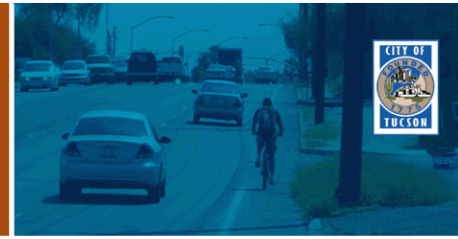




# GRANT ROAD *Improvement Plan*



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Mobility

Vitality

Sustainability



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## GRANT ROAD IMPROVEMENT PLAN TASK FORCE

January 26, 2012

Executive Inn & Suites, 333 W. Drachman, Tucson, Arizona 85705

5:30 P.M.

### MEETING RESULTS

#### MEETING TOPICS

- Overall Project Update
- Grant-Oracle Design Update
- Grant Road District Zoning
- Community Character & Vitality Plan Process and Schedule Update
- Value Analysis Results & Implementation Update

#### PRESENTATIONS

- Overall Project Update
- Grant-Oracle Design Update
- Grant Road District Zoning
- Community Character & Vitality Plan Process and Schedule Update
- Value Analysis Results & Implementation Update
- Next Steps

#### Introductory Remarks

Nanci Beizer called the meeting to order, reviewed the agenda, asked for and received approval of the March 28, 2011 draft Task Force Meeting Summary. There was no audience response to the call to audience.

#### Overall Project Update

Mike Holder, Project Manager, introduced himself and discussed changes in TODT and Grant Road Improvement Project staff. He noted that if everything goes smoothly during the bid and evaluation process, construction for the Grant-Oracle Intersection could begin in April, 2012. Phil Erickson overviewed the Grant Road District Overlay Zoning process: finalizing the technical approach for zoning and Area & Neighborhood Plan Amendments, preparing the administrative draft of the Grant Road District Zoning, refining the schedule for review & adoption, and preparing to initiate the Area & Neighborhood Plan Amendment process. Also discussed were refinements to the public outreach approach.

The Task Force had the following questions and comments regarding overall project update:

- Task Force members expressed concerns about public confusion regarding overlay zoning. Phil noted the Public Workshops were moved to February to better explain overlay zoning prior to the Area and Neighborhood Plan meetings and that there would be presentations about the overlay zone in the February Public Workshops.

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](http://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.

### **Grant-Oracle Intersection Update**

Dave Perkins provided an update on the Grant-Oracle intersection:

- Final plans were completed December 2011
- Advertising for construction will begin March 2012
- Right of Way acquisition was completed November, 2011
- Utility relocation completed December 2011
- Public education materials completed December 2011
- Complete construction March 2013
- Public Art has been relocated to the west and the design has been further refined

The Task Force had questions about the height of the public art (just under 30 feet) and when the second segment of construction (Stone to 1<sup>st</sup> Ave.) would begin. Dave responded the City has requested funding for the second segment and the RTA would like to maintain project momentum.

### **Grant Road District Zoning**

Phil Erickson overviewed Grant Road District zoning and how to achieve the centers and districts vision concepts implementation. He illustrated some of the changes in the central Segment and overviewed the Community Character & Vitality Tools, including:

- Community Character & Vitality Plan – centers and districts vision, planning objectives, and Grant Road implementation strategies
- Grant Road District Optional Zoning – Area and Neighborhood Plan Amendments will be needed to allow for the Grant Road District option

Phil explained the Grant Road District:

- An optional urban overlay zone
- Uses 8 zoning categories to define the centers and segments along Grant Road
- Emphasizes design of development
- Flexible in terms of specific land uses
- More definition: orientation of buildings to surrounding streets, building massing –height, step backs, buffering of existing residential neighborhoods

Phil overviewed how the Grant Road District works: property owners are not required to go through a rezoning process, property owners “elect-in” to the zone in lieu of their existing zoning, allows new options with a simpler process. Existing zoning will still apply; property owners will now also have a new set of optional zonings. There are a number of incentives for opting into the Grant Road District, including a more effective and efficient review process. He compared the current Entitlement Process with the Grant Road District process.

Phil explained the elements of the Grant Road District:

- 8 zoning categories
- Frontage types (how development fronts on Grant Road) - examples of Public Storefront, Private Storefront, Public Yard, Service Garage, Courtyard, Shared Motorcourt, Parking Lot, Park or Plaza.
- Parking standards: shared parking, district parking, pedestrian circulation and landscape design.

