

**Downtown Links
Citizen Advisory Committee Minutes
Tuesday, February 13, 2006
5:30 - 7:00pm
Joel D. Valdez Main Library**

Attendees:

CAC Committee

John Burr, Armory Park Neighborhood Association
Joseph Maher, Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee
Natasha Winnik, Dunbar-Spring Neighborhood Association
Christopher Carroll, El Presidio Neighborhood Association
John Sedwick, Fourth Avenue Merchants Association
Jonathan Levy, Iron Horse Neighborhood Association
Eugene Caywood, Old Pueblo Trolley, DLCAC Chairperson
Kory Kruckmeyer, Pie Allen Neighborhood Association
Don Durband, Tucson Downtown Alliance
David Hoyt Johnson, Tucson-Pima Arts Council
David Bachman-Williams, Tucson-Pima Bicycle Advisory Committee
Gerald Juliani, Tucson-Pima Historical Commission
David Aguirre, Warehouse Arts Management Organization

Project Team

MJ Dillard, TDOT
Mike Barton, HDR Engineering, Inc.
Joan Beckim, Kaneen Advertising & Public Relations

Observers

Kathleen Skinner, Tucson Metropolitan Chamber
Jerry Cannon, TransSystems
Terrence McMahon, Barrio Anita
Ron Wilson
Claire Fellows, Fremont Avenue
Carrie Calvert, Barrio Anita
Lorraine Hernandez, Ward III
Alex Hingle, Ward VI
Catesby Willis, TDOT
Byron Howard, City of Tucson
Brooks Keenan, TDOT
M. Classen, Sam Hughes
Carolyn Classen, Sam Hughes
Bruce Beenken, TransSystems
Mike Pryor, Tucson PD
C. Steward Ferrell, TransSystems
Richard Basye, Pima Association of Taxpayers
Karen Masbruch, City of Tucson
Dale Calvert
Chris Stebe

I. Opening Remarks and Introductions

Mr. Eugene Caywood called for introductions around the table.

II. Approve Meeting Minutes from January 9, 2006

The minutes from the last meeting were distributed and approved as printed.

III. Announcements

There were no announcements made.

IV. Downtown Links and Section 106 National Historic Preservation

Ms. MJ Dillard introduced Ms. Catesby Willis who is the environmental project coordinator with TDOT. Ms. Willis provided an overview of the National Historic Preservation Act, also known as Section 106.

Section 106 was passed in 1966. In addition to Section 106, the City of Tucson passed Administrative Directive (AD) in 1999, which states that the City will follow all federal and state laws. As a result of this AD, the City created the Historic Preservation Office and hired Ms. Marty McCune as the City's Historic Preservation Officer. This office has a contract with Desert Archaeology, which performs record checks, and field surveys and then prepares a report explaining the archaeological and historical significance of properties in the area of all City projects.

An historic event, the visit from an historic person, an important architectural feature or an innovative use of engineering can render a site one of historic significance. If it is determined to be an archaeological site, the distribution of artifacts and where they occur is important. If there are significant historic resources, then the primary mission is to avoid and preserve everything in place, which is why Tucson has so many historic sites. If, as a last resort, disturbance of the historical site cannot be avoided, the City requires a very intensive data recovery process. The area is mapped and any recovered materials go to the Arizona State Museum. A detailed report is issued and it contains recommended mitigation measures for reducing impacts to any historically significant resource.

Ms. Willis asked if anyone had a question about any particular aspect of this project. There were no questions.

Ms. Willis added that the Historic Warehouse District is in the area of this project. This District basically centers around the railroad and the industries that the railroad brought to Tucson.

Ms. Willis provided an example of a wooden shed, which is along one of the potential alignments. The wooden shed was used to store coal and wood, and is a structure with wooden sides and a corrugated metal roof. It has had structures added to it over the years, which can take away from the historical significance if it has been altered too much. Historians also look for other examples of this type of shed in the same vicinity, and there is another wooden shed with a corrugated metal roof located behind another building in this same area.

