



# El Cortez Heights Neighborhood

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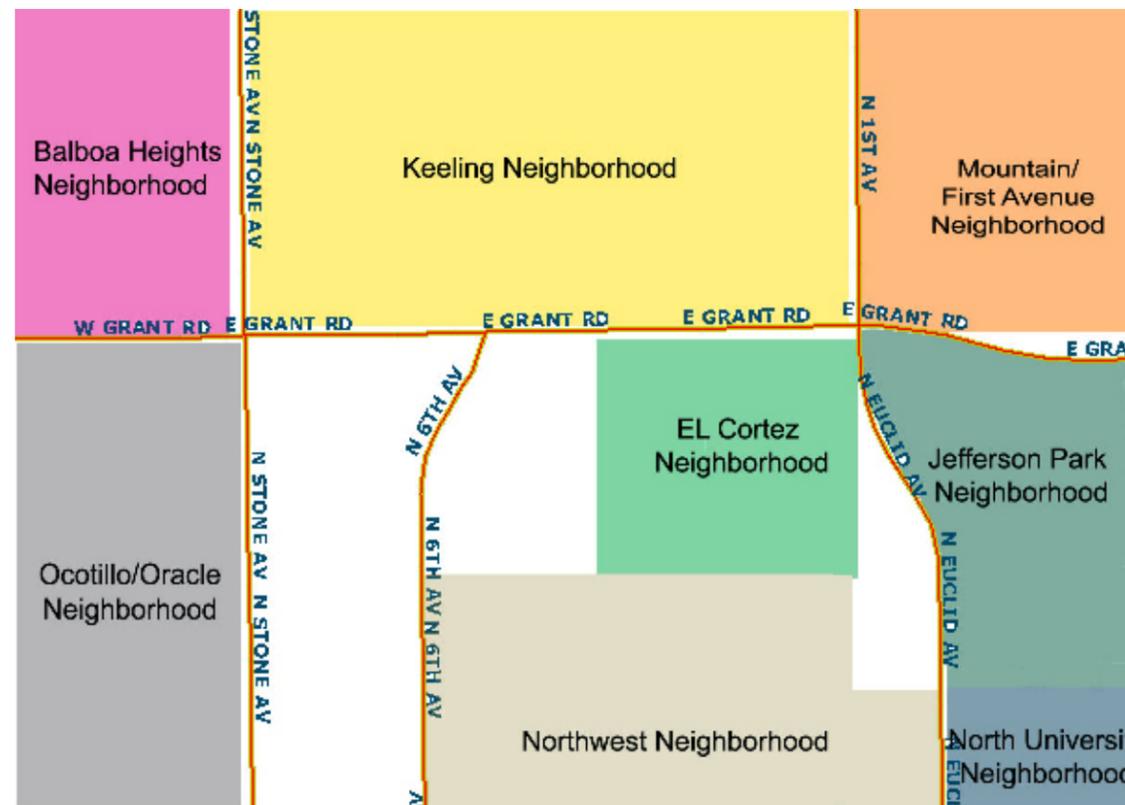
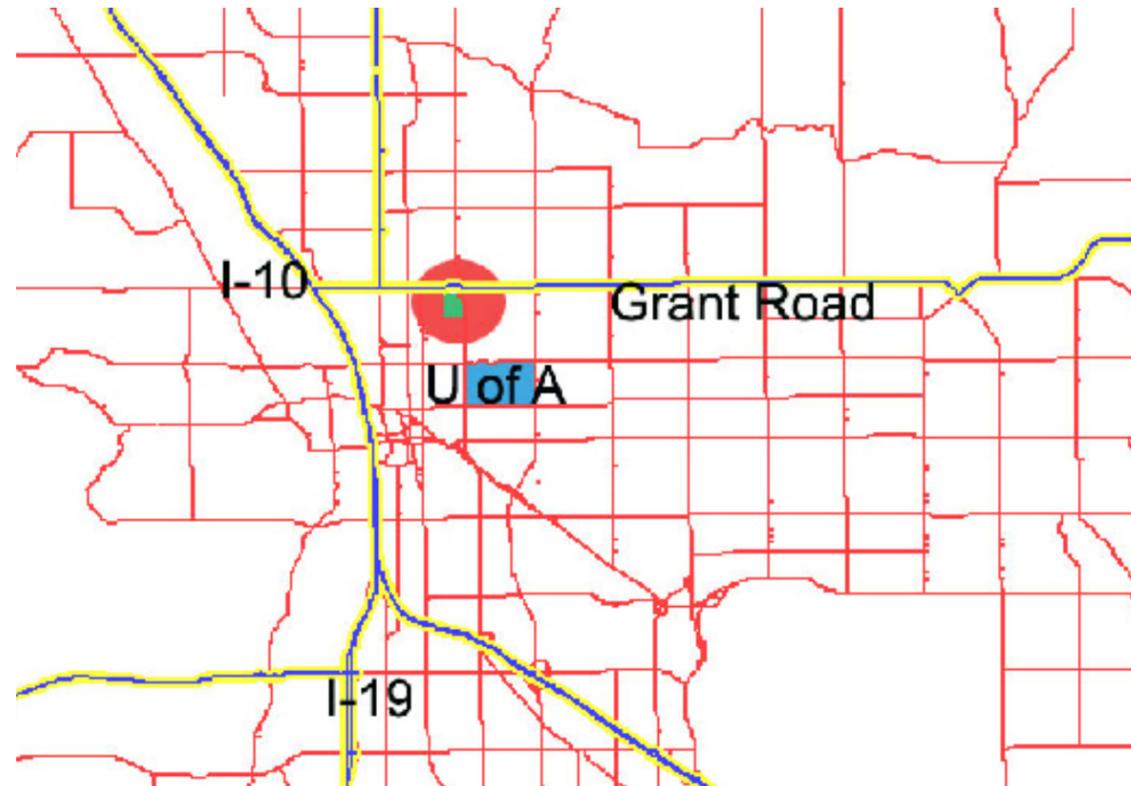


# El Cortez Heights

El Cortez Heights is located in central Tucson, Arizona. This area of the city was developed primarily in the early and mid part of the 20th century.

The neighborhood is bounded to the north by Grant Road, to the east by First Avenue, to the west by Avenida El Capitan and to the south by Seneca Street.

El Cortez is just east of Mansfield Park, and is surrounded by seven other recognized neighborhoods. The Jefferson Park neighborhood to the east, Northwest Neighborhood to the south and the North University Neighborhood to the southeast are all older neighborhoods and contain a number of historic structures.



# Climate

At 32°08'N latitude and 110°57'W longitude, Tucson is located in the Northern Hemisphere's Arid Sub-tropical Zone. Hot air rising off of the tropical zone, cooling in the atmosphere, and sinking onto the Arid Sub-tropical Zone creates the high atmospheric pressure that typifies this zone. The high pressure gradient over the area, along with a few other factors, combine to make this zone the sunniest and driest zone on the planet. Tucson receives 100% of possible solar radiation. This translates into sunshine 85% of the year, and an annual average of 143 days with temperatures above 90°F. This is an environment of extreme solar radiation, and high temperatures.

Another couple of factors that contribute to the aridity and high temperatures in the Tucson area are its distance from the ocean and the rain shadow effect from the surrounding mountains. Tucson only receives approximately 12 inches of rain per year. Without the temperature moderating and humidifying effect of the ocean, the air is extremely dry. Tucson receives 12 inches of rain annually, but the air could actually absorb up to 100 inches of precipitation annually. Evaporative cooling is very effective in such an environment, and many Tucson residents take advantage of that fact, using swamp coolers as their primary cooling system.

As mentioned earlier, Tucson does not have the advantage of the temperature moderating effects of a large body of water nearby. Instead, it is far enough inland to be effected by continentality. Soil and rock gain and lose heat more rapidly than water; therefore regions located closer to a continent's interior tend to have hotter summers and colder winters than regions located close to an ocean. Tucson is no exception. Tucson has hot summers and colder winters than one might expect. While it doesn't often snow in the Tucson basin, frosty mornings are a common occurrence. Tucson residents see about 17 days per year where the minimum temperature drops below freezing.

Unlike many areas in the west, Tucson does not receive

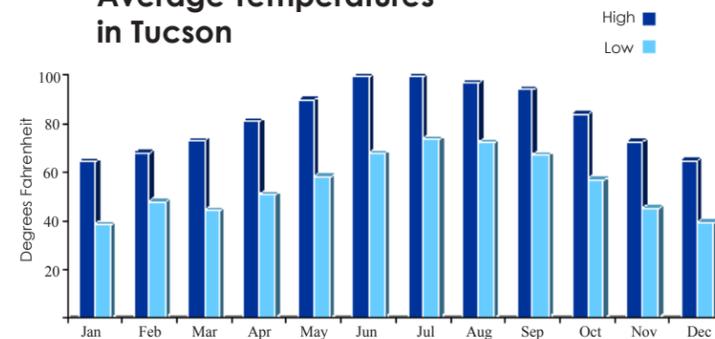
the majority of its precipitation in the form of snow. A snow day in Tucson is a rare and wonderful occurrence. Instead, Tucson experiences two distinct rainy seasons. The winter rainy season is typified by gentle storms blown in from the Pacific. However, by the time the storms reach the Tucson area, much of the moisture content is gone from the clouds.

