

DOWNTOWN LINKS CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (DLCAC)
DECK PARK REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Monday, February 25, 2013

*Accepted and Approved by the Downtown Links CAC
Deck Park Review Subcommittee on March 11, 2013*

FROM: TDOT Project Manager Tom Fisher

DECK PARK SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chair, Daniela Diamente, Dunbar Spring Neighborhood Association
Kylie Walzak, Tucson-Pima Bicycle Advisory Committee
Christopher Carroll, El Presidio Neighborhood Association
Susan Gamble, Warehouse Arts Management Association

PROJECT TEAM PRESENT:

Tom Fisher, City of Tucson Department of Transportation (TDOT)
Michael Bertram, HDR Engineering, Inc.
Brent Kirkman, HDR Engineering, Inc.
Kathy Jirschele, Kaneen Advertising and Public Relations
Laura Mielcarek, Wheat Scharf and Associates
Eric Scharf, Wheat Scharf and Associates

DOWNTOWN LINKS CAC MEMBERS PRESENT

No other CAC members present

1. Meeting Called to Order

Meeting called to order at 10:09 a.m. at Wheat Scharf and Associates, 442 N. 6th Avenue, Tucson, AZ
Quorum confirmed

2. Introduction of Committee Members and Staff

Downtown Links CAC Deck Park Review Subcommittee and Project Team Members introduced themselves.

3. Elect Chair for DLCAC Deck Park Review Subcommittee

A motion to elect Daniela Diamente as Chair was seconded and passed unanimously with a voice vote of 3-0

4. Announcements

No announcements

5. Staff Reports and Presentations to DLCAC

Mike Bertram of HDR provided a brief logistical review of the Deck Park in order to familiarize all meeting attendees with the location and roadway and structural design constraints associated with the deck park.

Mike B. also announced that the Draft 9th Avenue Pedestrian Bridge and Deck Park Feasibility Report, which addresses the preliminary geometrics, materials and costs associated with the Deck Park, was completed and was submitted to TDOT today (2.25.13). There was discussion regarding costs. The report estimated the construction cost for the 9th Avenue pedestrian bridge structure as \$1.2 million and the Deck

Park as \$2.7 million, leaving a delta of \$1.5 million needed to add the Deck Park.

Daniela Diamente asked if the feasibility report could be made available to the CAC members prior to the next DLCAC meeting. **Mike Bertram** said that first it needed to be reviewed and approved by City staff for structural review and second he wasn't sure what benefit it would provide to the CAC because the purpose of the report was to provide comparative information to the City so they could make a determination on whether to proceed with the 9th Avenue Pedestrian Bridge or the Deck Park. The City has already decided to go ahead with the Deck Park. Some graphics from the report were shared later in the meeting.

Mike Bertram also discussed the integrated aesthetic perspective of the park which includes a dead load (hardscape, landscape, and shade structures) of sixty pounds per square foot of deck area and one hundred pounds per square foot of live load (vehicles, musical events, people, moving things). **Mike B.** asked that the subcommittee keep these parameters in mind when discussing the aesthetic features of the Deck Park.

Mike Bertram shared Deck Park plan views and reviewed details relating to lane widths, bridge pier locations, medians, bike lanes, retaining walls, sidewalks and roadway profile.

Deck Park Concept Presentation

Laura Mielcarek gave a power point presentation that reviewed past renderings, current renderings and structures, which included examples for the function of the space, lighting, shade opportunities, materials and seating amenities for gathering places. **Laura M.** counseled the subcommittee members that in order for the design team to be able to effectively move forward with the architectural plans for the Deck Park, she needed the CAC to make decisions regarding the size and location, structural elements and function of the park in a timely manner.

Mike Bertram reminded the committee that the railing and retaining walls provide a significant opportunity to integrated art installations.

A discussion followed the presentation;

Susan Gamble - the focus of the park needs to be on the activities that unite Dunbar Spring with surrounding areas. The park needs to provide a seamless transition over the railroad that is more than just a structure that people ride and bike across. It needs to be activated in order to be successful. There needs to be a lot of shade provided for daytime activities. Nighttime activities might include an opportunity for outside movie theater since La Placita is outgrowing its popularity.

