views, and provide lots of shade.

What arts and entertainment opportunities should Oro Valley have?

Participants said that Oro Valley should have places for outdoor music, arts, and cultural performances such as outdoor seating, a stage or an amphitheater. People shared their favorite entertainment districts, the most popular being the San Diego Gaslamp District. Arts, entertainment should be integrated with gathering places and restaurants.

What kinds of open spaces should Oro Valley Main Streets have?

Participants named all kinds of open spaces. Many emphasized active areas, such as splash pads, a pond, or playground with nearby cafes and restaurants. Some emphasized low-key areas with art, trails or open space. Overall, participants said Main Streets should have a mixture of open spaces that bring people together with seating, gathering, shade, and views of the Catalina Mountains.

OPEN COMMENTS

During the open house events, staff wrote down ideas and feedback from participants.

Oracle and La Cañada

There was support for the La Cañada/Lambert location because of its central location, proximity to park and civic spaces, and walking-distance

from the surrounding neighborhoods. There was also support for the Oracle/1st location because of the existing development, proximity to parks, and opportunity to integrate the CDO wash and river path into the area. Some concerns were expressed about traffic at both prospective main street locations and neighborhood compatibility at the La Cañada/Lambert location.

Connections

Many people expressed support and ideas for safe connectivity between main streets, to neighborhoods and to surrounding parks and civic spaces. A popular idea was to utilize the golf courses around La Cañada for pedestrian connections. Other ideas included using misters in sidewalk areas and a trolley system to connect areas in Oro Valley.

Main Streets look, feel and function

Many people commented on the kinds of experience they’d like to have on a local main street. Some shared their ideas for areas that draw people to walk, are open in the evening, and have good lighting, courtyards, a gazebo and central squares. Many participants want local businesses and restaurants, such as cafés and ice cream shops, and core stores with a variety of price ranges to draw patrons. They also want events, like markets, food truck gatherings, performances and holiday lights. Participants want to see architecture and signs with more character, not more suburban architecture. Overall, participants want Oro Valley Main Streets to become unique destinations, places to hang out, spend time and serve as the heart of the community.

Families and young people

Many open house attendees showed support for the Oro Valley Main Streets project, and specifically pointed to giving families, young adults, teenagers and kids a fun, safe, lively place to spend time. Oro Valley Main Streets can bring energy to the community and draw new residents to the area.

CONCEPT ALTERNATIVES

Prior to the Community Workshop a few Focus Group meetings were held with subject-matter experts. The members of the Focus Groups were charged with providing feedback on the development of concept alternatives. These concepts were then used for discussion at the Community Workshop. A summary of the concepts follows:

Concept Alternative 1 – “Medium-Low”

