

DOWNTOWN LINKS CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING SUMMARY
Monday, October 8, 2012

FROM: TDOT Project Manager Tom Fisher

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chair, Eugene W. Caywood, Old Pueblo Trolley
John Burr, Armory Park Neighborhood Association
Daniela Diamente, Dunbar Spring Neighborhood Association
Susan Marshall, Citizen Transportation Advisory Committee
Richard Mayers, West University Neighborhood Association
Erika Mitnik, Iron Horse Neighborhood Association
John A. Sedwick, Fourth Avenue Merchants Association
Kylie Walzak, Tucson-Pima Bicycle Advisory Committee
Mary Ellen Wooten, Tucson-Pima Arts Council

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Christopher Carroll, El Presidio Neighborhood Association
Susan Gamble, Warehouse Arts Management Association
Keith Michael, Downtown Tucson Partnership
Korey Kruckmeyer, Pie Allen Neighborhood Association
Gail Ryser, Barrio Anita Neighborhood Association

PROJECT TEAM PRESENT:

Tom Fisher, City of Tucson Department of Transportation (TDOT)
Michael Bertram, HDR Engineering, Inc.
Kathy Jirschele, Kaneen Advertising and Public Relations
Joan Beckim, Kaneen Advertising and Public Relations
Corky Poster, Poster Frost Mirto
Britton Dornquast, Pima Association of Governments/MainStreet Business Assistance Program

1. Meeting Called to Order

Quorum confirmed. Chair, Gene Caywood called the meeting to order at 5:33 PM at University Services Annex-West.

2. Introduction of Committee Members and Staff

CAC and Project Team Members introduced themselves.

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes of June 13, 2011

John Burr made the motion to approve and the minutes were approved as written.

4. Ongoing Participation of CAC Members

The possibility of re-electing Chair and Vice Chair was discussed. The Vice Chair has been resigned while the existing Chair remains the Chair.
The role of the Vice Chair was reviewed. John Burr was nominated and with a unanimous vote, it was decided that John Burr will be Vice Chair.

5. Project Team Announcements

John Burr, representative for Armory Park Neighborhood Association, announced that they support the conversion of 6th Avenue to two-way traffic.

Kylie Walzak, representative for Tucson Pima Bicycle Advisory Committee, announced street closure information for the upcoming El Tour de Tucson on November 17, 2012.

Mary Ellen Wooten, representative for Tucson-Pima Arts Council announced the installation of particular public art components at Streetcar stops will begin in December.

6. Staff Reports and Presentations to the CAC

Downtown Links Project Overview, Summary and Update – Tom Fisher, TDOT

Tom Fisher of TDOT provided an overview and update of the entire project primarily for meeting attendees not familiar with the project. The scope of the project is to provide solutions to existing circulation challenges in Downtown Tucson and to provide opportunities for land use infill and revitalization (DLUOD).

This discussion elicited a question from John Burr regarding the current status of the budget. Tom Fisher explained that of the \$76.1 million allocated to the project, \$55 million remains after the design completion of the St. Mary's, I-10 to Church Avenue section.

Additionally, Tom Fisher discussed that the majority of the right of way has been acquired for the new Broadway segment.

Urban Overlay District Update – Corky Poster, Poster Frost Mirto

Corky Poster discussed the Urban Design Land Use Study where the project team collaborated with neighborhoods from Euclid to Bonita to receive feedback and provide recommendations. In 2011, the Mayor and Council implemented portions of the plan through zoning, which led to the emergence of an overlay district.

The overlay district includes four separate areas – Toole Avenue District, Warehouse Triangle District, 4th Avenue District, and Iron Horse District. The plan will specify allowable land uses, heights and placement of buildings, pedestrian space, streetscape standards, building massing, solar access, parking, and treatment of historic buildings. Each zoning area currently has distinct zoning requirements. However, the four areas have the choice to continue their current zoning or to rezone using the requirements provided by optional overlay zone. Additionally, the optional overlay zone will provide incentives for developments to select the zoning that is being proposed.

Important upcoming dates for the Urban Overlay District include:

- October 24th or 25th – rezoning neighborhood meeting
**this meeting was held on October 24, 2012*
- November 29th – official hearing in front of the zoning commissioner

The draft of the Overlay Zone is available on the Downtown Links website.

<http://www.downtownlinks.info/LandUse&UrbanDesign>

The project staff presented the following information via a PowerPoint presentation. To access the PowerPoint presentation shown at this CAC meeting, please visit:

<http://www.downtownlinks.info/CitizenAdvisoryCommittee/documents/DowntownLinksCAC06-13-11FINAL.pdf>

Phase I: 8th Street Drainage Improvements – Mike Bertram, HDR

Construction of the 8th Street Drainage Improvements project was completed in May 2012.

Phase II: St. Mary's Road Improvements – Mike Bertram, HDR

The St. Mary's phase extends from 1-10 to Church Avenue. The roadway will remain four lanes – two lanes of traffic in each direction with a raised median. To prevent cut through traffic, there will be no direct vehicular access St. Mary's Road from Davis Street, next to Davis School. There will also be a new signalized intersection at Granada Avenue. Main Avenue will be right in and right out only in each direction. The roadway will also have new lighting, desert landscaping, and rainwater harvesting basins.