About half of Tucson's yearly precipitation happens during the summer rainy season, the "Monsoons." Monsoon storms are blown in from the Gulf of Mexico, and tend towards dramatic displays of thunder and lightning. On July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2006, The Arizona Republic reported that "at least 5,400 lightning strikes hit the ground" during a monsoon storm the night before. Summer storm events often drop enough water in the Tucson basin to flood the city streets and washes. Dry creek beds roar into life, and city residents have to be

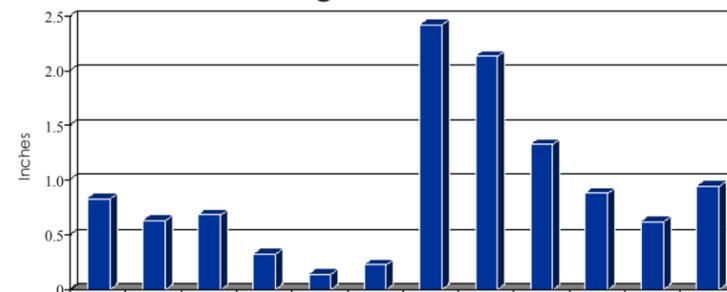
careful driving through the flooded city streets. Many streets have markers painted on poles so that people can check to see how deep the water is before driving through. Most of the markers are marked in feet rather than inches, and there are usually one or two casualties every year due to flooding.

Though Tucson's climate is extreme in many ways, large diurnal temperature swings mean that while it may be 105°F during the day, at night the temperatures often drop into the 70s and 80s. During the winter, nighttime temperatures are quite chilly, but daytime temperatures usually climb into the 60s and 70s. In other words, summer evenings and winter afternoons can be quite comfortable. Tucson residents have good opportunities for year-round outdoor experiences. Dinners on the patio and evening walks during the summer, and then winter hikes in the surrounding desert are just a few of the ways Tucsonans take advantage of their local and unique climate.

**Average Temperatures in Tucson**



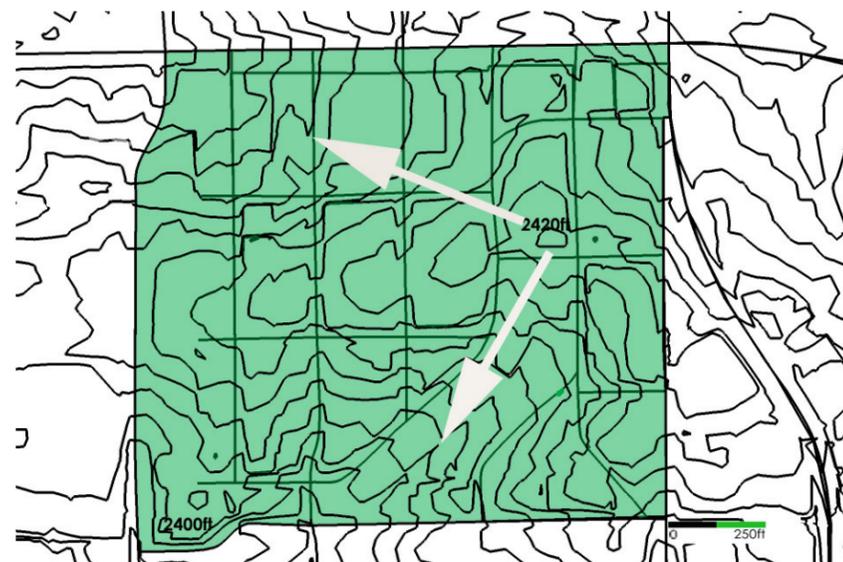
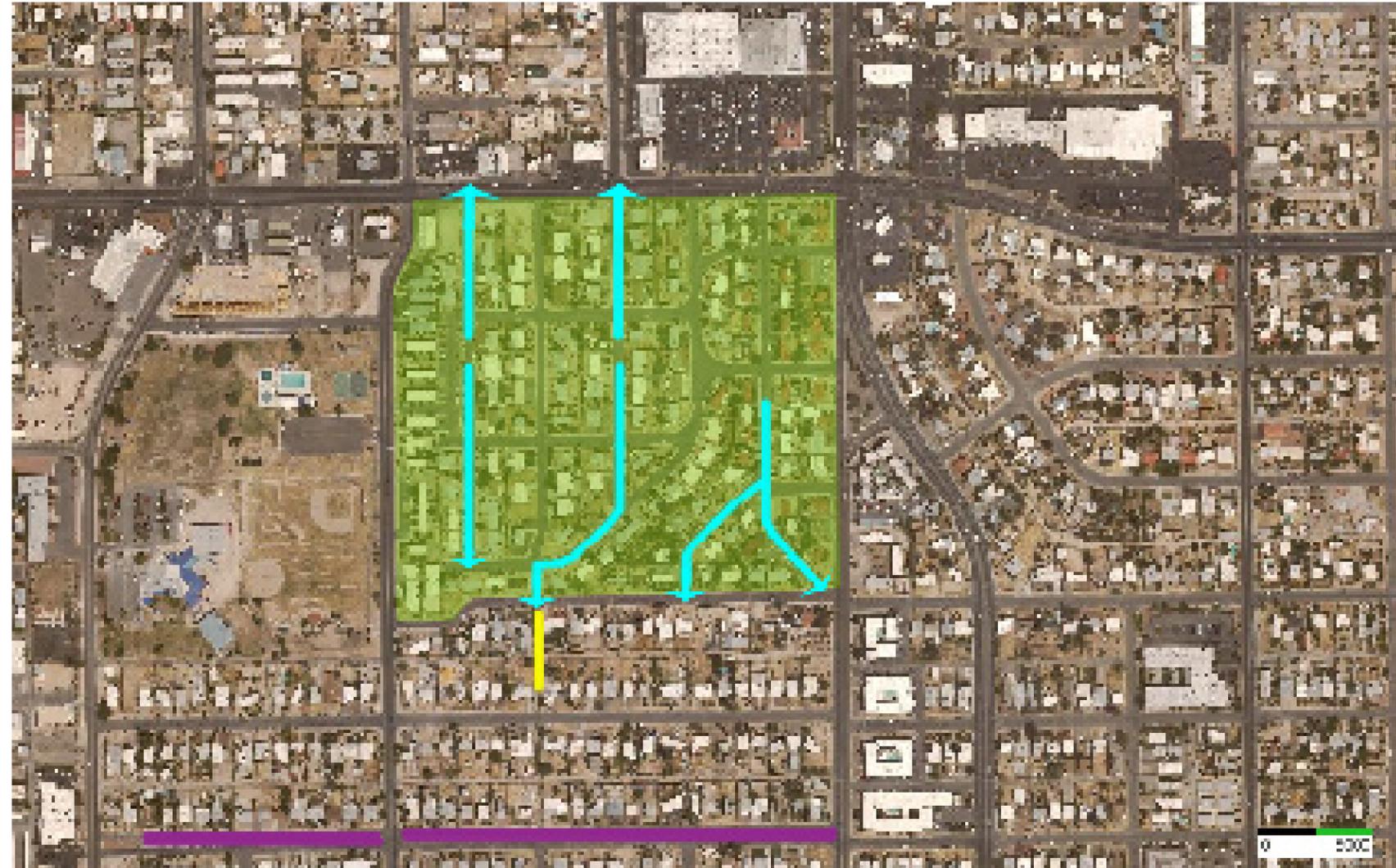
**Average Annual Rainfall**



# Hydrology and Topography

El Cortez is a very urban, built environment with very little natural water flow. The runoff from the neighborhood runs primarily into the southwestern corner and into a wash, pictured below, which leads to the Bronx wash off the site. The alley ways and yards do provide some percolation into the soil. The remaining water has been diverted underground into storm water pipes or channeled underground. The topography is fairly flat, ranging 20 feet from a low point of 2,400 feet to a high point of 2,420 feet.

El Cortez neighborhood would be able to benefit from implementation of a more environmentally friendly and attractive storm water management system. It could be possible to put in vegetation water collection systems to help filter the polluted water and keep less water from running into the washes. This could also be a part of the sidewalk expansion to give a buffer to residents and pedestrians from the traffic.



Key

- Water flow
- Water collection area
- Bronx Wash



# El Cortez Soil Anal-

## Soil Profile



### SOIL MAKE-UP

The soil make-up of El Cortez neighborhood is relatively uniform and made up of "Cave Soils and Urban Land" (1). The topography is on gently sloping (0-8%) relict fan terraces and is nearly level. This soil type may contain small areas of Yaqui soils on lower alluvial fans and Arizo soils on flood plains and Del norte soils on relict fan terraces.

