



GRANT ROAD Improvement Plan



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GRANT ROAD CORRIDOR PLANNING TASK FORCE Virtual Meeting – Tuesday, March 2, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.

Pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.02, notice is hereby given to the members of the GRANT ROAD CORRIDOR PLANNING TASK FORCE and to the general public that the GRANT ROAD CORRIDOR PLANNING TASK FORCE will hold the following meeting which will be open to the public.

MEETING NOTE: Due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which have prompted declarations of a public health emergency at the local, state, and federal levels, this meeting will be conducted using measures to protect public health. This meeting will be held remotely through technological means, as permitted under Arizona law.

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For members of the public that wish to address the commission during **Call to the Audience**, we ask that you please email your request to Leticia Flores at information@grantroad.info or call 520-885-9009. The email should include your full name, mailing address, and phone number. Also, please specify if you would like to be added to our email distribution list for future notifications and updates. **Please call or send your email no later than 10:00 a.m. Tuesday, March 2, 2021.**

Meeting Minutes

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call to Establish Quorum** – Joan Landers, meeting facilitator, called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and quorum was established.
2. **Introductions** – Joan Landers introduced herself and announced that Nanci Beizer, previous meeting facilitator, had retired. Ms. Landers briefly went over virtual meeting guidelines and talked about the Consensus Decision Making process.
 - a. **Task Force** – Each Task Force member in attendance introduced themselves and said which group or organization they represented.

Task Force Members

Present			Absent
Alice Roe	Andrew Jones	Beverly Rutter – 5:35pm	John Wakefield
David Sunderman	Deirdre W. Brosnihan	James Hogan	Linda Marie Smalls
John Anderson	Moon Joe Yee	Robert Tait	
Roy A. Garcia Sr.	Shannon McBride-Olson	Susan Alexander	

- b. Team Members (DTM, RTA, Psomas)** – Each team member introduced themselves and said which organization they were with.

Project Team Members

Present			
Diana Alarcon – DTM	Bob Roggenthen – DTM	David Burbank – DTM	Amanda Valenzuela – DTM
Robin Raine – DTM	Alejandro Angel – Psomas	Randy Cheney – Psomas	Daniel Bursuck – PDSD
Rebecca Roupp – PDSD	Rick Ellis – RTA	Jan Waukon – MainStreet	Britton Dornquast – MainStreet
Joan Landers – Kaneen	Leticia Flores – Kaneen	Millie Pageau - Kaneen	

- 3. Approval of May 1, 2019 Meeting Minutes** – Joan Landers asked the Task Force members if they had an opportunity to review the meeting minutes from the previous meeting on May 1, 2019. A Consensus Decision approval of the meeting minutes of May 1, 2019, was agreed on by all members in attendance.
- 4. Phase 3 & 4** – Bob Roggenthen with the Department of Transportation & Mobility (DTM) gave an update on the schedule for Phase 3 & 4 and said the design plan is 100% complete. Discussion was held. No action was taken.
- a. Schedule Update** – Mr. Roggenthen presented a PowerPoint slide which provided updated information on Phase 3 & 4 of the Grant Road Improvement project. (PowerPoint slide can be found on the Grant Road website at www.grantroad.info). Mr. Roggenthen spoke about demolition/utility relocation activities, acquisitions, project bidding, construction start date, and length of construction.

***Task Force Member James Hogan** asked if the Brake Masters on Grant/Columbus was going to be demolished and asked if all the properties that are left after demolition, would be available for purchase in the future. Mr. Roggenthen said yes to both questions. Mr. Hogan asked if there were any final property dimensions available to view. Mr. Roggenthen said the property dimensions are available online (www.grantroad.info) on the 100% design plans but is not sure how they would be bundled or parceled out.

***Task Force Member Deirdre Brosnihan** asked if there were plans to plant trees around the stormwater basins. Mr. Roggenthen said they presented the Arts Foundation the option/opportunity to use the basin to place art in or around it so the community could walk down or go through the basin and enjoy the artwork but will also be heavily landscaped.