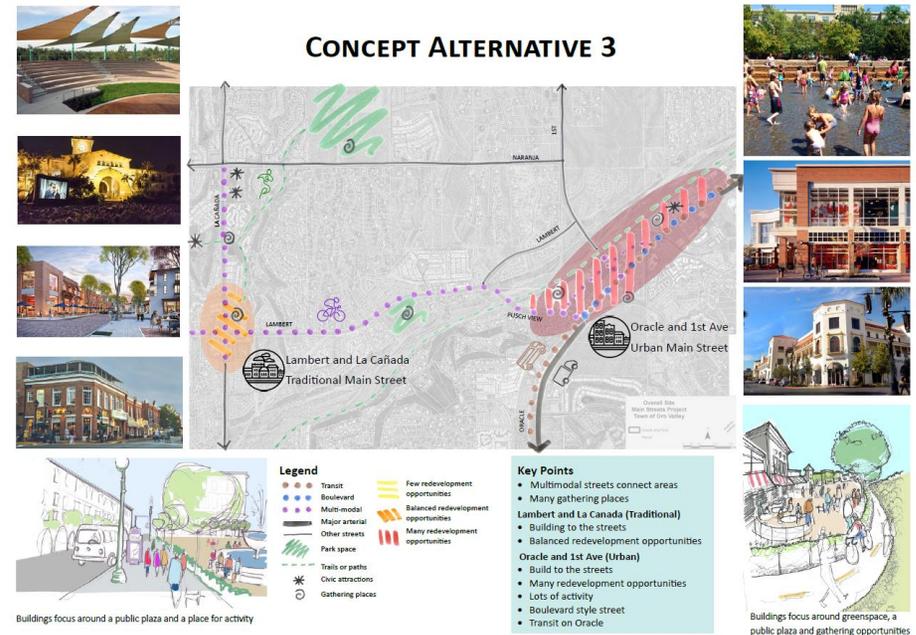
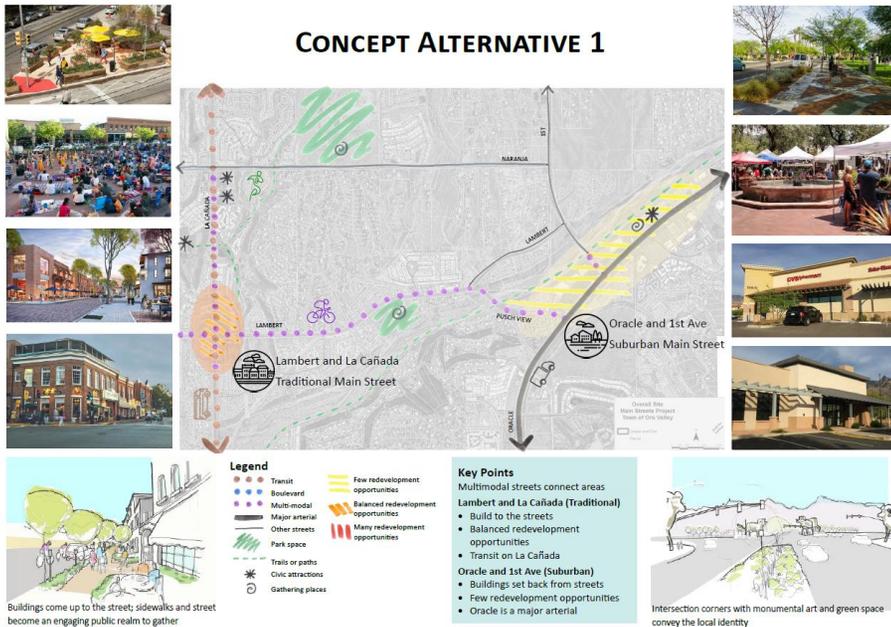
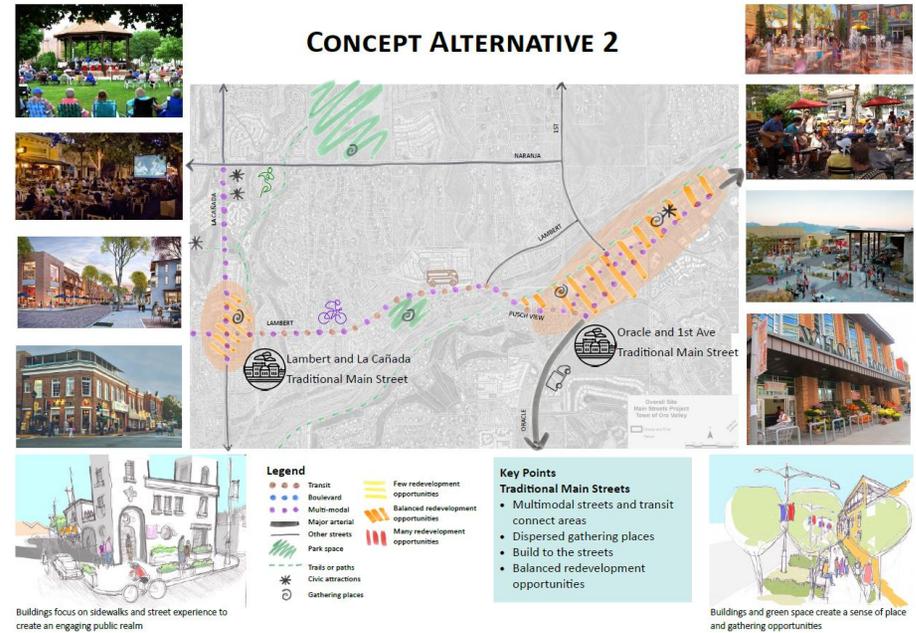
- Less change, mixed traditional and suburban scale and character, little new activity or gathering places

Concept Alternative 2 – “Medium”

- Some change, traditional scale and character, mixed activity, new gathering places

Concept Alternative 3 – “Medium-High”

- More change, mixed traditional and urban scale and character, lots of new activity and gathering places



FOCUS SESSION RESULTS

At the Community Workshop there were six focus sessions centered on different themes. The sessions were designed this way in order to facilitate a robust discussion around topics relevant to a main streets area, including active, cultural, scenic, thriving, social and playful. UA students helped facilitate focus session conversations and created the following maps.