Cave soils are very shallow and drains well to a lime-cemented hardpan It formed in mixed alluvium. It is calcareous throughout.

### PERMEABILITY

The soil permeability is moderate and the available water capacity is very low. Planting root depth is between 4 and 20 inches. Water run-off is medium to rapid yet water erosion risks are low, as is erosion risks from wind.

**BUILDING** Due to the history of El Cortez as being built-upon land, it is difficult to know exactly the soil type beneath and around buildings. For new construction, the main limitation is the hardpan (caliche). Heavy machinery is needed for excavation. Sandy and gravelly materials beneath the caliche are prone to caving or slumping in the case of deep excavation. The caliche also impedes the absorption of spetic system fluids and must be broken to increase permeability.



# Wildlife and Vegetation

Due to the dense residential development of El Cortez neighborhood, there is very little natural open space leftover for native wildlife and vegetation. There are small alleyways running north/south in between the backyards of the houses. However, these corridors were disturbed during the initial construction of El Cortez Neighborhood. This is evident due to the establishment of buffleggrass, fountain grass, and African sumac dominating these extremely narrow alleyways. The fast growth rate and the limited needs of these invasive species allow them to outcompete the native, more sensitive species and better establish themselves.

Although the narrow alleyways could serve as corridors for urban wildlife, they are not connected to any major wildlife habitation or circulation areas, so they do not. The alleyways of the neighborhood also do not provide much of a habitat for native wildlife since they do not provide the native vegetation necessary for its survival. The urban wildlife that does dominate the neighborhood consists of common pigeon, lizards, butterflies and other insects, and household pets.

Vegetation observed on the site, outside the alleyways, included mostly landscape plants and some native species such as prickly pear, saguaro, cholla, mesquite, and Mexican palo verde. The landscape plants include, but are not limited to, many varieties of citrus and palm, silk oak, tamarisk, leucophyllum, arborvitae, cassia, and privet.



Figure 1: Photograph Locations



Figure 2: Wildlife Corridor



Figure 3: Neighborhood Vegetation



Figure 4: Birds in the Neighborhood



Figure 5: Neighborhood Vegetation



# Neighborhood Ecology

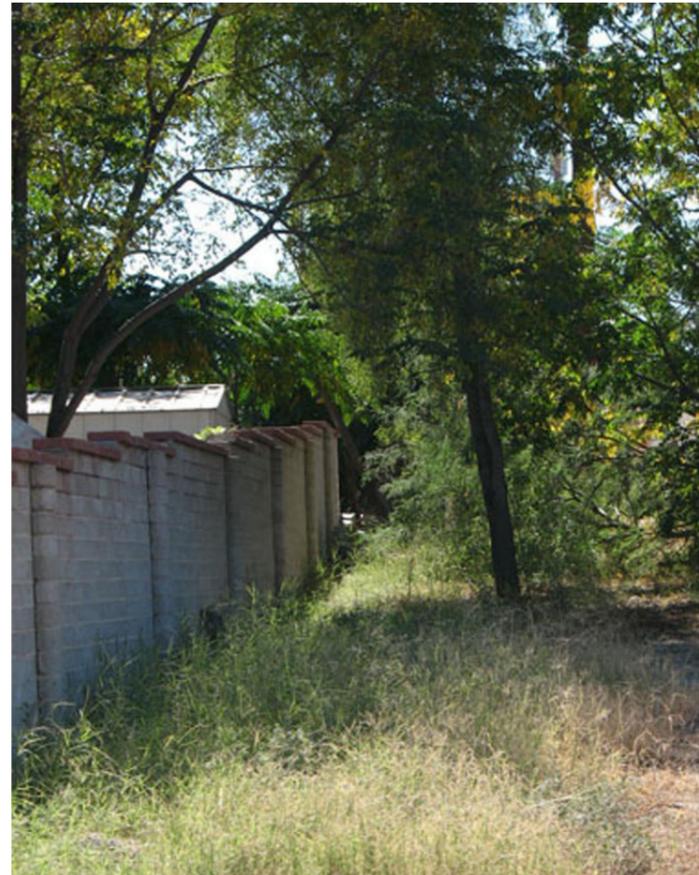
A city can be looked at as a matrix of interconnected spaces or patches connected by corridors. Places where there is interaction between individuals and communities are called nodes. This applies to wildlife as well as people. A neighborhood is a smaller unit of this system. A patch is an area that is distinct from another area and can be a backyard, a road or a tree canopy.

A healthy system has an abundance of all types of these elements combined to create a rich matrix. A neighborhood is a part of the larger urban matrix. A rich and varied environment can provide food and shelter for a wide variety of wildlife.

In El Cortez Neighborhood the patches are small and spread out and have few extensive corridors connecting them. These are broken by the wide streets. This wouldn't be a deterrent for larger animals or birds.

Many native species of birds like quail, cactus wren, road runners, and phainopepla do not live in high tree tops and are found in areas of native vegetation. More native plant species would compliment the existing trees and other vegetation and lead to a richer wildlife community.

A healthy and more diverse wildlife population can be a positive goal for an urban neighborhood. Some benefits are a more beautiful neighborhood, stronger community ties through neighborhood activity for children and adults, and a sense of pride in the neighborhood. In addition, more vegetation creates a healthier and more comfortable environment by cooling and humidifying the air.



A corridor



A fenced in patch



Isolated patches



# Human Ecology

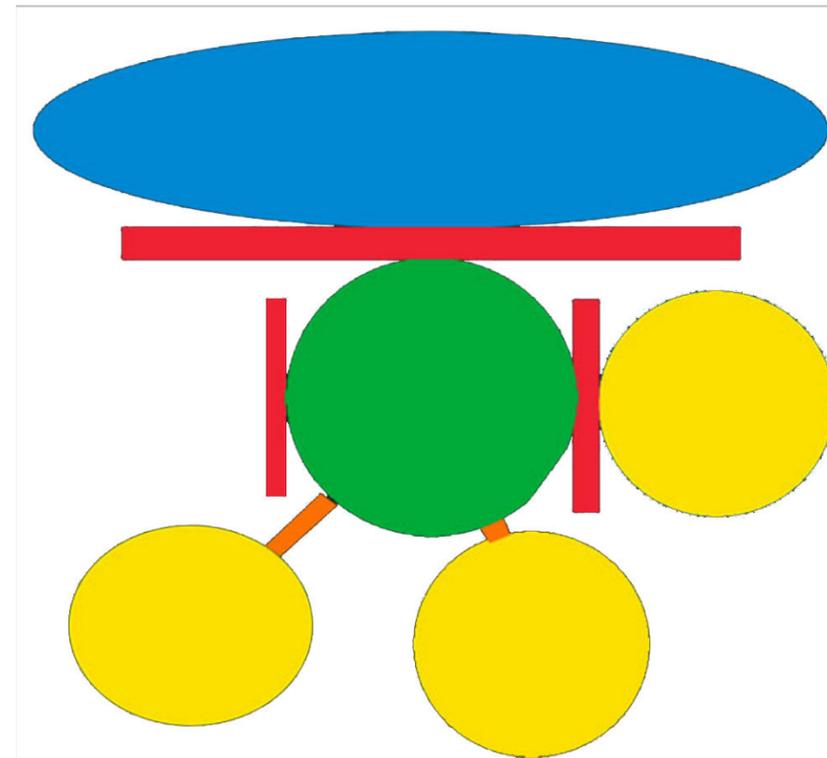
Just as animals need healthy places to live (wildlife patches) and connecting links (corridors), healthy human communities also need these things. For a healthy and safe community it is important for neighbors to get to know each other better. One of the best ways for improving communication is to provide usable outdoor spaces and comfortable walking paths. In this respect El Cortez is somewhat isolated as far. There are major traffic obstacles to the east and north and dead ends to the west. Well designed pedestrian corridors can help break down these barriers between adjoining neighborhoods and the commercial district across Grant Road where there are many dining establishments and grocery stores. These types of places are conducive to meeting and sharing news.

## Patches

- El Cortez
- Other neighborhoods

## Nodes

- Shopping and dining



El Cortez pop. 491  
40 acres



Another aspect of ecology is how energy flows through a system. If a community or population uses more than it produces it will eventually run out of resources. The problem with urban communities is that most of the resources are from outside the area, often from very far away. One way of measuring this is the ecological footprint. This takes into account the average energy and goods consumed and what it takes to produce them. The footprint shows how much land it would require to produce these resources. Unfortunately The U.S. has the largest footprint of 2.04 acres per capita. The diagram above is based on the assumption that El Cortez residents are average consumers and energy users. There are some things that can be done to reduce the size of the foot print. Vegetable gardens in back yards or using the alleyways or dead end streets for community gardens can produce a significant amount. Excess can be sold at a farmers market or shared with neighbors. Planting trees and reducing the amount of paved surfaces can drastically reduce the heat island affect and coo temperatures, especially in the evenings. Trees can also be used to provide shade when planted in the proper location. There are programs for free or inexpensive trees for individuals or communities. One such program is from Tucson Clean and Beautiful Inc. The phone number is (520) 791-3109. Applications can be found at their web site: <http://www.tucsonaz.gov/tcb/tft/index.html#shade>

R.T.T., 1996, *Landscape Ecology Principals*, Island Press, Washinton D.C.

