



# GRANT ROAD *Improvement Plan*



www.grantroad.info



This project is managed by the City of Tucson.

For more information please visit [www.grantroad.info](http://www.grantroad.info) or call the project hotline at 624-4727.

## GRANT ROAD IMPROVEMENT PLAN TASK FORCE

March 4, 2014

Tucson Association of Realtors, 2445 North Tucson Boulevard, Tucson Arizona 85716

5:30 P.M.

### MEETING RESULTS

#### MEETING TOPICS

- Brief Update on Urban Overlay District
- Project Update and Phase 2 Design Issues
- Preview of March 22, 2014 Phase 1 Walk Through

#### TASK FORCE PARTICIPANTS

Susan Alexander	Henry Jacobson	Moon Joe Yee
Andrew Jones	Jay Young	Rebecca Ramey
Beverly Rutter	John Wakefield	Robert Tait
Dale Calvert	Joseph Maher	Roy Garcia
David Sunderman	Linda Marie Small	Susan Alexander

#### TASK FORCE MEMBERS NOT IN ATTENDANCE

- Jim Hogan
- Jay Young
- Wayne Cullop

#### Call to Order

Quorum was established. The meeting was called to order by the facilitator, Nanci Beizer.

#### Project Team & Task Force Introductions

The Project Team and the Task Force introduced themselves. Since the last meeting there have been some changes and additions to the Project Team. They are outlined in the table below.

Name	Department	Role in Project
Beth Abramovitz	Tucson Department of Transportation (TDOT)	New Project Manager
Alejandro Angel	Psomas Engineering	Engineering Project Manager- Design of Phase 2 of Grant Road
Nicole Ewing-Gavin Rebecca Ruopp	Office of Integrated Planning (OIP)	Coordinate projects that cross multiple departments and have significant public involvement
Jim Mozzocco	Development Service Department (DSD)	Implement the Urban Overlay District (UOD)

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.

Approved April 1, 2014

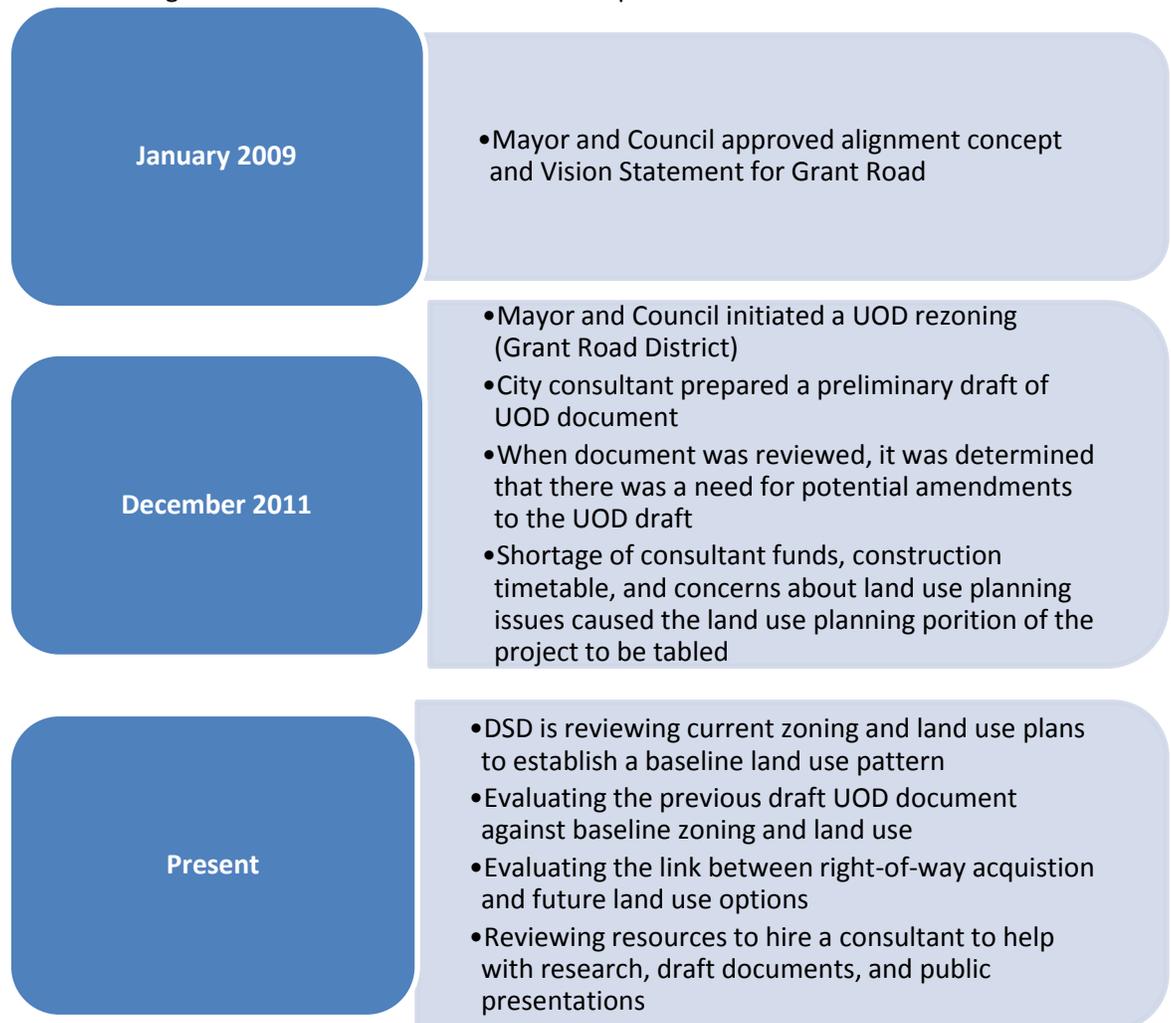
Dorothy Weideman	City of Tucson Real Estate	Manage communication and property acquisition with property owners
Myrlene Francis	Tierra Right of Way	Assist in property acquisition and other real estate services

