



GRANT ROAD *Improvement Plan*



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GRANT ROAD CORRIDOR PLANNING TASK FORCE

April 29, 2010

5:30 p.m.

Tucson Association of Realtors

2445 N. Tucson Blvd.

Tucson, AZ 85716

MEETING SUMMARY

MEETING TOPICS

- Progress Update
- Utility Undergrounding
- Community Character and Vitality Plan
- Grant-Oracle Intersection Design
- Project Timeline and Milestones for Completion

PRESENTATIONS

- Progress Update
- Utility Undergrounding Decision
- Community Character and Vitality Plan Update
- Grant-Oracle Intersection Design
- Timeline and Milestones for Project Completion

DISCUSSION AND WORK SESSION OUTCOMES

Introductory Remarks

Nanci Beizer called the meeting to order, overviewed the agenda, noted Task Force member changes including welcoming Linda Marie Small to the Task Force and announcing the resignation of Mike Humphries from the Task Force. She asked for and received approval of the February 23rd draft Task Force Meeting Summary.

Progress Update

Melissa Antol presented an update on the following activities: The Design Open House was a success with over 100 people attending; the EIP update included the announcement that Kimley-Horn was selected for the project with Tom Weideman as project manager, the 30% EIP design plans & draft DCR were submitted April 1st, the draft Public Art Master Plan is scheduled for mid-May and a call to artists for the EIP has been advertised, the Community Character & Vitality Plan is progressing.

Utility Undergrounding Decision

Dave Perkins overviewed key elements from the February 23rd Task Force meeting Utility Undergrounding presentation including:

- RTA policy change: a process is available, there is a low probability of success

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- Relocation options: relocation above ground is only feasible option (no added cost to City), other options will require a funding source(s) other than the City
- Outside funding: requires time, effort & skill, too late for Grant-Oracle intersection, low probability of success overall

Nanci Beizer asks for endorsement of the staff recommended decision to move forward with above ground utility relocation. The Task Force did not endorse moving forward with above ground utility relocation and had the following comments and questions:

- The Task Force went on record to unanimously register that they are not in support of above ground utility relocation on Grant Road and did not endorse the recommendation presented by the project team. Concern was expressed about taking action to pursue underground utilities on future segments of the roadway when it was too late for the EIP (Oracle – Grant segment).
- The Task Force stated that they were very interested in exploring reasonable actions and options for moving forward with undergrounding utilities such as: appealing to the RTA to change policy; approaching businesses and property owners on Grant Road to solicit funding; forming a business improvement district; finding a private sponsor to fund undergrounding for the EIP; approaching Quest, Cox, Time Warner for funding; polling business and political leaders and the public to test the strength of their commitment on this issue; taking the message back to the community and newly elected political leaders to gain support.
- Acknowledge that the decision regarding utility location is the community's decision.
- Note that the poles will defeat the beauty of the roadway, this is a quality of life issue.
- Ensure the public understands the hazards associated with above ground utility poles such as the potential they can fall and start fires, increased accidents and the environmental affects of the chemicals coating the poles.
- Create an informal ad hoc group of interested Task Force members to investigate how to proceed and explore the possibility of creating a Task Force subcommittee to pursue this issue.
- Could the planning team provide more information on how to approach conducting an ad hoc effort to address the issue of undergrounding utilities? Can the City share Grant Road contact information to poll people regarding the options for undergrounding utilities? The team will address this for the next Task Force meeting.
- Did the project team know of any studies linking underground utilities on projects of this size to their affect on property values? The staff and team stated they were not aware of any studies on this topic. Property owners may be willing to donate funds, or support creating an improvement district if a positive affect can be demonstrated.
- Are there camouflaging options for above ground utility poles and lines?
- Will the Task Force have an opportunity to see alternatives of where the utility poles will be moved to prior to endorsing future roadway plans? The project team indicated the poles will be moved within the future Grant Road right of way.

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Community Character & Vitality Plan Update and Community Outreach Strategy

Phil Erickson overviewed the goals and intent, desired outcomes, recommended policy organization and recommended planning and public involvement strategies for the Community Character & Vitality Plan.

- Goals and intent: document public preferences and long term vision for the future of development along Grant Road, improve and enhance the built environment along Grant Road, provide planning tools and approval process to support business vitality and encourage revitalization and redevelopment, and satisfy the Grant Road Guiding Principles
- Desired Outcomes: Policy outcomes (urban design and land use guidance and regulation, simplification of review and approval process, update/refinement of area and neighborhood plans); Physical outcomes (increased private investment to revitalize and redevelop properties along Grant Road); Public outreach outcomes (create project champions, build understanding in local professional community regarding implementation paths).