***Task Force Member James Hogan** asked if there would a lot more demolition east of Columbus. Mr. Roggenthen said there is a bid coming in to tear down Gus’ Liquor and Brake Masters would be torn down around October 2021. Mr. Hogan asked if the start of construction is slated for summer of 2022 with an 18–24-month timeframe as stated on Mr. Roggenthen’s PowerPoint slide with a completion date, roughly in summer of 2021. Mr. Roggenthen said yes, they are very optimistic that the plans will move forward. Mr. Hogan stated that with construction and completion being almost three and half years away, it makes it difficult to lease property. Mr. Roggenthen said yes, there will be some challenges. Mr. Hogan also asked about the corner of Grant and Sycamore and if there would be any traffic restrictions for traffic going into the neighborhoods. Mr. Roggenthen said there would be no traffic restrictions.

***Task Force Member Deirdre Brosnihan** asked if the neighborhoods would have the opportunity to be involved in the art selection process and be able to vote on the type of artwork that will be placed along this section of Grant Road. Mr. Roggenthen said there is a 13-member panel through the Arts Foundation that has been selected to choose the artwork that local artist Joe O’Connell would design and present. Ms. Brosnihan asked if the Task Force would be able to see the artwork before it is set for construction. Mr. Roggenthen said the Arts Foundation would choose and make sure the artwork is appropriate. Psomas Design Project Manager Alejandro Angel said the art selection panel consists of community members.

***Task Force Member Roy Garcia** asked if any members from the Task Force were a part of the 13-member panel. Mr. Roggenthen said a lot of the members on the panel live and work in the area and provide a good amount of representation. Mr. Garcia commented that the Task Force members had requested a unifying theme early on throughout the entire corridor. Deputy Director Robin Raine said the artist would design the artwork and present it for approval.

***Task Force Member Beverly Rutter** commented that the Task Force had provided a concept as to what artwork would be placed. Mr. Roggenthen said the art selection panel was presented with art ideas from the former Grant Road project design concept. He also said that the art concepts have not been designed yet and at this point, they are working on locations for the artwork.

***Task Force Member Andrew Jones** wanted to make the project team aware of the graffiti in the area of Grant and Dodge, where possible artwork would be placed, and how much graffiti abatement might be needed. Mr. Jones also expressed his concern over some of the previous artwork, “big green banana/corn stalk” which should have been an agave plant and would not recommend using it as a unifying theme for future art concepts. Mr. Angel said they follow up and ask the artist if he has the art themes that the Task Force created.

5. **Phase 5 & 6** – Alejandro Angel, Design Project Manager with Psomas, provided a PowerPoint presentation (www.grantroad.info) and gave an update on the 30% design plans, the schedule, and the key proposed changes from the original DCR (Design Concept Report). Discussion was held. Task Force members agreed to table this agenda item and not move forward until a public meeting can be held to receive feedback and input from the community. Then have a follow up Task Force meeting.
- a. **30% Design Plans Update** – Mr. Angel said that the initial data gathering has been completed and the team has been working on the 30% design plan. He said design completion is anticipated to be done in 2023. Mr. Angel also mentioned that there is no funding for acquisitions at this point but only funding for design.
 - b. **Schedule Update** – Mr. Angel said Phase 5 & 6 starts at Freemont Avenue and ends at Sparkman Boulevard.
 - c. **Key Proposed Changes from DCR** – Mr. Angel said the key proposed changes consisted of optimizing the Right-Of-Way to reduce full acquisitions, concerns regarding Mountain Avenue, the Campbell Avenue intersection, the Country Club intersection, and pedestrian crossing opportunities. He also talked about the TEP transmission line. He mentioned alignment adjustments, narrowing medians, but preserving bike/pedestrian lanes, and other design elements would help reduce full acquisitions. Some examples of this are: Jefferson Park at Highland Avenue and the Bayhorse Tavern. Mr. Angel said they plan to eliminate the proposed Northbound and Southbound left turn lanes on Mountain Avenue to maintain the bike route. He said it is not needed, it would avoid tearing up the concrete, pavers, and the mature vegetation. Mr. Angel said there were no significant changes to the Campbell Avenue intersection from the original Design Concept Report (DCR). Mr. Angel talked about the Country Club intersection and said indirect lefts would be a major circulation impact for Doolen Middle School where there would be a conflict between the school bus drop-off lane and the right turn lane. He said it would also impact the Boys and Girls Club’s parking/access. He said they are recommending avoiding the indirect left turn lane unless needed for traffic. He talked about the traffic analysis and said the volumes of traffic have not grown as originally expected. He shared the proposed design plan as a traditional intersection and said they would add a HAWK/Pedestrian crossing by Doolen Middle School and the Boys and Girls Club and would have no impacts to the school or club. He said this design would add left turn access to the Sunstate Plaza, reduce acquisitions, and preserve internal circulation.

