

Peoria Place Breaks New Ground

It's been on the drawing board since 2006, but Peoria Place has been a sweet dream much longer than that. On November 25, a ground breaking took place for an exciting addition to the Acacia District.



Councilmember Vicki Hunt at the groundbreaking for Peoria Place with the project developers Steve Robson (left) and Steve Ellman (right).

Peoria Place is being built on nearly 130 acres just east of City Hall and along Grand Avenue. The combined residential, retail, and office project will be developed in phases over the next several years. The Ellman Companies and Robson Communities are jointly responsible for Peoria Place. The value of the development at build-out is estimated to be upwards of \$200 million. Easily, this is the largest privately funded development in Peoria's central core area.

The initial stage of the project is completion of Cotton Crossing and 79th Avenue, as well as infrastructure necessary for vertical construction. Cotton Crossing will bisect the project between Grand Avenue near Peoria Wal-Mart and 83rd Avenue, adjacent to City Hall. From Cotton Crossing, 79th Avenue will be constructed and connect at the current 79th Avenue alignment north of the Roundtree Ranch subdivision. A traffic circle at the intersection of 79th and Cotton Crossing will ease the flow of traffic through the development. A multi-use trail will run adjacent to 79th Avenue between Cotton Crossing and Olive Avenue, encouraging bicyclists, joggers, and walkers. The roadways, waterlines, and other underground construction should be complete late next fall.

Robson Communities is the original developer of Sun Lakes in the east valley and Pebble Creek in Goodyear. The Ellman Companies are well known for another notable project, namely the Westgate Center. Like the Westgate project, Peoria Place will bring new activity to the West Valley.



Ground is cleared for the future Cotton Crossing and 79th Avenue, just east of Peoria City Hall.

Steve Ellman, chairman and CEO of the Ellman Companies, said at the groundbreaking that the time is right for a development of this type in Peoria. Acacia councilmember Vicki Hunt applauded Ellman's progress saying, "Steve has a belief in Peoria, a belief that we are going to prosper."

1ST TUESDAYS

Councilmember Vicki Hunt will be meeting with local residents the first Tuesday of every month from 8:00-10:00am at the Peoria Women's Club. Anyone who would like to visit with Councilmember Hunt, ask questions, or seek assistance is encouraged to come to the Women's Club on the first Tuesday in the morning; no appointment is necessary. The Women's Club is located at 8335 W. Jefferson, adjacent to the Peoria Community Center. Councilmember Hunt wants to know, "How can I assist you?" ("Como le puedo asistir?") If more information is needed, please call 623-773-7306.

Acacia District Update

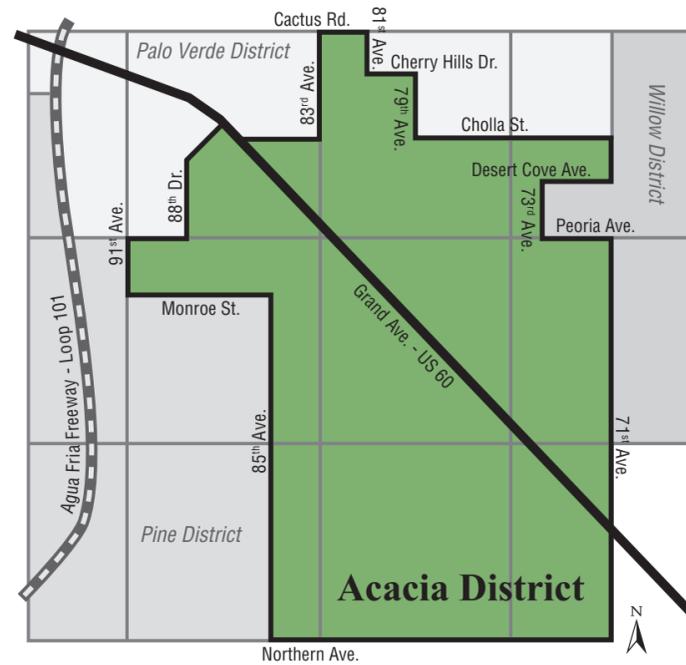
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Frequently Called Numbers

