



GRANT ROAD Improvement Plan



www.grantroad.info



Mobility

Vitality

Sustainability



This project is managed by the City of Tucson.

For more information please visit www.grantroad.info or call the project hotline at 624-4727.

GRANT ROAD CORRIDOR PLANNING TASK FORCE

March 28, 2011

College Place, 1601 N. Oracle Road, Tucson, Arizona 85705

5:30 P.M.

MEETING RESULTS

MEETING TOPICS

- Grant-Oracle Intersection Design Update
- Public Art Update
- Community Character & Vitality Plan

PRESENTATIONS

- Grant-Oracle Intersection Design Update
- Public Art Update
- Community Character & Vitality Plan Components: Centers and Districts Vision Concepts, Updated Schedule, Public Outreach, The Grant Road District, Form-Based Codes, Area and Neighborhood Plan Amendment Approach
- Next Steps

Introductory Remarks

Nanci Beizer called the meeting to order, reviewed the agenda, asked for and received approval of the February 24th, 2011 draft Task Force Meeting Summary. There was no call to audience as no audience members were present.

Grant-Oracle Intersection Design Update

Bruce Beenken provided an update on the Grant-Oracle intersection, including:

- The design schedule is on track. If Southwest Gas finishes construction at the end of September, road improvements can begin in October.
- 100% design plans will be submitted to the City of Tucson for a final review in April.
- Advertising and project award to a construction contractor is planned Fall 2011.
- Ongoing tasks include: right of way acquisition, relocations, demolition, and utility relocation designs (TEP: March-June, Southwest Gas: June-September)

The Task Force had several questions including:

- How long is the construction duration planned for Grant-Oracle? Bruce Beenken replied they anticipate about 12 months.
- Are public service announcements planned to educate the public about the construction? Britton Dornquist responded Main Street has been out meeting with businesses in the area. There will be construction message boards and the media releases that TDOT does for every project but no other outreach is currently planned.

Approved by Task Force on January 26, 2012

This is a project of the Regional Transportation Authority.

The voter-approved, \$2.1 billion RTA plan will be implemented through 2026. Details about the full plan are available at www.RTA-mobility.com.

The Regional Transportation Authority has a nine-member board with representatives from local, state and tribal governments.

This project will be managed by the City of Tucson.

Public Art Master Plan

Hank Saxe and Cynthia Patterson presented an update on the public art planned for the Grant-Oracle intersection, including several illustrations to demonstrate design considerations. They encouraged continued feedback and input on the design.

- Influences for the gateway public art piece at Grant-Oracle include natural history, culture and history in the area. This new Grant Road “signpost” is reminiscent of historic “surveyor markers” and suggest a use of the signposts as way finding objects.
- Design considerations include: form and proportions; construction method; color, texture and visibility day and evening; lighting and base options; materials, possibly woven stainless steel mesh.
- The location of the public art sculpture will be 80-90 feet east of the median at the Grant-Oracle intersection. Utility actions underground affect the location of the sculpture.
- The sculpture has three parts: the bottom leaf, the center petal and the top stamens.

The Task Force had the following questions and comments:

- Did the artists consider how to prevent people from climbing the structure? Cynthia responded that the sculpture will be a smooth surface which will make it more difficult to climb.
- Would RGB LED lighting that resembles the linear filaments in the public art concept be suitable for lighting? The artists could consider making the stamen out of something like that.
- The idea of the structure coming out of the ground is a good one; however, since it is in the median, a car could come up and impact it. Are there Department of Transportation standards for placement? Bruce Beenken responded that the art meets the required standards for a clear zone.
- Have the artists considered how they are going to color the sculpture? Are you going to use paint? Sun here can be unforgiving and color can fade after a couple of years. Hank Saxe responded that there are several coloring options for stainless steel mesh. Paint would be the primary finish of choice, it’s a matter of what type of paint.
- In terms of design: stamens without the bulbs are preferred; having the structure come out of the ground versus being placed on a base is preferred; maintain the curvature of the leaves to indicate it is a plant, would like to see green leaves; the negative space shown in the simulation is lovely, graceful; the piece is eloquent and simple.