***Task Force Member Alice Roe** asked if early acquisitions are possible due to safety concerns regarding more traffic (vehicle/pedestrian) and not enough parking at Grant and Treat at the marijuana dispensary. Diana Alarcon, Department of Transportation & Mobility Director Diana Alarcon said unfortunately funding for early acquisitions have not been awarded yet to Phase 5 & 6 of the project. Mr. Angel said that property would be a full acquisition.

***Task Force Member Andrew Jones** asked where the funding came from to acquire and tear down properties in Phase 5 & 6. Mr. Angel said there hasn’t been any acquisitions for about 7 or 8 years.

* **Task Force Member Andrew Jones** asked where vehicles would be able to access Bobo's Restaurant on the south side of Grant Road just west of the Grant & Country Club intersection, where there is significant turn in movements to the restaurant parking lot. Mr. Jones asked how far vehicles would need to go before being able to turn. Mr. Angel responded that there will be a median opening approximately 500ft west of the current area. Mr. Angel went on to say they could place a turning area in front of Fire Station #5, as there is sufficient room to do so. He said he would follow-up with more research into this addition of a median opening. Mr. Jones shared those businesses in the area will need turn-in traffic and was appreciative that Mr. Angel would look into it.

***Task Force Member John Anderson** stated a concern about potentially reducing median size in order to allow left hand turns into the adjacent businesses. He stated this would be a danger to pedestrians using the sidewalks, as vehicles are turning left across traffic to access private driveways. Mr. Angel stated they would not be removing the median, more so narrowing the median to allow for turning opportunities. He also states there will be pedestrian crossings every ¼ mile to increase safety. Mr. Anderson states his concern was more so about the pedestrian traffic near Doolen Middle School and to the west of the intersection, saying the more openings in the median, the more likely traffic will dart through onto small driveways and potentially miss pedestrians in that area.

***Task Force Member Alice Roe** shared that at the area of Tucson Blvd. there are only three streets that empty out on Grant Road; Margaret Ave., Treat Ave., & Forgeus Ave. She asked how people would be able to get in and out of their neighborhoods in this area. Mr. Angel shared they are now considering a median opening in the area in front of Fire Station #5 to allow for left turn traffic. He says there will be a left-turn at Forgeus for neighbors to access and improve connectivity. Originally the turn was located at Treat Ave., but it was moved to Forgeus to separate it from the bike path at Treat. Ms. Roe followed up with a question regarding Fire Station #5 on the north side of the street, asking how they will be able to head east. Mr. Angel explained the Fire Station has a specific kind of median, which is colored red and designated as a fire access only. Ms. Roe stated this seemed fairly dangerous for the rest of the travelling public. Mr. Angel added there is also a fire signal that will stop traffic when engines need to leave the station.