Councilmember Vicki Hunt	773-7306
AM-PM Afterschool Program	773-7137
Aquatics	773-7137
Barking Dog Hotline	773-7040
Block Watch	773-7099
City Council Office	773-7306
Code Enforcement	773-7226
Dial-A-Ride	773-7435
Graffiti Hotline	773-7094
Library	773-7555
Parks Reservations	773-7137
Police Non-Emergency	773-8311
Utility Billing and Meters	773-7160
General City Information	773-7000
Shopping Cart Pick Up	773-7226

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Acacia District Update



Commentary by Councilmember Vicki Hunt



MUSEUM MAKING HISTORY

"History is not another name for the past, as many people imply. It is the name for stories about the past." - A.J.P. Taylor

The two-room Peoria Central School was constructed in 1906. Seventy years later the school buildings were turned over to the city for use as a local museum. Until just recently, even the grounds of the buildings were historical; the same uneven and broken sidewalks, water-thirsty turf, and non-descript public gathering space that has always existed was still in place. Last November a long-awaited upgrade project was completed, in coordination with the Peoria Historical Society who now oversees the buildings' operations.

Several key upgrades took place. A seat wall was constructed in the center of the museum parcel as a gathering place for pedestrians and visitors. New lines were constructed for watering turf, which now is located largely on the north-end of the museum space. A swath of water-wise vegetation was planted adjacent to the seat wall. Sidewalks were reconstructed for the public's safety. At the entrance to the main museum building, contractors carefully re-laid the memorial bricks, dedicated by individuals and businesses, through the Peoria Historical Society.

In 1982 Peoria Central School, which was built with funds generated by the first school bonds ever issued by the Peoria Unified School District, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Last fall the Peoria Historic Preservation Commission recommended designation of the two-room school building as a local landmark with Historic Preservation Overlay Zoning, and the Planning and Zoning Commission recommended approval of the zoning just prior to the holidays. Essentially the designation and overlay zoning require any future significant changes to the façade of the building be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission; proposed changes will be considered for a Certificate of



Councilmember Hunt reviews plans for the Historical Museum landscape improvements with Historical Society Director, Harold McKisson while a member of the crew looks on.

Appropriateness which would permit façade changes. This is Peoria's first building to be designated as a local landmark. Other sites are pending in the process.

Thousands of children were educated in the school buildings over the past 100 years. The two-room schoolhouse was supplemented in 1910 by three additional classroom buildings. Today each of the buildings houses themed displays. The main school building features a complete classroom setting, painstakingly recast as it would have been decades before. The classroom building just to the north is dedicated to the community's agricultural roots, with interactive displays for cotton production, cattle, and other farming endeavors. The interior of the next building to the north is currently undergoing renovation by members of the Historical Society. It will trace Peoria's business and government history with displays highlighting early commercial efforts, including some businesses that are still in operation today such as Wilhelm Automotive. The final building houses the Peoria Historical Society office, as well as serving as a workshop for members and volunteers working on museum projects.

The Peoria Historical Society has worked near miracles within the walls of the buildings. Beyond paint and plaster, workers have charted the city's history in photographs, documents, and displays. Historical Society Director, Harold McKisson cites the work of members and volunteers as the driving force that brings Peoria's history to life. For more information on the museum or about membership in the Peoria Historical Society, call the museum at 623-487-8030.



Three Peoria Historical Society members; (left to right) Harold McKisson - Director, Ken Forgia - President, and Ray Alcantar - Member. All three are former students of Peoria Central School.

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Acacia District



Acacia Happenings in the Local Schools

Every year there are opportunities to help with school programs and projects that benefit Acacia students and the Acacia community. See how some of the Acacia District funds have been used over the past few months:

• Ira A. Murphy Basketball Courts

Several years ago the City of Peoria constructed lights on the outdoor courts. Using a gate between Murphy Park and the basketball courts, the school agreed to allow after-hours and weekend use of the courts by the public.

After some unfortunate vandalism and theft, school administrators asked Councilmember Hunt for assistance in remedying the problem. Several phone calls and meetings later, funds were donated by Salt River Project, as well as Peoria council members Hunt, Carlat, Aames, Evans, and Mayor Barrett.

