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GRANT ROAD IMPROVEMENT PLAN TASK FORCE

February 23, 2010

MEETING RESULTS

MEETING TOPICS

- Progress Update
- January Community Character and Vitality Workshops Summary
- Public Art Workshop Summary
- Utility Undergrounding Update
- March Open House Preview
- Next Steps

PRESENTATIONS

- Progress Update
- Community Character and Vitality Workshops Summary and Next Steps
- March Open House Preview
- Utility Undergrounding Update
- Next Steps

DISCUSSION AND WORK SESSION OUTCOMES

Introductory Remarks

Nanci Beizer called the meeting to order, overviewed the agenda and reviewed the Task Force meeting process feedback. She initiated the first call to the audience. Dick Basye addressed the Task Force regarding the indirect left-turn, the re-construction phasing, incorporating the Antique District into land use planning for the project, and the acquisition of property at the corner of Grant Road and Country Club Road. Nanci asked for and received Task Force approval of the December 16th, 2009 draft Task Force Meeting Summary.

Progress Update

Melissa Antol presented an update on the following activities: 15% plans and cost estimate review completed by City, draft design concept report in progress, 30% Early Intersection Project plans completed by Spring 2010, reconstruction phasing plan media briefing completed, Community Character and Vitality Plan workshops completed, Public Art Workshop completed.

Community Character & Vitality Workshops Summary and Next Steps

Phil Erickson presented the major themes gathered from all segments of the five Community Character & Vitality January Workshops: improve pedestrian access, open space and gathering places, neighborhood serving uses, shared parking and structured parking. He then overviewed workshop activities, what was heard from participants and key decision points and questions and solicited Task Force member input and reactions for the following workshops: Oracle Center, Fontana Center, Stone to Park – 1st Avenue Center, Park to Tucson – Central Districts and Campbell Center, Tucson to Palo Verde – Country Club Center, Tucson to Palo Verde District, Palo Verde to Swan – Palo Verde District and Alvernon Center.

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The Task Force had the following comments about the Oracle Center workshop summary: some key points conflict with each other, like building height and density for business owners who must balance requests for a smaller footprint with return on investment; the need for continued outreach and with the Yaqui community and the possibility of incentivizing property owners by presenting attractive alternatives for land use. The Task Force discussion regarding the 1st Avenue Center noted that safety is a concern throughout the study area; pedestrian access rules and lighting improvements may help alleviate safety concerns. The Park to Tucson Workshop Task Force discussion raised the need to define the term “gateway” and present options for gateway designs along the corridor. Gateway was described as a way to signal an entrance to a segment, call attention to the unique character of focused areas by representing what makes them special and offer opportunities for public art. Another type of gateway feature would be gateways between Grant Road and the adjacent neighborhoods. The Task Force was encouraged to visit the Oracle Revitalization Website for a history of the area. There was also discussion of the need to be clear about how the Plan will be implemented in terms of land use policy and guidelines, as well as how it will affect the process of development review and approval—concerns were expressed that this could make the process even more complicated.

Nanci Beizer asked for and received the following Task Force feedback on the Community Character & Vitality Workshop summary:

Next Steps:

- Complete a draft character and vitality plan with concepts for the public to react to with decision points to identify recommended policy and design alternatives.
- Ensure the character and vitality plan draft and recommended alternatives take into consideration current challenges of site development regulations and development review.
- Complete an overall outline for the Grant Road corridor and a more detailed draft for the first two reconstruction segments (Oracle - Stone) for the Task Force to review prior to proceeding with drafting the full plan.

Outreach:

- Ensure the outreach strategy addresses concerns over low workshop attendance and engages and ignites public enthusiasm.
- Shift the strategy to “go to” the public instead of asking them to attend meetings.
- Build *opportunity* message into communication to convey opportunities for development and other possibilities along Grant Road. Make the CC&V process concretely alive to the public to focus on the possibilities of what can happen; what could be in it for them.
- Possibility of a permanent location to view maps? Ask questions?
- Send a clear public message that even though your area may not be scheduled for reconstruction until 2020; now is the time to influence the plan.
- Treat & Country Club is an area with vacant land, buildings. How can we reach and empower commercial owners and let them know they can do something now?
- Ensure outreach to disadvantaged populations such as renters, low-income, refugee...

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Public education:

- Concern over public confusion regarding how the CC&V process influences neighborhood plans, area plans and re-zoning.
- Contact neighborhoods and let them know how the CC&V plan fits with existing neighborhood plans. Is there a possibility the City can conduct workshops?
- Educate public regarding how CC&V connects with neighborhood plans and zoning; reassure public City government is not developing properties
- Extra layer of fear this process may lead to more bureaucracy and red tape and will interfere with business development. Consider views of business owners at the Western end, no one wants to develop with more/new restrictions.
- Educate mid-town neighborhoods first (mostly rentals, high turnover).

