

**DOWNTOWN LINKS CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING SUMMARY**

Monday, May 13, 2013

Accepted and Approved by the Downtown Links CAC on August 12, 2013

FROM: TDOT Project Manager Tom Fisher

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chair, Eugene W. Caywood, Old Pueblo Trolley
Vice Chair, John Burr, Armory Park Neighborhood Association
Daniela Diamente, Dunbar Spring Neighborhood Association
Richard Mayers, West University Neighborhood Association
John A. Sedwick, Fourth Avenue Merchants Association
Kylie Walzak, Tucson-Pima Bicycle Advisory Committee
Gail Ryser, Barrio Anita Neighborhood Association
Korey Kruckmeyer, Pie Allen Neighborhood Association
Susan Gamble, Warehouse Arts Management Association
Mary Ellen Wooten, Tucson-Pima Arts Council
Carlos Lozano, Tucson - Pima County Historical Commission
Michael Keith, Downtown Tucson Partnership
Erika Mitnik, Iron Horse Neighborhood Association

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Susan Marshall, Citizen Transportation Advisory Committee
Christopher Carroll, El Presidio Neighborhood 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
Joan Beckim, Kaneen Advertising and Public Relations
Steve Taylor/MainStreet Business Assistance Program
Laura Mielcarek, Wheat Scharf Associates

1. Meeting Called to Order

Quorum confirmed. Chair, Gene Caywood called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

2. Introduction of Committee Members and Staff

CAC and Project Team Members introduced themselves.

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes of February 11, 2013, was passed by a voice vote of 13 to 0.

4. Announcements

Susan Gamble announced a newly released book about the Citizen Warehouse.

5. Staff Reports and Presentations to DLCAC

- **Project Review**

Overall Review - Mike Bertram gave an update on the overall project, briefly reporting on the 6th Avenue 2-way conversion, 9th Avenue Deck Park Review subcommittee meetings, RTA VA Review subcommittee meetings, Union Pacific Rail Road no whistle zone, Building Demolitions and Building Acquisitions, among others.

Tom Fisher informed the members that, at the direction of the City Manager's Office, the Urban Overlay was on hold. The City was trying to blend the Downtown Links Urban Overlay District with the Streetcar Overlay and Infill Incentive Overlay Districts. The goal is to simplify the process, but right now we have overlay on top of overlay. **Tom Fisher** suggested Jim Mazzocco with COT Planning & Development, give an update on the Urban Overlay Districts at a future CAC meeting.

Tom F. said that as a result of building demolitions and acquisitions, there would be remnant parcels after the corridor was completed and thought it would be advantageous to form a Land Use subcommittee in the coming months.

Construction Update – Sam Credio updated the CAC members on the St. Mary's/6th Street, I-10 to Church Avenue. Still on track for a January 2014 completion date. The contractor plans to complete construction on the north side of the road, and because of the intricate landscaping details, they will construct from the outside in, which is different than how roadways are typically built. The public will see landscape first, followed by sidewalk and curb, then the north side of the roadway and medians.

Design Update – Mike Bertram updated the CAC members on the status and key issues of Phase III. Design should be 75% complete by September 2013.

Submittals:

- Union Pacific Rail Road - They have submitted a request to the Union Pacific Rail Road (UPRR) asking to deviate from their rolled steel superstructure requirement in lieu of a concrete structure which would liberate about \$3 million of the budget. The review process can take anywhere from 45 to 60 days. The design will provide for four-tracks as required by UPRR. Currently, there are about 40- 50 trains per day. The extra track will allow for approximately 80 – 100 trains per day.
- 9th Avenue Deck Park Feasibility Study – HDR prepared and submitted to TDOT a selection report that substantiates the design features for the facility and makes provisions for accommodating features that will go on top. HDR responded to TDOT comments and now are waiting on the Deck Park elements. **Gene Caywood** clarified that the report as drafted to date, covers the structural elements – the amenities and landscaping will be added later after vetting by the subcommittee and final approval of the CAC. **John Burr** asked for clarification that the basic construction cost of the structure is \$2.7 million and other features are an additional cost. **Michael B.** said that was correct.
- Bridge Selection Report submitted to TDOT for Links Avenue Overpass at 6th Avenue – **Michael B** said the bridge will be a post-tensioned, cast-in-place concrete box girder superstructure. It should be able to be constructed over traffic. There will probably be intermittent closures, but for the most part, it can be built over traffic. **Gene Caywood** asked if the plans would be available to the public. **Michael B.** said that once the plans are sealed, they should be able to be scanned and made available to view.
- Pedestrian Overpass at Stone Avenue – This will be a single span structure just for the multi-use path users. Bicycles and pedestrians. This was one of the topics that was vetted through the RTA VA at the last meeting. This will not have a bridge structure report associated with it. HDR will only prepare plans for the subsurface structure. **Gene C.** asked about visual impacts of it, particularly in relation to the historic underpass. He wanted to know if there were rendering in relation to the existing bridges so they can see what they're going to look like from a half block away. **Michael B.** said they have engineering drawings. There was conversation about the existing historic bridges and what the new bridges would look like along side or in front of them. **Tom F.** suggested that some renderings of the Stone Avenue and 6th Avenue underpasses could be made.

