

GRANT ROAD IMPROVEMENT PLAN TASK FORCE

February 19, 2008

MEETING RESULTS

MEETING TOPIC

Finalize the Grant Road Vision Statement and Guiding Principles.

PRESENTATION

- Report on public input received regarding the Vision Statement & Guiding Principles provided to the Task Force.

WORK SESSION

- Task Force members reviewed and adopted the Vision Statement for the Grant Road Improvement Plan. (Final version attached, page 3)
- Task Force members reviewed, refined and adopted the Guiding Principles for the Grant Road Improvement Plan. (Final version attached pages 3-6).

PRESENTATION

- Report on the results of the Character Segment Workshops. *Note: Power Point presentation to be posted on website.*

NEXT STEPS

- The consultant team will develop concepts reflecting the values embodied in the Vision Statement and Guiding Principles, as well as information gleaned from the first round of Character Segment Workshops. These concepts will be presented for consideration during the second round of Character Segment Workshops, tentatively scheduled to take place in mid-April.
- The tentative timeline for future Task Force meetings is as follows:
 - Week of May 19—Report out on results of Round 2 Character Segment Workshops
 - Week of July 7—All day work session to provide input to consultants on initial concepts
 - Week of August 11—Refine concepts that will be presented at a public open house and posted on the website for public review.
- Facilitator will poll Task Force members regarding their availability on potential meeting dates to what dates will offer the greatest potential for attendance.

CALL TO THE AUDIENCE

- Andrew Rutter spoke briefly and handed out a letter to Task Force members (see attached, page 7)

TASK FORCE PARTICIPANTS

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Draft Vision Statement and Guiding Principles next page

Final Vision Statement & Guiding Principles

February 19, 2008

Vision Statement

The improvements resulting from the Grant Road Improvement Plan will enhance safety and balance mobility and accessibility for all users including motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and those with disabilities. The Plan will direct the widening of Grant Road to six lanes, also improving its function as an urban arterial street within Tucson's network of streets. The Plan will balance the needs of those traveling through the area on Grant Road with those who live, work, and shop along Grant Road.

The community values the scale, character, and diversity of the neighborhoods and businesses along Grant Road and the Plan will reflect these values. The Plan will recognize the diversity of residents and independent businesses along Grant Road, and will help them to revitalize the places in which they live and work.

The Plan will strive to improve the visual character and quality of Grant Road and the land uses along it, and it will define Grant Road as a unique and vital place that ultimately enhances the community and region as a whole.

The Grant Road planning process and its implementation will balance a long range vision with the definition of improvements and programs that fit within the financial resources identified for this project. It will be forward-thinking in its design, consider likely future trends and work to effect positive change to the environment and public health. It will set high standards for community involvement while providing an inspirational model for future Tucson roadway enhancements.

Guiding Principles

1. Mobility and Access

Mobility and Access mean moving along and connecting with uses on Grant Road — both for people living and working nearby and those passing through; both freeing up motion (mobility) and getting to specific destinations (access). Through mobility and access, the Plan will work toward sustainable transportation both for the local community and the Tucson region by doing the following:

- 1.1 Balance the transportation needs of those traveling locally with those passing through Grant Road by:**
 - improving Grant Road's role in Tucson's street network and its role for neighbors;
 - recognizing all populations using Grant Road; and by
 - increasing the efficiency of traffic flow along Grant Road while designing Grant Road and the context along it to encourage drivers to travel at safe speeds.

- 1.2 Improve mobility and safety for all those traveling along and across Grant Road, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and those with disabilities, by:**
 - recognizing that Grant Road is not the exclusive domain of cars;
 - improving access for all modes of travel to neighborhoods, commercial districts, schools (including the University and community colleges), and other destinations;

- improving the physical conditions of the roadway, and the pedestrian and bicycle environments along and crossing Grant Road and on connecting streets;
- improving transit stops and access to them as well as considering the land uses around them; and by
- considering land use and other needs of transit, bicycle, and walking dependent populations.

1.3 Balance mobility along and across Grant Road with access to businesses, residences, and other destinations along and nearby Grant Road by:

- providing safe vehicular access to properties on Grant Road;
- facilitating regional access to businesses (including deliveries) that avoids cut-through traffic impacts to adjacent neighborhoods; and,
- improving neighborhood access to businesses and other destinations by providing quality connections for all users.

1.4 Ensure that roadway improvements support and enhance the community’s values regarding the character, vitality, aesthetics, and environment of Grant Road by:

- Recognizing that different sections of Grant Road may require a different balance of mobility and access

1.5 Provide the potential for future transit options, such as bus rapid transit, modern streetcar, light rail, or other high-capacity transit in the design of Grant Road improvements with the goal of minimizing future costs for construction and right-of-way acquisition.