### Review and Approve February 26, 2013 and October 17, 2013 Meeting Summaries

The Task Force reviewed and approved the February 26, 2013 and October 17, 2013 Meeting Summaries.

### Brief Update on Urban Overlay District

Jim Mozzocco, DSD, provided the Task Force with a brief presentation regarding the Urban Overlay District and the potential application to the Grant Road Corridor. Below is a timeline of the work that has been completed or is currently in progress. Mr. Mozzocco explained that the UOD will create a flexible zoning option and can accommodate flexible development standards for parking, landscaping, loading, alley access, etc. When refining the land use document, the Task Force Guiding Principles will be incorporated into the final product. In the future, a Task Force meeting will be held to discuss the UOD in depth.



### Task Force Questions & Comments

- Does DSD introduce this concept to Mayor and Council and ask for its approval? It would be initiated by you?
  - An urban overlay is a rezoning. A rezoning goes to our zoning examiner and then goes to Mayor and Council for approval. Once approved, we would change our zoning map. The UOD would get triggered by properties that choose to use it.
- When this (UOD document) is finalized, will the citizens be able to look at it and say anything more about it prior to it going to Mayor and Council?
  - Yes, it would go to the Task Force for review and then it would go to Mayor and Council. There is a requirement for a neighborhood meeting prior to going to a zoning examiner.
- What decisions and input will the Task Force have going forward in relation to the UOD? Does the delay (Task Force meetings/ project team progress with UOD) have to do with what happened with the overlay on West University and the controversy?
  - The delay occurred due to lack of funding. We need to evaluate the Task Force Vision and Guiding Principles and see how it can be applied to the specifics of an UOD document. For example building height, uses, transit stops, etc. The Task Force will be making the key decisions in regards to opportunities the UOD provides and to what intensity.
- Have we approved a UOD for the entire corridor? Are we doing a custom Grant Road Overlay? Are we trying to implement transit? Are we changing the alignment? The UOD has gotten such a bad rap, when really, it is better than the zoning that is currently there. The customized strip of an overlay should be good enough where Jefferson Park Neighborhood Association opts into the process.
  - The UOD is a process that you can use as a potential rezoning. It will be customized to Grant Road. The Grant Road Task Force Vision and Guiding Principles document discusses transit. No, we do not plan to change the alignment.
  - We would like to come back to you in May-June when a consultant is on board to discuss the UOD specifically. We wanted to give you a preliminary update on the status.
- With Jefferson Park Neighborhood, what is the legal basis for them opting out of the UOD for property owners along Grant Road, which will result in property owners not having the same choices as other property owners along Grant Road?
  - The Mayor and Council makes the decision on the UOD boundaries. We would like to produce a document that is enticing and can be supported by all neighborhoods.
- I would like to point out that we have 14 members here, 5 of the members are new. The 5 new members were not in the decision making process. That is approximately 30%. There needs to be a presentation to the entire group to bring everyone up to speed. We all need to talk on the same page, it would make the conversation more effective. I would like to summarize something I remember; the Task Force wanted to do a UOD for the entire corridor. Once the neighborhood objected to it, we retracted.

There are many neighbors that do not know what an overlay zone means. Before, we were talking about buying into the overlay zone without jeopardizing the existing zoning. This is a new element that the City may ask to use to contribute to the design.

- When do they plan to get a consultant?
  - We have an on call planning solicitation. We will have several consultants to review from that pool. I think it is safe to say that we can come back sometime in May 2014.