The result - a chain link perimeter fence around the courts with locking gates on both the park side and the school side of the basketball courts. The gates on the park side can be locked during the school day, permitting access only from the school playground for students to play during class and recess. In the evenings the school side gate can be secured, maintaining the security of the remainder of the campus, and the park side gate is unlocked to allow for



Murphy Elementary Assistant Principal Sam Chagolla with Salt River Project's Patricia DiRoss & Councilmember Vicki Hunt. Salt River Project donated funds to help construct the fence.

Acacia Gets New Community Park

Rio Vista Community Park began welcoming residents and visitors in 2006, and the park amenities are very well used. Peoria residents soon will see the beginnings of the city's second community park when ground breaks this coming summer near Olive and 83rd avenues. Peoria's second community park is being developed where the historic Robertson Farm once stood.

The 60-acre park will be on the southeast corner of the intersection, adjacent to the new Butler Water Reclamation Facility. A 16-acre commercial parcel is planned for the southeast corner; the community park will be built immediately behind the commercial parcel. Community Park #2, yet to be officially named, is to be built in phases with the park built out in four or five years.

The newest community park will feature an urban fishing lake, a skate court, a shaded playground area with a youth splash pad, a dog park, and picnic ramadas among many other amenities. Six youth ball fields will be built at the center of the park, and four multi-use



public use of the courts. Discussions continue regarding other possible improvements to the shared outdoor basketball courts.

• Santa Fe Elementary Classroom Systems

A donation by Councilmember Hunt to the Peoria Educational Enrichment Foundation (PEEF) was used to acquire a classroom response system for a fourth grade classroom at Santa Fe Elementary. The other fourth grade classrooms are also equipped with the system.

The classroom response system enables students to provide electronic feedback to questions during class activities. The response system consists of an electronic response pad for each student, similar in appearance to a television remote. The teacher's laptop computer is outfitted with a receiver unit.

A number of unique learning activities are built into the response system. Teachers using the classroom response system attend trainings in the summer and then modify lesson plans to incorporate the response system. Quick spelling tests, mathematic number games, topical history trivia quizzes, and more make learning interactive and exciting.



Bethany Bradshaw, 4th grade teacher at Santa Fe Elementary, instructs her class & Councilmember Vicki Hunt using the electronic classroom response system.

You Asked For It - Successfully Completed Projects

Acacia residents have asked Councilmember Hunt for help in their neighborhoods. Recently completed projects:

• Streetlights on Sunnyslope



Local residents requested additional streetlights. Three were installed in October.

Residents living in Sunnyslope Lane, near Sunnyslope Park contacted Councilmember Hunt about streetlights. The park site is located between 71st and 73rd avenues, immediately north of Olive Avenue. Local residents, who have enjoyed the neighborhood park for years, requested additional streetlights on the south side of Sunnyslope Lane adjacent to the park. Late in the fall, Salt River Project installed the new streetlights and serviced an existing pole that required work. A total of three additional streetlights were installed.

• Sidewalks on Mt. View

Several residents who walk, ride, and skate on Mountain View Road between 75th and 77th avenues requested additional sidewalks. A Salt River Project well site on the north side of the street, just west of the 75th Avenue intersection was not fronted by sidewalk. The south side of Mountain View in this area has yet to be developed; sidewalks are generally constructed by commercial property developers. Consequently, pedestrians nearing the intersection were forced into the street. City staff worked closely with Salt River Project, and in November the sidewalk was finished so that pedestrians can now safely travel along Mountain View between 75th and 77th avenues without having to use the street.

• Handicapped Sidewalk Ramps

A helpful resident has been assisting Councilmember Hunt to identify intersections where handicap ramps have yet to be constructed. Current building standards required handicap ramps at intersections so that



New sidewalk and handicap access ramps have been constructed on Mt. View near 75th Avenue.

wheelchairs can easily negotiate between the sidewalk and street. Years ago, when much of central Peoria was built, these ramps were unheard of anywhere. Annually the city constructs as many handicap ramps at intersections as money will allow. Citizens who are impacted sometimes request an intersection be reviewed for ramp construction. In the past year the Acacia District received new handicap ramps at two intersections, as well as handicap access improvements to the traffic signal pushbuttons at five locations.