2. Character and Vitality

Character and Vitality mean the health of the places surrounding Grant Road — neighborhoods and businesses, public space and activity, and private investment. Character and Vitality define the overarching goals for aspects of the study area such as housing, neighborhoods, employment, and public space. Through character and vitality, the Plan will work to enhance, in a fair manner, the economic and social environment of neighborhoods and districts by doing the following:

2.1 Preserve and enhance the scale and character of existing residential neighborhoods by providing appropriate transitions and buffering from Grant Road and the uses fronting onto it to the neighborhoods behind.

2.2 Support opportunities for a range of options for housing tenancy and housing type, which serve and expand upon the diversity of residents who live along and nearby Grant Road.

2.3 Support the viability of small, local, and independent businesses.

2.4 Preserve and enhance opportunities for a range of employment along Grant Road, including restaurants, retail, manufacturing, construction, repair, service, professional office and medical jobs.

2.5 Create a cohesive public realm that adds new public spaces to existing parks, plazas, schools and other community gathering places; forming an accessible network that supports

and is supported by the design and function of Grant Road, and the neighborhoods and businesses along it.

- 2.6 **Build on the attraction and strengths of community and social service organizations** to revitalize districts and enhance the public realm with activity along Grant Road.
- 2.7 **Develop districts with multiple uses and shared parking** that will be destinations for neighborhood residents as well as people from the region at large.
- 2.8 **Recognize the differences in demographics, environment, scale, neighborhoods, business types, and other aspects of character;** and use them to reinforce the identities of Grant Road's Community Character Segments.
- 2.9 **Work to create safer environments that discourage crime** and increase personal safety.
- 2.10 **Support and build upon ethnic diversity** in relation to the social and economic vitality in the Grant Road Study Area.
- 2.11 **Encourage private investment** that revitalizes opportunity sites along Grant Road.

3. Aesthetics and Environment

Aesthetics and Environment build upon the principles set out in Character and Vitality by focusing on the details of key issues such as climate, utilities, views and the watershed. Through aesthetics and environment, the Plan will work toward human and ecological sustainability of Grant Road and the neighborhoods and districts along it to the benefit of those in the Study Area and the greater Tucson region by doing the following:

- 3.1 **Create an aesthetically pleasing, comfortable, inviting environment,** both in the street right-of-way and in adjacent public spaces, that is framed by the buildings and landscapes that front Grant Road.
- 3.2 **Enhance the identities** of Grant Road's Community Character Segments through the creation of business clusters, streetscape design, and other elements.
- 3.3 **Capitalize on Grant Road's natural environment and regional scenery** through climate adaptation, utilization of desert plants (especially those native to the Tucson basin), topography, key views and the integration of aesthetic and environmental design.
- 3.4 **Capitalize on Tucson's culture,** through urban form, architectural styles, public art, and other elements.
- 3.5 **Mitigate utility issues** including overhead wires, to the extent financially feasible.
- 3.6 **Mitigate watershed issues** such as flooding, storm water runoff, ecological health and water harvesting in a holistic manner.

- 3.7 Mitigate noise impacts** of traffic on Grant Road utilizing a range of techniques that are appropriate to the surrounding context.

4. Vision and Implementation

Vision and Implementation mean making the vision for Grant Road's future a reality. Through vision and implementation, in a fair manner, the Plan will work incrementally towards long-term sustainability in transportation, economy, livability and ecology by doing the following:

- 4.1 Define a long-range vision as well as priorities** that can be achieved within the budget and timing of the Grant Road Improvement Plan.
- 4.2 Define cost-efficient and effective phases** for successful implementation.
- 4.3 Protect the viability of businesses during construction** by maintaining their visibility, their parking, and access to them.
- 4.4 Provide information and technical assistance to residential and business property owners** directly impacted by the Grant Road Plan.
- 4.5 Define the improvements so that the vision can be achieved incrementally** with both the RTA funding base and additional public and private funding to enhance the improvements.
- Identify and give priority to the implementation of those improvements that provide the most benefit and that address those issues that are a priority concern to the public.
 - Identify and pursue additional sources of funding early in the process to ensure that the desired improvements can be implemented.
- 4.6 Rely on policies and programs** in addition to physical improvements in achieving the vision.
- 4.7 Coordinate new development and revitalization with new and existing amenities and multimodal infrastructure.**

Comment received from the public during the call to audience at the
February 19th, 2008
Grant Road Improvement Plan Task Force Meeting

1

February 2008

To: The Grant Road Improvement Plan Task Force under the auspices of the Regional Transportation Authority

The following are opinions based, however, on having served for two years on the Grant Road/Campbell Avenue Citizen Advisory Committee for the widening of Campbell Avenue from Elm Street to Grant Road.