***Task Force Member Jim Hogan** shared that the task force was promised landscaped medians. He shares the landscaping following Phase 1 has been diminished, and if the medians are narrowed there will be less opportunity for landscaping. He shared that seeing the changes involving less landscape and less sidewalk make him lament the project. Mr. Angel responded and said the medians will not be narrowed everywhere and the size of the sidewalks will largely remain the same. He also shared that comments like this were the reason for the presentation to the task force, the design team values the input of the task force.

***Task Force Member Alice Roe** shared that she was worried about not having an indirect left at the intersection of Grant & Country Club would lead to pedestrians having many lanes of traffic to cross and would not be able to cross within enough time to be safe. She also echoed Mr. Hogan's concern regarding lack of median and removing the landscaping and no opportunity for water harvesting. Mr. Angel shared the design team had chosen to remove dual left turn lanes at Country Club so the crossing distance will be the same as having an indirect left would be. He also shared the City had timed this intersection so people can get all the way across regardless. He responded to her second concern about lack of landscaping in the medians, sharing they had identified other areas within the corridor, more so neighborhood areas and remnant parcels that could be used for drainage basins and heavier landscaping, similar to Phase 2.

***Task Force Member Beverly Rutter** shared her concern about narrowing the median and how this would affect pedestrians crossing who may not make it across in time to stand in the middle of the intersection and still feel safe. Mr. Angel explained there is 6 feet of median area for people to stop in the middle, which is the required amount of space throughout the City.

* **Task Force Member John Anderson** share that he applauds the changes the team is making, although he laments the loss of landscaping in the median. He also shared he was pleased to see reduced setbacks to adjoining businesses, which typically reduces driving speeds. He asked if lane width had been researched as a possible way to reduce ROW impacts. Mr. Angel said the lane width is 10.5 feet, and they are looking to increase

the buffer between the roadway and the bike lane. He shared this would be a good use of the extra space and John Anderson was pleased to hear the extra consideration for bicyclist safety.

***Task Force Member Andrew Jones** asked that the section of Grant directly south of the Boys & Girls Club and Doolen Middle School have fencing in the median to prevent children from running across the street like they currently do, especially if the median will be so narrow. Mr. Jones also shared his concern about Grant & Country Club being the only intersection without an indirect left possibly confusing local drivers. Mr. Angel explained there are several traditional signals within the corridor, meaning there will be a mix of both so Country Club will not be the only intersection without an indirect left. Mr. Angel also explained that the City would most likely place a fence in the median as a last resort, and there are other ways to prevent crossing. Director Diana Alarcon shared she'd like to have to staff head out and look into this issue. She shared they would be able to collect data when school goes back in session.

*** Task Force member, Roy Garcia, left the meeting at 7:00 p.m. There was still quorum.**

Alejandro Angel moved on to the next slide of his presentation – Pedestrian Crossings.

***Mr. Angel** shared they had adjusted the locations of the pedestrian crossing to include the Bike Boulevards and provide pedestrian crossings at least every $\frac{1}{4}$ mile.

***Mr. Angel** also discussed TEP's desire to advance a transmission line from the U of A area out to Grant & I-10. Four of the six final alternative overlap Phase 5&6 of the Grant Road project in some way. Two of the alternatives come up to Campbell Avenue and head west. The other two come up to Highland Ave, which have lesser impact but still come in contact with Grant Road. TEP has asked for the 30% design files to better coordinate with the Grant Road process. The construction of these transmission lines will likely precede the construction of Phase 5&6.

***Task Force Member John Anderson** asked Mr. Angel when he thought the 30% design plans would be made available to the public. Mr. Angel explained their process of wanting the Task Force to see the changes first, then they would present the changes to the public at a meeting and take in any comments.

***Joan Landers, meeting facilitator,** reminded the group of their Consensus Decision making scale and how they would like to handle voting on the proposed changes.

***Task Force Member Jim Hogan** raised his hand and asked why the ROW/Cost of Construction Ratio in Phase 5&6 was almost double that of the other phases. Mr. Angel explained this is because there is a section within the project where they will be impacting both sides of the road, as opposed to just one which is typical of roadway projects. The other reason for this is the homes in the area of Mountain & Campbell area are of higher value than other properties to the east.