## **Project Update and Discussion of Phase 2 Design Issues**

### ***Project Status***

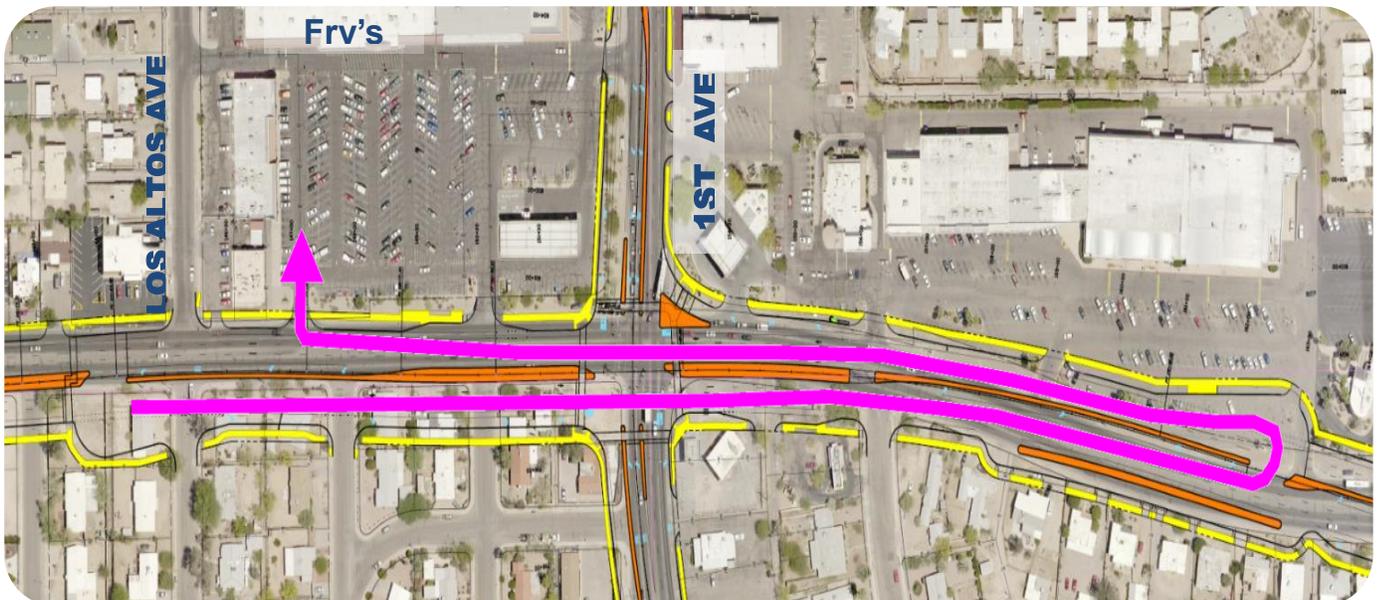
Phase 2 of the project extends 1.2 miles from Castro Avenue (just west of Stone Avenue) to Fremont Avenue (just east of Park Avenue). There will be two indirect left turns; one on Stone Avenue and one on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue. The 30% design plans were completed in November 2013 and the 60% design plans are anticipated to be completed in summer 2014. Currently, RTA Main Street has started business outreach. Additionally, Real Property and Tierra Right of Way have started to coordinate with property owners and tenants and have begun the relocation planning process.

Based on the RTA Value Analysis, it was determined that it would be cost effective and advantageous to the project schedule to combine the Alvernon and Swan segments. A design consultant has been selected for this portion of the roadway improvements.

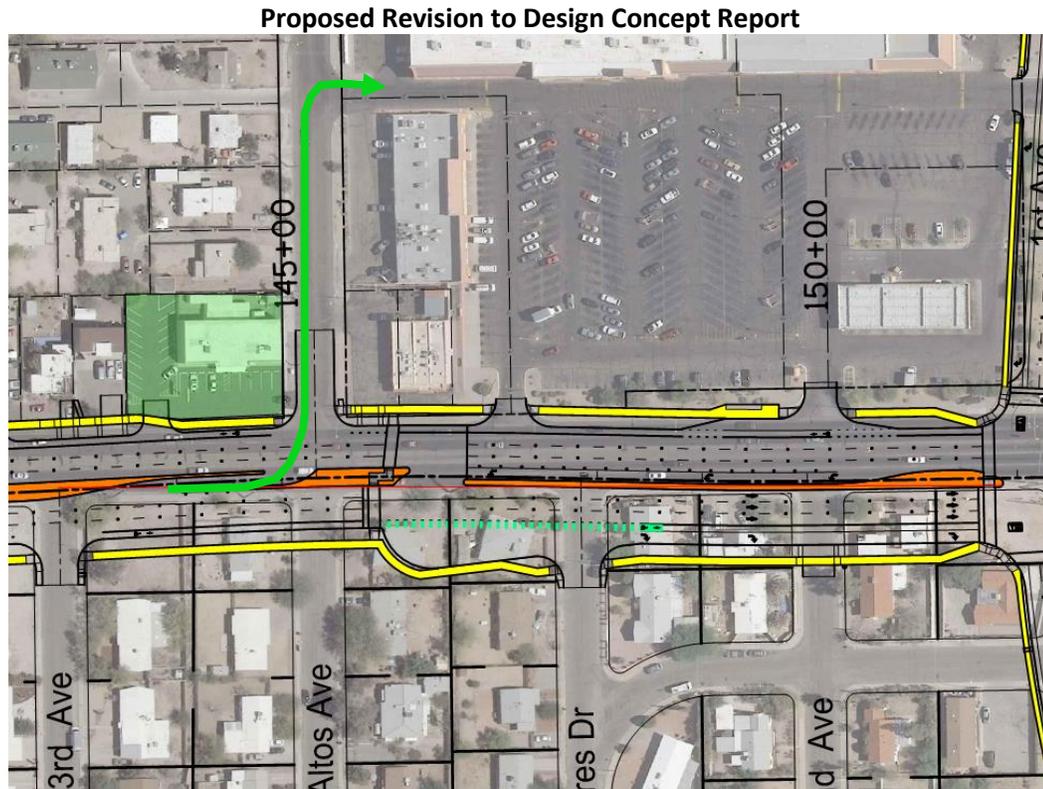
### ***Potential Revisions to the Design Concept Report***