Protected bicycle lane and crossing, Albany, NY



Complete street with on-street parking, protected bicycle lane, stormwater harvesting and sidewalk, Tucson, AZ



Niagara Falls State Park trolley bus



Flamingo Arroyo Trail, Las Vegas, NV



SESSION A: ACTIVE MAIN STREETS

At the Active Main Streets focus session, residents worked in groups to brainstorm how Oro Valley Main Streets could be active and support cyclist and pedestrian activity. Here are their big ideas:

Connections

- More walking and biking paths, especially on La Cañada Drive
- Flexible transit to key destinations in Oro Valley
- Connect neighborhoods to Main Streets and public spaces (Steam Pump Ranch, Town Hall, the library, Community and Recreation Center, Aquatic Center, parks, trailheads)
- Connect La Cañada/Lambert to Town Hall
- Emphasize natural landscape

Safety

- Complete streets – safe, accessible, attractive streets for all users and modes of transportation
- Slow traffic through traffic calming measures
- Wide bicycle lanes and sidewalks, separated from vehicles with buffers or vegetation
- Safe crosswalks across La Cañada Drive and Oracle Road

Walkability

- Enhance paths and trails with shade, art and rest areas
- Access to shops, dining and gathering places
- Encourage year-round use with shade and programming
- Repurpose parking lots with vegetation, walkways and gathering places

Other

- Highlight existing amenities, such as the golf course and Steam Pump Ranch
- Create spaces in Main Streets that facilitate gathering and events

ACTIVE MAIN STREETS



-  Main Streets
-  Activity Center
-  Multi-modal street with transit
-  Enhanced pedestrian crossing
-  Shaded corridor
-  Trails



Wayfinding art, Tolleson, AZ



Crosscut Canal Path, Tempe, AZ



History Walk Mural, Downtown Gilbert, AZ



Water Tower Plaza, Gilbert, AZ



Historic branding symbol, interpretive vehicle tire, Artist Elizabeth Conner, Old Town Scottsdale, AZ



SESSION B: CULTURAL MAIN STREETS

At the Cultural Main Streets focus session, residents worked in groups to brainstorm how Oro Valley Main Streets could have entertainment, arts and cultural activities. Here are their big ideas:

Be active and adventurous

- Enhance Oro Valley's walkability
- Connect entertainment, commercial and open spaces
- Accessible by foot, bicycle, stroller or trolley
- Shade, nature and the views

Connect to history and culture

- Actively connect Oro Valley's history with the community identity, cultural activities and the built environment
- Interpretive art walk that connects local history to modern identity
- Celebrate local arts and cultural offerings
- Interpretive art that is engaging and encourages wandering
- Wayfinding with a historic or artistic twist