Steiner, Frederic, 2002 *Human Ecology*, Island Press, Washington D.C.



# Edges

El Cortez neighborhood has edges that are created by the surrounding streets. The north side of the neighborhood is bordered by Grant Road. 1st Avenue creates a border on the East side of the neighborhood. The south side of the neighborhood is defined by Seneca Street. The west side of the neighborhood is at Avenida El Capitan.

El Cortez neighborhood includes the park located to the west of Avenida El Capitan and 4th Avenue although it does not fall within the actual limits of the neighborhood. Between Avenida El Capitan and 4th Avenue are apartment complexes which are excluded from the neighborhood. There are also parking lots and dead ends of streets from the neighborhood. This creates an ambiguous edge as well as discontinuity within the neighborhood.

The east edge created by 1st Avenue is a busy street and forms a definite border to the neighborhood. The north edge is formed by Grant Road which is also a hectic street. There are also plans for Grant Road to be widened. The other edges are not as definite as the east and north edges.

Grant Road and 1st Avenue create a barrier to the commercial area to the north and northeast. More crosswalks could be placed along these streets to allow easier access to the commercial area. A tunnel under Grant Road would create a safe and easy path for both pedestrians and bicyclists. Metal signs are posted at the entrances to the neighborhood which could be replaced with more attractive, personalized signs. Improved landscaping around the entry signs would be more welcoming to the residents and visitors to the neighborhood while also beautifying the neighborhood.



Figure 1: Grant Road north edge



Figure 2: 1st Avenue east edge



Figure 3: Photograph Locations



Figure 4: Apartments on west edge



Figure 5: Entry signs on 1st Avenue



Figure 6: Entrance at Seneca Street and 1st Avenue



# Religious Centers and Places of Worship



- 1 Stairway to Light
- 2 Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
- 3 Mt. Calvary Missionary Baptist Church
- 4 Coronado Baptist Church
- 5 Apostolic Truth Church
- 6 Central United Pentacost Chruuch
- 7 Church of Liberty
- 8 Tucson Tabernacle
- 9 Tucson Tabernacle Office
- 10 Jehovah's Witness North Congregation
- 11 Siloam Freewill Church
- 12 Bible Church

There are no organized churches in the El Cortez neighborhood. The closest church to the neighborhood is the Stairway to Light Church located on the north-west corner of the neighborhood, on Grant.



# Residential Form

The majority of El Cortez neighborhood was constructed during the 1950's and 1960's. The primary building material is brick, followed by slump block, adobe and frame and stucco homes. The lots are almost exclusively single-family residential. Three multi-family structures are found within the neighborhood proper.

The predominant housing style is the PAT (Perfect Arizona Type) ranch style, characterized by low brick structures with relatively small windows and shading roof overhangs. A few examples of colonial revival architecture are also present. In the 1960's and then in the 1990's two larger scale apartment complexes were constructed facing 4th Avenue, just outside the official boundary of the neighborhood. Four lots remain vacant on the north side of the neighborhood today. One lot contains a mobile home. Plans to expand Grant road to the north of the neighborhood will most likely incorporate these lots, along with the houses facing Grant. Most of the homes in the neighborhood are in moderate to fair condition, a few appear to be in the need of repair and upkeep.

In 1989 the neighborhood acquired state and federal grant money and approved a special tax assessment for better street lighting, sidewalks, and other public improvements. El Cortez is also part of the Tucson Neighborhood Renewal program. This program helps brings in grant and bond money for improvements to Mansfield Park, and the streetscape of the neighborhood itself.



House in El Cortez 1950's



House in El Cortez 1940's



House in El Cortez 1930's



Slump Block Construction in El Cortez



Brick Construction in El Cortez



Adobe Construction in El Cortez



Frame and Stucco Construction in El Cortez



# Schools and Parks

## Schools

Neighborhood school children attend Jefferson Park Elementary School located on the east side of neighboring Jefferson Park. There is currently no cross light or stop sign allowing children from El Cortez to enter the Jefferson Park neighborhood on the other side of heavily trafficked Euclid Avenue. Doolen Middle School and Catalina High School are located over two miles from El Cortez neighborhood and may require school children to catch the Grant Road bus eastward. Returning home these children would have to cross busy Grant Road to enter their neighborhood from the bus stop.