Community Character & Vitality : Centers and Districts Vision Concepts, Updated Schedule, Public Outreach, Grant Road District, Form-Based Codes

Phil Erickson presented the Community Character & Vitality - Achieving the Centers and Districts Vision: Center and Districts Vision concept implementation; CC&V updated schedule including one remaining Task Force workshop, and multiple ongoing opportunities for public involvement, planning commission and Mayor and Council involvement. Phil reviewed current and upcoming Community Character & Vitality public outreach efforts including: design focus group meetings and CC&V Open Houses for West, Central and East locations planned for May 2011.

Phil Erickson presented the development review process, the Grant Road District and how the

Grant Road District works. The Grant Road District is an optional zoning designation that will shape future development to achieve the Centers and Districts Vision. The Grant Road District does not require a property owner to go through a rezoning process. A property owner “elects-in” to the zone in lieu of their existing zoning. This allows new options with simpler process. If a property owner wants to re-zone a property on Grant Road, because of the Grant Road District, it will be a more tedious process.

Phil Erickson explained the components of the Community Character & Vitality Plan: Centers and Districts Vision Concepts, Area and Neighborhood Plan Amendments, Grant Road Urban Overlay District, Grant Road Implementation Strategies.

Phil explained the Grant Road District:

- A “form based” code
- Uses 9 sub categories to define the centers and districts along Grant Road
- Relatively flexible in terms of specific land uses
- Relatively definitive in terms of: orientation of buildings to surrounding streets, building massing – height, step backs, setbacks and buffering of existing residential neighborhoods.

Phil illustrated how the Grant Road District works using 9 sub-categories: Center Marketplace, Center Hub, Center Crossroads, Center Neighborhood, Center Urban Crossroads, Center General, District West, District Central, and District East. Phil shared feedback received from some of the participants at the stakeholder groups about the small parcel size on Grant Road. The modern development industry is not as comfortable working with this. Developers at the CC&V design focus groups said they need market support. Some asked if the centers could be extended along some of the side streets that have more density.

Phil presented the basics of form based codes. He explained and illustrated via simulations frontage types, including: public storefront, private storefront, service garage, public yard, shared motorcourt and parking lot. He explained how development fronts on to Grant Road.

Phil presented an example application of the Grant Road District zoning, how the zoning works and some remaining decision points. He presented example developments for the East District, including an introduction to using the Grant Road District zoning code and scaling and transitioning to adjacent neighborhoods. Using simulations, Phil illustrated existing conditions looking north, new residential lofts and new office and retail building. Using additional simulations, Phil demonstrated the following: East District existing development - 8,500 s.f. office building and 10, 500 s.f. Dance School; District sub-category residential loft development – 22 units, retail and office development 2,000 s.f. retail, 38,000 s.f. office; residential lofts frontage types - public yard, parking lot; meets or exceeds build – to line and perimeter yard requirements, e.g.: 12’ stepback after 1st floor along Walnut, residential adjacency – 20’ perimeter yard, 35’ stepback to 2nd floor, 45’ stepback to 3rd and 4th floors; retail office building frontage types – public storefront, private storefront, parking lot 44 ft. height (45 ft. allowed); meets or exceeds build-to line and perimeter yard requirements, e.g.: 12’ stepback after 1st floor along Walnut, Residential adjacency – 20’ perimeter yard, 35’ stepback to 2nd floor, 45’ stepback to 3rd and 4th floor.

Phil Erickson presented example developments for the Center Marketplace demonstrating incremental revitalization of shopping centers. Using simulations, he presented existing conditions looking at the center at the southeast corner of Swan and Grant. Next, he presented

initial development with the one-story 'liner' retail building. Next, full revitalization' with retail, office, live/work, townhomes, and residential flats. Then, full revitalization with retail, office, live/work, townhomes, and residential flats. Phil presented an example of existing development - 86,000 s.f. retail (including 5,000 s.f. gas station). He added a linear retail building along Grant Road - 90,300s.f. retail (including 5,000 s.f. gas station) and demonstrated frontage types: public storefront, parking lot. He then presented a simulation of full revitalization: 58,000 s.f. retail (including relocated Trader Joes), 4 retail kiosks, 78,000 s.f. office, 20 units of townhome flats, 8,000 s.f. plaza. He illustrated frontage types: public storefront, private storefront, porch, park or plaza. 45 ft. height on Grant and Swan (55 ft. allowed), 25 ft. height on pre-existing minor streets (45 ft. allowed), meets or exceeds build-to line and perimeter yard requirements.