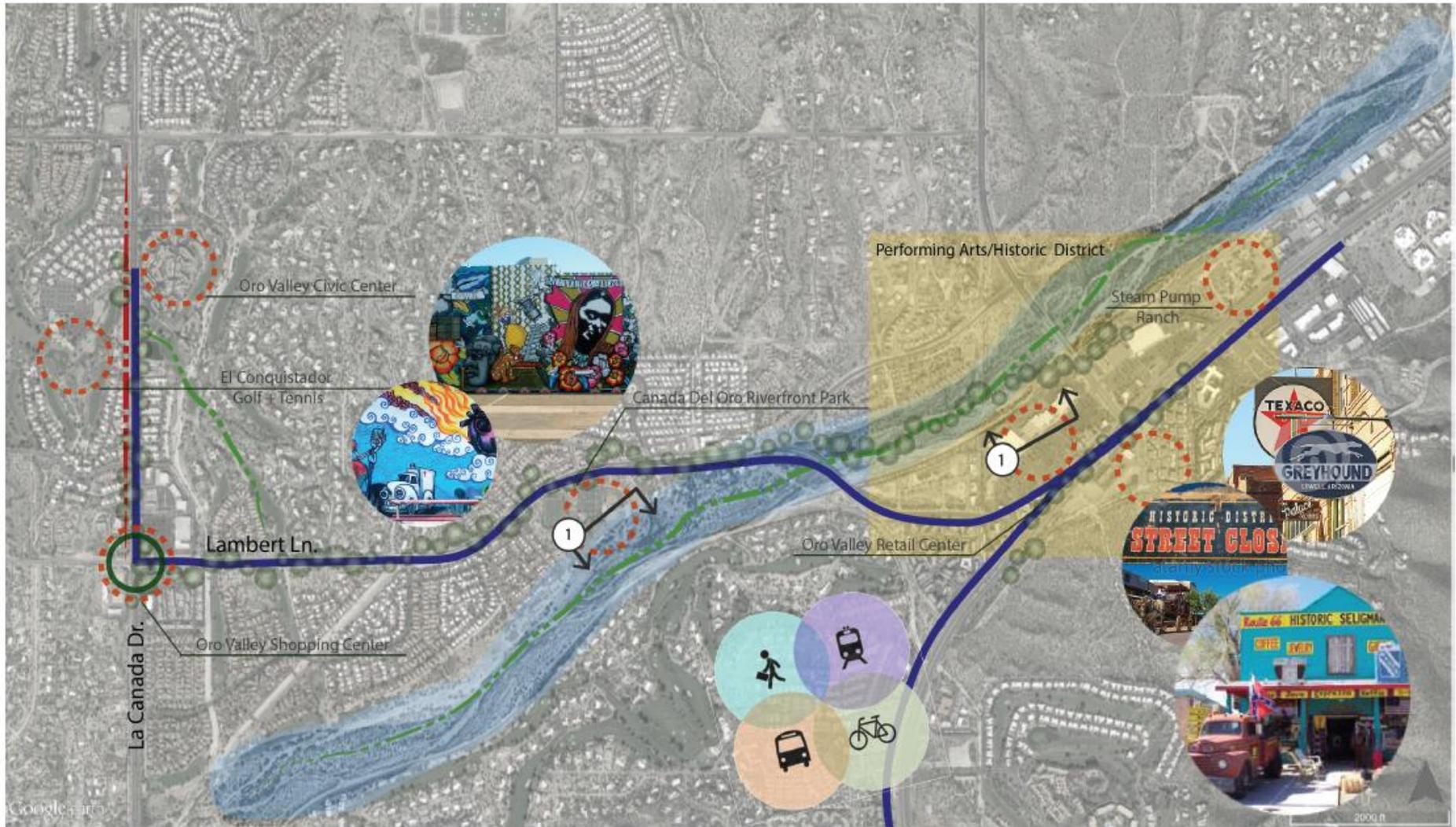
Places for people

- Gateways that create a sense of arrival
- Create social spaces
- Attract and grow local shops and businesses

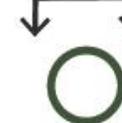
Integrate

- Entertainment
- Art exhibits
- Cultural resources and local history
- The natural environment
- Gathering places
- Shopping and dining pedestrian walkways

CULTURAL MAIN STREETS



-  Pedestrian trail
-  Enhanced bike/pedestrian access
-  Alternative transit access
-  CDO Wash

-  Gathering spaces/open space + activity centers
-  Viewsheds
-  Vegetative buffers



Wide sidewalk and water harvesting,
Downtown Phoenix, AZ



Noble Hops, Oro Valley, AZ



Views from Colorado Ave, Telluride, CO



Native landscape, Tucson, AZ



Interpretive garden and water
harvesting, UA, Tucson, AZ



SCENIC MAIN STREETS

At the Scenic Main Streets focus session, residents worked in a group to brainstorm how Oro Valley Main Streets could feature, enjoy and conserve the natural environment. Here are their big ideas:

Views and nature

- Embrace Oro Valley's natural beauty to create inviting places and build community pride in the natural landscape
- Orient gathering places, patios and rest areas toward views, especially the Catalina Mountains and Cañada del Oro wash
- Pedestrian plaza adjacent to CDO wash
- Linear parks, pocket parks, outdoor venues and small amphitheatres
- Feature the landscape in parks and plazas

Enhance the pedestrian experience

- Connectivity – paths and a network of parks
- Walkability – wide sidewalks
- Comfort – shade and rest areas
- Safety – traffic and lighting
- Places to go – parks, cafes, event spaces
- Accessible for all ages