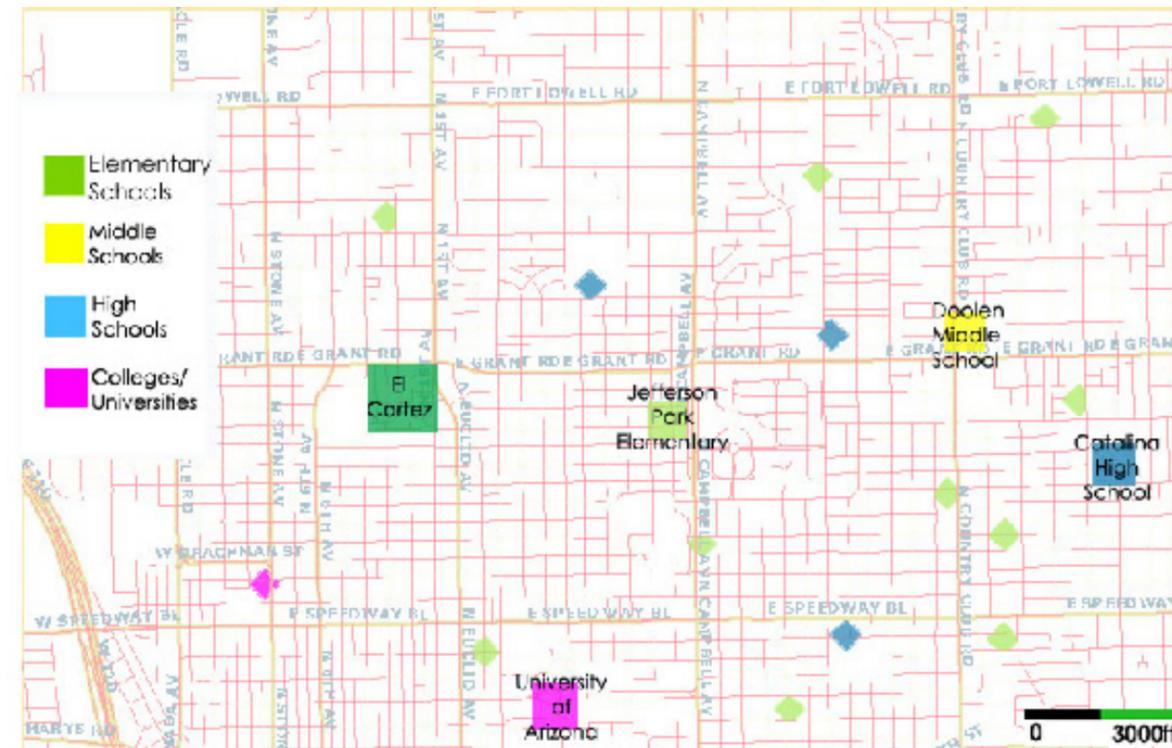


Jefferson Park Elementary



Doolen Middle School

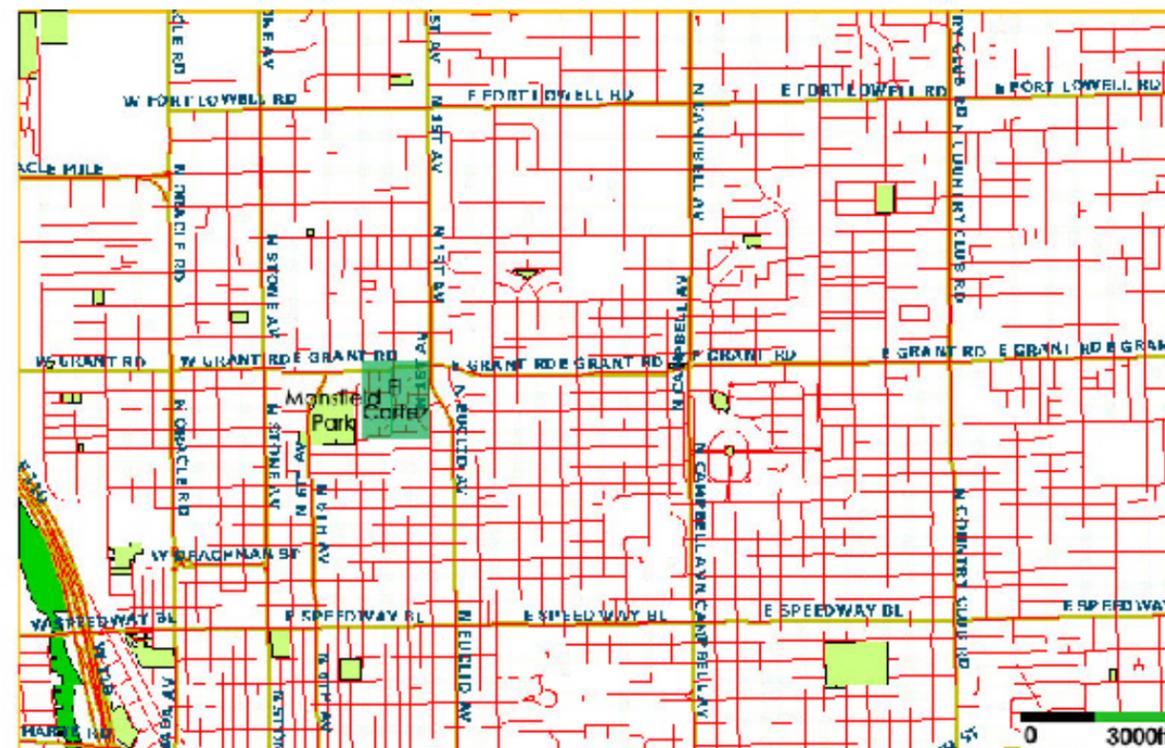
## Schools



## Parks

The only major park within comfortable walking distance to El Cortez Neighborhood is Mansfield Park, located just across 4th Avenue from the neighborhood. The park has a pool open in the summer, a large open space for athletic activities or events, a community center and a community dog park. The park is open to the street along the majority of its perimeter. Traffic might therefore endanger children and pets playing in the park and entering the street area to chase after toys. There is no stop sign or light providing a safe crosswalk into the park from the neighborhood.

## Parks



Mansfield Park looking East from El Cortez

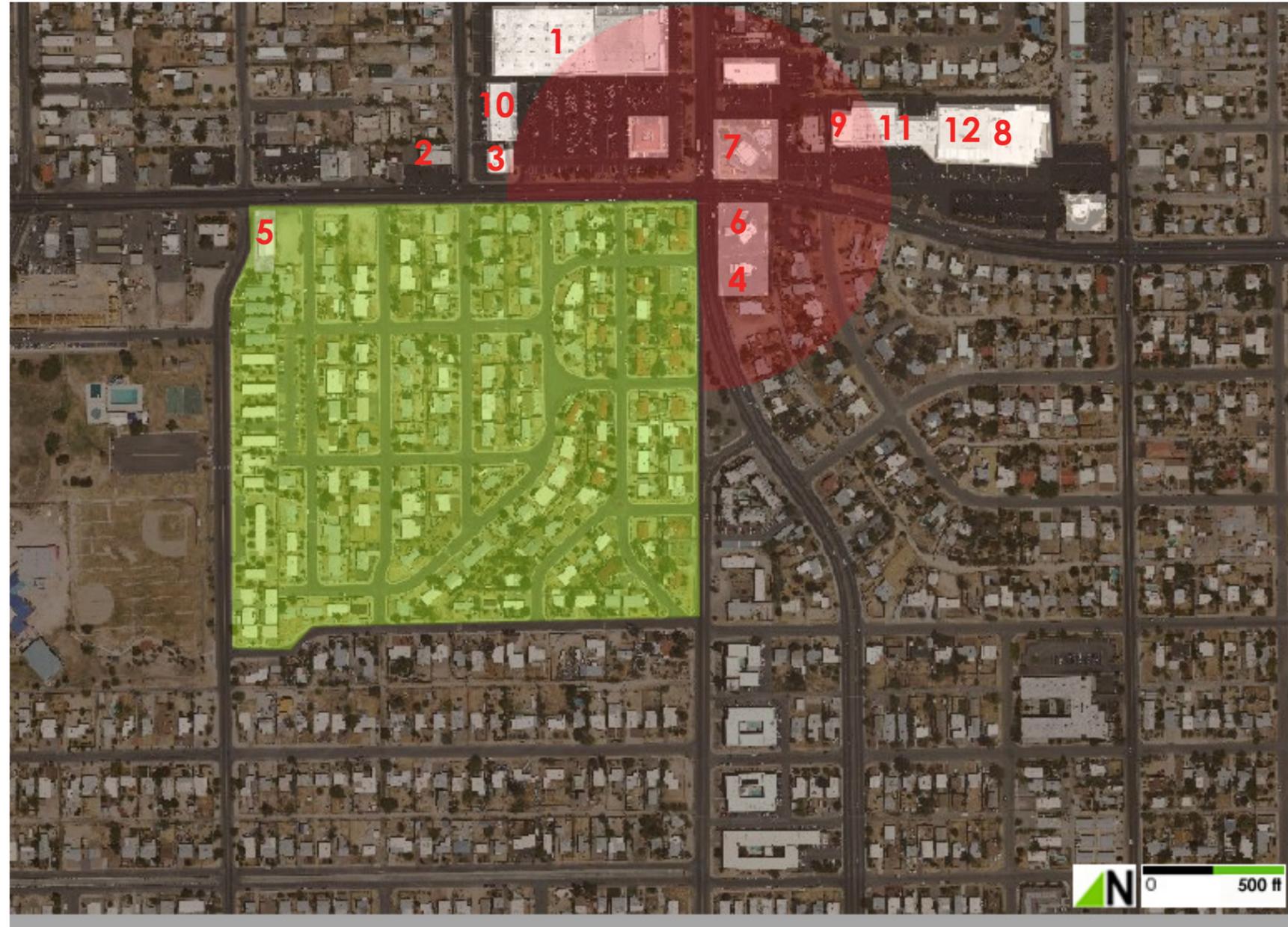


Mansfield Park looking South-East from El Cortez



# Commercial Centers

The main commercial node for El Cortez neighborhood is on the north-eastern edge. The shops are predominantly food services. The access to the shopping centers are along Grant, hinging on the busy intersection of Grant and 1st Avenue. While there is ample parking for these commercial centers, the pedestrian access is precarious (short pedestrian traffic signals that are not often observed by vehicular traffic).



- Fry's Supermarket 1
- Mandarin Grill 2
- Dollar Tree 3
- Los Betos 4

- Enchanted Dragon Tatoo 5
- University Shell Gas 6
- Mobil Gas Station 7
- Compass Bank 8

- McDonalds 9
- Little Ceasar's Pizza 10
- Yamato Japanese Restaurant 11
- Save-on Drugs 12



# Circulation

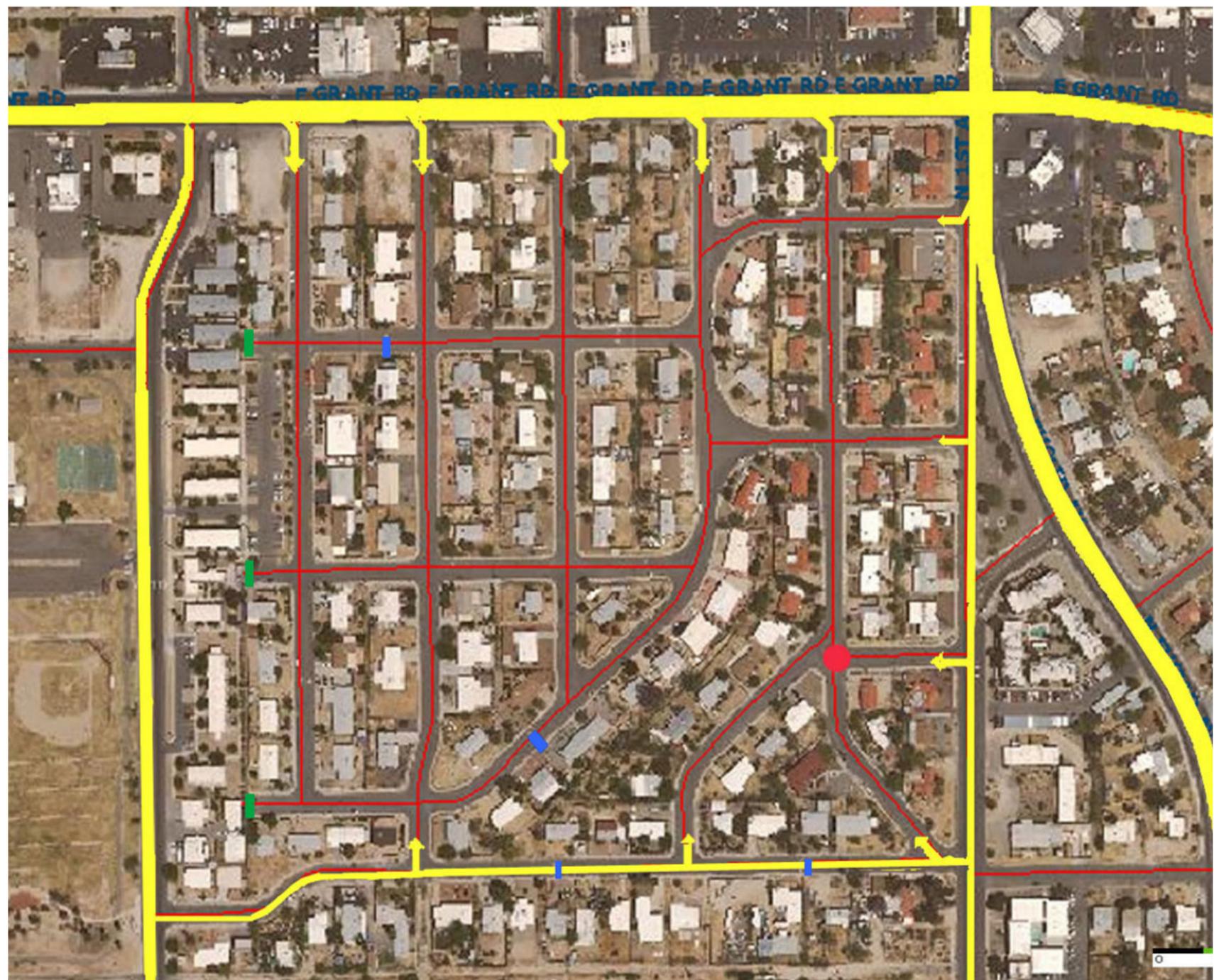
El Cortez Neighborhood is bounded by Grant Avenue to the north, Seneca Street to the South, First Avenue/Euclid Ave to the East and Fourth Avenue to the West.