A committee member asked about the significance of 300 N. Sixth Avenue built in 1930. Ms. Willis said it was originally Corbett Tin and Paint and later became Arizona Cigar

and Tobacco. It is part of the historic district and is considered to be a contributing property, but that does not necessarily mean that the building itself is on the historical register.

David Aguirre asked whether the Sangin warehouse was listed on the historic register. Ms. Willis said it is one of a number of buildings listed as contributing to the historic district, but it is not an individually listed structure.

Mr. Don Durband asked how the 106 process would work as they move forward on this project. Ms. Willis said they would be looking for the alignment that will have the least impact with the primary mission being avoidance and preservation, but there are some instances when it is not feasible to preserve a building.

Mr. Durband asked if there would be a recommendation from the Historic Preservation Office on the option with the least impact. Ms. Willis said there would be a recommendation on the type of treatment option they would like to see, the type of data recovery they would like to see, perhaps features of a building that they find to be significant. It is also possible to preserve part of a building that has particular significance.

A committee member asked if moving a building would be an option. Ms. Willis said it would depend on the significance of the building, and the soundness of the structure. Some buildings cannot be moved without destroying them.

Mr. Chris Carroll asked about the status of the Fourth Avenue Underpass and to what degree they can work on it without removing its historical significance. Ms. Willis stated that all of the downtown underpasses are listed as significant, and are on the register of historic places. For example, that is why the Stone Underpass was not modified, but was repaired and painted.

Mr. Gerry Juliani commented that this was an excellent summary but he would like specifics. Mr. Juliani stated that he thinks that Section 106 requires you to note adverse affects such as noise that affect people or property, and he would like to see something annotated that shows that the City has gone out and reached all the properties that the law requires, because without that they cannot evaluate anything. He asked when the City would be able to tell them some of those things. Ms. Dillard said that the noise studies were dependent on the selected alignment, and that had not been yet been determined. Mr. Juliani said he was referring to Section 106 that says very clearly that these studies should be done as early in the planning process as possible. Mr. Juliani asked if the City could draw some vague conclusions about how far the noise abatement would go and what the City is going to do about it. Ms. Dillard explained that there have been several environmental studies conducted in the project area, one in particular was the Warehouse Arts District study, which provided a list of with particular buildings, and areas of concern. There has been a significant amount of environmental cleanup already performed at the site. The City is actively pursuing a quiet zone status, and this will significantly change the noise impact.

Ms. Dillard agreed to put together an environmental plan outline in a format similar to the committee's milestones with timelines for tracking.

Mr. Durband asked if the final recommendation would take into consideration the adverse affects or is it simply a matter of deciding that Plan A destroys three buildings, Plan B destroys five, so we pick Plan A. He asked what was going into the recommendation. Ms. Willis said an alignment is not picked based on one particular aspect, so they look at the historic along with other environmental aspects of the project such as noise, air, potential hazardous materials, etc. Now that we are down to three possible alignments, we can start by evaluating these.

Mr. Juliani asked whether or not this project requires a full environmental impact study. Ms. Dillard said that this project does not currently require an official environmental impact statement because it is not a federally funded highway project. What it does require, by the City's guidelines, is a full study of everything to be sure all the issues are addressed. An official Environmental Impact Statement is one type of study required for certain federal funded highway projects, and this is under what is called the NEPA process. Mr. Juliani disagreed and thinks the City Attorney's office should give their reading on this because this project will be connecting up to a federally funded project (I-10 frontage road)

Mr. Mike Barton stated that they had federal funding to conduct the studies in the early design phases of this project. Throughout the development of this corridor, and when it was an ADOT plan, they went through an extensive environmental process, which was updated as part of the 1996 Barraza Aviation plan. As the City amends that plan with this project, the City will go through the environmental process to update that last environmental assessment. This approach had been done throughout the project process because it wasn't known how the project would be funded. Ms. Dillard stated that this issue would be looked into and placed on the next agenda.

