

# SILVERBELL ROAD, GRANT ROAD TO INA ROAD

## Open House Comments and Responses – May 23, 2013

COMMENT: Speed limit of 40 MPH – Thank you! Even 35 MPH would work.

COMMENT: How to reduce the heat retaining asphalt? The Office of Conservation and Sustainable Development knows about this. Could Tucson get an exception from ADA requiring heat island paths on both sides, and just do one side and gravel on the other? Even with pedestrian flashing lights would it not be about the same cost to put gravel and crossing lights on one side and concrete on the other as to put concrete and asphalt?

**RESPONSE:** *The heat island effect is a real issue in growing urban areas. Addressing this effect while creating a multi-modal environment that reduces auto travel, encourages a healthier lifestyle through walking and biking, meets ADA requirements for pedestrian facilities, and provides the safest environment for pedestrians and cyclists is indeed a challenge. The City of Tucson will consider potential pedestrian path surface options relative to ADA requirements, durability, maintenance, and cost.*

COMMENT: Urge median lowered and curb cuts in many places to take advantages of the hundreds of gallons that fall on a little stretch of this wide road.

**RESPONSE:** *The median width is only wide enough at one location, just south of Goret Road, to provide enough vegetation for water harvesting to be beneficial. The median at this location will include curb cuts to take advantage of storm water runoff. However, the roadway and landscape design will utilize water harvesting extensively to irrigate vegetation in the shoulders.*

COMMENT: I strongly urge that heat island impact be included in any new asphalt or concrete project. It's a killer here.

**RESPONSE:** *The City of Tucson will consider potential pedestrian path surface options relative to ADA requirements, durability, maintenance, and cost.*

COMMENT: Concerned that with additional width, Silverbell will be attractive to semi truck traffic. Please ban large commercial trucks as it is now.

**RESPONSE: *The need for restriction of large trucks on Silverbell Road once it is improved will be determined by City of Tucson Engineering. If restrictions are deemed appropriate, an ordinance by the City Council will be required.***

COMMENT: Looking ahead to the next phase. Opening of 3333 N. Silverbell, turn in to the businesses to allow hay truck, trucks & trailer to enter and leave properly. This is a concern to me as a business owner. Also, the slope to the entrance.

**RESPONSE: *As shown on the preliminary plans included in the Design Concept Report, a median opening is planned for the driveway at this location. Since the roadway will be raised to allow for a new drainage culvert across Silverbell Road, the existing driveway slope will be flattened.***

COMMENT: How can I learn the details of the proposed street lighting?

**RESPONSE: *You can contact Jason Simmers at Kittelson & Associates, jsimmers@kittelson.com to get more information regarding the street lighting design and luminaire specifications.***

COMMENT: Before the project starts in 2015, lighting by Silverbell nursery needs to be installed. Pedestrian was killed as recent as three years ago. Area between Grant to Goret is very dark during evening hours.

**RESPONSE: *Continuous roadway lighting from Goret Road to Grant Road will be included in the roadway improvements.***

COMMENT: I like the decorative concrete retaining walls. Native designs, cactus flowers, birds, desert animals, Native American symbols, motifs – anything depicting southwest culture.

**RESPONSE: *Thank you. This feedback will help both the project landscape architect and the project artist as they develop their designs.***

COMMENT: Please do not undertake Phase II (Goret to El Camino del Cerro) at the same time as I-10 and Ruthrauff construction. It will be impossible for any of us in the Camino del Cerro and Sunset Road areas to get into town. Please coordinate with other agencies to avoid this. Design should try to maintain rural feel of the area.

**RESPONSE:** *Specific timelines for construction of either the Silverbell section from Goret to El Camino or the I-10/Ruthrauff interchange will not be known for a while. However, the City and ADOT will coordinate these projects to minimize adverse impacts to access and mobility.*

COMMENT: Please consider another surface for ADA compliant paths. It can be met by other surface than rubberized asphalt.

**RESPONSE:** *While ADA compliant paths can be constructed using decomposed granite, gravel, or even dirt, maintenance of these surfaces often becomes a problem even when these materials are stabilized using a binder. As such, the City of Tucson prefers to use asphalt or concrete for sidewalks and multi-use paths.*

COMMENT: The improved Silverbell Road should follow the model of Silverbell Road between Ina Road and Cortaro Farms Road: Not with a curbed median but with a central turning lane. Diagram was provided.

**RESPONSE:** *The Silverbell design concept follows the improvements specified in the voter approved RTA plan which included a raised median between Grant Road and Sunset Road. Inclusion of a raised median between Sunset Road and Ina Road is the preferred cross section of Pima County, the Town of Marana, and the Silverbell Citizen's Task Force.*

COMMENT: No one from Ward 1 came to the meeting. I wanted to express my concern about the current condition of the roadway! If these changes do not start and take place until 2015, what is going to be done in the near future? The integrity of the roadway is horrible. It can't go without assistance until then. People now drive on the bike path – I am concerned what happens when there are bikes there.