Grant Road is by far the busiest transit route surrounding the neighborhood. It is four lanes wide and is a major east-west route in Tucson. First Avenue/Euclid Avenue, directly east of El Cortez, also is a high volume traffic route consisting of 4 lanes running north/south.

Seneca Street is the only boundary street used only for residential use. Fourth Avenue is used mostly residential traffic but is also used for commercial traffic entering or exiting Grant Road.

Inside the neighborhood, traffic circles in combinations with speed bumps and stop signs are used to slow down traffic. Dead ends are also common providing roadblocks that prevent thru traffic from crossing directly from Fourth Avenue to First Avenue or vice versa. The traffic in El Cortez is distributed fairly evenly and due to its small population it is not heavy.

- Surrounding road
- Entry point
- Dead end
- Speed humps
- 4-way stop & traffic circle



# Vehicular Traffic

The traffic in El Cortez is distributed fairly evenly and due to its small population it is not heavy. There is very heavy traffic on the adjacent streets of Grant Road and Euclid Avenue. Some problems that have been observed are speeding and motorists not stopping fully at the 4-way intersection. Skid marks evident in the wide intersections indicate unsafe driving. There are some speed humps on some streets but these are an annoyance to most drivers.

There are some traffic calming measures that can be implemented. Part of the problem is that the streets are much wider than necessary. Widening the sidewalks, narrowing the streets and planting trees and landscaping on alternate sides can create windy streets that will slow down traffic. In addition it is more aesthetically pleasing and would be more conducive to



E. Edison St. & Flores Ave.



2nd Ave. & Calle Chico



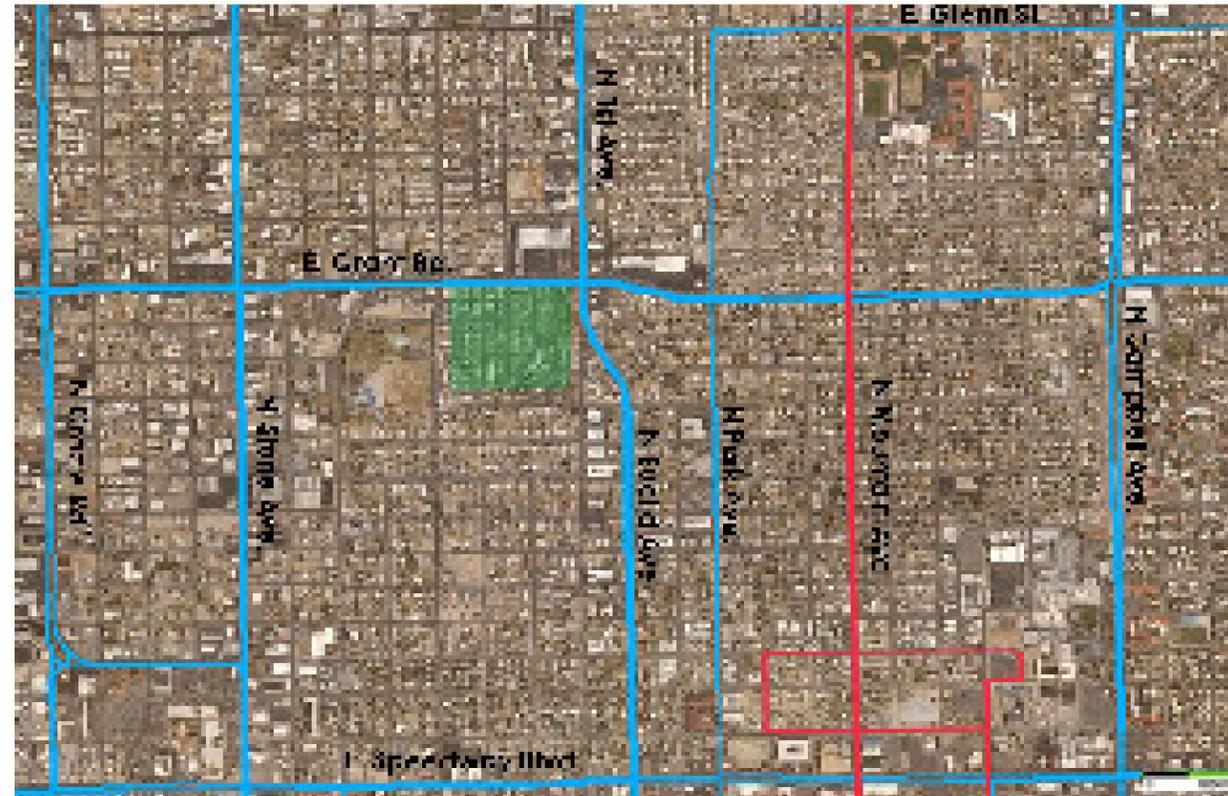
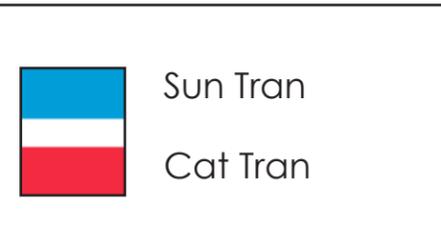


## Bus Routes

The Sun Tran buses operate city wide and are accessible from many locations. There are major north-south routes and east-west routes, adjacent to El Cortez., on Grant Road and Euclid/1<sup>st</sup> Ave respectively. The stops, near the intersection of Grant and 1st Ave. are in easy walking distance from the neighborhood. The buses stop at half hour intervals from 5:00 or 6:00 AM to 8:00 or 9:00 PM depending on the route and location. For information call (520) 792 9222. The web address is <http://www.suntran.com/index.htm>.

The Cat Tran is a shuttle service provided by the University of Arizona for students and employees. For information call (520) 621-7721.