Joseph Maher asked if any of the buildings that are in the plan to possibly be demolished are on the historic register. Ms. Willis stated that the structures are considered to be contributing properties but are not yet on the historic register. She will check on the individual buildings on the current alignment to see if they are registered and will return with that information.

V. Previous Noise Study and MLK Noise Study

Ms. Dillard said that they have obtained some of the previous noise studies that have been conducted in the project area. One noise study was done for the Historic Train Depot restoration project (copies of this report were provided), and the other is a draft MLK housing preliminary noise study (not available for release yet). One of the assumptions made in both of these studies was that this area would be designated be a quiet zone. It should be noted that an acoustical engineer did not take actual sound measurements in the field, and that these studies were developed using accepted generic values for each contributing source of noise. The City considers a quiet zone designation of importance, and is currently issuing a Request for Qualifications to pursue this designation. This study will apply to the four at-grade crossings within the downtown area.

Natasha Winnik suggested that as a part of the Request for Qualifications, the City should hire ab acoustical engineer to test the current noise levels. Ms. Winnik would like to know what the current levels are if any noise rules are being broken during the time that

the quiet zone project is pursued. MJ agreed that she would look into the options for measuring the current levels and report back.

Mr. John Burr asked if the crossings south of 22nd street could be considered in the quiet zone evaluation as well. Ms. Dillard indicated that she would submit that request.

VI. Update on One-way to Two-way Traffic

Ms. Dillard said that two-way traffic issue is still on the table but several of the links, such as this project and/or the connection of 22nd to the freeway, may need to be in place in order make two-way work as effectively as the City would like.

As part of this Downtown Links project, the City is going to update the existing two-way traffic modeling to include recent changes, and to verify assumptions. Specifically, in the original modeling the assumption was made that 70% of the traffic going into the downtown area wasn't headed downtown. The traffic modeling for this project will include a license plate survey to verify this assumption. This will help refine the two-way modeling.

Mr. Barton said that they would be starting the data collection effort after the traffic from the gem show subsides because they do not want to be influenced by gem show traffic. The procedure will be to take a look at license plates that enter the downtown area and match them to license plates leaving the downtown area. The east-west boundaries for this study will be Aviation/Broadway to I-10, and north-south boundaries will be south of Five-Points at 18th St., and the north end will be both Stone Ave. and Sixth Ave. just north of the railroad bridge and around Franklin St. This effort will start in early March and will take approximately one month, in addition to compiling traffic counts. The change in the Five-Points project also needs to be accounted for in the modeling. Basically, they will be taking the modeling done in 2002-2003 and updating that with current conditions and updated information for a better outcome.

Ms. Natasha Winnik asked how it would work to change one-way traffic to two-way traffic on Congress and Broadway coming in from the east and west. Mr. Barton said that he has plans that show different concepts for doing that. One concept is that as you come in heading westbound into downtown with a possible four lanes coming in under the underpass, two lanes would go to Broadway, one lane would go up to Congress and one lane to Toole. Heading east, Congress would not necessarily have an eastbound connection. You would go along Congress and make a right turn on Fourth and a left turn on to Broadway, emphasizing Broadway as the through route as opposed to Congress.

Mr. Durband said that developer Jim Campbell was on the agenda but could not attend. Mr. Campbell's Plaza Centro would be another alternative if it were to be approved. Mr. Campbell is proposing removing the roadway between Fourth Avenue/Toole/Congress intersection and Broadway as it comes up from the underpass, which would take all the westbound traffic onto Broadway. Mr. Durband passed around an illustration of Mr. Campbell's ideas, and staff passed around a copy of the proposal at the committee's request.

Mr. Christopher Carroll asked what the schedule is for converting Granada Avenue from four lanes to three lanes from Sixth Street to Alameda. Brooks Keenan said that the City

is planning to do that, but he didn't know the schedule. M.J. Dillard said that she would look into that and provide the information at the next meeting.

