



GRANT ROAD CORRIDOR PLANNING TASK FORCE

THURSDAY, April 26, 2018, at 5:30 p.m.

Donna R. Liggins Recreation Center

2160 North 6th Avenue

Tucson, Arizona 85705

Legal Action Report & Meeting Summary

[Note: This document was prepared using flip chart notes taken by the facilitator during meeting and an audio recording of meeting. The primary focus of this meeting was for updates on Phases 2, 3&4 and 5&6.]

1. Welcome & Call to Order

Nanci Beizer Fink, acting as the meeting facilitator, called the meeting to order shortly after 5:30 p.m. A quorum was established.

Citizen Task Force Members

Present		Absent
Deirdre Brosnihan	Beverly Rutter	John Anderson
Dale Calvert	Linda Marie Small	Shannon McBride-Olson
Roy Garcia	David Sunderman	Robert Tait
Jim Hogan	John Wakefield	
Andrew Jones	Joe Moon Yee	
Alice Roe		

The Task Force and the Project Team members introduced themselves. Project Team members present included:

- Robin Raine, COT, Tucson Department of Transportation (TDOT)
- Shellie Ginn, COT, Tucson Department of Transportation (TDOT)
- David Burbank, COT, Tucson Department of Transportation (TDOT)
- Dorothy Weiderman, COT, Real Estate Division
- Jim DeGrood, RTA
- Ricardo Pargas, HDR
- Britton Dornquast, MainStreet

Note: For this item discussion was held, but no action taken.

2. Agenda Overview

Note: For this item no discussion was held, but no action was taken.

Facilitator, Nanci Beizer Fink, went over each agenda item.

3. Grant Road Phase 2 Overview

Note: For this item discussion was held, but no action taken. The PowerPoint presentation, can be found at www.grantrroad.info/pdf/Grant_Road_Task_Force_Presentation__042618_PDF.pdf

Overview of Phase 2

David Burbank, TDOT Project Manager, reviewed the status of construction for Phase 2.

Overview of south side of Grant Road

Mr. Burbank discussed the construction progress on the south side of Grant Road. He mentioned water line work is almost completed and there is still driveway and landscaping work.

Overview of north side of Grant Road

Mr. Burbank discussed the work that is occurring: trash service is going to return to the alley as it was prior to Phase 2 project; working on curbs, sidewalks and driveways.

Task Force Questions and Comments

Task Force member Jim Hogan asked why the landscaping would not look like Phase 1. - "Under the impression the length of the project that, Phase 2 landscaping would look like Phase 1" and that he is "disappointed how it looks; seems trees are less mature, smaller."

City Staff David Burbank noted that the landscape is fresh and new and would grow to look like Phase 1 landscape and "the plan" is for it to look like that eventually.

Task Force member Roy Garcia asked for more detail regarding the detention basin and amenities.

City Staff David Burbank explained that there are 4 inches of stabilized decomposed granite that goes on top of the path and some resin asphalt paving will be put on the west end of the detention basin.

Task Force member Jim Hogan asked if the bid awarded to this project was over or under.

City Staff David Burbank answered that the bid was 10% under the project cost estimate.

4. Requested Discussion per Task Force of Phases 3&4 and 5&6

Note: For this item discussion was held, but no action taken. The PowerPoint presentation, can be found at www.grantrroad.info/pdf/Grant_Road_Task_Force_Presentation__042618_PDF.pdf

4a. Project Schedule

Note: For this item discussion was held, but no action taken. The PowerPoint presentation, can be found at www.grantroad.info/pdf/Grant_Road_Task_Force_Presentation__042618_PDF.pdf

Robin Raine, TDOT, reviewed the project schedule of the Grant Road Improvement Plan and discussed utility clearance in Phases 3&4 and 5&6; the construction periods; and discussed the estimated construction costs for these phases.

Task Force Questions and Comments

Task Force member Jim Hogan asked why none of the property owners were notified when the schedule changed from 2021 to 2023? Property owners affected should have been notified immediately. Can something be done about this now?

City Staff Robin Raine apologized for not getting any sort of notice out and said something would be sent out this week. Mentioned that they will do better in the future. Explained how Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) works and that the fiscal year starts in July 2022.

Task Force member Roy Garcia mentioned that Phase 2 ends in September and according to the schedule and asked if nothing is going to happen in 2 years.

City Staff Robin Raine Right of Way, (ROW) acquisitions and utilities will be started; acquisitions and right of ways will commence.