Michael B. agreed. **Tom F.** also commented that the billboard at Stone Avenue will be removed in about two years.

- **Boring Plans** – **Michael B.** explained that prior to building structures such as the Downtown Links bridges and walls, you have to prepare a geotechnical report and in order to do that, some investigations need to be made. **Michael B.** explained the entire process and what the public can expect while the operation is underway. He also reminded them that when they see the large drill rigs, it does not mean that construction has begun. He asked the CAC members to educate their neighborhoods and committees on the process.
- **Roadway Design** – **Brent Kirkman** gave an overview of the roadway design based on feedback received from the committee. The Multi-Use Path (MUP) has some changes at 6th Avenue. The MUP now goes under the bridge. There was conversation regarding the signalization at 6th Street for the bike/pedestrian crossing. **Gene C.** asked for clarification of the crossing at 6th Avenue. He said the current configuration is not acceptable to him. **Brent K.** said they are still working out the details of that movement. **Tom F.** said that it is a very complicated bike connection and they are continuing to look at ideas on how to cross bikes and pedestrians at this location. **Gene C.** suggested they utilize the property to the north which is owned by the city. **Tom F.** suggested a Bicycle/Pedestrian Subcommittee be formed to work out the details and possible review design elements in the field in order to work out several of the challenging crossings. **Gene C. appointed Kylie Walzak, Michael Keith, Richard Mayers and Daniela Diamente to form the Bicycle/Pedestrian Review Subcommittee.**

There was discussion regarding the design standards of the pedestrian bridge structure at Stone Avenue. **Kylie W.** clarified that the BAC wrote a letter in support of maintaining the bicycle pathways around the Citizen Warehouse and a letter in support of maintaining the path on the bridge over Stone Avenue. She said these were the only two items the BAC has weighed in on.

Gene C. asked for verification of how the existing Barraza Aviation will tie in with the new Links Avenue. There was discussion regarding the history of this piece of the design and **Gene C.** asked for a bigger scale drawing of this particular section of roadway to be provided at the next meeting. He also asked that it include the striping plans, or at least how the turn movements will function through the intersection. **Michael B.** said they will provide him with a sketch to show how everything lines up.

Brent K. reviewed changes in the plans resulting from the RTA VA subcommittee recommendations; changes in MUP south of Broadway connecting to the north side of Broadway via the Snake Bridge and creating a dual left from southbound Links Avenue to Broadway.

- **No Whistle Zone** – **Brent Kirkman** reviewed the required elements in order for a no whistle zone to be considered. The Federal Rail Authority sets the guidelines and makes the final determination on whether the guidelines have been satisfied. The first requirement is that the zone must be at least one-half mile in length and second, there must be modifications made to the crossings within the one-half mile section. Our section begins south of Broadway and reaches one-half mile near the Granada/Main Street crossing. Modifications will be made to the 5th Street crossing and the Main Street/Granada Ave crossing. We may install additional gates or raised medians at these crossings. The other crossings considered within the one-half mile section are 6th Street and 9th Avenue (which are considered one crossing) and 7th Avenue. **Kylie W.** wondered if a subcommittee could help especially since there may be a doubling of trains in the coming years. **Michael B.** suggested that the team meet with the ACC first. If they determine that these crossings at 7th and 9th are public, then we've met the criteria for these crossings to be no whistle zones. If they determine they are private, we will have a diagnostic team determine what is needed to be deemed a no whistle zone. If we get push back then maybe it would be prudent to have someone who represents the Downtown Links body start writing letters. **Gail R.** said she was disappointed that the Granada Ave/Main crossing and the 5th Street crossing were not considered inside the bounds of this project and wondered if that determination could be re-evaluated. **Tom F.** said that it is very important that