VII. Update on I-10 Feasibility Study

Ms. Dillard said that the City completed a feasibility study regarding the lowering of I-10. It was determined that it would be too expensive and take too much time to build, so that idea has been abandoned. The City and County are currently looking at some other possibilities for slight modifications to the existing widening plan. A question was asked about what type of modifications might be made. Mr. Brooks Keenan explained that ADOT's current plan is to make the underpasses for Congress St., 22nd St. and Clark St. wider than they are now, and they are evaluating the possibility of making them even wider.

A committee member commented that the I-10 project was supposed to go to construction in August 2006. He asked how long these minor adjustments would affect the actual schedule. Mr. Keenan said that as far as he knows, ADOT has not announced a new construction schedule. Ms. Dillard will keep the group updated as they hear more.

A committee member asked if the current plan or the plan to make those underpasses wider would include bicycle lanes. Mr. Keenan said that ADOT's current plan corresponds with the City's plan to widen Congress in the future, which includes the number of lanes in the City's plan, plus bicycle lanes, plus generous sidewalks.

Mr. Caywood commented that he was disappointed in the way that the City handled the study of I-10 and the fact that there was no citizen input. Citizens should have had the opportunity to give their input into the parameters that the consultant looked at that caused the cost to come out the way it did. There was a study done by Johnson Brittan four or five years ago that made it look like this plan was feasible. He thinks that study was what the City Manager was looking at, and the cost estimate they came up with at that time, compared with the cost estimate that HDR came up with this time deserves an explanation. Mr. Keenan said that he would get the CAC copies of the feasibility study.

Mr. Joe Maher commented that 3-10 years from now downtown will be surrounded with construction and the key will be how it's handled. As long as the accessibility issue is taken care of, this I-10 tunnel project would have been a great project, and he's hoping the state will come through with the money to pay for it.

VIII. Neighborhood Priorities

Ms. Dillard explained that staff would like to start collecting information about what items are of critical interest to the surrounding neighborhoods as they might relate to this project.

Ms. Dillard met with the Barrio Anita Neighborhood Association last week, and they indicated that they have a school and other concerns in the area. Specifically, at the parent drop off area the cars back up into traffic, and it becomes a serious congestion issue. The neighborhood requests that this be considered in the design of the new alignment.

Ms. Dillard would like everyone to go back to each of their groups and ask what is important their own areas, and pull together a list of their specific concerns regarding schools, pedestrian crossings, bike path connectivity etc.

Additional issues discussed were as follows:

General Design:

- a. Children crossings, parent drop off near Davis school.
- b. Noise abatement
- c. Amount of traffic increase west of Stone to the freeway
- d. Historic structures
- e. Tucson High students walking to and from the Ronstadt Center (and where the Ronstadt Center will be relocated).
- f. Bicycle and pedestrian connection from the north side of Sixth to downtown.
- g. Armory Park connectivity, especially to Fourth Avenue, through the underpass is important. They definitely need pedestrian access because many of their residents like to bike and walk, and they work downtown.
- h. Armory Park doesn't want to be the dumping ground for all the traffic.
- i. A lot of kids walk from Safford School to the high school.
- j. FEMA Issues

Construction Concerns:

- a. Construction impacts on nearby historic properties
- b. System to address any adverse affects and resolve issues
- c. Access during construction
- d. Staging area
- e. Dust

Ms. Natasha Winnik spoke about a study Irene Ogata presented to their Neighborhood that looked at the pedestrian and bicycle interconnectivity of neighborhoods, and it was something that Dunbar Spring's Weed and Seed money funded. All of the connections that were looked at through Irene's study need to be addressed in this plan. She suggested that Irene be invited to present the plan to this group

Neighborhood priorities will be added to the agenda as a regular item, so as members go back to speak to their groups they can continue to make a list of concerns.

IX. Review Current Fourth Avenue Project Status

The Fourth Avenue project will be constructed as two projects.

The first project will include the relocation of utilities south of the railroad tracks. The plans are complete for this project, and this should be out to bid in about three weeks.