Phil explained neighborhood buffering with the Grant Road District by comparing underlying zoning for C-1, C-3 and Center Market with Grant Road District for Alvernon, and presented examples of development stepping down for building heights for C-1, C-2 and C-3. He continues to explain elements of the Grant Road District: environmental resources and circulation design.

Environmental resources: open space design- open space requirements, solar access, passive cooling; water harvesting. Circulation design: on-site pedestrian and bicycle access, pedestrian improvements to adjacent streets, traffic calming on local streets. Phil demonstrated several East District and Center Marketplace simulation examples to illustrate existing and proposed zoning features. Phil commented that many in the public think of Grant Road as it exists today, but it is not nearly as built out as it could be. Current zoning allows much greater height and density than exists today.

The Task Force had the following questions and comments regarding the Grant Road District Zoning presentation:

#### Area and Neighborhood Plan Amendment Questions and Comments

- Does the City initiate amendment to the Area and Neighborhood Plans? If there is a Neighborhood Association in place do they decide on the amendment? What if the Neighborhood Association doesn't want the amendment? Phil responded that the amendment process is the same process a property owner has to go through today, for example, if someone wanted to change from C1 to C3 zoning. Changes will require neighborhood input before going to the Planning Commission and then Mayor and Council. During the whole process, neighborhoods can be involved. Only after plan is amended can the property owner rezone.
- Neighborhood Associations are "worried" about the input process; in many cases feel their opinions are not being heard.

#### Overlay Zone Questions and Comments

- If a property owner wants to opt into the overlay zone, is there any reason they would be denied? Phil responded that to opt into the overlay zone the property owner would need to have a development proposal and it would still need to be approved.
- Twenty years down the line, if someone wants to re-develop and people may not like the new zone, how do you change it? Go back to existing zoning? Phil responded that you could go through a re-zoning process. The City is currently reviewing its land use zoning.
- Is there any possibility that the overlay will become another Prop 207 type problem? Phil responded that because it is an optional process, generally no jurisdiction in the states has been willing to do an outright re-zone, and are rather doing optional overlays such as the Grant Road District. This is being done because they are nervous about potential Prop 207 lawsuits.
- Currently if my property is zoned C-1, I can develop it under existing C-1 zoning ordinance. Does the overlay entirely allow somebody to use the property in greater density? Does it allow more flexibility? Phil responded yes.
- Is there a specific life proposed for the Grant Road District? As a property owner I would want relative certainty about what I can do in the future, that the overlay zone would stay in place for some time. Phil replied that is the intent of the overlay zone.
- If I opt in, can I ever opt out? Phil responded, once you opt in, you can't opt out.
- If I opt in, can I rezone in the future? Phil responded, technically, no. There would be little reason why a property owner would want to rezone because more potential exists with the overlay zone.
- Need to make it clear to property owners that opting into the zone involves forfeiting future rights. They need to know what they are buying into.
- The roadway is supposed to be completed 2026: 6 lanes, multi-modal vehicles, improved car mileage; the economy is going to change, lifestyles are going to change. The City can make reasonable forecasts, will know how much excess land they will have. The overlay should incorporate flexibility, so the property owner can choose the best option at the time.

Convey this to the public. Phil responded that this is what the project team has been doing. Continuing public education is the intent of the scheduled February Workshops.

#### Grant Road District Elements Questions and Comments

- Is there a diagram showing the 75 foot building? It will be like the new jumbo screen at University of Arizona football stadium, blocking the view of the Catalina Mountains from Kino. Phil clarifies that the maximum height allowed is 65 feet and that the current retail development in place today on the south side of Grant Road already blocks most of the view of the Catalinas. The best mountain views are at major intersections or turning to look down side streets or between existing buildings when looking north or diagonally from the south side of Grant Road.
- Does street elevation influence elevation zoning? Yes.
- How many properties are deep enough to be able to do the proposed step-downs? Phil responded that properties that are about 100 foot deep or more can relatively easily accommodate the step backs that would allow the maximum development height at their Grant Road frontage
- Will there be considerations to allow changes to wall heights, etc. to work with overlay changes to improve safety, privacy, noise...? Phil responded that the team has considered this and one option might be a 6ft block wall and an addition of something like a see-through trellis or screen. Phil explained there aren't very well defined open space requirements for residential or commercial. The Grant Road District does have open space requirements for residential and commercial once you reach a certain square footage of development or number of residential units.