You have been selected for the Task Force not for any expertise you may have but rather primarily on a perception that you are amenable to compromise and open to persuasion. In the oncoming months, you will be dined but not wined. The city and county employees whom you will be dealing with are knowledgeable, affable and smart. They are experienced; you are not. They will have an answer and/or obfuscation for every point or question raised.

What then, will the Task Force be able to decide? If shrubbery is involved, you may determine the type. If decoration of sound walls or barriers is required, you may so determine, but you will have no say about the height or location. On the most important aspects of the widening of Grant Road, the alignment, you will have input but no control whatsoever. Members of the Task Force have been told that the alignment for the widening has not been determined. This is a canard at best and an outright fabrication at worst. The city has planned for years on making Grant Road six lanes. They know exactly where they want it to go, and what they want, they know how to get. As an example:

For many years the shakers and movers in transportation planned on a GSI (grade separated interchange) with Grant Road going under Campbell Avenue. They had—and have—a \$75,000 model of the interchange that they are extremely proud of. They trundled the poor thing all over town at every opportunity. The only problem was that the voters wouldn't buy it. They also wouldn't buy a tunnel under Speedway from Campbell to Park, but it was worth a try. City voters wouldn't buy the various street "improvements," so they brought in the county. County people like to buzz into the city and buzz right back out again, so widening city streets was a fetching idea. While 15 mph. is standard in the Foothills, it is slightly more than that in town. The GSI model has disappeared from view, but no doubt still lurks in the undercroft of the bureaucracy voraciously waiting for a fix of public funding. Grant Road at Campbell has been widened twice since our moving into the neighborhood. It is not enough. It never is.

The transportation bureaucrats and suited types want few things but they are focused on them. Neighbors and neighborhoods are not focused; they want many things, and while their ideas and wants and suggestions will be duly written down innumerable times, they can be safely ignored. Neighborhoods can be turned against neighborhoods. Catalina

Vista denizens are adamant that the houses on Grant be preserved to remain as a buffer. Citizens living on the north side are less adamant.

There have been several suggestions that it is time to put the power lines underground. They have been dismissed by simply saying that it can't be done. Of course, it can be done, but like citizen committees, it is a nuisance they don't want to deal with. Eventually, of course, the power lines will have to go underground where God intended them, and then the city will have the splendid opportunity to dig up the streets and fill them back in again. No country with a literacy rate above three percent considers putting wires on top of 40 foot dead trees progress. Until power lines are buried, Tucson will always look like a hick town.

At times you will be quoted specifications. These specifications will meet American city, county, state, federal and Bantu regulations. One word will be left out: Minimum. There is no economic incentive to build better than the minimum required. Thus, as with many government-required specifications, the minimum and the maximum become the same.

If the committee will look at the large expensive maps laid out for your perusal, note that the city has planned "UPSCALE SHOPPES" at Grant and Campbell. Gosh! Sounds so good! The fact that there are no "upscale shops" south of the Rillito doesn't faze our planners who can hood and wink with the best of them. Draper's & Damon's between Upper Crust Pizza, Old Towne Tattoo and the Tux Rental. We can hardly wait. Most Tucsonans are aware City Planning and Zoning has never heard of Transportation, nor has Transportation ever heard of, much less coordinated with, Planning and who? What? Hello?

Is Tucson the only city in the country to widen a five mile or so section of a primarily business oriented street? Surely similar work has been undertaken and from it, lessons learned. Has the RTA investigated the probabilities of such construction or must the wheel and the starting of fires be reinvented with each new project? An evaluation of similar projects in other cities might give some indication of the effect on business, the time frame involved, how neighborhoods responded and the specifics on traffic flow. Is this too much to ask? It may well be.

Has a neutral party done a cost/benefit analysis of the Grant Road widening? If not, why not? If so, where is it?

The purpose of the Task Force is to arrive at a consensus by giving citizen approval to whatever the transportation people have in mind. Bureaucrats are well aware that they will still be in place when the present elected officials are in rocking chairs stroking their cats. Like the spy in a John Le Carré novel, you will be turned and consensus will be achieved.

In my less cynical days, I hope I am wrong. Give Jane Jacobs' classic study, "The Death and Life of Great American Cities" a try.

Andrew Rutter