Task Force member Roy Garcia mentioned concern about several problems with the vacant properties—have to call Tucson Police Department to check them out on a regular basis and they are having an adverse impact on the neighborhoods. These calls impact Tucson Police Department (TPD) manning and are less of a priority due to TPD manpower shortages. Also, after buildings are demolished, there are dust/dirt issues in the area.

City Staff Robin Raine responded that first they need to see if the properties are inhabitable, if they can be fixed and if not, they will be demolished. She anticipates that demolishing these properties will be done in about 3 weeks to one month and said they are aware of the issues that are occurring. They will demolish “the right way.”

Task Force member John Wakefield inquired about the Fry’s that was shut down on Grant and said, that Corridor project was the reason they shut down. A member said that they cannot sell their homes or businesses and this project is “life changing” for their neighborhood.

City Staff Robin Raine Cannot discuss the Fry’s location. She mentioned that “we will do better” in getting information out to the area.

Task Force member David Sunderman stated his understanding is that Phase 2 didn’t start because utilities changed the dates and wanted to know if the City has any control over contractors, any recourse if they don’t meet schedule? He asked if this happened in the past and stated that this needs to be addressed.

City Staff Robin Raine Utility company says they will complete the work on certain days, but then they change the dates. It is something to be addressed.

Task Force member Beverly Rutter stated that they do not like the feeling of “not knowing what’s happening”. The project does a good job putting information on the website; however, not everyone goes online three times a week to see what the website says. Businesses and residences would prefer a printed notification in the mailbox whenever there is a change.

City Staff Robin Raine said they will work on it.

Task Force member Jim Hoqan asked about the time frame for south and north side acquisitions for Phases 3&4. Is there an ending time frame and when is 90% design to be expected?

City Staff Robin Raine answered that they are at 60% design for Phase 3&4 and once they are at 90%-100%, they will know more; partial acquisitions for this phase will be before funding is over in 2021. 90% design plan is anticipated in August 2018. Also mentioned that every owner who has an interest can contact them directly and meet with the City.

Task force member Jim Hoqan noted that property owners should have input between 60% and 90% design.

City Staff Robin Raine stated the City will meet individually with every property owner who has an interest and that they will put this in the notification to property owners that will go out about schedule change.

Task Force member Dierdre Brosnihan asked about other 2021 upcoming/other occurring projects dollars are.

City Staff Robin Raine said that it will be talked about in the next slides regarding project costs.

Task Force member Andrew Jones commented that the schedule for 5&6 devalues living and work for property owners and residents and asked for some sort of “security” that ensures and/or accelerates Phase 5&6. Would go “a long way” with the business owners and neighborhoods. He discussed the big problem with the vacant building and that “people are hanging out doing bad things.”

City Staff Robin Raine answered that they can look at accelerations of design of Phases 5&6; ROW acquisitions-2021.

Task Force member Dale Calvert asked whether the construction would start in 2023 for Phase 3&4, referred to the fiscal year and whether construction would start in July 2022?

City Staff Robin Raine answered, “Yes.” -Phases 3&4 will be done with design next calendar year and hope to be done with ROW acquisitions in July 2021.

Task Force member Linda Marie Small asked when the design and acquisitions in Phase 5&6 would begin and how they will be funded? The Phase 5&6 road is currently in poor condition. Can anything be done?

City Staff Robin Raine answered that they if they start design early— it would be perhaps in 2021 fiscal year (middle of 2020 calendar year), but worst case scenario, design would start in 2023 and it would take about 2 years and add another year for utility relocation. Beyond 2022, we don't have an understanding of the funds available and as each year goes by, we understand it better. Discussions are held with the RTA on cash flow and the current estimates, so we can have a better understanding of when we are able to start the ROW acquisitions and utility relocation.

Task Force member Roy Garcia commented that the current schedule is based on the TIF and requested a schedule of "what staff think will happen,"- not just what the TIP says. Mr. Garcia asked what TDOT's opinion was of the time frame.

City Staff Robin Raine answered that we are not the only jurisdiction in Pima County, Marana and Sahuarita also have ongoing projects. It is a constant "balancing act" of when various monies would be available for various projects. Commented that they have no certainty of funding at this point so they would hate to publish something that is based on an assumption that funding could possibly be available. Would rather publish something with more certainty.

Task Force member Jim Hogan asked about road conditions east of Columbus to Swan and the repaving status. He also asked about the drainage issue as this block area is not considered part of Phases 3&4.