the four crossings; i.e. Granada Ave/Main, 5th Street, 6th Street/9th Ave and 7th Avenue be kept open. **Brent K.** clarified for **Gail R.** that they need the crossings at Granada/Main and 5th Street in order to qualify for the no whistle zone. He said they have preemptively designed the improvements to those crossing, however, right now; those crossings are out of the budget blueprint. **Gene C.** suggested that if it's a funding issue, maybe **he, Michael Keith and Gail R.** could pay a visit to Daryl Cole (Director of TDOT) to ask if he could free up some money. He asked that **Tom Fisher** let him know when the timing is right and for **Michael Bertram** to provide him with a dollar amount that would be needed. There was discussion about the possibility of implementing some of the improvements now, rather than waiting for construction of this final phase of Downtown Links. **John B** asked if the RTA could pick the improvements up as separate costs under the safety improvement quotient.

- **Sixth Avenue 2-Way Conversion** – **Brent K.** gave a brief update stating the 100% plans have been submitted to TDOT and construction is expected to begin sometime this summer. There was discussion about the conversion, timing of signal installation and paving.
- **High School Wash** – **Michael B.** provided an update on the project. The design is currently at 75% with 100% anticipated around the end of August 2013 and will be submitted to Pima County Flood Control at that time. Construction could begin in late December 2013 or January of next year. It is still uncertain whether the Army Corp of Engineers or Pima County Flood Control will construct it. This is an important element because if the Corp builds it, it must be constructed with cast in place concrete, which will substantially increase the construction time. The final piece of the High School Wash will be constructed as part of Phase III of the Downtown Links project. At that time the area will be eligible to be removed from the 100 year flood plan. **Michael Keith** asked about location of a TEP substation along Links Avenue. The team will look into it. **John Sedwick** said that the last he heard the PC Flood Control was going to construct the High School Wash. He hadn't heard anything different. **Michael B.** explained that the decision on who would construct had gone back and forth, and he expected to hear final decision at the Stakeholder meeting. There was additional discussion regarding design plans, construction costs, time frames and boundaries of the flood plain.

Subcommittee Reports

- **Deck Park Review Subcommittee** – **Daniela Diamente** reviewed for the CAC, the Deck Park Review subcommittee members and how many times the subcommittee met. **Daniela D.** said she felt very positive about the work they did and feels that the Deck Park is headed in the right direction. **Laura Mielcarek and Chelsea Marshall of Wheat Scharf** continued with the presentation. **Laura M.** reviewed the project limits for the Deck Park and briefly reviewed the process utilized by the Subcommittee to arrive with the concept being presented for CAC approval tonight. **Laura M.** went over the laundry list of items that will be included in the Deck Park design, no matter what concept moves forward. The list includes; shade, seating, gathering space, artwork, lighting and electricity, low maintenance, water harvesting features, an area for food vendor trucks, pedestrian/bicycle access and the same sustainable goals the St. Mary's project is following now (e.g. salvaging sidewalks and building materials from demolished buildings). **Laura M.** also listed the design constraints the team is faced with; structural limitations, drainage, emergency access at 9th Avenue, rail road crossing and unknown adjacent land use. **Daniela D.** interjected that the design constraints **Laura M.** reviewed are items that the subcommittee members and Wheat Scharf have already addressed and are basically reflected in what will be presented tonight. **Chelsea M.** said the goal for the design is to create an interactive place that both children and adults can enjoy and to celebrate the warehouse district. She reviewed the several different aspects and elements of the park including materials, vegetation, water harvesting areas and the consideration of using buffalo grass as turf. **Chelsea M.** presented her plan for where seating and gathering spaces would be and also showed examples of interactive art pieces to help the group envision possibilities for art