The discussion raised a question from Kylie Walzak regarding the posted speed limit. Mike answered that the speed limit would remain the same. John Burr inquired about the Toucan crossing being shifted farther east in the final design which differed from the design plans that the CAC was last shown. It was stated that the project team worked with ADOT which only allows crossings to be within 300 feet east or west of the frontage road. John Burr asked a follow up question regarding the usage of the TOUCAN crossing by pedestrians and bicyclist simultaneously. Mike explained that there will be one crosswalk for pedestrians in the middle and two green bike lanes, one on either side, marked for bicyclists where it is legal to ride across. TOUCAN stands for Two GrOUps CAN cross, meaning pedestrians and bicyclists at the same time.

John Burr asked for clarification regarding the pedestrian signs. The illustration showed that there was an actual pedestrian crossing at Main Avenue. However, this contradicts the final design plans. Mike responded that the final design plans are an accurate depiction of what will be implemented in the future.

Phase III & IV: 6th Street Underpass to Broadway – Mike Bertram, HDR

After conducting the value analysis with the RTA in February 2012, it was determined that Phase III and Phase IV should be designed together. The project team is now referring to this design phase as 'Links 3.' Currently, the project team is in the process of producing a single construction documentation package. This phase will also have new lighting, landscaping, and subsurface utility infrastructure.

The east-west segment of Links 3 on 6th Street will continue the four lane section, similar to what is being constructed on the St. Mary's Segment, and include a new UPPR railroad underpass at 6th Street and a new pedestrian/ bicycle underpass bridge at 9th Avenue maintaining the north-south linkage for bicycles and pedestrians.

John Burr inquired about bicycle access to 7th street. Michael explained the currently planned bicycle route, but noted that the route described is part of the 30% design plans and that the bicycle path may be revisited and/or revised in the future.

The north-south segment of the project, Links Avenue, will begin approximately 250-300 feet east of Stone. Stevens avenue will have two lanes in each direction, a signalized intersection at 6th Street, raised or striped median, and a shared use facility for pedestrians and bicyclists. The key features of this segment will be the completion o the Tucson Arroyo culvert and drainage section, overpass bridge at 6th Avenue.

After the discussion regarding Phase III and IV of the project, Mike Bertram introduced the Value Analysis topic which was elaborated on by Jim DeGrood from the RTA.

RTA Value Analysis – Jim DeGrood, RTA

Jim DeGrood attended the meeting to discuss the RTA Value Analysis that was completed for the Downtown Links project. The overall purpose of the value analysis was to evaluate the project and provide recommendations (not mandates) as to how to complete projects in the most cost effective way possible.

To conduct the value analysis, the RTA assembled a group of roadway designers, structural engineers,

environmental specialist, bicycle advocates and City staff to review the project, provide a function analysis, and brainstorm and refine recommendations. This process was a week in duration and the findings were presented in report form and given to the RTA Review Board to assess and provide input. A compilation of all of the feedback has been given to the engineering team for further evaluation. The engineering team is in the process of completing their assessment of each VA recommendation and intends to provide feedback to TDOT regarding those that they recommend being considered further and/or being integrated into the final design of Links 3.

The value analysis produced alternatives regarding alignment, bridge designs, and the importance of drainage and investment in drainage infrastructure. Additionally, the value analysis determined that the combination of Phase III and IV of the project would result in a significant cost savings.

This discussion raised a question from John Burr asking if the CAC could be presented with a comparison document as to the difference between the 30% design plan and the recommendations provided by the value analysis. The project team will grant this request at the next CAC meeting.

The value analysis report is available online at www.rtamobility.com.

Public Art Update – Mary Ellen Wooten, Tucson Pima Arts Council

The “Living Lenses” artists are working on technical details in the segment. The concept for this space is ‘traveling through space.’ There are still additional funds in the art budget, so it is possible that public art will be present in the 9th Avenue area. With Richard Posner’s passing, the art team would like to commemorate him. A suggestion of the memorial is a one dimensional project with the work he has already completed for the project. The art team will review the legality and copyright laws.

7. Next Steps

Items for Future Meetings

There was a discussion as to how to structure the CAC for future meetings. Tom Fisher suggested formulating sub-committees for different components of the project such as roadway design, bicycle/pedestrian, land use, etc. The CAC provided feedback stating that they would prefer to continue as a full committee and continue to meet as needed. John Burr suggested that the project team provide the CAC with a tutorial to get everyone up to speed on the current status of the project. CAC members also requested to see documentation of the CAC recommendations compared to the value analysis recommendations and to have an explanation of the new recommendation.

Future Meeting Dates

The future meetings will continue to be held at the University Services Annex – West Building when available and on the 2nd Monday of the month. The CAC will meet on an as needed basis. Future meeting dates include:

- October 24, 2012 – Urban Overlay District Meeting
- October 30, 2012 – St. Mary’s Construction Open House
- November 12, 2012 – CAC meeting

**this meeting was rescheduled due to lack of quorum*

8. Call to the Audience

The following person addressed the Committee:

- Diana Rhodes, council aid to Regina Romero, stated that she was very alarmed at the recommendations provided by the value analysis; specifically, that a Deck Park was not included which according to Diana, had been agreed upon by TDOT. She said that she and Council Member Regina Romero are committed to approving the amenities that were originally part of the 30% Design Plan.

9. Adjournment at 7:33 p.m.