Design Engineer Ricardo Pargas said that this area is not in conjunction with this project, as it was a separate project that Psomas worked on. TDOT administered the construction project that was addressing drainage issues

4b. RTA Roadway Projects: Budget/Funding Requirements

Note: For this item discussion was held, but no action taken. The PowerPoint presentation can be found here: www.grantroad.info/pdf/Grant_Road_Task_Force_Presentation__042618_PDF.pdf

Mr. DeGroot, RTA, began by addressing the funding requirements and TIP and said that the RTA is "making promises to deliver." Developments are updated every 2 years and the process will begin again this summer. Mr. DeGroot talked about the top 18 projects in the TIP, and Grant Road is #18, which is the project with the most money.

Task Force Questions and Observations:

Task Force member John Wakefield asked how this information was relevant to Grant Road and expressed his dislike for the information shared and the time spent on the subject.

RTA Staff Jim DeGroot proceeded to answer that he "prepared for several different questions that the Task Force originally had." Mr. DeGroot apologized if information was not relevant.

Task Force member Moon Joe Yee asked what DIFO stands for?

RTA Staff Jim DeGroot answered that it stands for Development Impact Fees and they are funds that are used for project, sometimes they are state or federal funds.

Task Force member Beverly Rutter said “Too many acronyms. Less verbiage and more building.”

Task Force member Deirdre Brosnihan asked if the City has input on ranking and prioritizing projects. Can the focus be shifted to finish existing projects vs starting new projects and to finding ways to accelerate this project’s completion. She expressed, concern about getting “spread pretty thin” on this project.

City Staff Jim DeGroot answered that they work with jurisdiction representatives and they vote on the projects after they are presented.

Task Force member Jim Hogan If funds have shifted from Grant Road to other projects? Who advocates for Grant Road on the RTA? If RTA funding goes through fiscal 2026 (mid 2026), what are the possibilities if the project is not completed by then. He indicated he was told by someone at the City that there was a good chance it won’t be completed. He also stated that he was not aware of “pay as you go.”

RTA Staff Jim DeGroot answered that no project received a significant increase in funding at the expense of Grant Road. He also answered that Mayor Rothschild and everyone has been very supportive of this plan; that RTA goes through Fiscal 2026 (mid 2026). He said that he recognized that Grant Road is the largest project in the RTA; and on reference if it is going to get done, he stated “I can’t guarantee it, but I do think it will get done.”

4c. Phases 3&4 Design Update

For this item discussion was held, but no action taken. The PowerPoint presentation can be found www.grantrroad.info/pdf/Grant_Road_Task_Force_Presentation__042618_PDF.pdf

David Burbank, Project Manager TDOT, began the section by mentioning that they are starting to move from 60% to 90%, where they look at more detail. Mentioned that they want to minimize impacts on homes and buildings.

Ricardo Pargas, Design Engineer with HDR, began talking about some changes that have occurred to the plans-when compared to the DCR, which are shown in the PowerPoint presentation.

Task Force Questions and Observations

Task Force member Jim Hogan said that “reduction of ROW (right of way) equals savings”; but it also creates problems for property owners; What outreach does the City/RTA make? You just don’t want to pay the money, no one asks the property owners input about sidewalk, buffer or other design changes? Mr. Hogan added, “Maybe you get bonuses for saving money.”

City Staff Robin Raine answered that when they do acquire, they speak directly to the home/business owners so they can talk things through. They encourage property owners to contact and meet with the City to help accommodate what can and can't be done.

Task Force member Jim Hogan indicated that no one has contacted him. He found answers because he hired an attorney. Mr. Hogan also added "nothing is proactive on this project." If the project team is changing plans, let the property owners know.

City Staff Robin Raine said that the Design Concept Report is conservative and as the design gets refined, it gets narrow and sometimes when they reach out to the business/property owners, they decline to meet.

Task Force member Roy Garcia asked if property owners who are no longer getting acquired, due to the changes on the 5-8 ft sidewalks, had been told.

City Staff Robin Raine answered "No", that the DCR shows a conservative plan and as the design is refined, things can get narrow. They do reach out to property owners, but sometimes the owners decline on meeting.

Task Force member John Wakefield wanted to know how the City can help the Tucson Botanical Gardens, extend to the north - in getting the old Fry's building. He added that this would align with and add to the Grant Road Vision, Community Character and Vitality.

City Staff Robin Raine answered that the City Council is discussing this, but it's not something TDOT can assist in.