Daniela Diamente - questioned the transition of the park with the rail road crossing and the safety elements resulting from the at-grade crossing. The park could be active, but if the railroad was still a barrier safety wise, it will not be used. Daniela wants to make sure those types of safety elements are incorporated into the design. **Mike B and Laura M** both said there is likely to be fencing that would "funnel" pedestrians to a particular crossing point at the railroad. **Daniela D** said her point in bringing it up is to make sure that the UPRR crossing is integrated into the design so that the public does not travel through a beautiful park with shade and then get to the RR crossing and it's still scary and seemingly difficult to cross.

Daniela D - she's not too sure the neighborhood is particularly interested in another community garden, but they are interested in making sure the park is usable to many different peoples in the surrounding neighborhoods. The park needs to feel comfortable and include features that make it open and inviting to everyone.

There was discussion regarding the potential for a playground. Tom Fisher, TDOT Project Manager said careful consideration must be given to that option because of the high number of trains that pass though the area. He also said he did not know if COT Parks and Recreation would maintain the area.

Chris Carroll - the IDA (Industrial Development Authority), with support from his neighborhood was going to ask the City to do a larger transportation plan regarding the RR parcel and the traffic patterns and circulation. He said the implications of development of the area are enormous and we need to think about how the Deck Park will integrate with the properties south of it. Also, need to think about when the Deck Park is complete and “energized”, what are we going to do with all those people? The consequences for the north side of his neighborhood are enormous. So far we’ve talked about how the neighborhoods would like to see the park developed, but we need to think about the development of the Rail Road parcel and possibly Lot 175. Possibilities and interconnections of these parcels will be affected by the design of the Deck Park, and the implications must be considered. Chris said the impacts of additional traffic and connection to the entire warehouse strip must be considered.

Kylie Walzak - talked about how places get re-energized, and the need for pop-up meeting space, shade and creating a reason for people to want to go there (the Deck Park). There should be a variety of levels of seating, a shed with tables and chairs that everyone has access to. Making sure that food trucks and mobile vendors have access. In order to make a place desirable, you need to have ten features going on at the same time.

Audience member (Karen?) - Boston and Portland created beautiful parks in conjunction with huge roadway projects. Her concern is that if there can’t be any trees for shade, then that means more concrete, which means we’re going to bake in the summertime. So the team needs to consider other types of materials at least for placement on top. She also said that we need to worry about the number of trains, and that a “whistle-free zone” is very important. Another consideration is when there are events, who runs them? Who is in charge? Will there be bathrooms? If so, who is responsible for cleaning and maintaining them?

Natasha Winnik - If there is a playground, it needs to be something that is not like every other playground out there, but something more innovative. Also, if there are bathrooms, they should be the composting type. She would rather the hardscape not be concrete.

(Unknown speaker) The infrastructure needs to be productive. Solar? Water harvesting? Also, looking at workshop space, places for active learning. If there is a garden, the compost from them should be used on the deck landscaping.

Susan G - Dunbar Springs is on the cutting edge of activating their neighborhood into implementing water harvesting. She thinks the space could provide a great demonstration site.

Daniela D - The theme of the site is “A Gathering Space”. All the surrounding neighborhoods already have gatherings and enough connections and activities to make this space successful.

There was discussion regarding some of the current neighborhood activities; mesquite bean milling, tree trimming, water harvesting, bike in movies, supper clubs.

There was discussion about art being integrated into the deck.

Mary Ellen Wooten -There is about \$100,000 for art and it can be divided up anyway that they want to.

Daniela D – Have we addressed the goals of the meeting? Size and location? **Mike B.** said that the size was essentially set by the roadway and railroad geometry.

Chris C – How is the 9th Avenue crossing going to look compared to how it is now? **Mike B.** said it will be exactly where it is now. There will likely be bollards in place to keep vehicles from driving across it.

Chris C. reminded Laura and the committee that parking areas must be considered.

Tom Fisher suggested that the Downtown Links CAC form a subcommittee for Land Use.

Natasha W. – Downtown Links Urban Overlay District should extent north to at least 5th Street.

6. Next Steps

Items for Future Meetings

- Specific practical solutions that does not include concrete pavers as the hardscape material for the top of deck.
- Maintenance concerns for both the hardscape and the landscape. Toilets, dog parks? What is the feasibility of actually having them?
- What is the budget?

Confirm Future Meeting Dates

Next subcommittee meeting will be at 10 a.m. on Monday, March 11, 2013 at Wheat Scharf Associates

7. Call to the Audience

None

8. Adjournment at 11:47 a.m.