Key to bus route map

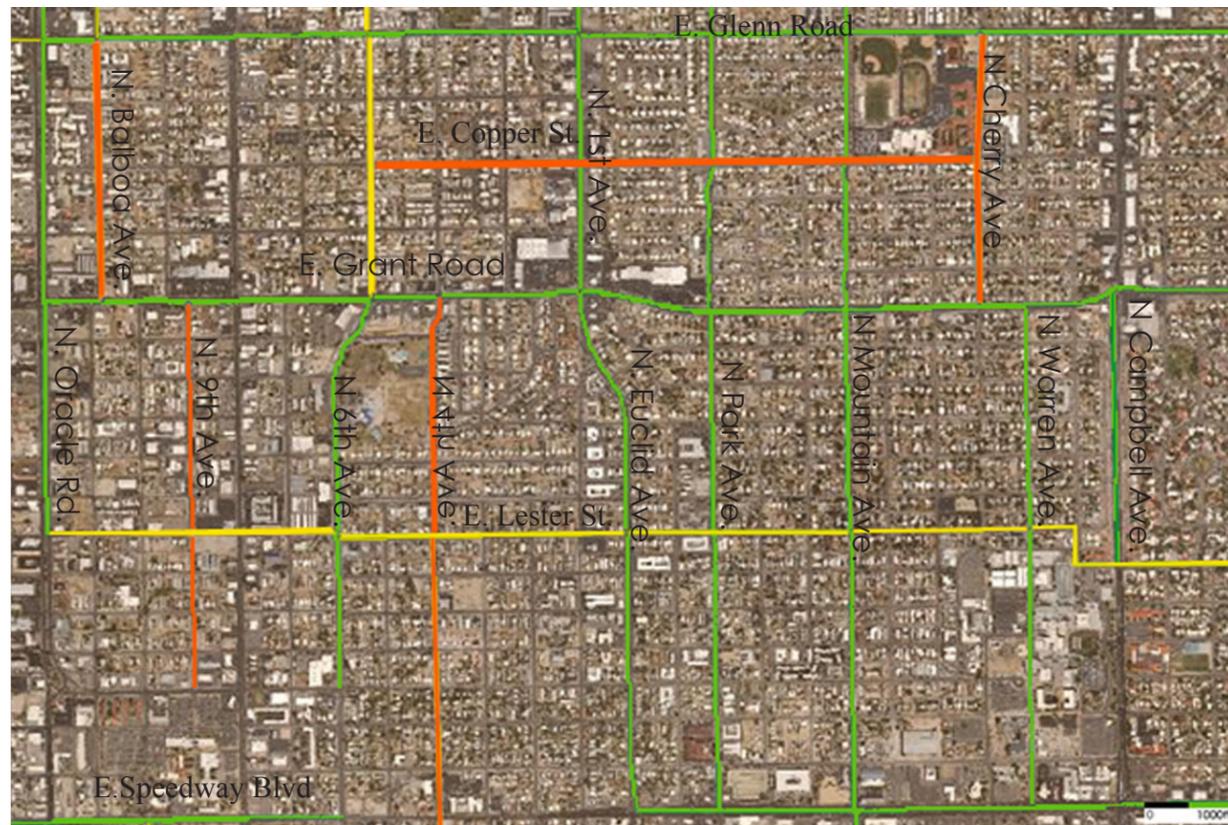


## Alternatives

### Bicycles

Designated bike routes in Tucson and Pima County are of three types. There are lanes at the shoulders of many of the major roads although these are merely marked with painted lines. There is a lot of traffic into and out of parking lots. Other routes lead through residential and secondary roads. Some are signed and some designated on the route map. These connect to the main routes. Mountain Ave. from the University to Glenn uses brick paving to create a distinct and safer bike lane. This could be used as a model for other areas such as 4th Ave.

Key to bicycle route map



# Some neighborhood streets



## Parking

Every residence has access to off-street parking. However, if needed, on-street parking is available and does not require a special permit. There is a parking lot for the Apartments in El Cotez Neighborhood.



The views surrounding the El Cortez neighborhood capitalize on the Tuscon and Catalina mountains to the West and North respectively. The mountains provide a borrowed landscape of the Tuscon desert juxtaposed against the urban surroundings. The Western side of El Cortez is bordered by the large park and public pool facilities. Some of the negative views in El Cortez are the noisy and congested streets. Grant rd on the Northern and 1st Ave on the Eastern boundaries are the main concern. With the future expansion of Grant Rd, this will become more of an impediment to having a positive interface with the surrounding areas.

Some suggestions for improving the views of the neighborhood would be to widen the sidewalks and plant more of an attractive buffer between the neighborhood and the traffic. Since the North and the East sides of El Cortez seem to be the primary entry and view points, it would give a more ideal first impression.



Key

	Noise/Pollution
	Street views
	Tuscon Mountains/ Downtown/Park
	Catalina Moun- tains



El Cortez is a small neighborhood with a good mix of different ages and races. The data listed below is from the 2000 US Census and the Tucson Police Department.

**Population:**

493 people live in the neighborhood  
 171 people live in the apartment buildings on 4th Ave  
 (35% of the total population)

**Age:**

0-17	106
18-39	212
40-64	130
65 and Over	45

**Sex:**

Male	254
Female	239

**Race:**

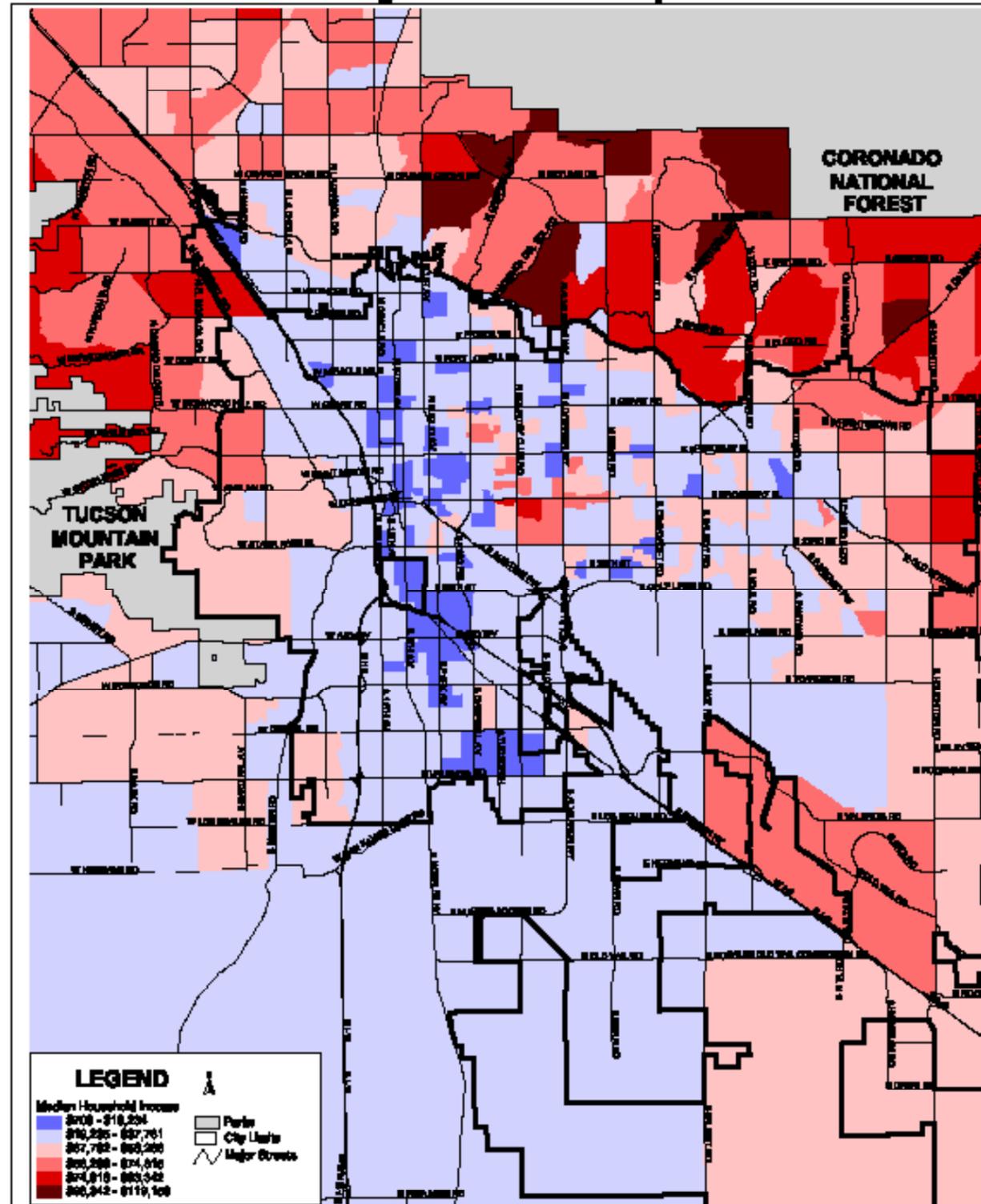
White	233
Black or African American	112
American Indian and Alaska Native	15
Asian	68
Other	55
Two or More	10

Average Income: \$19,235 - \$37,761

**Crime Rate:**

242 incidents in 2005  
 1-2 times Mean Crime Rate for the City of Tucson  
 Less than a mile from Oracle Rd where the crime rate is  
 5+ the Mean Crime Rate

## Median Household Income by Block Group



# Zoning

El Cortez lies within a R-2 zone. This is a medium density residential zone where multifamily and single-family residences are permitted. On the north side of the site there is a C-1 zone which is a local commercial zone, limited to retail sales with no outside display/storage. Offices and residential development are permitted as well as restaurants. At the northwest corner of the neighborhood, there is a C-2 zone which is a general and intensive commercial zone. Retail commercial with wholesale, nightclubs, bars, and amusement enterprises are allowed. A full range of automotive activities, sales, repair, leasing and limited manufacturing are also allowed. Residential uses are permitted. On the west and southwest corner of site, there are R-3 zones. These are high density residential zones which are primarily for apartment houses and single-family development is permitted.

There are two development designators, I and K. Development designator I is used for low-density urban zones. It requires a minimum lot size of 5,000 square ft with one unit per lot. The maximum lot coverage is 70% and the maximum building height is 25 ft. The perimeter yard width must be 6 ft or 2/3 the height of the proposed exterior building wall. Development designator K is for medium-density urban zones. The minimum lot site is 5,000 ft<sup>2</sup> and the maximum lot coverage is 75% of the lot. The density of the development is 15 units per acre. The maximum building height is 25'. The perimeter yard width is 10 ft or 3/4 the height of the proposed exterior building wall.