#### **Grant Road Zoning Workshops**

Phil Erickson provides an overview of the Grant Road District workshops scheduled for February 6, 8 and 9, 2012, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. He reviewed the proposed format and design which combined a presentation, open house session to review materials at stations and reconvening full group for a Q&A discussion session. The 45 minute presentation will include (1) review of the Grant Road Improvement Project - Context Sensitive Solutions, Vision Statement and Guiding Principles, concept design, and status; (2) the Community Character & Vitality Plan – Improving the Context, public input to date, CC&V objectives; (3) review of Grant Road District Zoning – categories and design characteristics, ease of implementation, key issues, example developments; (4) schedule of public input and hearing process; (4) organization of workshop stations. Next, Phil reviewed the proposed stations and layout: Public Process & Schedule; Grant Road Improvement Project; Community Character & Vitality Background; Planning Objectives, Vision, and Zoning Framework; GRD Map and Zoning details.

Nanci Beizer asked for and received the Task Force endorsement of the February Workshop format and content.

#### **Community Character & Vitality Plan Process and Schedule Update.**

Phil Erickson provided an overview of the Area and Neighborhood Plan amendments approach and the overall schedule.

Area and Neighborhood Plans Amendments Approach. 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. The Grant Road Planning Team is developing a standard approach that will be presented to neighborhood stakeholders for comment and will be refined by the Planning Commission prior to a public hearing with Mayor and Council. The approach includes:

- new maps or mapping changes to indicate area that is within the Grant Road District Zone.
- a general statement directing people to the Grant Road District Zone for details.

- additional references and policy changes as needed in some of the area and neighborhood plans to reflect the objectives of the Grant Road District.

Area & Neighborhood Plan Amendments Process. Phil overviewed the Area & Neighborhood Plan Amendments Process: submittal and review process, Planning Team drafting amendment applications, stakeholder meetings for each area and neighborhood plan (February – April), Planning Commission study sessions and hearings April – August, subject to revision and Planning Commission feedback. Phil also reviewed the updated Community Character & Vitality schedule.

The Task Force had the following comments and questions about the Community Character & Vitality Plan Process and Schedule Update:

- The area and neighborhood plan amendments process sounds like a “done deal”, the neighborhoods can nuance the language; however, it has to happen. Phil responded that the process has to happen. The Planning Commission could say this Neighborhood Association has an issue and we don’t think you have done enough to address it, or Mayor and Council could say no and then we could not do the overlay in that section of Grant Road.
- We have a neighborhood plan in my neighborhood and we have design guidelines, but the only time they kick in is when someone wants to re-develop or develop something. Will this dissolve these guidelines? We have to make sure that this is included and that the neighborhoods are protected. Phil responded that we are working to integrate appropriate guidance from the area and neighborhood plans into the standards of the Grant Road District overlay.
- Suggest language that emphasizes that this is a draft, or proposed amendment and we need your input, when approaching different neighborhoods.
- It is important to show what could happen under current zoning when discussing proposed overlay zone changes, for example, the corner now at Grant and Alvernon isn’t going to go to a large mixed use area. Show worst case vs. best case scenario.

### **Value Analysis Results and Implementation Update**

Dave Perkins reviewed the Value Analysis results and how they might affect the Grant Road Vision. There were 46 recommendations between \$70,000 and \$10 Million. One recommendation getting traction with the City is funding the Grant-Swan intersection with non-Grant Road RTA project funds. Other recommendations will be considered by the City with each segment design project and the citizen group for those projects. Dave reviewed the following implementation update:

- The City has formally requested RTA funding to begin design of the Stone/1<sup>st</sup> Segment 2 phase to maintain the current schedule.
- A property Asset Management Plan is under development to guide advance acquisition opportunities which will allow for Right of Way cost savings and closer adherence to schedule. Jim DeGrood, RTA Director, complimented the Grant Road team on working with the RTA on the Value Analysis. Going into the Value Analysis we were \$26 Million over budget. He noted the Swan intersection was out of the scope of work funded by the voters. Most of the budget was for right-of-way acquisition costs. The RTA is exploring changing the business model regarding how to re-locate people affected by construction. They have commissioned a firm to explore other situations in the West and identify best practices.

The Task Force had the following comments and questions about the Value Analysis and Implementation Update:

- Has private funding been identified for the Swan Intersection and will they have to follow Task Force recommendations? Dave responded, he was unsure. The City has requested RTA funding for Stone and Swan which will be next but we may have to revise the schedule if alternate funding for Swan is not found.
- Wasn't Swan part of the RTA vote? Dave responded the decision not to include Swan came from the City. Rick Kaneen added the original Grant Road Improvement Plan included the Indirect Left Turn, and goes East of Swan. It will be completed with non-Grant Road Corridor RTA funds. It was noted that Swan is already 6 lanes.
- You seem to pass over early acquisition and abandoned buildings and nobody wants to see that. A vacant lot or open space for 20 years would be a good alternative.
- Are we changing any of the right-of-way plans in the Value Analysis? Jim DeGrood responded, no.