Phil presented example developments for the Oracle Center exploring maintaining mountain views with step backs and limiting heights to explore how maintaining mountain views affects other objectives of revitalization. He presented a simulation of a Center Urban Crossroads example demonstrating the following Grant Road improvement concepts to compare impact to mountain views: one and two-story mixed use development with relatively low intensity; two, three, and four story mixed use development concept with closer to building envelope of draft Grant Road district zoning; lower-intensity reuse scenario -42,250 s.f. retail/office, 14 units of live/work, 38 units of townhomes and flats; public storefront frontage type, near GRD maximum scenario, 107,530 s.f. retail/office, 69 units of townhomes and flats; public storefront frontage type lower-intensity reuse scenario, mainly 1 story. 14 ft. height on Grant and Oracle, 12 ft. setback on Oracle for upper floor up to 3 story, 30 ft. height within site; near GRD maximum scenario, mainly 3 story, 34ft. height on Grant, 2-3 story, 24-34 ft. height on Oracle for upper floors, up to 5 story, 50 ft. height within site.

The Task Force had the following questions and comments regarding the Community Character & Vitality presentation:

Grant Road District:

- Will the Grant Road District overlay zone allow for a bigger footprint and higher density development in the neighborhoods? Phil responded the foot- print would not be much bigger. Single-family homes on R-1 or R-2 lots that are not impacted by the Grant Road improvements will be remaining with their existing zoning. The land use planning team has been thinking about how to address O-1, C-1, or similar non-residential zoned properties next to Centers or Districts, the property owner could ask to be re-zoned to be in the Grant Road District or should the Grant Road District boundaries be expanded now.
- Do we have to define the boundaries of the Center area now or can we wait and let the boundaries be flexible? Would property owners have to apply for a re-zone? Phil responded that currently property owners have to apply to re-zone. So, it is likely better to try and resolve as much of this as possible now, rather than inconvenience property owners with future re-zoning.
- It appears there is no downside to being included in this overlay zone. Why not expand the Center boundaries as much as logically makes sense to offer property owners more options and stimulate development.
- Has the team considered closing off some streets within the Centers to increase the value of the parcel and a multi-use Center? The Center Marketplace is a multi-modal example of where we want circulation within the area. The idea of a Center Marketplace is for incremental improvements plus revitalizing the entire site.
- In the Tucson Center example, Spring and Silver streets dead-end and Water is the only street that goes through. Could be interesting to have access to the Centers from

neighborhoods; however, how do the neighborhoods feel? We need to be judicious, realistic.

- Concerned about neighborhood opposition because the plan will amend Area and Neighborhood Plans. Certain neighborhoods already feel under attack from commercial development encroaching into their residential area.
- The concept of sub-districts is fuzzy, needs greater definition. Phil responded there will be an upcoming Task Force workshop that will look at sub-districts in greater detail.

Form-Based Code Approach:

- Why would property owners opt- in to the overlay zone? If they do not intend to change their development, is there a reason to opt-in? Phil responded that it will provide property owners with greater development options and a simpler process avoiding the need to go through the Planning Department for change of use.
- Will design guidelines be mandatory? Can we create incentives so developers chose the design guidelines? Phil responded that the guidelines are not mandatory because existing zoning can't be changed; and therefore guidelines will not be developed as part of the CC&V Plan. The best incentives are more development, and flexibility of use, and a process that does not require parcel-by-parcel re-zonings.
- Is there a way to allow existing buildings to be grandfathered in so it will be feasible to remodel without having to tear down the building to meet design requirements. Phil responded that that property owner discretion could be made an option. Tim Sullivan added that one of the reasons for the public yard concept would be to incorporate existing development to make them more attractive frontages.
- Does conditional use allow restaurants to change occupancy and prevent neighborhood protest? Is consideration given to what all four sides of the building will look like, including the back? Phil responded that currently restaurants are not considered a conditional use and noted that perhaps they should be treated with performance criteria to address noise, smoke, odors, etc.; the same as industrial use properties. Tim added that all sides of the building are considered, noting the University area as an example.
- This approach is "marvelous, good stuff"!

