



**PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
STAFF REPORT**



<b>HEARING DATES</b>	Wednesday November 25, 2015
<b>CASE</b>	Co8-15-04 Major Streets and Scenic Routes Setback Deletion
<b>SUBREGIONS</b>	All
<b>DISTRICTS</b>	All
<b>REQUEST</b>	Proposal by Pima County to amend Chapter 18.77, Roadway Frontage Standards, of the Zoning Code

**STAFF REPORT**

**Recommendation**

Staff recommends **APPROVAL** of the proposed amendment to the Zoning Code.

Staff proposes to amend setback requirements for major streets and scenic routes in Pima County Zoning Code Title 18, Chapter 18.77 Roadway Frontage Standards. Specifically, staff proposes to delete the requirement for an additional thirty foot (30') setback for buildings or structures located along major streets and scenic routes. The zoning code requires that all buildings or structures located along major streets and scenic routes be setback an extra thirty feet in addition to half of the required right-of-way width as designated on the Major Streets and Scenic Routes plans. This proposed text amendment implements Goal 1, Policy 6 of the Pima County Comprehensive Plan (Pima Prospers) Transportation Element.

**History of Major Street Setback Distances**

In 1951, the Board of Supervisors adopted the Major Streets and Routes Plan as a “framework for future development” which required development to “recognize” and “conform” to the Plan. In 1953, the Board adopted “Standard Street Cross Sections” which established the recommended widths of newly designed roadways. By 1958, the Board acknowledged that many existing buildings and developments or subdivided lands encroached upon the proposed future widths of many major streets. As a result, the Board defined “setback lines” to provide a buffer between buildings and roadways. The setback would be measured from the “approved center line” of the roadway. In 1964, the Board first adopted the requirement of a thirty foot setback from “the nearest right-of-way line” on the Major Streets and Routes Plan. In 1965, the Board changed the setback measurement to the roadway centerline: 80 feet for a collector street, 105 feet for a secondary major street, and 130 feet for a primary major street. In 1980, the Board amended the Zoning Code to require “thirty feet in addition to half of the required

right-of-way width” for all major streets and routes. This requirement has remained in effect until today, thirty-five years later.

### **Benefits and Consequences**

The primary reason for having a Major Streets and Routes Plan (and the 30’ setback requirement) is to avoid or minimize future impacts to property owners who build next to major streets which ultimately become widened. However, not all county roadways need to be or can be widened to four or six lanes. In many cases, a two-lane or three-lane collector roadway is appropriate and will be sufficient to accommodate anticipated future traffic. These may be low-density areas that are essentially built-out and fully developed where traffic volumes remain relatively low. In other areas, there are too many properties that would be impacted if the roadway were widened to four or six lanes.

In many cases 150-feet of right-of-way has been acquired or set aside for future roadway widening that never occurred nor is expected to occur. Unfortunately, this has resulted in undeveloped and even blighted roadsides that have become vacant lots. This is an inefficient use of an increasingly valuable land resource and a lost opportunity for some developers and homeowners who might otherwise use these areas for parking, landscaping, or other purposes.

With the recent adoption of the comprehensive plan Pima Prospers, the Board adopted a new Major Streets Plan which downsized many, but not all, arterial streets to more appropriate widths based on updated population, employment and traffic data. Staff indicated during this update that the intent was to also eliminate the 30’ additional setback requirement. Staff believes that the current Major Streets Plan, along with typical zoning setback requirements, are sufficient to plan for future roadway development.

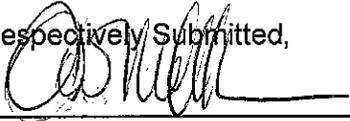
The following reasons summarize why the 30’ setback should be eliminated:

1. The recently revised Major Streets Plan establishes adequate right-of-way for future roadway improvements;
2. Zoning setbacks and buffer yard requirements - as required for any land development - provide additional setbacks along major roadways;
3. Excess right-of-way along roadways creates areas that require costly maintenance and upkeep to avoid becoming blighted landscapes;
4. More open and wider roadways may encourage faster driving than what is legally posted or safe. Some studies have shown that narrower roadways with more buildings, trees, and other roadside development may result in slower driving speeds;
5. The additional 30’ setback could be used for parking, landscaping, or other purposes beside vacant use.

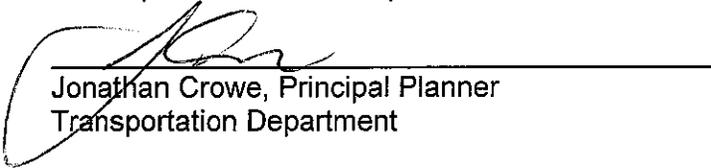
### **Public Comment**

Staff has not received any comments on this proposed zoning code amendment.

Respectively Submitted,



Arian Colton, Planning Director  
Development Services Department



Jonathan Crowe, Principal Planner  
Transportation Department

ORDINANCE 2015-

AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF PIMA COUNTY, ARIZONA, RELATING TO ZONING; AMENDING THE PIMA COUNTY CODE BY AMENDING CHAPTER 18.77 (ROADWAY FRONTAGE STANDARDS); TO REPEAL THE REQUIREMENT FOR AN ADDITIONAL THIRTY FOOT (30') SETBACK FOR MAJOR STREETS AND SCENIC ROUTES, AS DESIGNATED ON THE MAJOR STREETS AND SCENIC ROUTES PLAN (CO14-14-02).

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF PIMA COUNTY, ARIZONA FINDS THAT:

1. The Planning and Zoning Commission, at its October 28, 2015 hearing, initiated and authorized staff to amend the Pima County Code.
2. The Pima County Comprehensive Plan (Pima Prospers) Transportation Element Goal 1, Policy 6 calls for deletion or reduction of the 30 foot setback.
3. Pima Prospers was approved by the Board of Supervisors on May 19, 2015 and a resolution adopting the plan was approved by the Board on August 17, 2015.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF PIMA COUNTY, ARIZONA:

Section 1. Pima County Code Chapter 18.77, Section 18.77.030 is amended to repeal the requirement for a thirty foot additional setback as follows:

18.77.030 Setback Lines for Streets

...

B. Setback Lines in general:

1. All buildings or structures or any part of such buildings or structures, except signs (as defined in Section 18.79.020, Sign Standards), shall have setback requirements of ~~thirty feet in addition to~~ half the required right-of-way width for all Major Streets and Routes as designated on the Major Streets and Scenic Routes Plan, as it may be amended and supplemented.

...

Section 2. Pima County Code Chapter 18.77, Section 18.77.040 is amended to repeal the thirty foot additional setback as follows:

18.77.40 Scenic Routes

...

E. Development Standards

...

2. Setback:

a. All buildings or structures or any part of such buildings or structures shall have setback requirements of ~~thirty feet in addition to~~ half of the required future right-of-way width according to the Major Streets and Scenic Routes Plan, as it may be amended and supplemented.

...

Section 3. That this ordinance is effective 31 days after its adoption.

Passed and adopted by the Board of Supervisors of Pima County, Arizona, on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2016.

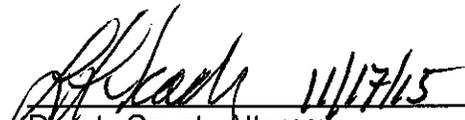
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair, Pima County Board of Supervisors

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk, Board of Supervisors

Approved As To Form:

Approved:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy County Attorney  
Lesley M. Lukach

\_\_\_\_\_  
Executive Secretary  
Planning and Zoning Commission

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