### **Task Force Roundtable**

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

- The next Task Force meeting is Fall 2012, our 5 year anniversary- we should have a celebration.
- Does the City intend to buy properties in aggregate and sell them to developers? How is property valued? Dave Perkins and Bruce Beenkin explain, on Oracle Road, the intention is to buy just what's needed; Real Estate has looked into grouping them. Generally, you purchase Right of Way as you design it. Property value is assessed case by case.
- I live in a house and want to move but nobody wants to buy. You are changing the character of the road and changing the value of the house. How are you protecting my interests? Team members offer to set up a follow-up one-on-one meeting with a City Real Estate representative. Following the Task Force Meeting, the Project Team added that analysis of the future roadway design and traffic levels has shown that noise will not increase in the future following the completion of the roadway improvements. In most cases the distance between the through traffic lanes of Grant and adjacent residences increases because of the local access lane with landscaped median that will be installed or because of additional landscaping. These design features are the result of comments from adjacent property owners, discussions with the Task Force, and analysis and design by the consultant/city team during the previous roadway design phase of the Grant Road Project.
- After 3 years, I finally have a grasp of concepts; however, I still do not have the vocabulary to be able to articulate them. I like the pictures better than the line drawing, pictures generate a more positive response. What was missing for me is an update on art. Where is the other public art in those pictures? I'm still attached to my mountain views and losing that value. I do not agree with only seeing the mountains down side streets. Views need to be incorporated into the concept of open space.
- It's been a long time since we've all been together and I've missed the back and forth exchange.
- As one of the owner occupied properties, I am excited by the prospect of the overlay and the potential for developers to buy up properties around me on the West end and bring more business to the area.
- Felt a little detached from the process, perhaps I had forgotten that we weren't going to be meeting as much, or did something change? I am excited about the overlay zone from a development stand, the urban core has been facing pressures and this is a good step forward. Regarding the Task Force meeting schedule, Phil responded, we planned for fewer Task Force meetings because bigger chunks of work had to be done (in-between meetings).

- Nice to be back, appreciate input as citizen advisory member. The team is doing a very good job in creating the overlay zone and creating options. I'm afraid the views won't march forward.
- With the construction schedule being done over years and the economy being bad, the timeframe could change. If you displace a family and they have elderly or many generations living together you need to buy a larger property to accommodate the re-located people to comply with federal guidelines, two people to a room. People would be happy to sell to get a reasonable price. This can help achieve a tremendous savings by doing early acquisitions. People can move on with the money they get from the sale. The \$26 Million dollars may not be erased but a good portion of it can be eliminated.
- I like what's happening with the overlay and I'm excited to see the construction at Oracle. The contractors need to move as quickly as possible to help relieve the businesses. I hope the City is considering innovative ways to do this. I would hope the RTA puts top dollars into landscaping, art and other finishing touches so people say it was worth it. People in the area will see what the rest of Grant Road would look like from Grant/Oracle. I encourage the RTA and the City to not go cheap on the finishing touches (art, landscaping...) for PR and advertising, getting neighborhoods to look at the project. Oracle and Grant has a WOW factor and can set the standard for the rest of the project.
- Is the next Task Force Meeting in August our last? Yes.
- They were relocating utilities at Grant and Oracle in front of my office. Having the new lines that high up is better than I thought.
- Concerned how people with disability will get across Grant Road, they do not use crosswalks.
- The neighborhoods still have a lot of opportunities to provide input into the overlay zone and you can communicate that to the team and they can take that into consideration.

### **Next Steps**

Phil Erikson reviewed next steps for the Grant-Oracle Intersection, the GRD Zoning & ANP Amendments and Grant Road Improvements.

### **Call to the Audience**

There were no audience questions or comments.

### **TASK FORCE PARTICIPANTS**

Susan Alexander	Joseph Maher	Robert Tait
Barbara Bird	Michael Midkin	Moon Joe Yee
Dale Calvert	Alice Roe	Jay Young
Sarah Evans	Beverly Rutter	
Jim Hogan	Linda Marie Small	

### **TASK FORCE MEMBERS NOT IN ATTENDANCE**

Judith Anderson  
Tom Bush  
P. Wayne Cullop  
Roy Garcia