on the deck along with installation of neighborhood art. She also showed examples of a bi-facial modular solar system, which is integrated into the structure. **Chelsea M.** conveyed to the CAC that the subcommittee members asked the designers to be very aware of the face of the deck park and what the public will see as they're driving down 6th Street and to pay particular attention to what the pedestrian fencing and shade structures will look like and to incorporate some greenery along that edge. The subcommittee felt that this would announce the presence of the neighborhood. **John Burr** asked, in addition to the Deck Park subcommittee members, how many members of the public participated. **Daniela D.** responded that they had very participatory meetings, and that there were developers, business owners and neighbors. **Daniela D.** also stated that she took preliminary drawing to neighborhood meetings, and that she would estimate that over a dozen members of the public had been involved. There was additional conversation regarding responses from neighborhoods, how they embraced the design and provided input on several elements of it. **Mary Ellen W.** had a question regarding the art, and asked if the idea to have multiple art installations. **Laura M.** said the subcommittee liked the idea of interactive art, such as swings and slides and also reusing materials from the corridor such as old benches and shade structure materials. **Mary Ellen W.** said the call to artist could include that type of direction. There was additional discussion regarding the buffalo grass. **Daniela D.** explained to the committee that in order for the design team to move forward, they would need to make some sort of approval on the concept just presented. **Michael B.** expounded that approval of this concept will set the stage to scope it to do the design, in conjunction with being able to prepare the feasibility report – two pieces of information that are vital in order to proceed. **John B.** said he thought it was a very efficient plan, but wondered about the cost. **Laura M.** said that is the next step. Cost couldn't be determined until the concept is endorsed by the CAC. **Tom F.** reminded everyone that TDOT still needs to review the concept. Though it appears to be a fairly efficient plan, there are still some issues to consider. Maintenance needs to be addressed. TDOT is not in the Parks business, but whatever is done on the deck – it's 99.9% sure that TDOT will have to maintain it. However, TDOT does maintain landscaping along roadways; he just wants to make sure the Deck Park does not turn into a grassy park that they will have to figure out how to maintain. **Michael Keith** commented on the need for water, electricity and trash pick-up. **Daniela D. made a motion to approve the design concepts as is. Michael Keith seconded it.** **Kylie W.** asked what if we can't find the money. What if we vote to approve this concept and then end up with something very different? **Tom F.** said the City is committed to the Deck Park and a certain amount of money. It will be three or four years before it gets built so there is time to find additional funds if needed. **Chelsea M.** said that basically, it's the laundry list of amenities that is getting approved. There are a lot of variables in materials and design. **Gene C. said we are approving the concepts, not a final plan. He reminded everyone to keep that in mind. Richard M. asked if the committee could be provided with a copy of the laundry list items. Gene C. asked for a vote. The motion passed unanimously.**

- **RTA VA Review Subcommittee - John Burr** reviewed the RTA VA proposals that have been reviewed by the full CAC, those reviewed by the subcommittee (twelve proposals) and those still pending. **John Burr, made a motion recommending the CAC vote to approve the subcommittee's recommendations on the twelve proposals reviewed, which concurred with TDOT's assessment. The motion was seconded by Kory Kruckmeyer and passed with a unanimous voice vote. (a chart of the RTA VA recommendations reviewed and voted on at tonight's meeting can be reviewed at www.downtownlinks.info)** **John B.** further explained that the items in white on the chart are in the process of further review. **Gene C.** recommended that the RTA VA Review subcommittee remain in place, but inactive, until city staff advises the CAC that the items still in review are ready to be addressed by the subcommittee. **Joan Beckim** advised **Gene C.** that that was the intent for both subcommittees. **Gene C.** agreed that that was appropriate.

6. Next Steps

Items for Future Meetings

- It was suggested that Jim Mazzocco, City of Tucson, present information regarding the Downtown Links Urban Overlay District at a future meeting when the timing is appropriate. It was requested that both Nicole Gavin-Ewing from the City Managers office and Corky Poster participate as well.
- A more detailed sketch of the Barraza Aviation at the south east connection to Links Boulevard will be provided to the CAC.
- **Mary Ellen** suggested that the discussion regarding the art should begin at the next meeting or the following one at the latest.
- Report from the Bicycle/Pedestrian Review Subcommittee

Confirm Future Meeting Dates

The next Downtown Links CAC meeting was set for July 8, 2013.

7. Call to the Audience

The following people addressed the Committee:

Karen Green, Dunbar Springs Neighborhood Association, would like an additional “Local Traffic Only” sign added at the intersections of 9th Avenue and 5th Street. She also said that with the current traffic control for the St. Mary’s construction project crossing 9th Avenue is fabulous without having to worry about cars. She also likes the Deck park design and looks forward to organizing monthly swing dance events.

Nancy Bender, Whistle Stop Depot, wondered if the design team had considered the use of composting toilets in the Deck Park design. She heard that the idea had been discarded because of maintenance issues.

Linda Samuels, Project Director of the Sustainable City Project, UA Downtown, suggested that since there was the potential for four new bridge elements downtown, the team should consider an aesthetic review as part of the environmental landscape.

Laura Mielcarek, Wheat Scharf, asked that the Bicycle/Pedestrian subcommittee study the 7th Avenue/6th Street and Links Avenue connection.

8. Adjournment at 7:52 p.m.