After the design consultant evaluated the Design Concept Report, it was recommended that two potential revisions be considered. The first revision is regarding the **west bulb-out** (u-turn area) at Grant Road and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue. Below is an image that is reflective of the current design.

**Current Design in Design Concept Report**



With the current design as shown, it is challenging to eastbound traffic to access the Fry's retail center. There is an increased travel distance of 0.65 miles. To mitigate these issues the proposed revision is suggested (please see the image below):



The images represented above show the potential revisions to the Design Concept Report. They include:

- Shift blub for the indirect left east 200 ft.
  - No change or compromise in indirect left turn storage
  - Left in to the shopping center from E. Los Altos
- Improving business acquisition
  - Avoids acquisition of WABA Hair & Beauty
  - Avoids acquisition of Mandarin Grill
- Direct inbound access to retail

#### **Task Force Discussion Regarding Revision 1**

- Does this change the acquisitions to the south side?
  - There is no change to the acquisitions of the south side, but it avoids acquisitions on the north side.
- What does the green dotted line in the diagram represent?
  - This is what the City is using to represent the bike lane in areas of conflict.
- Can you make a left out of the shopping center?
  - No you cannot.
- Is there a signal for the new left?

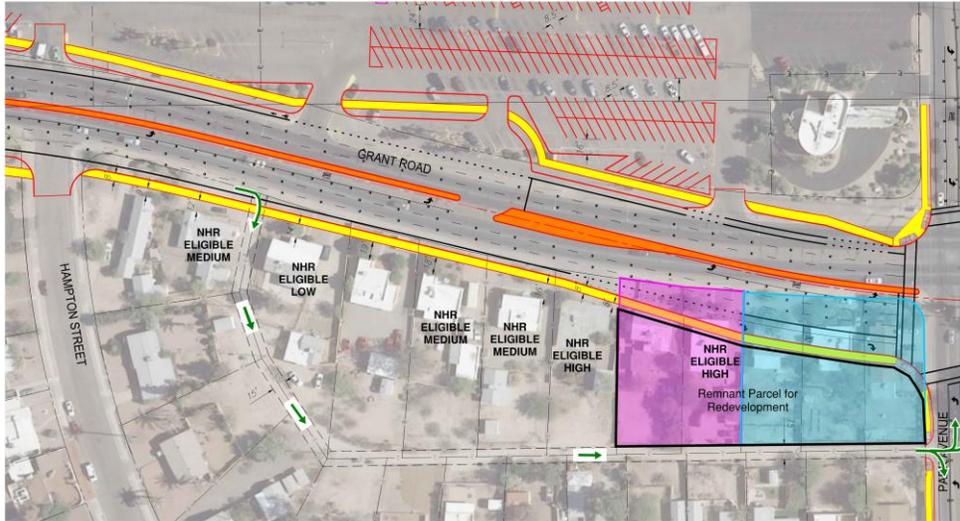
- No, this is just a standard median. There is a signal at 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and a signal where you would make the U-turn.

The second revision pertains to the **east bulb-out** on Grant Road and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue. The placement of the east bulb out has the following history outlined in the table below.