The approach to achieve these goals and outcomes would be to develop a stronger regulatory approach to achieve the community vision rather than solely relying on policy guidance the range of tools include urban design and land use design guidelines, safe harbor ordinance/land use code amendment and creating a "Grant Road Revitalization" zoning district. Phil overviewed recommended policy organization demonstrating the pros of a range of implementation "paths" using existing zoning with design guidelines, possible "Safe Harbor" ordinance land use code amendment (with design guidelines) and new "Grant Road Revitalization" zoning district. He presented examples of Community Character & Vitality Paths including: an example of existing development, impacts of Grant Road improvements and multiple paths for maintaining existing uses or revitalizing properties addressing various needs and conditions. Phil presented a sampling of issues the development guidelines could address: site and building design issues including transition to adjacent neighborhoods, street-fronting façade design, pedestrian paths through parking lots, public gathering spaces within shopping centers, etc. He overviewed the possible City-wide "Safe Harbor" Ordinance which is in preliminary development with introductory discussions with Mayor and Council in May; will likely include enabling ordinance providing flexibility for parking, street fronting setbacks, signs, lot size, etc. He presented issues that will be considered in the development of the New "Grant Road Revitalization" Zoning District: voluntary and option zone, owner must ask for it to be applied; integrates design guidelines with zoning for more efficient and effective implementation; could allow for lower or higher heights, different mixes of land uses, different densities/intensities.

Phil presented the draft Community Character & Vitality Planning & Public Involvement Strategies.

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- Public Involvement: focus on business and property owners, keep neighborhood associations informed with opportunities to participate
- Review outreach with key stakeholder focus groups
- Early outreach to neighborhood associations: inform leadership, encourage neighborhood association discussions
- Comprehensive Outreach & Input: business briefings, outreach to commercial managers and brokers, focus groups (specific locations, specific issues)
- Segment Open Houses
- Present the draft Community Character & Vitality Plan to the public and gather input
- Host an area-wide Open House

Nanci Beizer asked for and received the following endorsements from the Task Force:

- The Task Force endorsed the project team to move forward with the Community Character & Vitality Plan development using the approach presented.
- The Task Force endorsed the general approach to Community Character & Vitality Plan public outreach.
- The Task Force endorsed the project team to undertake the Key Stakeholder Focus Groups and refine the Outreach Strategy.

Dave Perkins overviewed the Grant-Oracle Intersection design including the role & responsibility of Task Force, the design team, scope of work & schedule and 30% Intersection Plan Review. The Task Force role will include attending four scheduled Task Force meetings (most will be combined with GRIP meetings), attending & co-hosting two design open houses (one of which will be the Community Character & Vitality Open House), communicate with & represent respective constituencies and continue to challenge design team to integrate Guiding Principles in the design. The design team will include: Tom Weideman, City Design Project Manager; Melissa Antol, City Project Manager; Dave Perkins, Project Manager; Bruce Beenken, Design Manager; Grant-Oracle design team is the GRIP team plus new firms to support geotechnical, wet utility relocation & ILT operations. Dave overviewed the scope of work until construction begins in 2011 and overviewed key elements that were included in the 30% intersection design which are under review by City staff. Rick Kaneen noted that one of the first things the team will need the Task Force to help with, is educating the public about Indirect Left Turn as it will be among the first in Tucson.

Nanci Beizer asked for and received the following endorsements from the Task Force:

- The Task Force endorses the 30% Grant-Oracle Intersection design.
- The Task Force endorses their role and responsibility in the Grant-Oracle intersection design and planning.

As requested at the February 23rd Task Force meeting, Dave Perkins presented the timeline and

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milestones for the overall Grant Road Improvement Plan. Melissa Antol presented next steps: Grant-Oracle EIP final design underway, finalize concepts for landscape & streetscape, draft Public Art Master Plan, EIP artist applications & selection, Community Character & Vitality Plan development continues, 30% design continues.

Task Force Roundtable

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

- Unable to take part in ad hoc utilities committee; willing to write letters in support of undergrounding utilities.
- Proud to be a Task Force member tonight, to go on record with our concerns and represent the views of my constituents regarding undergrounding utilities.
- Another related utilities discussion cost we have not yet discussed is connectivity of the utilities underground.

Call to the Audience

There were no audience questions or comments.

TASK FORCE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Susan Alexander	P. Wayne Cullop	Alice Roe
Judith Anderson	Roy Garcia	Beverly Rutter
Barbara Bird	Jim Hogan	Linda Marie Small
Tom Bush	Joseph Maher	Jay Young
Dale Calvert	Michael Midkiff	

TASK FORCE MEMBERS ABSENT

Sarah Evans
Moon Joe Yee
Robert Tait

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