Note: Diana Rhoades, Ward 1 City Council Aide, did attend the Open House meeting. She arrived after the introductions were made so attendees did not realize she had arrived.

**RESPONSE:** *Several open house attendees expressed concern regarding the condition of the pavement on Silverbell Road. While this project will replace the pavement between Grant and Goret, the condition of the pavement on the roadway section to the north is the responsibility of the transportation maintenance departments of the City of Tucson, Pima County, and Town of Marana. The City of Tucson has established a hotline, (520) 791-3154, that residents can call to report potholes. As pothole repair is a priority, City maintenance crew response is typically timely.*

COMMENT: The design meeting was good, thank you for the visuals and the people to answer questions. On the NW corner of Silver Vista and Silverbell Road there is to be a change to the culvert (drainage). Could that be located on the other side of Silver Vista? (SW corner). Less concrete and less intrusive to our neighborhood entry. If it must remain where it is, then please embed stones in the concrete, not scattered but close together to make the impact of all the concrete less obvious and less of a magnet for graffiti. Also, if there needs to be handrails, please match them to the existing rail on our bridge which is a 2" pipe, rusted. I would appreciate a call regarding the requested adjustments to the plan. Thank you.

***RESPONSE: Much of the inlet to the new Nursery Wash culvert crossing Silverbell Road is located within the existing roadway right-of-way. While a drainage easement will be required, moving it to the south side of Silver Vista would add substantial cost to connect the two culverts (new culvert under Silverbell and existing culvert under Silver Vista) as well as obtain new right-of-way. We will evaluate the potential to line the inlet/channel with rock to improve appearance and discourage graffiti.***

COMMENT: The plans are similar to earlier plans – we are looking forward to the road being more scenic, safe, and accessible to all modes of transportation. Our biggest complaint is how slow this process is. The west side has been overlooked – neglected for far too long. This area/roadway is especially important as part of the Anza Trail which is a scenic designation, and the Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area which is moving through Congress. After all, tourism = money.

***RESPONSE: Unfortunately, reduced funding associated with the downturn in the economy has significantly impacted the timeline for implementation of nearly all RTA projects. However, the City of Tucson, Pima County, Town of Marana and the RTA are committed to fulfilling their commitment to improving Silverbell Road. The significant cultural and historic importance of the Silverbell corridor is also a factor in the longer time required to implement the roadway improvements. Due to the high number of archaeological sites within the corridor, permitting from regulatory agencies, including the US Corps of Engineers and the State Historic Preservation Office, as well as recovery of the archaeological resources will take much longer than originally anticipated.***

COMMENT: This Thursday evening, I went to a design meeting regarding the improvements to Silverbell Road between Grant Road and Goret Road. The overall design looks wonderful and will make the area safer and much nicer looking. Construction of this section is due to begin in 2015. Before that there will be moving of water mains and electrical poles. When the speaker mentioned relocating the telephone poles, I raised my hand to ask why we are relocating the poles and not putting them underground. They told me that yes, it would be far better to underground them but TEP didn't want to spend the money. This is a major construction event where at one time or another, the entire road will be dug up. This is a perfect and rare chance to do it right, to get the poles underground where they are safer and not an eyesore. Is TEP's reluctance due to the fact that this is the west side, not a high priced area, so those of us in our small but treasured homes don't really count? Please help me to get TEP to consider under grounding our wires so that when this project is done we will all have something to be proud of. Would you forward a copy of this to the City of Tucson, TEP, and a news source, if possible?

**RESPONSE: A detailed response addressing the relocation options of the overhead TEP lines is provided on page 7 of this document.**

COMMENT: I live just off Silverbell west of Grant. Silverbell is worst west of Goret up to the street that becomes Ruthrauff than it is from Grant to Goret. Why not repair Silverbell all the way up? This road has been patched so much that the patches have patches.

**RESPONSE: Improving the section from Grant to Goret first is based on several factors, including traffic volumes, the level of surrounding development, and the minimal chance of encountering unknown archaeological sites. North of Goret, a substantial amount of archaeological recovery work will likely be required. It is critical that all archaeological recovery work is completed before roadway construction starts in order to minimize the potential for delays and substantially higher costs due to unknown archaeological sites. Simply put, constructing the Grant to Goret section is essentially easier than starting to the north.**

COMMENT: Will you be providing buffer walls? My house is three houses east of Silverbell just north of Grant, in the Ironwood neighborhood.