Time Period	Bulb-Out Placement	Impacts	Acquisitions	Feedback
2008- prior to final alignment being approved by Mayor and Council	Bulb out was placed in an ideal location (west of final DCR alignment)	Negative impacts to the shopping center due to loss of parking, eliminated drive through at the bank, and access to gas station	Acquisition of 3 homes	Based on comments from the public hearing and impacts to the shopping center, <b>Mayor and Council</b> directed the project team to provide a new placement for the bulb
2010	Based on direction from Mayor and Council, the bulb out was shifted east. This was an attempt to mitigate impacts to the shopping center.	Bulb out is very close to signal at Park Avenue which surfaces safety concerns.  5 of the 9 houses remain within a 10 ft. of sidewalk. There is inconvenient access to homes, loss of parking at the shopping center, substandard turn lanes at Park Avenue.	Acquisition of 3 homes  9 homes intended to remain, but 5 houses within a 10 ft. of sidewalk	Psomas evaluated bulb out location for TDOT. TDOT requested that Psomas present design alternatives. It was determined by TDOT staff to shift bulb out west to mitigate impacts.
2014	Bulb out was shifted west and south of 2010 placement	Greater impacts on homes: 2-9 additional acquisitions needed depending on alternative selected.  Impacts vary based on the design alternative selected.  Mitigates conflicts between signals, creates sufficient turn lane storage at Park Avenue, and provides better parking & access to shopping center.  One of the alternatives provides opportunity to improve drainage conditions in area.	Acquisition of 5 homes  7 homes remain	The design team developed the two design alternatives that have been approved by TDOT. The alternatives will be presented to Task Force and the Jefferson Park Neighborhood Association to gather input.

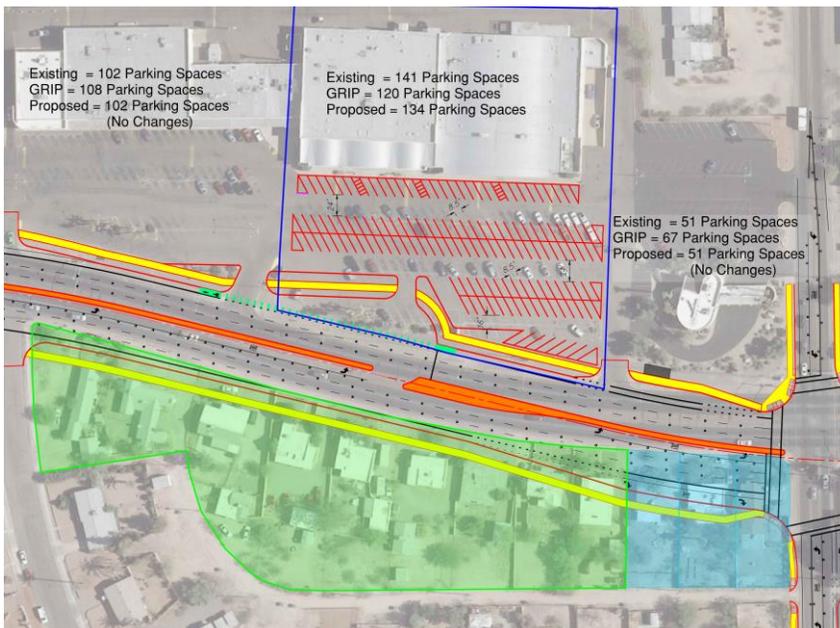
After discussing the bulb-out history and the revised design, the project team provided the Task Force with two design alternatives using the current 2014 bulb placement.

**Alternative A- Save as many houses as possible.** This alternative (shown graphically below) saves 7 houses. There will be two additional houses acquired than what was outlined in the Design Concept Report. Although the 7 houses will remain, the only access to the homes will be from the alley. There will no longer be access to the homes from Grant Road.



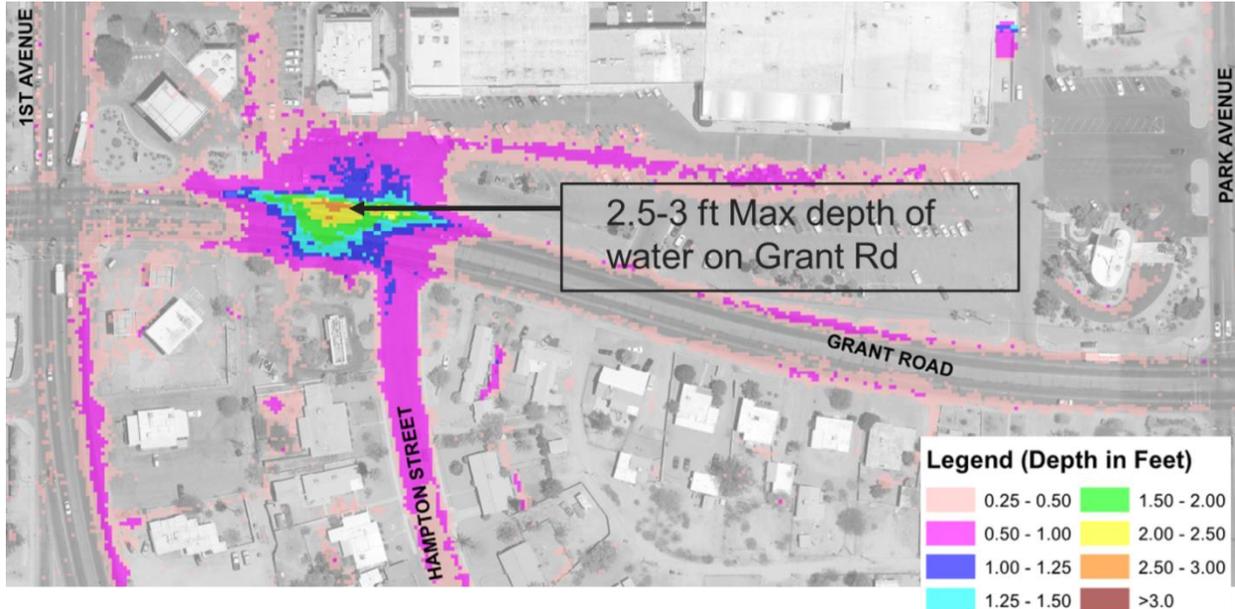
**Alternative B – Acquire houses and improve drainage**

