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GRANT ROAD CORRIDOR PLANNING TASK FORCE

December 7, 2009

MEETING RESULTS

MEETING TOPICS

- Progress Update
- Mobility, Access and Streetscape Workshops Summary
- Preliminary Roadway Design Update
- Early Intersection Project Update
- Reconstruction Phasing Sequence Preview
- Community Character and Vitality Workshop Preview
- Next Steps

PRESENTATIONS

- Progress Update
- Mobility, Access and Streetscape Workshops Summary
- Preliminary Roadway Design Update
- Early Intersection Project Update
- Reconstruction Phasing Sequence Preview
- Community Character and Vitality Workshop Preview
- Next Steps

DISCUSSION AND WORK SESSION OUTCOMES

Introductory Remarks

Nanci Beizer called the meeting to order and the Task Force acknowledged the passing of Task Force member Marshall Shultis with a poem by Anita Fonte. There were no audience questions or comments at this time. Nanci reviewed the agenda.

Call to the Audience

WARD 3 Staff asked Melissa Antol to read a letter from citizen, Ruth Stokes, addressed to the Task Force regarding adding a right turn lane on Mountain Ave. at Grant Road. The letter was read by facilitator Nanci Beizer. Melissa will respond to Ruth Stokes on behalf of the Grant Road Improvement Project and the Department of Transportation and will copy the Task Force via Nanci on her response. Nanci Beizer asked the Task Force for their approval of the August 21st Meeting Summary.

Progress Update

Melissa Antol presented an update on the activities that had occurred since the August 21st Task Force meeting, including: completion of the November Mobility, Access and Streetscape Workshops; review of 15% plans and cost estimates by City; progress on draft design concept report; on-going Early Intersection Project scoping; progress on reconstruction phasing plan and Community Character and Vitality workshops planned for January.

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Mobility, Access and Streetscape Workshops Summary

Dave Perkins presented a summary of the Mobility, Access and Streetscape Workshops that took place November 16, 18, and 19 including general observations regarding workshop organization, objectives and results. Dave summarized Activity #1, the community influence on mobility and design with a review of purpose: how community input resulted in design concept innovations and how those innovations have been used to address mobility and access concerns. Over 800 comments were received and reviewed. Comments were categorized by: business access, medians, neighborhood access, neighborhood traffic management, transit and multimodal and miscellaneous.

Dave Perkins summarized what was heard at each workshop segment: western segment, central segment, eastern segment. Western segment comments were categorized into business access and miscellaneous. In response to a western segment comment, the Task Force wanted to know if there were studies about the impact of indirect left turns on business. Dave responded that he is aware of studies done on this subject, but that the issue is about educating people about the indirect left turn and business locations. Central segment comments were categorized around transit and multimodal, redevelopment and neighborhood traffic and circulation. Eastern segment comments were categorized by business access, medians, neighborhood traffic management, transit and multimodal.

Dave Perkin's summarized the Mobility, Access and Streetscape Workshops Activity #2- the Nuts and Bolts of Access Management. He reviewed: purpose, access management tools, nuts and bolts of access management and what was heard. Comments were categorized by: access, parking, alleys, business signage, landscape and noise. The Task Force was concerned about the liability and maintenance of shared and cross access driveways and how the City plans to enforce agreements. Dave responded that management of shared access driveways is being coordinated with the City Real Estate Department, who will help design a program that is fair to all users.

The Task Force raised the issue of alley use and Dave indicated Environmental Services are already doing pick ups in the alleys and other alley uses may be suggested. There was some Task Force discussion about how businesses can currently use the City's recycling programs. Dave presented the workshop outcomes for Activity #2: demonstrate continued support for Grant Road Improvement Plan improvements, evaluate each location-specific comment, determine the appropriate response; integrate business signage with streetscape plan; City of Tucson commitments needed for indirect left turn education and outreach, landscape and streetscape maintenance, reconstruction business access, and develop business signage concepts. Task Force members noted paying attention to the long-term view and issues of landscape maintenance and signage. The project team will make recommendations regarding signage taking into consideration both the City Sign Code Committee and policies and the needs of the Grant Road Corridor.

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Phil Erickson summarized the Mobility, Access and Streetscape Workshop Activity #3 purpose: community input on enhancements to innovations that will improve aesthetics, user comfort and function including public art integration. He then overviewed the integration of public art, indirect left turn, and TOUCAN and enhanced transit stops. Over 500 comments were categorized into three major categories: general urban design, landscape and streetscape and public art. Phil reviewed what was heard from each category. General urban design: provide sense of place, provide additional or different pedestrian and transit amenities, make Grant Road interesting for pedestrians, support for concept of centers, create defensible spaces, provide public spaces along Grant Road, concerns about maintenance and durability, and landscape and streetscape. Landscape and streetscape: support landscape concept, concern about landscape concept, use special paving for pedestrians, underground utilities. Public art: bus stops as focal points for art, create functional art, art should be cohesive throughout the corridor, other public art ideas. Phil reviewed Streetscape/Landscape and Public Art Workshop outcomes. In response to a question from the Task Force regarding if there were any comments in Activity #3 relating to people with disabilities, Phil noted a person from the Southern Arizona Association for the Visually Impaired, SAAVI, came to the Mobility, Access and Streetscape Workshop and the team will be following up with him. The Task Force noted the need to add texture to cross walks and make this consistent along the corridor for safety of disabled and visually impaired roadway users.

Dave Perkins presented how the Mobility, Access & Streetscape Workshop results will be used: provide input to the 30% design plans, development of access management guidelines and inform 30% design, and inform the Community, Character and Vitality workshops. It was noted that over 800 comments were collected at the Workshops and the public can continue to comment online on the project website.