**RESPONSE: A noise study was conducted for Silverbell Road as part of the design concept study. The study identified several areas where noise levels of future traffic volumes could meet or exceed levels at which some form of mitigation should be considered. Given the reduced effectiveness of walls caused by openings for side streets and driveways, the recommended method of mitigation is the application of rubberized asphalt pavement.**

COMMENT: Relocating the telephone poles is not the best answer. To do this job right, the poles and wires need to be underground. For over a year's disruption of traffic, dust and noise, we all want a complete job. While the streets are torn up is the time to do this to make the area more attractive, safer and complete.

**RESPONSE: A detailed response addressing the relocation options of the overhead TEP lines is provided on page 7 of this document.**

COMMENT: My husband and I attended the May 23rd Open House that highlighted the proposed improvement project referenced above. We were favorably impressed by the various aspects of the project as shown by the different departments involved in the project. We were particularly interested in the question from the floor asking if the utility lines will be placed underground. The answer was that they would not be placed underground for various reasons, and that Tucson Electric Power was the agency responsible for that decision. Since the Open House, I have driven along Silverbell Road from Grant Road to Speedway to St. Mary's several times, using that stretch of roadway to get a feel for how the described improvements along Silverbell from Grant Rd to Goret Rd and beyond might look. That proposed road improvement will look just fine-with one notable exception. The utility poles along Silverbell from Grant to St. Mary's are underground. That single difference makes ALL the difference. The new four lanes of traffic, the pedestrian and bike facilities, the native landscaping and the improved roadway lighting look great in renderings, but the unsightliness of above-ground utility lines will, in reality, ruin the entire concept. Why would all the involved planning and coordinating departments be content to spend so much effort on a good project, only to have it sabotaged by ugliness? How did the stretch of Silverbell from Grant Road to St. Mary's find itself so favored with underground utilities, while the stretch from Grant Rd to Goret Rd. will not? Why is there to be a step-child section of road improvements in this area of the Silverbell corridor?

**RESPONSE: A detailed response addressing the relocation options of the overhead TEP lines is provided on page 7 of this document.**

## **RESPONSE: Relocation of TEP Overhead Power Lines -**

*Overhead electric sub-transmission (46kV) and distribution lines (14 kV) located on wooden and steel poles run primarily along the west side of Silverbell Road from Ina Road to Grant Road. Right-of-way records indicate that TEP has no prior rights with respect to these facilities which are present within the Silverbell Road right-of-way under a franchise agreement with each jurisdiction in which the roadway is located. Between Goret Road and Grant Road, the agreement is with the City of Tucson. Under this agreement, TEP is required to relocate their lines, as necessary, when the roadway is improved. TEP has the option of keeping the lines overhead or undergrounding.*

*The City's Major Streets and Routes (MS&R) plan designates Silverbell Road north of Grant Road as a scenic arterial. Scenic Corridor (Section 2.8) requirements are included in the City's Land Use Code which was adopted on July 1, 1995. The code requires that new utilities installed within a scenic corridor be undergrounded, however utilities installed prior to July 1, 1995 are exempt. Therefore, the TEP facilities along Silverbell Road are not required to be undergrounded.*

*Relocation of TEP facilities along Silverbell Road was addressed during the development of the corridor planning phase and is documented in the Design Concept Report (DCR). Throughout the DCR process, the Silverbell Road Citizen's Task Force and the public were informed that the overhead utility lines would stay overhead on new poles that would be located further west of the current alignment.*

*While a detailed cost comparison specific for Silverbell Road has not been conducted, the cost differential between the two options is substantial. While costs can vary significantly, relocating 14 kV overhead lines generally costs in the range of \$300,000 per mile, while undergrounding 14 kV lines generally costs \$1 million per mile. The cost of undergrounding both 46 kV and 14 kV lines would be significantly higher. Additional right-of-way may also be required to provide room for TEP and other communications utilities currently utilizing the TEP poles to underground their lines. Given the cost differential, TEP will invariably elect to keep the power lines overhead. In addition to the higher installation costs, TEP notes higher maintenance costs with underground power lines. Should the City of Tucson request that TEP underground the power lines along Silverbell Road, the roadway improvement project would need to fund the difference in design and installation costs relative to the overhead option.*

*RTA funds, which will be used to fund the Silverbell Road improvements, may not be used for utility relocation unless there are prior rights or it is required in the City's franchise agreement with a utility. Since this is not the case, additional non-RTA funds would need to be obtained for the underground option of the TEP lines. No City funds are available to cover the undergrounding costs. At the recent Silverbell Road open house, several attendees suggested that an improvement district might be considered to secure the necessary funding. The improvement district option has been explored by the City on other roadway projects; however, it has lacked the support of affected property owners.*