As stated in the previous Task Force meeting, there is significant ponding in this segment (Phase 2) of Grant Road after severe storms. There is not a feasible method to ‘dry’ the road. Alternative B suggests that 9 more homes (than what was anticipated in the DCR) be acquired. Acquiring the homes would allow the project team to institute a drainage basin in the remnant area. The drainage basin would mitigate flooding on Grant Road. Additionally, the use of a detention basin could provide a landscape buffer, active/passive recreation, and public art opportunities.

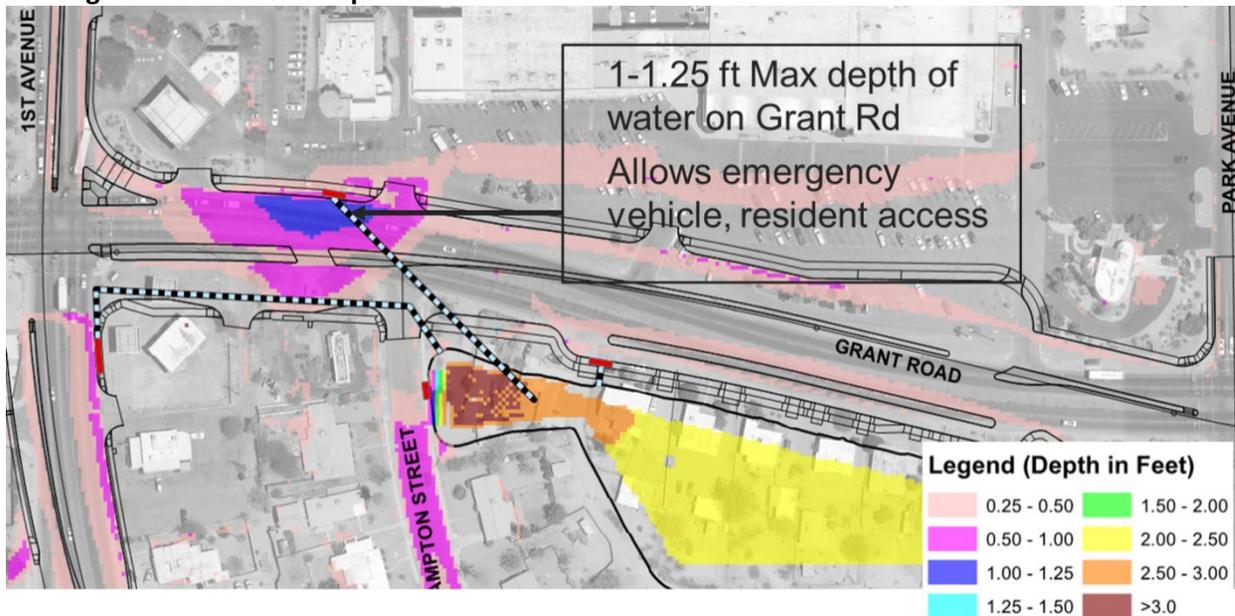


The results of the drainage improvements are graphically represented below.

### Drainage Conditions without Improvements



### Drainage Conditions with Improvements



### Task Force Discussion Regarding Revision 2

- If you have driven on Grant Road in a big storm, there are significant drainage issues. It seems to me that the project team needs to do the catch basin.
- A and B are the only alternatives being presented – is there an Alternative C? If the project is going to take that much property on the south side of the street? Why do you need that much acquisition on the north side?
  - The issue is that shifting the alignment is a ripple effect. If we shifted the alignment south, we would need to shift it south west of 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue as well. Consequently, more

homes would be taken. We are also constrained by the location of the new Walgreens and Sausage Deli, which prevents shifting the alignment further south.

