



Citizens Steering Committee (CSC) September 24, 2008 Meeting Summary

Pima Community College Downtown Campus, Amethyst Community Room, 1255 N. Stone Avenue; 5:30 PM, Conversation & Refreshments; 6:00 – 8:00 PM, Meeting

CSC Members Present: Charlie Wachtel, Chair; Jason Brown, Vice Chair; Dick DeNezza; Tad Denton; Darel Magee; Erik Nielsen; Martina O'Brien; Bill Quiroga; Cathy Rex; Ken Scoville; Leon Solomon; Steve Roth; Bob Wright

CSC Members Absent: Hilary Eshelman, Bernadette Jilka, Joshua Randell, Gloria Townsend

Staff Present:

UPD OARP Team – Chris Kaselemis, Administrator; Rebecca Ruopp, Project Manager; María Gayosso, Lead Planner

Technical Advisory Team – Ron Thompson, Tucson Police Department; Teresa Williams, Department of Neighborhood Resources

Meeting Agenda & Discussions

Actions Taken/ Follow-Up Required

1. Welcome and Introductions

The CSC members introduced themselves by name and affiliation to the project area. Staff members and audience members introduced themselves.

2. Regular Business

- August 27, 2008, CSC Meeting Summary – CSC members approved the summary, with Cathy Rex moving to approve, and Martina O'Brien seconding the motion.

3. Updates and Announcements

- **Ghost Ranch Lodge** – CSC Chair Charlie Wachtel presented letter he wrote on behalf of the CSC to the Arizona Department of Housing, dated September 22, 2008, in support of Atlantic Development and Investments' new application for low-income tax credits. Ken Scoville asked if there could be further discussion about the Ghost Ranch Lodge for its proposed conversion to senior housing, and Charlie Wachtel indicated that would be appropriate later in the meeting.
- **CSC Memberships** – OARP Team Member Rebecca Ruopp introduced Erik Nielsen as a new member of the CSC, and reminded the CSC and the audience that CSC seats are still available and encouraged anyone who would be interested to apply.
- **OARP Brochure** – OARP Team Member Rebecca Ruopp presented the new edition of the OARP brochure, now printed full bleed on high quality stock.
- **9/25/08 Business Mixer** – OARP Team Member Rebecca Ruopp indicated that over 500 businesses within and nearby the Oracle Area were invited to the Business Networking Event to be held on Thursday September 25, 2008 at College Place from 5:30-8:30 p.m. Presentation set for 5:30-6:30. Speakers include Britton Dornquast, program manager for the RTA MainStreet Program and a business owner instrumental in forming the Campbell Avenue Merchants Association; and, Lisette DeMars, membership coordinator from the Tucson chapter of Local First Arizona.

The rest of the event will include time to network while enjoying food donated by OARP area restaurants, and information sharing about resources for businesses

Approved by vote of 13-0



**Actions Taken/
Follow-Up Required**

Meeting Agenda & Discussions

and public projects planned for the area.

Rebecca also indicated that Erik Nielsen will host at the Executive Inn & Suites the second business networking event, scheduled for October 22, 2008. The format of this event is still to be determined.

- **Oracle/Drachman/Main Art Project** – CSC Member Leon Solomon, who is serving on the Tucson-Pima Arts Council Selection Committee for the public art project at Oracle/Drachman/Main, indicated that 30 artists submitted applications for the public art project, from which 3 candidates were selected to go through a second round of review. The final candidate will be selected on October 30, 2008, during a closed meeting. Leon Solomon will keep the CSC advised of the status of the selection process.

- **Gospel Rescue Mission Rehabilitation and Shelter Care Facility on Miracle Mile** – OARP Team member María Gayosso provided an update on the facility’s proposed redevelopment of the Wayward Inn. The Special Exception was approved by the Zoning Examiner on September 11, 2008, with certain conditions, which include: building facades and entryways fronting Miracle Mile to remain unaltered; landscape and wall buffer along the southern perimeter; centralized recreational area and playground. Ken Scoville asked if the sign was addressed in the Special Exception. María responded that it was. *(Note: It has since been determined that the sign was not included in the façade preservation conditions. Further inquiry is underway and further clarification will be provided at the next CSC meeting.)*

- **Potential Redevelopment on the Southwest Corner of Speedway Blvd. and Main Avenue.** OARP Team Member Rebecca Ruopp informed the CSC that the owner/developer of the property contact the OARP Team to discuss its potential redevelopment. The OARP Team will request the owner/developer to give a presentation to the CSC, if and when they have taken their ideas a bit further.