***Joan Landers, meeting facilitator,** asked who would be willing to move all changes forward. The Task Force decided they would like to do a roll call vote, stating they endorse moving forward all the changes from the DCR. The task force had several members who felt strongly that the public should be informed of the proposed changes before the Task Force is asked to move the changes forward. A roll call vote was taken to approve a public meeting with another Task Force meeting following after, the Task Force reached a unanimous consensus.

6. Call to the Audience (15 min.) – Four members of the public addressed the Task Force. Discussion was held, no action was taken.

- **Vicki France (Grant/Alvernon Area Plan GAAP Committee Chair)** stated her concern about planning efforts for Phase 5&6, more specifically about zoning and planning. She stressed the neighbors wanted input on this. She shared there were high volumes of traffic entering her neighborhood and wanted to discuss how to mitigate that. Finally, her last point was tree maintenance along roadways once they are planted and stressed the importance of keeping landscape alive.

- **Joan Daniels (Jefferson Park Association Board/Grant Road Coalition Chair)** asked DTM to consider where neighborhoods would like to place monument signs at Grant & First Ave. and discussed using remnant parcels to create a new park that would complete their bike and walking path.
 - **Janet Fisher (LEED AP/Catalina Vista resident)** discussed mitigation & preservation of quality of life in Phase 5&6 for neighbors of Catalina Vista neighborhood.
 - **“Dos Arbolitos”** was deeply concerned about not having enough vegetation or landscaping planted along the corridor.
7. **Next Steps** – Joan Landers reiterated that the Task Force members agreed to have a public meeting for feedback and input from the community. Ms. Landers also mentioned the Task Force members’ appointment continuation and asked if they would still like to serve. All Task Force members agreed.
- a. **Community Open House** – All Task Force members agreed to have a community Open House for feedback and input regarding the 30% design plans. Task Force Member Alice Roe wanted it to be clear to the public that the Task Force had not endorsed these proposed changes.
 - b. **Task Force Continuation** – All Task Force members agreed they would continue to serve on the Task Force for another two-year term.
8. **Roundtable** – Each member of the Task Force had an opportunity to make a comment or pass. Most members made a comment and thanked everyone for being so helpful. Discussion was held, no action was taken.

***Task Force Member Susan Alexander** thanked the task force for working so hard. She also echoed landscaping concerns and safety issues.

***Task Force Member David Sunderman** stressed the public be informed thoroughly on all proposed changes.

***Task Force Member Alice Roe** thanked members for staying engaged and working hard. She also thanked City employees and others and looks forward to hearing from the public.

***Task Force Member Shannon McBride-Olson** thanked all members for their hard work.

***Task Force Member Jim Hogan** passed.

***Task Force Member Dierdre Brosnihan** echoed the comments about landscaping and looking for opportunities in the remnant parcels to add green space.

***Task Force Member Andrew Jones** thanked the amount of mitigation that designers were putting in place to save businesses and homes.

***Task Force Member Moon Yee** thanked his fellow task force members for all the insightful comments.

***Task Force Member John Anderson** echoed Andrew’s thoughts about the hard work Psomas has put in. He discussed the importance of long-term landscape care in public spaces.

***Task Force Member Robert Tait** was highly pleased that an effort was made to reduce acquisitions as well as the importance of quality landscaping.

9. **Adjourn** – Meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

The Regional Transportation Authority, a political subdivision of the state and independently governed, has invested more than \$1.3 billion in transportation projects and services to improve mobility, safety, economic vitality, and quality of life in the region. The RTA collects a half-cent excise (sales) tax from its special taxing district within Pima County to fund its 20-year regional transportation plan. The plan and tax were approved by voters in May 2006. The Grant Road Improvement Project is part of the RTA plan and is managed by the City of Tucson. For more information, visit www.RTA mobility.com.