Figure 1 shows the zones of El Cortez and the surrounding areas while figure 2 shows more detailed zoning of El Cortez neighborhood. The west side of the neighborhood that is zoned commercial is currently occupied by apartments. There is only one commercial location on the site on the corner of Grant Road and 4th Avenue.

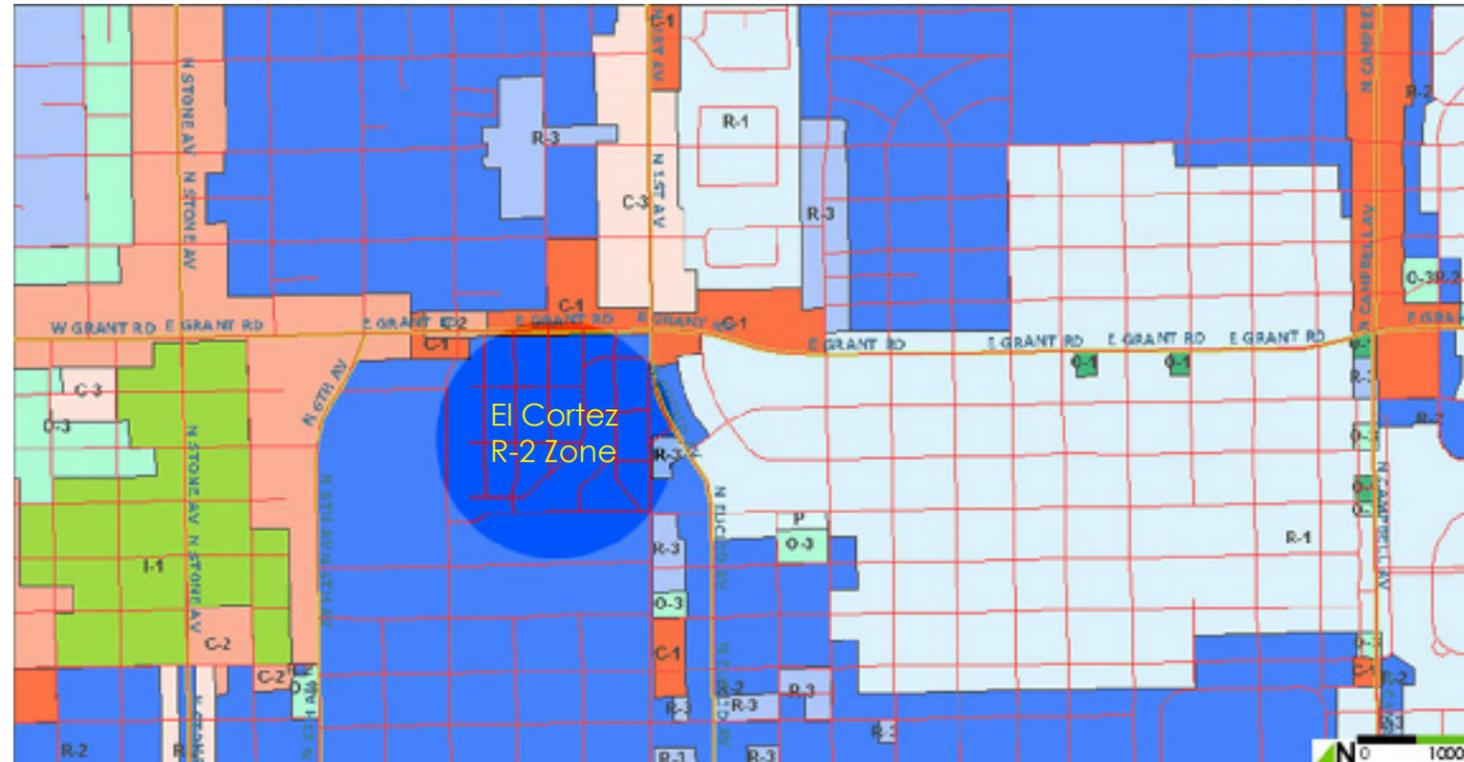


Figure 1: Zoning of Areas Surrounding El Cortez Neighborhood



Figure 2: Zoning of El Cortez Neighborhood



# Utilities

For El Cortez Neighborhood, utilities are provided by the following companies: electric, Tucson Electric Power Company; gas, Southwest Gas; water, sewage, and trash, City of Tucson. Utility meters can be accessed from inside the alleyways in between residences. Below is a map of the existing sewer lines and street lighting within and around the neighborhood. To the right is contact information for the utility companies. Before any new construction or neighborhood implementation is begun, the utility companies should be contacted for information on where existing lines and pipes are to prevent any damage from occurring.



**Call Before You Dig!**  
**Blue Stake Utility Line Marking**  
 1 - 800 - 782 - 5348  
**TEP Customer Service**  
 520 - 623 - 7711  
 1 - 800 - 328 - 8853



**SWG Customer Service**  
 520 - 889 - 1888  
 1 - 800 - 428 - 7324  
 Hearing Impaired 711



**Customer Service**  
 520 - 791 - 3242  
 1 - 800 - 598 - 9449  
**Water Quality Information Line**  
 520-791-4227



Figure1. Sewer Lines and Lighting in the El Cortez Neighborhood



Figure 2. Utility meters can be accessed through the alleyways



# History

## Tucson and the El Cortez Neighborhood

El Cortez Neighborhood is a small neighborhood in central Tucson, home to approximately 493 residents. It is one of the younger neighborhoods in the central Tucson core, constructed primarily during the 1950's and 1960's.

The story of Tucson is one of many people and interests, from ancient Native American cultures to Spanish conquistadors, American settlers and modern day research scientists. During much of the 19th century Tucson was known as a rowdy and violent, yet prosperous, frontier town frequented by outlaws and rebels. The arrival of the railroad in the 1880's welcomed the first era of rapid growth in the region. Around the turn of the last century Tucson's dry air attracted a large community of tuberculosis patients. During this time many patients were housed in an area called Tentville which occupied the area north of the University of Arizona, near and perhaps in, the modern El Cortez neighborhood. No remnants from this time remain in the neighborhood.

El Cortez was the 19th annexation into the City of Tucson on September 24th, 1938, but the majority of El Cortez was constructed during the 1950's and 1960's. El Cortez is located in an area considered to be Tucson's historically African American core. Many early African American Tucsonans were Buffalo Soldiers at Fort Huachuca, and their families. From the turn of the last century on, they helped form new communities located primarily northwest of the city core. During World War II Davis-Monthan Air Force Base and Ft. Huachuca brought a new influx of African American soldiers to Tucson. Many settled in already established African American neighborhoods, close to their churches. Mt. Calvary Baptist, founded in 1900 and located just southwest of El Cortez neighborhood, is the oldest and largest of all the Black churches in Tucson. Five blocks south of El Cortez, Mt Olive Church of Christ is the fourth oldest African American Church in Tucson, founded in 1923. The population of El Cortez is 23 percent African American today, significantly higher than the city-wide average.



# Recommendations

El Cortez neighborhood is a residential area that does not include any green space. The streets are all at least 30' wide which is enough room to allow a green space corridor to be created along all of the streets. Widening one side of the sidewalk to allow for a path and plantings while narrowing the street could provide this green space corridor. Narrowing the street will act to calm traffic while enhancing the neighborhood aesthetic.

The neighborhood lacks connectivity to the surrounding areas because of Grant Road and 1st Avenue as well as the apartment complexes on the west side of the neighborhood. Creating a linear park would act as a link to the surrounding areas. Mansfield Park on the western edge of the neighborhood would be linked with the park throughout the community and the connectivity would continue across Grant to the commercial area and schools. A pedestrian tunnel under Grant Road would need to be created to provide easier and safer access to areas to the east and north of the neighborhood. A linear park created on the south and west sides of streets would help to lessen the intense heat during much of the year and reduce energy costs. Pocket parks could be created at the dead ends to create more open space in addition to the linear park. These parks are shown on the map in green.

## Suggested Vegetation for Streetscape and Household Plantings

### Trees

Velvet Mesquite  
Desert Willow

Prosopis Velutina  
Chilopsis Linearis

### Shrubs

Brittlebush  
Fairy Duster

Encelia Farinosa  
Calliandra Eriophylla

### Cacti & Succulents

Ocotillo  
Fishhook Barrel  
Saguaro

Foquieria Splendens  
Ferocactus Wislizenii  
Carnegiea Gigantea

### Wildflowers

Sand Verbena  
Mexican Gold Poppy

Abronia villosa  
Gaillardia aristada

Much of the vegetation found in the neighborhood is not conducive to supporting wildlife. Planting more native species in the neighborhood would help to bring more wildlife into the area.

Creating commercial activity, such as a farmer's market, in Mansfield Park, would help to unite the neighborhoods surrounding the park. This could also help to include apartments residents within El Cortez neighborhood.



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