4. Grant Road Improvement Plan. Dave Perkins, Project Manager for the Grant Road Improvement Plan Consultant Team, presented an update on the project using a powerpoint presentation. Highlights included:

- The project planning area extends along Grant Road, between Oracle and Swan Roads.
- Grant Road will be a 6-lane divided arterial.
- The project team is preparing for public open houses in mid-October, at which time the proposed alignment will be revealed.
- For planning purposes, the Grant Road project area was divided into three segments: East, Central and West.
- The project is utilizing a relatively new planning approach called “Context Sensitive Design Solutions”. This approach begins with extensive outreach to the public. The Grant Road team undertook its outreach in 2007 and collected about 4,000 comments, which were presented to a Citizens Task Force for its discussion, and for the development of a Mission Statement and Guiding Principles. The latter can be viewed on-line at www.grantroad.info
- After the development of the Mission Statement and Guiding Principles, two workshops were held in 2008 with the community. The workshop attendance was as follows:

- OARP Team will double-check Special Exception conditions to verify if the motel sign was addressed.



**Actions Taken/
Follow-Up Required**

Meeting Agenda & Discussions

East segment: 78 table participants
Central segment: 88 table participants
West Segment: 36 table participants
Total attendance: 287

- At the workshops, several potential street cross-sections were developed by the participants.
- Last May, workshop results were presented to the Grant Road Citizens Task Force, and an overall street design was proposed, as well as how to address specific issues, segment by segment.
- The project team requested the Grant Road Citizens Task Force to endorse the following project-wide design concepts:
 - For the standard right-of-way (ROW):
 - 6-lane divided roadway
 - 137-foot-wide ROW, with landscaping along the route and the median that will allow for water harvesting
 - 8-foot-wide sidewalk with 10-foot landscaping separating pedestrian from traffic
 - 6-foot-wide bike lane
 - For the areas where access will be provided for businesses and residential areas:
 - 160-foot-wide ROW
 - 8-foot-wide sidewalk with 12-foot landscaping separating pedestrian from traffic
 - 7-foot-wide on-street parking on one side of the street, a 10-foot wide local access lane and a 10-foot wide side median separating the local traffic from the drive-through traffic
 - 6-foot-wide bike lane
- Bicycle mobility and safety improvements:
 - Enhanced bike lane (6-foot-wide, with a 1-foot-wide buffer, thermoplastic conflict area)
 - Parallel bike boulevards
 - Toucan bike and pedestrian crossings at Dodge, Palo Verde, Treat and 6th Avenue
 - Bicycle amenities at bus stops
- Crossings and median openings:
 - 48 pedestrian crossings (signalized intersections, some PELICAN – similar to the intersection on Campbell south of Grant)
 - 4 toucan crossings
- Enhanced bus stops:
 - Bus pullouts
 - Lighting
 - Bike parking
 - Landscaping
 - Water harvesting
 - Wayfinding signs
 - Benches
- Indirect left turns at 7 arterial intersections:
 - Increased pedestrian refuge



Meeting Agenda & Discussions

**Actions Taken/
Follow-Up Required**

- Combination signal and PELICAN at 600-700 feet
- Enhanced bus stops
- Increased capacity along Grant
- Vehicle delay reduction of 42%
- Fuel use reduction of about 9%
- Travel time reduction of 27%
- Reduced pedestrian crossing distance of 15%
- Crash incidence reduction of 16%
- Reduction of ROW needed at intersections
- Rain water harvesting themes – Water will be collected from the medians and pedestrian routes
- Once endorsement was reached for the entire project, workshops were held this summer with the public to discuss alignment options
- Results were presented to the Grant Road Citizens Task Force, were the following topics were discussed: guiding principles, red-flag properties, historic districts, neighborhood associations, land use, real estate.
- Grant Road Citizens Task Force discussed and made endorsements, parcel by parcel.
- Simulated photo improvements at Grant and 6th Avenue was presented to the Grant Road Task Force, showing how a Tucan would look like.
- Next steps:
 - 3 Open Houses in October: 10/15/08, 8:00 PM (western segment); 10/16/08, 8:00 PM (central segment); 10/18/08, 4:00 PM (eastern segment)
 - Property owner meetings and briefings
 - 30-day public review and comment on proposed alignment
 - November: Task Force review of public input and development of preferred concept
 - December: Finalize preferred alignment concept
 - January: Grant Road Task Force recommends preferred alignment to the Mayor and Council

CSC members and the audience asked the following questions or made the following comments:

- *CSC Member:* Do you have visuals on what the Oracle/Grant intersection will look like?
Dave Perkins: No. It is expensive to create the photo simulations.
- *CSC Member:* The OARP's CSC would like to see a simulation for Oracle and Grant.
Rebecca Ruopp: We will explore the possibility of creating one with the Grant Road team.
- *CSC Member:* Motorcycle sales are up. The design being proposed is dangerous to inexperienced motorcycle drivers, mixed with anxious automobile drivers. Motorcycles need to be considered in the design.
- *CSC Member:* A visual for the Grant/Oracle intersection is important, since it is the entryway from the freeway. Also, no public transportation was available for those without cars to attend the night and weekend meetings for the Grant Road

- OARP Team will explore the possibility of obtaining a photo simulation for the intersection of Grant and Oracle



**Actions Taken/
Follow-Up Required**

Meeting Agenda & Discussions

- project. Also, no meetings were held on the western segment of the project.
Dave Perkins: 35 meetings were held with the neighborhood associations.
- *CSC Member:* The Pascua Yaqui and the Adelanto Neighborhood Associations were not invited to those meetings. Additionally, Tucson House residents have been very vocal about the lack of effort on behalf of the project to integrate their concerns. No assumptions should be made.
Rebecca Ruopp: The OARP team can assist in forwarding information related to the Grant Road project to the CSC.
 - *CSC Member:* Could you please provide the website address:
Dave Perkins: www.grantroad.info
 - *CSC Member:* What are the mechanics for financing the project?
Dave Perkins: Revenues generated by the approved RTA Plan will provide the funding. The largest part of that funding will be dedicated to land acquisition.
 - *CSC Member:* How will the money be allocated for specific intersections?
Dave Perkins: Once the design concept is reached, the phasing will be determined.
 - *CSC Member:* When is construction going to commence?
Dave Perkins: Construction dollars will be available in 2013.
 - *Audience member:* Consideration of the crime element should be incorporated into the design of the bus stops, including video cameras and voice-recognition software to help identify criminals.
Dave Perkins: We have not reached that level of detail, but we have met with Tucson Police, and crime was discussed.
 - *Audience member:* Could you please explain how wide the cross-sections are?
Dave Perkins: Currently the proposal is 300 driveways along Grant. By consolidating driveways, local access lanes will be needed. At those points, a wider cross section will be needed (160 feet). The rest of the alignment will have 137-foot wide cross section.
 - *Audience member:* Will the landscaping help to prevent flooding (lost her car last month due to lack of flood signage at Tucson Blvd).
Dave Perkins: This is not a drainage project. Flooding issues need to be addressed at a more regional level. For this project, storm drainage will be installed, and water harvesting will be included.
 - *CSC Member:* Is there a budget for the project?
Dave Perkins: Not yet.
 - *CSC Member:* Does this project also address excess traffic from Alvernon?
Dave Perkins: Yes.
 - *CSC Member:* How secure is the money for expanding the number of buses along Grant Road?
Dave Perkins: The dollar amount has been allocated by the RTA.
 - *CSC Member:* Will the project address the long-term maintenance of the plants and trees in the landscape areas?
Dave Perkins: Details of required financing will be reached in January 2009.
Rebecca Ruopp: Maintenance is always an issue in any project.
Dave Perkins: Maintenance will be required. Further input can be provided



Meeting Agenda & Discussions

**Actions Taken/
Follow-Up Required**

through the project’s website address.

7:00 – 7:10 PM Break

5. Historic Context Study

OARP Team Member Rebecca Ruopp indicated that the Historic Context Study is currently being reviewed in detail, and will inform the CSC of the results of the review. Rebecca also indicated the purpose of the Study; before getting into more specific recommendations like land use, the OARP will need to be sensitive to the historic elements in the area – the Assessment will provide the “red flags” ahead, and will provide us with the historic nature of the area, to be used as an asset.

OARP Team will provide CSC with a report of the review of the Historic Resource Assessment

Consultant Demion Clinco proceeded with the presentation of the draft Assessment:

- What is a Context Study? It provides the framework for evaluating historic resources relative to specific themes.
- Demion Clinco provided a historic overview of the area (from 1493 with the Spanish colonization of the Americans, to 1912, when Arizona became a State).
- The Oracle Area development could be characterized as occurring over 5 distinct periods:

First Period- Early Automotive Impacts and Shrinking Western Landscape (1899-1920):

- Cars were available only for the very wealthy
- There was no infrastructure in place to support cars
- Tucson’s first accident involved running into a Sahuaro
- Oracle Area was undeveloped and owned by 3 people
- There was no highway system. Entrepreneurs began creating networks at a regional level, encouraging drivers to use the Old Spanish Trail.