- Is there a significant cost difference in the two alternatives? I think we need some input from the neighborhood. I think if we can detain the water, it would be a definite improvement to Grant Road.
  - The cost of constructing the frontage road is almost the same as constructing the basin.
- The people on the Neighborhood Association board are typically not as impacted. I would like to hear from the people who are directly impacted. This moment of buy in could win over future support from Jefferson Park in the overlay district. I really want to hear the opinion of the people directly impacted.
  - We are sending impacted property owners a letter, which will serve as an invitation to the Jefferson Park Neighborhood Association meeting. We hope to hear their feedback at the meeting.
- I think that the catch basin sounds like a good idea, but if presented incorrectly we could alienate Jefferson Park, if presented well, we could win them over. I have the concern that open space can become mosquito haven and trash ridden. Who is responsible for maintenance?
  - The contractor would be responsible during the establishment period (first 2-3 years), City crews would be responsible thereafter.
- I have a question about the drainage map – it seems like an alarmist map. All of this is based on a flood that could happen once in 100 years? Isn't this ludicrous?
  - It is a hard area to get through the roadway with a significant storm.
- If it would be difficult to enter and exit the properties, would those property owners really want to live on Grant Road? It seems like common sense to make the change. I agree that we need to hear from the neighborhood. There is a park behind Coffee Exchange that is very lush and green with hardly any trash.
- The City has responsibility for risk management – emergency vehicles need to be able to travel through the roadway in a timely manner, especially when the roadway has just been improved. We don't know when the next 100 year flood will come about.
  - The design criteria for most agencies requires the valuation of a 100 year storm. In fact, FEMA evaluates the need for flood insurance based on the same event.
- If there is no drainage slated for this segment, our best option is probably the retention basin. Are the houses worth saving? What is the cost of demolition versus the cost of moving the properties?
  - As the historic preservation officer, I can only speak to their historic designation. The majority are considered historic properties.
  - The cost of moving the houses is significantly greater than acquiring them.
- If you have open space, will it be enclosed with fencing? Do you think someone would pick up the trash and keep the green space looking nice?
  - We haven't thought that far in terms of fencing for the park. In terms of maintenance, it will be built in to the contractor's contract to maintain the park for the first 3 years. After that the City will maintain the park.
- If the houses weren't so close to the road, there probably wouldn't be a taking. The only options being show are a basin or a roadway. Is there an option 'c' that could be presented?

Those open parcels could be developed for commercial use. Additionally, it feels to me that there is somewhat of a parallel process going on. Jefferson Park is being talked to outside of the Task Force process versus solely going through the Task Force. This generally makes me feel uncomfortable.

- Under Alternative A, we can't use the 5 houses for the drainage mitigation because the drainage problem is where the other 7 houses are located. If we do the basin, we may not need everything. The properties not needed may have the potential to be redeveloped.
- Looking at Alternative A, those houses currently have access off of Grant Road. Is the access to the properties via the alley way practical?
  - We would like to create practical access to these houses.
  - As part of the evaluation process, any damages to the property is accounted for and compensated in the appraisal process.
- In regards to the potential option 'c' (commercial development) that a previous Task Force member suggested, can we take more parcels and redevelop the area? Can we do underground catchment basins like they do on Swan Road? This seems like an opportunity to save the future water development for the City of Tucson.
  - We did preliminarily look at doing underground water harvesting. That would qualify as active water harvesting. There is significant cost in the infrastructure and maintenance.
- Are any of the historical properties owner occupied?
  - The majority of the 12 homes are rental properties.
- The issue of recognizing the major water problem was not considered until the current level of plan design. When setting the roadway alignment, we did not know the drainage problem. This is a new problem as far as the water is concerned.
  - The water problem is a regional problem, it is not specific to Grant Road. Now, we are trying to be opportunistic. We can't do this for the entire corridor.
- We keep talking about redevelopment, we can't acquire property for redevelopment. These properties are currently zoned as residential. It's not the mandate of the City to redevelop, it's up to the property owners.
- The redevelopment could be addressed in the UOD.
- To clarify my comment earlier, I understand we can't acquire property for the City to redevelop. The overlay zone should set the stage for the private market to redevelop in the future. We are talking about taking 7 properties in the historic district. This strikes me as extreme to say that it is not okay to redevelop, but it is okay to put a catch basin there.
  - We do plan to go to Jefferson Park and gather their input.
- When they were doing the Oracle Road improvements, did you go to the neighborhood associations and spend as much time worrying about them as you do Jefferson Park? I think the businesses on the south side of the street should be at the Jefferson Park meeting as well. The catch basin impacts them. They might actually like the catch basin because it could make it a better view.
- We did have west end meetings and worked in conjunction with OIP.
- I went to the west end meetings. I was impressed by the level of involvement.