• Suntown B-4 Project

The Peoria Police Department, in response to a high number of calls for service and inquiries from residents, organized the B-4 Project this past summer in the Suntown neighborhood. B-4 is the police grid number for the area between 71st and 75th avenues, Peoria Avenue to Mountain View. The project's ongoing mission is to reduce crimes such as family disputes, loose animals, assaults, and drug activities. It also aims to improve the neighborhood's livability by reducing blatant violations of property maintenance codes. Nearly 70 residents attended a B-4 Project Community Meeting on August 5 at Ira Murphy Elementary. Attendees asked questions of the police officials, and made suggestions of their own for improvements to their neighborhood. After several months, Peoria police report improvements, but note there is more work to be done. School officials have noticed some subtle changes in student behavior and a new sense of pride in their students who live in the Suntown neighborhood. The project will continue for an undetermined length of time.

Help When You Need It

Everyone can benefit from help from time to time. Here are a few timely assistance opportunities that are available:

Peoria Retrofit Kit Program

The City of Peoria Water Conservation Division is offering a free retrofit kit for homes that have not been updated to today's water efficiency standards. Single-family homes built prior to 1990 used high-flush toilets and more than 2.2 gallon per minute faucets.

There are a small number of kits available that are being distributed on a first-come and eligible basis. If you are interested, contact the Utilities Department at 623-773-7286.

SilverSneakers for Seniors

Rio Vista Recreation Center is now participating in the SilverSneakers Fitness Program. Senior adults who belong to participating Medicare health plans can enroll in the program and receive a free basic membership to use the Rio Vista fitness center. This includes access to conditioning classes, exercise equipment, and customized programs designed exclusively for senior adults. For more information contact the Rio Vista Recreation Center at 623-773-8600.

Document Clean Up Time - Free Shred Day

You can clean, go green, and dispose of unwanted paperwork safely all in one trip! Arrowhead Community Bank is sponsoring a "Shred Day" on Saturday, March 21 from 9 a.m. to noon in the bank parking lot. You are invited to bring your boxes of paperwork and watch as your documents are shredded right in front of your eyes. Arrowhead Community Bank is located at 17235 N. 75th Avenue; north of Bell Road on the east side of 75th Avenue.

Historical Mural Comes to Oldtown

Pioneer families, agricultural fields, roses and the historic Peoria water tower surround the city brand in the mural that will soon grace Oldtown Peoria. The historical mural was recommended by the Peoria Arts Commission and approved by the Peoria City Council on November 18. The 12-by-25 foot depiction commences in early 2009 and is scheduled for completion by March.



Final rendering of the Emanuel Martinez mural that will soon grace a wall near the intersection of 83rd Avenue and Washington Street.

Noted Colorado artist Emanuel Martinez will create the original artwork on the exterior, west wall of the Biker's Edge Cycle & Fitness outlet on the southeast corner of 83rd Avenue and Washington Street. Shayne McQuay, owner of Biker's Edge, said that their longtime customers were very supportive of the addition of the mural.

Martinez was commissioned to develop a preliminary rendering which was presented at two public workshops in September. Nearly 40 people participated in the meetings and offered feedback. Relying on documentation of Peoria's roots and input from the community, the final design is a colorful presentation of Peoria's rich history.



At the center of the mural is the canal. According to history, water brought settlers to what is now central Peoria. Agriculture, livestock, cotton, roses, and railroads followed, and the community began to grow and thrive. On the mural's lower portion, in the center of the mural is a depiction of the original Peoria brand, PAZ. This was used on livestock in the community's early days. Perhaps settlers had a hopeful view of the future; in Spanish the word "paz" means peace.

Martinez will utilize the services of several young high school artists to assist in painting the mural. He has relied on this practice in the creation of murals in communities throughout the southwest. "When kids know it's going to be a permanent work of art, they're careful. They take ownership," said Martinez. The director of arts education for Peoria Unified School District will develop criteria for the selection of the student artists.