

GRANT ROAD IMPROVEMENT PLAN TASK FORCE

October 18 & 19, 2007

MEETING RESULTS

MEETING TOPIC

Begin development of a draft Vision Statement and Guiding Principles for the Grant Road Improvement Project.

OCTOBER 18TH SESSION

PRESENTATIONS

Background presentations included the following topics:

- What we've heard from the community to date
- Task Force impressions
- Technical Assessment Summary

WORK SESSION

Task Force members broke up into small groups to discuss the following:

- Experiences related to the assessment of the Study Area.
- Key issues and themes of the existing conditions and potentials of the area.
- Priorities for preservation, enhancement, and change.

Major Themes from Task Force discussions

Following is a summary of the key themes that came out of the interactive work session.

Character and Vitality

- Preserve and enhance the scale and character of existing residential neighborhoods.
- Preserve and enhance existing valued retail and services.
- Create opportunities for civic/community gathering places and enhance those that exist.
- Encourage and create opportunities for investment to support the vitality of residential neighborhoods, mixed use districts, and business clusters.
- Maintain affordability and opportunities for small businesses.
- Support opportunities for a diversity of housing choices.
- Work to reduce crime and provide economic opportunity.
- Support and build upon ethnic diversity.

Aesthetics and Environment

- Improve the aesthetics of Grant Road and its surroundings to improve safety and reinforce the unique character of places and segments.
- Address utility issues - overhead wires and areas that flood
- Create new community open spaces, facilities, and other amenities.
- Incorporate environmental sustainability.

Mobility and Access

- Balance the transportation needs of those traveling locally with those passing through Grant Road by enhancing roadway efficiency.
- Improve mobility and safety for alternate modes, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders, as well as those with disabilities.
- Balance mobility along and across Grant Road with access to businesses and residences along Grant Road.
- Balance access to neighborhoods with the desire to protect them from cut through traffic.
- Ensure that roadway improvements support and enhance the community's values regarding the character, vitality, aesthetics, and environment of Grant Road.

Vision and Implementation

- Define a long range vision as well as priorities that can be achieved within the budget and timing of the Grant Road Improvement Plan.

CALL TO THE AUDIENCE

Citizen letter from Ruth Stokes read aloud. (see attached)

TASK FORCE PARTICIPANTS

P. Wayne Cullop
Barbara Bird
James Hogan
Judith Anderson
Sarah Evans
Roy Garcia
Alice Roe
Beverly Rutter
Marshall Shultis
Mike Humphrey
Moon Joe Yee
Jamey Sumner
Robert Tait
Tom Bush
Fletcher Sliker

UNABLE TO ATTEND

Nancy Laney
Michael Midkiff

OCTOBER 19TH SESSION

BUS TOUR

Task Force and Planning Team members took a guided bus tour through the Grant Road Improvement Project Study Area.

WORK SESSION

Task Force members began developing a draft Vision Statement and Guiding Principles for the Grant Road Improvement Plan. Work will continue on the draft through the next Task Force meeting. The following statement reflects initial thoughts on the draft Vision Statement.

- ❖ “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, improving its function as an urban arterial roadway within Tucson’s network of streets.
- ❖ The community values the scale, character, and diversity of the neighborhoods and businesses along Grant Road. The Plan will support the unique and diverse mix of neighborhoods and businesses along and adjacent to Grant Road.
- ❖ The visual character and quality of Grant Road will be improved, and it will define Grant Road as a unique and vital place that ultimately enhances the community 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 fiscal resources identified for this project.”

UNRESOLVED:

- Whether or not a reference to budget or fiscal resources should be part of the Vision Statement or moved to the Guiding Principles.
- Final wording for the Draft Vision Statement
- Development of Draft Guiding Principles

NEXT STEPS

- In preparation for the next Task Force meeting:
 - The consultant team will take the rough Draft Vision Statement completed at the meeting, clean it up and offer alternatives for clarity, inspiration and the handling of the fiscal issue that remained unresolved.
 - The consultant team will take the results of the October 18th work session and develop some potential Draft Guiding Principles as a starting point for Task Force discussion.
 - Task Force members agreed to complete a homework assignment that will be designed to capture input on the alternatives provided by the consultant team for Task Force consideration. The advance work will provide the foundation for discussion at the next meeting.

- The consultant team will summarize additional public input received from meetings and surveys through the end of November to inform the development of draft vision and guiding principles at the next meeting.
- The next meeting of the Task Force will be December 6th from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Northwest Neighborhood Center, 2160 N. 6th Ave. The primary purpose of the meeting will be to receive data from public outreach efforts and complete the Draft Vision Statement and Guiding Principles that will go out to the public for input in January.

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Citizen letter Attached next page

CITIZEN LETTER TO THE TASK FORCE

1215 E. Seneca
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To: Lynn Slagle, facilitator Grant Road Improvement Project
From: Ruth Stokes
Re: Task force meetings October 18 and 19, 2007 - please make this part of you official records

Request that the task force recommend to the City and County elective officials that the major intersections on Grant Road be improved with bus turnouts and right-turn-only lanes BEFORE completing the widening to 6 lanes.

I have been involved in urban transportation issues since 1969 and have served on 6 different citizens advisory committees. Three of these – the statewide bikeway, the impact study of the proposed Butterfield Parkway and Tucson Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee concerned transportation issues. My comments are based on this valuable experience.

I realize that neither your committee nor the elective officials can change the RTA mandate to widen Grant to 6 lanes and improve the major intersections. But they can and should schedule improvement of the intersections long before completion of the widening project.

+ Drivers on Grant Road need relief NOW not the years from now that it will take to complete the widening project. I have driven on Grant Road many times during rush hours. The lack of another lane is not what slowed me down. Rather it was being stuck behind a stopped bus (a major aggravation) or behind a driver waiting to make a right turn until pedestrians cross the side street. The Tucson Department of Transportation estimated that doing just the major intersections would be 70% as effective as the full widening. If the DOT is correct, then drivers would get great relief if we did just the intersections long before the widening is completed.

+ Since the RTA has to improve the intersections as part of the widening project, doing them first does not waste money. Note that other areas are getting bus turnouts now. So let's ask that Grant Road be nearer the front of the line for intersection improvement.

+ Since my involvement, the arterial widenings are the first major road projects that have not required complete impact studies and route design before applying for funding. Some responsible planners fear that the RTA won't have enough money to complete all of the promised projects. So let's get the Grant Road intersections done as soon as possible so we can get some relief now.

+ Over 100 Grant Road businesses petitioned the city to consider improving the intersections instead of widening to 6 lanes. Citizens in ward 3 (mine) and ward 6 were NOT represented when the City Council refused to accept the petition and gave the ok to apply for funding without adequate information about cost and impact. Neither the city nor the RTA even considered the intersection option. And the so called citizens input meetings were dominated by the powers that wanted only full widening so we had no chance to focus on improving intersections.

+ The description of plans for the intersections on Grant seem vague. The mayor spoke about fancy lights at intersections. It is expensive to improve intersections so we need to be sure that no corners are cut. The best insurance for getting what we need - bus turnouts, right-turn lanes and other improvements is improving these intersections soon – BEFORE full widening.