- Jefferson Park is a total homeowner association. There are not businesses in Jefferson Park. When we talk about the first section of Grant Road improvements on Oracle Road and Jefferson Park you aren't comparing apples and apples.
- My experience and understanding is that any group of citizens impacted by this project can contact the Task Force, project manager, or Ward 3. I attended the meetings for the Oracle segment. The meetings were well attended. If you ask for attention, you will be given attention.
- I think that the concept that the neighborhood association can vote about what happens to the properties is not fair because the people affected are the property owners. That is one concern I have. Jefferson Park has had closed back door meetings in the past. Some of the staff went to those meeting. There were select people from Jefferson Park invited. I think that is wrong and generates negative feelings.
  - We are going to make sure that the Jefferson Park meeting is properly announced. They will be presented a similar presentation as what you received tonight. Rebecca, from OIP, will be facilitating the meeting.
- Since this is a change in the Design Concept Report, do these changes need to be approved by Mayor and Council? We have the responsibility to make sure that the neighborhood association is aware of the changes and gather their input, however; it is not for the neighborhood association to decide.
  - The revisions are not considered a significant change to the Design Concept Report. They do not have to go back to Mayor and Council.
- I think it is totally appropriate to have the meeting with Jefferson Park because the revised design does affect their neighborhood. I think it is important to be upfront and transparent. The information would be helpful for the Task Force guidance as well.
- The Task Force sounds divided. I am not comfortable making a recommendation right now. I don't feel like I know enough facts. I don't think I understand the impact of the alternatives. I want the neighborhood association to know that the Task Force wants their feedback. At first glance, looking at this, I wouldn't want to live in the houses being saved. They are very close to the roadway.
- I understand that the meeting with Jefferson Park is important and appropriate. It has concerned me that there have been things going on that were not brought to the Task Force. We do represent the entire corridor. There are voices of people who are not heard. When I feel that there is special treatment, whether real or perceived – it is important to always remember that we represent everyone.
- What has the Jefferson Park neighborhood been told?
  - The Jefferson Park Neighborhood Association president has been contacted. It was explained that there were design issues coming up and that the project team would like to present those to the neighborhood.
- I am listening to the revisions to the Design Concept Report from a skewed point of view. It feels to me that this redesign could really sidetrack the overlay. How do we get the redesign and save the overlay?

#### **Preview of March 22, 2014 Walk Through of Phase 1 Project**

The Project Team along with the Task Force will participate on a Walk Through on March 22, 2014. The walk through will provide the Task Force with the opportunity to see how their work translated into the

final product. The Walk Through will provide an in depth look at the indirect left turn, transit stops, landscaping, shade structures, public art, lighting, pedestrian environment, ADA compliance, etc. Additionally, the Task Force will be able to provide feedback that will be incorporated in the lessons learned and future improvements to Grant Road.

### **Task Force Roundtable**

- I am on the Board of Catalina Vista Neighborhood Association. We are in the last segment of the roadway improvements. Constituents keep asking if anything can happen to improve the road prior to 2023.
- It's good to have eyes back on the project, I hope it continues. There are new members, a new phase, and not enough discussion about expectations moving forward. I would like to see more discussion on the Task Force. For example, how much longer will we be involved and what kind of decisions will we be making.
- I hope my remarks about Jefferson Park were not construed as disparaging. I applaud the neighborhood association. They have worked hard. One year ago, they seemed to have a bigger voice. The neighborhood needs to be dealt with fairly. The UOD is the end goal.
- I have optimism and a positive attitude that the UOD will get done. With great planning and design, anything can be done. The UOD is the key. More time should be spent on the UOD. Jefferson Park needs to be handled properly and can be a prototype for others. I think both alternatives presented tonight are OK, but incomplete. The houses kept could be commercial, the houses gone could be saved.
- As a new member, it is hard to grasp new information pertaining to the UOD and Jefferson Park. Phase 3 & 4 being combined is a new bombshell to me. Was this a random decision or a plan? Why do we have to wait to hire new consultants before you move to the next phase? Why aren't the phases continuous?
- I am impressed by the questions and participation from new members.
- I am always impressed with the process, new member participation, and I am happy to be here.
- I liked the presentation and listening to everyone's comments.

### **Call to Audience**

Three members of the audience addressed the Task Force. Their comments were as follows:

- Mike Bosnos – My wife and I have property on Grant Road. For property owners with adjacent parcels that are not all in the overlay zone, what can be done to allow for our future development? In a case like this, could there be some consistency for individuals who own adjacent parcels. In our neighborhood, there are a lot of problems with crime. Is there a schedule for when the City will acquire 3002 E. Grant? What is the best way to stay updated with project activity?
- Carl Noggle – I represent Samos neighborhood. It seems that at the start of the Grant Road project we had a lot of meetings. It was a really nice process. I don't see a lot of what has come out of that process reflected in what Grant Road is now. Grant Road is like a freeway. I would like to prevent what is happening on Speedway and Park, with the 14 story buildings, happen

on Grant Road. I hope Grant Road won't be open for rapid development. There doesn't seem to be plans to run along Grant Road. Thank you all for listening.

- Judith Anderson- Represents Ward 3. I appreciate the hard work you are doing and fighting for transparency.

**Adjournment**

8:30 pm