Second Period - From Roadway to Highway:

- Roadway businesses began to emerge
- Autocamps were established
- At the corner of Drachman and Oracle, the first autocamp was established in 1927, which later became an auto court (Ramson’s Court, demolished in 1947)
- Neon signage was introduced

Third Period - Miracle Mile and the Entrepreneurs (1937-1941):

- First highway built in Arizona (Miracle Mile), completed in 1938

Fourth Period - WWII to Development of I-10:

- National freeway system was established
- Oracle Area is unique – it was the only northern entrance into Tucson

Fifth Period - End of an Era: The Decline of the Corridor (1958-1978):

- Cars began to drive faster and began using I-10
- Motels began to convert into adult-oriented businesses
- Movie filmed in 1974 in the Oracle Area

- A map showing properties built before 1968 was shown. Those colored in green are identified as potentially contributing properties to the National Register of Historic Places. Those properties colored in red are considered to be



Meeting Agenda & Discussions

**Actions Taken/
Follow-Up Required**

“compromised” (they may not be able to be contributing properties).

- Demion Clinco looked at 133 properties in the Oracle Area – the corridor itself is really the defining feature.
- A Historic Residential Evaluation was done. The following neighborhoods may qualify to be considered historic districts:
 - Barrio Blue Moon – There is enough integrity in the southern portion of the neighborhood
 - San Ignacio/Adelanto – Combined, these neighborhoods are significant culturally. Individual properties will need to be evaluated
 - Miracle Manor – Most of the neighborhood represents a transitional ranch district type of architecture
- Opportunities and Recommendations:
 - National Register of Historic Places (Barrio Blue Moon, San Ignacio/Adelanto, Miracle Manor neighborhoods)
 - Multiple Property Documentation (trailer courts, restaurants, motor courts, motels)
 - Neon Sign District (local zoning overlay with incentives to preserve old neon signs and introduce new ones)
 - Design Guidelines (incentive based) to stop loss of historic resources
 - Old Spanish Trail Auto Highway Centennial Celebration (currently being organized in Texas)
 - Historic Roadway Designation – good tool for historic management in the area; return name to Oracle Road from Main Street
 - Interpretive Signage and Street Improvements (including parallel parking)
- Examples of renovated hotels were cited (including Hotel San Jose, in Austin, Texas and another hotel in Palm Springs)

The following were comments received from CSC members and the audience:

- *CSC Member:* There are rumors that the sign code is going to be revised. This is an opportunity for neon signage.
Rebecca Ruopp: Will check on that. Another way is to create an overlay zone.
- *CSC Member:* 20 years ago people were complaining about signage along Speedway. Many of the signs were torn down. Signs should be put back up along Oracle.
Demion Clinco: Agree. Signs can provide lots of character.
- *CSC Member:* Will the Study be available to the CSC.
Rebecca: Yes. OARP Team will go through the report and will provide copies to the CSC, and info will be posted on the web as well.
- *CSC Member:* Is there a list of the properties available?
Demion Clinco: Yes. Each property was evaluated.
- *CSC Member:* Have you considered the area south of Drachman as historic?
Demion Clinco: Both sides of Drachman should be included as part of a historic corridor.
- *CSC Member:* What about monument signs?
Rebecca Ruopp: Will check on that and will report at the next meeting.
- *CSC Member:* This is the kind of study that was needed. Piece by piece things keep disappearing. We should preserve motels and signs that are left. Land

OARP Team will investigate tools to preserve and encourage the development of neon signage

OARP Team will investigate tools to preserve monument signs



**Actions Taken/
Follow-Up Required**

Meeting Agenda & Discussions

speculation impacts the historic nature of the community.

- *CSC Member:* Significant buildings should not be lost. This is an opportunity not only for signs, but also for buildings. The long-term economic impact of historic preservation should be addressed.
- *CSC Member:* Executive Suites, College Place, and other motels hosted the actors that participated in movies filmed in Tucson.
Demion Clinco: Encountered very little information about the motels where actors stayed.
- *CSC Member:* Mr. Robert Shelton (who used to run Old Tucson Studios) would be a good resource.
Rebecca Ruopp: Joe Yee may also have information. The UofA's Leadership Program students are still thinking on what they will be working on – we suggested a project related to the local history.
- *CSC Member:* AAA travel books from the 50's provide a lot of info.
- *Audience member:* Yahoo!'s website "Benching Tucson" is also a good resource.

6. Call to the Audience

No further comments or questions were received from the audience.

7. Next CSC Meeting (Wednesday, October 29, 2008) – Preliminary Agenda Items

- *Regular Business*
- *Revitalization Goals & Strategies – Second Draft*
- *Results of 9/25/08 Business Networking Event*

8. Closure of Meeting (8:10 PM)

Darel Magee made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Martina O'Brien seconded the motion, and CSC members voted unanimously to adjourn.