Conservation

- Water harvesting
- Green infrastructure and low-impact design
- Education and demonstration gardens for learning, sharing and programming
- Opportunities for comradery in conservation

SCENIC MAIN STREETS



Enhanced pedestrian/bicycle access





Free summer concert series, New York, NY



Main street, Blue Ridge, GA



Meet me at Maynards weekly walk, Tucson, AZ



Casas Adobes, Tucson, AZ



Weekly food truck gathering, Provo, UT



SESSION D: THRIVING MAIN STREETS

At the Thriving Main Streets focus session, residents worked in a group to brainstorm how Oro Valley Main Streets could be business-friendly and economically viable. Here are their big ideas:

Business-friendly

- Support local businesses, which are important to community vibrancy
- Keep more dollars in the community
- Build relationships between businesses and property owners
- Streamline and incentivize businesses and development in key areas
- Build public-private partnerships to create places for local businesses that appeal to the community

Vibrancy and activity

- “Meet Me in Oro Valley” walking events
- Programming in civic spaces, like concerts or food truck gatherings
- Create a sense of place and local experience
- Generate energy in Main Street areas

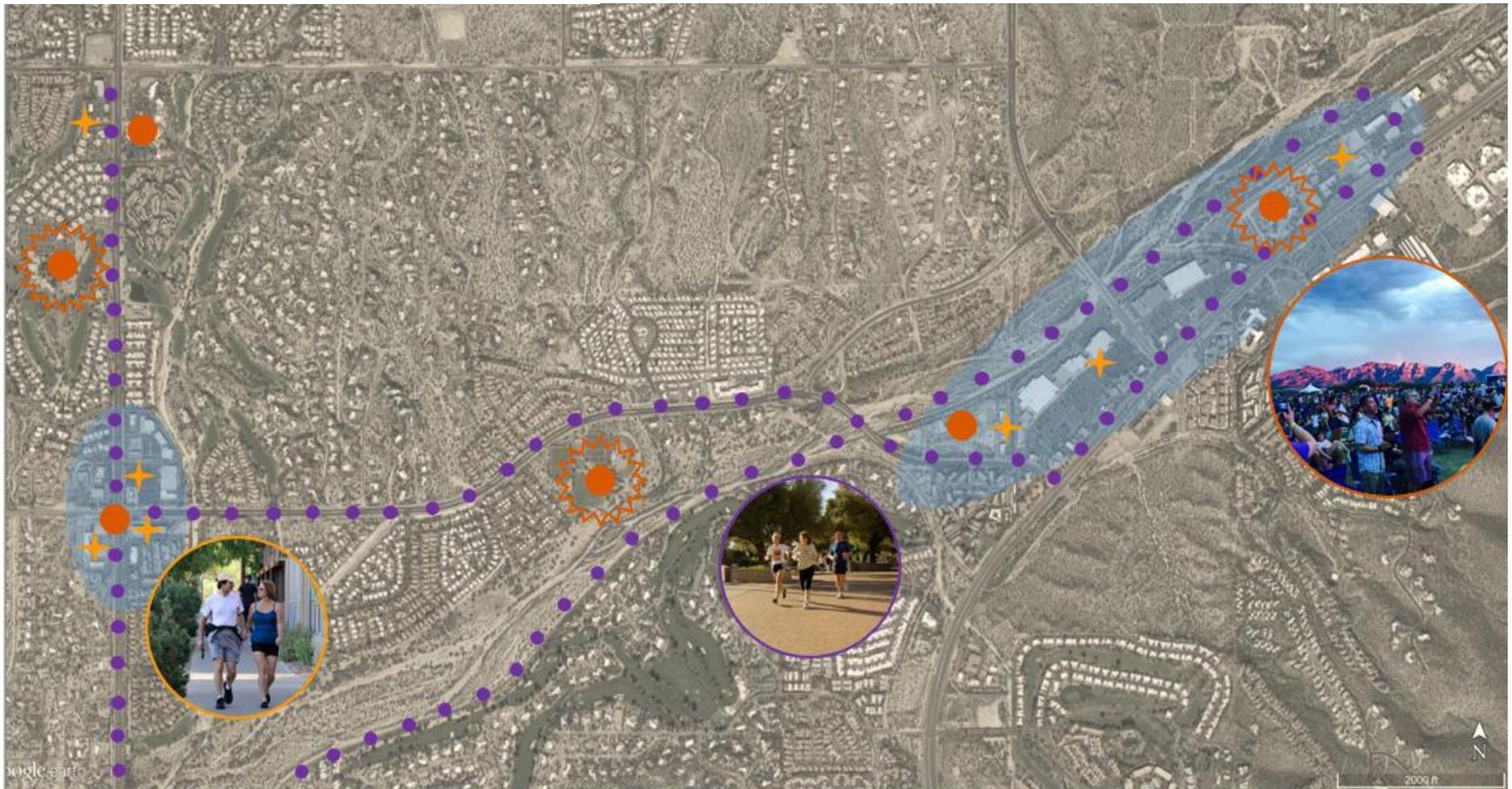
Connections

- Connect people together and to businesses, parks, civic spaces and trails
- Generate more pedestrian and cyclist activity
- Safe for pedestrians and bicyclists

Accessibility

- Inviting to all ages
- Adequate parking
- Visible, beautiful wayfinding signs

THRIVING MAIN STREETS



-  Main Streets
-  "Meet Oro Valley" paths
-  Local businesses
-  Event area
-  Gathering place



Lively courtyard, Mercado San Agustin, Tucson, AZ



Calm street, Old Town Scottsdale, AZ



Film showing, San Francisco, CA



Oro Valley Farmers Market, Oro Valley, AZ



SESSION E: SOCIAL MAIN STREETS

At the Social Main Streets focus session, residents worked in a group to brainstorm how Oro Valley Main Streets could integrate shopping, dining and gathering places. Here are their big ideas:

Gathering spaces

- Courtyards and splash pads
- Tight-knit areas
- Cafes and restaurants with patio seating

Safety and accessibility

- Enhanced pedestrian experience
- Slowed vehicle speeds
- Reduce and reconfigure parking behind buildings
- Shade and native landscaping

Outdoor events

- Weekly events, “Fridays after Five” or “Second Saturdays”
- Entertainment, movies, performances, culinary events
- Performance areas that face the mountains