Task Force member Deirdre Brosnihan commented that drainage is a big issue in her midtown neighborhood.

City Staff Robin Raine answered that there is no additional funding for drainage.

Task Force member Linda Marie Smalls asked if the City can speak to Zoning for the south side of Grant Road and the most efficient/effective zoning. Asked what the most efficient/effective zoning is.

Design Engineer Ricardo Parqas said that there is not extra funding for additional drainage. He asked the person with the zoning question to "please send it in writing, as I do not know."

Task Force member Beverly Rutter asked if the City still has the original drawing/vision of this project.

Design Engineer Ricardo Parqas answered "Yes."

Task Force member Andrew Jones commented Phases 3&4 is turning into corridor light. He appreciates keeping homes and businesses intact, but people leaving the area because of drug problems; Grant Road is crumbling-the area is turning into "utter shambles." If business and property owners receive news on Phases 3&4, they might stay.

5. Call to the Audience

Note: For this item no discussion was held, but no action was taken.

Laura Greenberg Ward 6: This is her first meeting. She lives in Phases 5&6 area and the Grant Road project is going to destroy her neighborhood. She would like any legal advice/course, as she needs help. Would like to have a buffer/wall. She called the City and they said that there is no additional money for a wall. Business can relocate, but she cannot, as it is her home. Thinks the real problem is on Campbell, not Grant. Asked if anyone downtown is really affected by this expansion.

6. Next Steps

Note: For this item no discussion was held, but no action was taken.

The facilitator spoke about the next steps that the Task Force would take at the next meeting—Task Force membership and Discussion of Resolution-Position of Chair/Vice Chair.

7. Task Force Round Table

Note: For this item discussion was held, but no action taken.

Linda Smalls/TF: Pass

Alice Roe/TF: Grant Road “light” has forgotten about pedestrians—very narrow sidewalks—if 5ft sidewalk and no buffer, we are right back where we were, concerned about a better pedestrian environment. Also concerned about Phases 5&6 and blight; Sam Fox did something to revitalize the area. Need redevelopment.

Moon Joe Yee/TF: Helpful to be made aware of problems, hopes that the City actually has the funding to complete this project. The Fry’s closure and the roadway construction in progress has created a problem. Once a neighborhood gets a negative reputation, that negative perception is hard to rejuvenate. Hope those with money will do their magic and push this along.

Beverly Rutter: Support staff—thank you for giving us the information. Do you all do a lot of different projects or Grant Road only?

City Staff David Burbank, Robin Raine answered that they do work on several other projects.

Deirdre Brosnihan/TF: Thanks to staff for coming and talking about design. We need to find a way to expedite Phases 3&4 and Phases 5&6 (I live there). Storm water is a future issue and missed opportunity, but so is the funding—dilapidated parcels could be opportunities for more green space and relief from flooding.

John Wakefield: Want to express my thanks to the City. Asked for an early buy-out and I got a good price for my building. The extension to 2026 would be more difficult. Was given fairly generous amount for moving and reestablishing. Uncertainty is tough. If you want advice, talk to me.

Jim Hogan/TF: I have angst. My business is one block east of Alvernon on the north side of the street. SAVI next door is vacant, Fry's is vacant. I'm concerned about safety, people partying in the parking lot. Had to hire two private security guards for night classes. So the number of projects City-wide, not just Grant or Broadway, are causing blight. Focus on fewer projects. Enable property owners to manage their businesses and their lives. Has been on this Task Force for twelve years and there have been many changes in the staff. Interim positions are filled with someone new who does not have the history of Grant Road. Would like to see this project run like a business, more efficiently.

Dale Calvert/TF: It is a reality, people do come and go with the City, that's just how it is. I know they are doing a national search for Robin's position. These issues are difficult in all transportation projects.

Roy Garcia/TF: Thank you staff, we can get brutal at these meetings. If and when changes come about, for example design changes, delayed schedules, please communicate better to those impacted and at a better rate.

Andrew Jones/TF: When will we discuss next steps/task force responsibilities? The City has said we don't need chair or vice chair. When is our next meeting? We need to sit down and discuss next steps of design for Phases 3&4, before they start buying amenities. Please don't buy benches we don't want. Can we see phases 3&4 before it is released to the public so that we have input? Would like the next Task Force meeting ASAP.

David Sundermand/TF: Everything that I wanted to say has been said. Pass.

8. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at approx. 7:40 p.m.