Nanci asked for and received the following endorsement to move forward with the Community Character and Vitality Plan development using workshop results:

- The Task Force endorsed the planning team to move forward with developing an annotated outline of the Community Character and Vitality Plan for the entire roadway using the results from the Community Character and Vitality workshops and directs the planning team to prepare a more detailed land use draft plan for the first two segments slated for reconstruction, Oracle to Park, taking into consideration current site related issues and regulations, to review at the next Task Force meeting.
- The Task Force directs the planning team to re-visit the public outreach and education strategies and present new ideas on involving the public at their next meeting.
- The Task Force directs the planning team to prepare additional educational information pieces in a variety of formats to better demonstrate the objectives of the Character and Vitality planning efforts.

Public Art Workshop Summary

The Task Force endorsed tabling this agenda item until the next Task Force meeting due to time constraints.

March Open House

Dave Perkins previewed the March Open House purpose, format and tentative date of March 24th, 5:30-8:00 PM at Tucson Association of Realtors. The Open House is designed to be a celebration of Task Force accomplishments, provide information and allow opportunities for public feedback. The following information stations were presented: Draft DRC and 15% design plans; public involvement and influence; innovative and sustainable design features; streetscape, landscape, public art; reconstruction phasing and Early Intersection Project; Community Character & Vitality Land Use Plan; Real Estate and Mainstreet availability for one-on-one conversations. Task Force members were asked to volunteer to staff the stations along with City staff. There will be a Task Force training prior to the Open House. To publicize the Open House, invitations will be sent to properties within a ½ mile area of Grant Road, 1000 on Kaneen's mailing list, Mayor, Council and Ward offices; there will be notices in the newspaper. Rick Kaneen urged the Task Force to send an email to Nanci if they want someone invited to the Open House and encouraged them to help get the word out and excite people to attend. Nanci will follow-up with the Task Force by email to

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set a Task Force training date and provide more detailed descriptions about the stations so Task Force members can volunteer. Volunteers will be selected on a first come basis.

Nanci Beizer asked for and received the following Task Force feedback on the open house.

- Invite all Neighborhood Associations
- The Open House message of celebration is an opportunity to kick off the new and exciting outreach effort, build this into the design
- A photo simulation of the roadway would be great at some point

Nanci asked for Task Force endorsement of the Open House format, information stations and Task Force role at the Open House. The Task Force endorsed the Open House format and information stations. The Task Force endorsed their role in inviting the public to attend the Open House and their role in helping to staff the information stations at the Open House.

Utility Relocation

Dave Perkins presented an abbreviated update on the options for utility undergrounding, including: RTA policies and procedures on utilities, how citizen's concerns about RTA policies and procedures can be expressed, existing aerial utilities and utility undergrounding options. He overviewed: base costs for relocating TEP utilities above ground, undergrounding both 14kV and 46kV lines, and undergrounding only the 14kV lines, TEP equipment on the roadway, advantages and disadvantages of underground 14kV with 46kV overhead, and advantages and disadvantages of relocating 46kV and 14kV overhead. Dave reviewed Federal, State and local funding source opportunities and the decisions facing the Task Force: utility undergrounding requires a champion and a funding source; converting the funding source into funding requires an action plan; an action plan requires time, resources and commitment. Dave overviewed other TEP utilities developments on Grant Road and asked the Task Force to provide their feedback at the next Task Force meeting due to time constraints. The Task Force agreed to provide feedback on undergrounding Champion, undergrounding funding and funding action plan at the next Task Force meeting.

Next Steps

Melissa Antol reviewed the following next steps: TAC meeting on February 25th, Draft DRC submitted to City February 28th, Report to Community in March, Public Art & Design Open House March 24th, 30% design continues, CC&V plan development continues, Task Force Members will be notified of Open House station volunteer opportunities and Task Force Open House training date.

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Task Force Roundtable

Nanci Beizer conducted the roundtable and Task Force members had no additional comments.

Call to the Audience

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



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TASK FORCE PARTICIPANTS

- Susan Alexander
- Judith Anderson
- Barbara Bird
- Dale Calvert
- P. Wayne Cullop
- Sarah Evans
- Roy Garcia
- Jim Hogan
- Joseph Maher
- Alice Roe
- Beverly Rutter
- Robert Tait
- Jay Young

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