Nanci Beizer asked for and received endorsement from the Task Force for posting the workshop summary to the website and Design Team follow-up actions to address comments received at the workshops.

Preliminary Roadway Design Update

Dave Perkins reviewed the Preliminary Roadway Design including 15% design plan review schedule and draft design concept report. The Task Force asked what form of presentation the 15% design plans and the design concept report will be presented to the Task Force in and Dave responded that an aerial based visual (not engineering design) will be provided and posted on the project website. The Task Force suggested a Bicycle Advisory Committee and/or community activity to see the design detail from a bicycle perspective by riding the route and discussing design. Melissa Antol suggested following up with City staff and bringing the issue to the Bicycle Advisory Committee.

Nanci Beizer asked for Task Force feedback on the 15% plan review process, information level of detail to be provided to the Task Force in the 15% plan and draft design concept report and information level of detail to be provided to the public. The Task Force began a discussion regarding the desire and feasibility for undergrounding utilities. Melissa Antol explained funding for the Grant Road Project for moving utilities is not included in the budget. The RTA will not pay for undergrounding. There was discussion on this issue, but since it was not an agenda item, the

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Planning Team agreed to add this to the agenda for the December 16th meeting and report back on this item at that time. The Task Force had the following feedback for the Planning Team:

- Investigate how the Task Force can provide information to the RTA, formally raise a concern and suggest a change in RTA policy and report back at the December 16th Task Force meeting.
- Draft a “white paper” to scope out the feasibility of undergrounding utilities which should include: Arizona Corporation Commission rules for payment, current & projected capital and operating costs for underground utilities, funding sources, schedule, a summary of the history of the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) position: how they came to their current policy position for non-payment of underground utilities, and the impact of current City of Tucson budget cuts.
- Develop a view of Grant Road from a bicyclist’s perspective that would show the design planned for the new roadway. The suggestion was made to hold bicycle tour down Grant Road with the 15% design plans.
- Develop a view of Grant Road from a business perspective that would show the design planned for the new roadway with business signage & access. The Team noted this will be developed in future plans.

Early Intersection Project Update

Dave Perkins presented the Early Intersection Project (EIP) scoping and schedule and public involvement and roll out. Nanci Beizer asked the Task Force for feedback on the Early Intersection Project design scope and schedule, Task Force involvement in EIP design, and level of public involvement in EIP design. The Task Force urged the Planning Team to integrate Task Force recommendations from the Grant Road Improvement Project into the EIP and to ensure communication and coordination with the Oracle Area Revitalization Plan (OARP). The Task Force endorses the Early Intersection Project scoping and schedule and the Early Intersection Project public involvement and roll-out.

Reconstruction Phasing Sequence Preview

Dave Perkins presented a preview of the reconstruction phasing sequence: preview (December 7th meeting) - approach, project limits, project delivery; the planning team recommendation for reconstruction phasing (December 16th meeting) - reconstruction table, recommended reconstruction sequence, Task Force considerations and endorsement. He overviewed the reconstruction planning approach and phasing considerations. Dave reviewed the reconstruction evaluation table and six reconstruction projects: 15th – Castro (Early Intersection Project), Stone – 1st, Campbell/Fremont – Plumer, Country Club/Plumer – Sparkman, Alvernon/Sparkman – Bryant and Swan/Bryant – Arcadia. He presented the RTA funding schedule and overall project delivery components. The Early Intersection Project delivery schedule was reviewed including: final design and contractor bids, right-of-way acquisition and relocation, utility clearance and construction.

Nanci Beizer asked the Task Force for feedback on the proposed approach to reconstruction sequencing, project definitions and project delivery. The Task Force directed the team to proceed.

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Community Character and Vitality Workshop Preview

Phil Erickson previewed the Community, Character and Vitality Workshop schedule including five workshops planned for January: January 20th EIP area Oracle-Stone; January 21st Stone-Park; January 25th Tucson-Palo Verde, January 26th Palo Verde to Swan; January 27th Park-Tucson. He reviewed the workshop format and presented a specific development example illustrating the “chip game” designed to develop a group concept plan and react to and modify concept alternatives. Task Force members were concerned the public might find the workshop activities repetitive as they have already provided input in earlier workshops. Phil explained the January workshops will get into more details than previous Community Character and Vitality Workshops. The January workshops will help set the stage for the Grant Road Land Use Plan. He encouraged the Task Force to invite Neighborhood Association participation and help get the word out.

Nanci Beizer asked the Task Force for feedback on workshop format and number of workshops. The Task Force encouraged the team to ensure workshop facilitators were well-trained and to add a debriefing session for public comment to the workshops.

Next Steps

Melissa Antol reviewed the following next steps: 15% plan review by City in December, draft design concept report to City in January, Community Character and Vitality Workshops in January, TAC and Task Force meetings in February and Public Art and DCR open houses and report to Community in February.

Task Force Roundtable

Nanci Beizer conducted the roundtable and Task Force members had the following comments:

- Consider the long view, the big picture vs individual needs as we design the roadway. Current property owners will come and go, yet the roadway will be there.
- Consider the future of transportation as we create the roadway. Suggest an expert to address the Task Force.
- Ensure PowerPoint slides can be read – two per page
- Staff is doing a great job – thanks!
- Avoid noise walls, consider short segments of walls
- Build utility poles into future design scenarios/illustrations if we cannot eliminate them
- Need a public relations campaign to revitalize area, help with public perception of construction phasing and minimize loss of potential tenants, get the message out “it is ok to stay on Grant Road”
- Capitalize on the City database of properties for lease or sale

Call to the Audience

Nanci Beizer initiated the second call to the audience. There were no audience questions or comments.

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