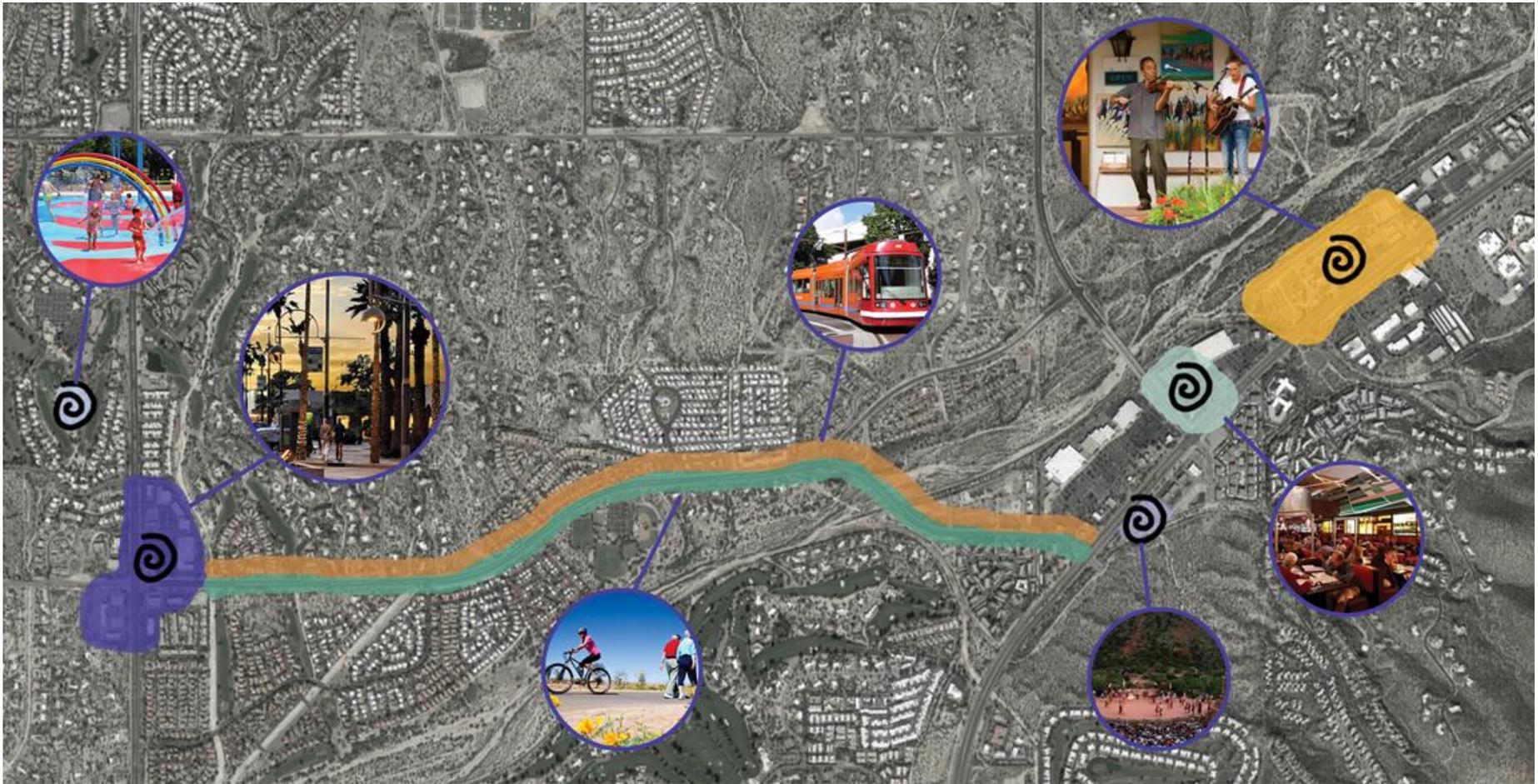
Cultural district

- Public art
- Museums
- Small theater company
- Distinct entrances
- Walkability and connectivity through district
- Creative restaurants
- Enhance Steam Pump Ranch

Other

- Regional partnership with Tucson, connect transit to downtown

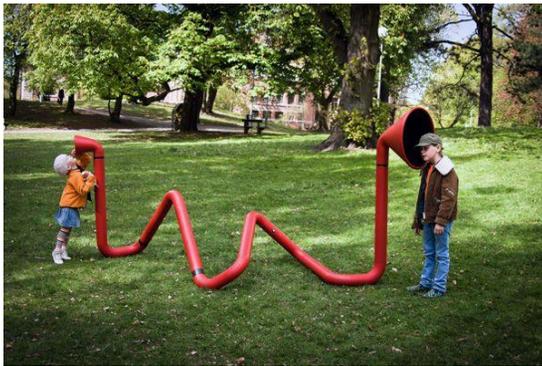
SOCIAL MAIN STREETS



-  Gathering place
-  Splash pad
-  Outdoor performance venue
-  Main Street
-  Restaurants
-  Enhance pedestrian/bicyclist access
-  Cultural district
-  Trolley



1Looped In social seating, Philadelphia, PA



Interactive sound sculpture, Karl-Johan Ekeröth



Bus stop swings, Montreal



Parklet, San Francisco, CA

SESSION F: PLAYFUL MAIN STREETS



At the Playful Main Streets focus session, residents worked in a group to brainstorm how Oro Valley Main Streets could be welcoming, interactive and family-friendly. Here are their big ideas:

Emphasize play

- Emphasize fun, foster play, and engage people of all ages to wander, explore and connect
- Encourage lingering, interaction, and contribution to public spaces

Welcoming

- Benches and water
- Shade and vegetation
- Spaces that mix activities/uses for different age groups
- Make accessible for pedestrians, bicyclists, strollers and vehicles

Fun and interactive

- Playgrounds and green spaces
- Splash pads
- Public instruments
- Benches that double as play equipment
- Public art that doubles as climbing structures
- Recreational requirements for commercial development
- Bike share program, encourage activity and connectivity between main streets, parks and civic places

Safety

- Encourage community interaction and visibility – position open green space, play structures and splash pads in safe locations
- Slow traffic with traffic calming measures
- Separate play areas from vehicular traffic

PLAYFUL MAIN STREETS



Gathering place



Main Streets



Slow traffic



Splash pad



Enhanced pedestrian access



Bike share program

1) Sculptural play elements

2) Public instruments

3) Sculptural benches

TOWN STAFF BRAINSTORM

Various Town of Oro Valley staff members were brought together during the workshop to have receive information about the Main Streets project and have an open discussion. Attendees were asked “what are issues this project should address, from your staff perspective?” The following list represents that feedback. This feedback will be used to launch future conversations with Town staff and guide efforts regarding Oro Valley Main Streets.