Mountain Views:

- Currently, hardly notice mountain views traveling on Grant Road and the set-backs presented offer a more attractive option and create greater vitality for the area.
- Who are we preserving mountain views for? Pedestrians? Businesses are more concerned about traffic. It is better to have the overlay zone in place to obstruct the mountain view for some and enable it for others. The current zoning eliminates mountain views.
- Long-time residents have an emotional, visceral connection with mountain views. Each building that goes up takes away from that view; however, people appreciate the need for more urban areas, activity, vibrancy. It is a tradeoff.
- Prop 207 is a reality. Have to make viable options with square footage big enough to help people opt-in to the overly zone.

Phil Erickson asked for and received the Task Forces' endorsement of the Grant Road District: use of Urban Overlay Zone as optional zoning, form-based code approach and definition of sub-districts.

Community Character & Vitality: Area and Neighborhood Plan Amendment

Phil Erickson presented the area and neighborhood plan amendments and proposed different solutions to the problems the neighborhood and area plans are trying to address. For example, in

Approved by Task Force on January 26, 2012

the Central Segment, in R1, where half of the properties are being impacted along Grant Road, do we allow non R1 uses? We have new tools to explain what a potential change of use will mean. Area and neighborhood plans need to be amended to define the Grant Road District urban overlay zone as the alternative zoning for the planning area and clarify policy statements and guidelines that apply to the Grant Road planning area. Exceptions to the area and neighborhood plan policy statement for the Grant Road District include: restricting access to arterial and collector streets, restricting access to alleys, requiring all parking to be on-site, and screening of uses adjacent to residential neighborhoods.

The Task Force had the following questions and comments:

- It would benefit businesses to have access to alleys. Would neighborhoods have to vote on amending their area and neighborhood plans? Phil responded that we would be setting circulation standards to improve alleyways. There is a public outreach requirement before the amendment goes forward to the Planning Commission and Mayor and Council. It will be important to communicate this to the neighborhoods.

Next Steps

Phil Erikson reviewed the next steps for the Grant-Oracle Intersection Design, including milestone open house, continued property acquisition and utility relation design, obtaining community input on public art and receiving city review comments to prepare the 100% design. He reviewed next steps for the Community Character and Vitality Plan including: milestone open house, design focus groups in March and April, preparing a full draft of the CC&V Plan components, Planning Commission and Council study session, three CC&V Open Houses and a Task Force Workshop to endorse the Public Review Draft CC&V plan in summer or early fall.

Task Force Roundtable

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

- Continue to distribute both hard and electronic pre-reading.
- This was an amazing experience; grateful to be a part of this, to hear different experiences and perspectives.
- Very interested in receiving input the team receives from the CC&V focus groups, what the participants are saying they are willing to carry forward will be critical for my endorsement. Rick Kaneen will send a summary of what was heard from the CC&V focus group meetings.
- This has been a tremendous presentation. The team has worked very hard.
- Appreciate Phil Erikson's his ability to effectively conceptualize and communicate technical issues clearly.
- This is a milestone and very exciting, especially the form based code approach and overlay zone. We will look back and see things changed for the better in Tucson. It is one of the things Tucson has lacked and it will bring Tucson up to being a more modern City.

Call to the Audience

There were no audience questions or comments.

TASK FORCE PARTICIPANTS

Susan Alexander
Barbara Bird
Tom Bush
Dale Calvert

P. Wayne Cullop
Roy Garcia
Jim Hogan
Joseph Maher

Beverly Rutter
Robert Tait
Jay Young

TASK FORCE MEMBERS NOT IN ATTENDANCE

Judith Anderson
Sarah Evans
Alice Roe
Linda Marie Small