Planning and Zoning

- Parking solutions
- Character (architecture)
- Strict zoning standards
- More permissive sign code
- Less restrictive codes
- Streamline review process

Messaging and Advertising

- Demographics in the surrounding residential areas
- Community acceptance/buy-in
- Branding
- Public messaging
- Digital advertising for Town events
- Town Council support and advocacy
- Will need to have event coordination

Transportation

- Connection to Town Hall
- Right of way land
- Traffic speed and volume
- Strollability
- Traffic calming
- Multi-modal opportunities
- Increased construction cost for wider sidewalks

Place-Making

- Riverwalk and water features
- Water features
- Green space
- Art, culture, recreation is a must
- Drainage
- Green space as center
- Special event space
- Family-oriented
- Character

Economic Sustainability

- Term "incentives"
- Streamline processes
- Concern that rent cost too high to keep shops
- Visibility of businesses that end up "inside"
- Incentives
- High commercial lease rates

Technical Infrastructure

- IT infrastructure (dark fiber)
- Cell phone density
- Public wifi

Have an Open Mind

- Be bold and solution oriented
- Other areas?



ORO VALLEY, *it's in our nature*

TAKEAWAYS

The breadth and depth of feedback received from the Main Streets Community Workshop is very informative. Overall, participants were excited and optimistic about the project and opportunities it provides for the Town. Following is a list of broad ideas and directions.

General Ideas

- Highlight existing amenities and build off existing assets in both locations
- Concerns about traffic and neighborhood compatibility at La Cañada/Lambert location

Community Identity

- Connect history, identity, culture and the built environment, consider a cultural district
- Integrate public art into the entire experience

Business Activity

- Generate economic activity, energy and excitement, which support the existing community and can draw new residents to the area
- Build business and property owner relationships
- Create partnerships and connections with Tucson, connect with transit
- Focus on local business
- Push for architecture and signs with more character
- Promote businesses that are open in the evening

Transportation for all Modes

- Build bike/pedestrian connections and reconfigure parking
- Emphasize safety, walkability, the pedestrian experience and active lifestyles
- Create bikeable destinations



Unique Destinations

- Create places for people and facilitate gathering and events
- Focus on outdoor entertainment opportunities, integrated with gathering places and restaurants
- Give families, young adults, teenagers and kids a fun, safe, lively place to spend time
- Consider spaces that are playful, interactive and mix activities and uses for all ages
- Draw people to walk, through good lighting, courtyards and other gathering places
- Create a sense of place with unique architecture

Nature and Open Spaces

- Celebrate views and nature and consider water harvesting
- Support a mix of open spaces that bring people together with seating, gathering, shade and views of the Catalina Mountains

NEXT STEPS

All the feedback from Community Workshop provides some solid directions for consideration. However, there is a lot more work to be done to build a comprehensive and forward-thinking plan for creating a “heart” in Oro Valley. As further work, research and analysis continues, prominent themes will begin to emerge. These will inform the creation of a preferred concept map and accompanying goals. These will be compiled into a high-level Concept Plan, intended to provide a structure for continued community conversations and directions for future detailed planning.



Following is a broad schedule for next steps in the project:



THANK YOU!

Thank you to all the community members who shared their time, knowledge and talents as part of the Community Workshop. A special thank you to members of the two Focus Groups.

FOCUS GROUPS

Design Focus Group:

- Tom Drzazgowski
- Dick Eggerding
- Don McGann
- Dino Sakellar
- Brooke Trentlage
- Joe Winfield
- Bruce Wykoff

Business and Property Owner Focus Group:

- Gary Best
- Barry Kitay
- Jacob Kruzikis
- Lynda Maloney
- Dave Perry
- Kathleen Stupp
- David Welsh

TOWN STAFF

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- Paul Keesler, P.E.; CDPW Director
- Bayer Vella, AICP; Planning Division Manager

Project team:

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Michael Spaeth, AICP; Senior Planner
Amanda Maass; Planning Intern

With additional workshop assistance from:

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- Andre Rioux
- Nejliah Hummer
- Nicole Freeman
- Carol Miller; Office Assistant
- Teresa Shin; Office Assistant
- Chain Daines, AICP; Principal Planner
- Rosevelt Arellano; Senior Planner
- Robert Kirschmann; Planner