For the second project, which is the actual construction of the new Fourth Avenue underpass, the City is pursuing one of the new methods for hiring a contractor, called a Construction Manager at Risk process. The City has advertised the job and is in the

process of going through a selection process. The schedule currently calls for the contractor to be selected by March 22, 2006.

The City recently received a proposal from developer Jim Campbell called Plaza Centro, which may have significant impacts on everything that has been planned. The City has been asked to do a quick feasibility study of this within the next two and a half weeks, and forward the study recommendations to the City Manager's Office, the Mayor and Council.

The Mayor and Council appointed Rio Nuevo Downtown subcommittee will consider this item on their February 23, 2006 agenda.

Donovan Durband passed around a copy of the Plaza Centro map, and the City of Tucson distributed a copy of the proposal.

The Plaza Centro project would cut off Congress St. between the Broadway underpass and Hotel Congress, and would cut off Toole Avenue from Fourth Avenue to Fifth Avenue.

Issues of concern in the feasibility study will include whether the City can make the trolley and the proposed modern streetcar operate through the old underpass (which would require significant modifications), how would traffic work if you made those major modifications at Congress and Broadway, and what would be the associated costs?

It should be noted that the Fourth Ave. Underpass utility relocation project will not be put out to bid until the City has the opportunity to evaluate the feasibility of Mr. Campbell's plan and that evaluation will include whether or not the utility relocations would need to be changed if that plan was adopted.

It should also be noted that the Underpass construction project would not be awarded until the City has time to evaluate the Mr. Campbell's proposal and get a decision from the Mayor and Council. The schedule currently calls for the contractor to be selected by March 22. This particular type of contract is flexible, and it is possible that if the City were to move forward with Mr. Campbell's proposal, that this contract could be utilized to modify the plans.

Mr. John Burr asked about the status of the Greyhound bus station. The new temporary station by Congress and I-10 is ready and Greyhound will start moving the end of this month. The demolition of the old facility will take 60 days.

Mr. Burr asked why the City gave Mr. Campbell the first right of refusal without an RFP process. Mr. Keenan said that from what he understands, Mr. Campbell owned property with historic structures related to Old Ft. Lowell that the City wanted to acquire, and the City made a land trade which includes undeveloped land on the east side and the first right of refusal on the existing Greyhound parcel.

Mr. Gerald Juliani asked if anyone ever heard of a historic underpass that could be deepened without losing its historic significance. It was stated that the decision would be left up to the Historic Preservation Office & Historic Commission.

Mr. Burr asked if approval of the Campbell proposal would require entire cancellation of the 4th Avenue project, or if the plans could be modified in some way to have both. Mr. Keenan replied that the current proposal would stop the project but that Mr. Campbell was willing to work with the City on the plans if there wasn't a way to get the trolley through the old underpass.

Ms. Winnik asked if the Campbell plan meant that only pedestrians, bicycles and streetcars would go through the old underpass and not car traffic. She believes that it is not possible to have everything use the old underpass.

Ms. Winnik expressed concern that Mr. Keenan recently stated there would be no redesign and now one person may put a stop to the project completely, and that parts of the proposal would bottleneck traffic more than is currently. Mr. Caywood and Mr. Bachman-Williams both expressed that it would be difficult if not impossible for bicycles to share the current underpass with car and trolley traffic.

A committee member was concerned about the delay caused by reviewing these plans and the related cost increase if the Fourth Avenue project moves forward. Also that he was bothered by the fact that they were told no further design changes could be made by them, but a last minute developer can put the whole project on hold.

Ms. Winnik suggested that Campbell pay for the time the City spends reviewing his proposal.

Mr. Caywood commented that the reality is that this is a political situation and that Mr. Campbell has the ear of the City Manager

A committee member asked if it was possible to widen the existing underpass to accommodate all the traffic. Mr. Keenan replied that it would be very difficult to widen specifically because of the visual differences. He confirmed that it could be done but the underpass would lose its historical value.

Mr. Kruckmeyer asked if a separate bike tunnel would be a possibility.

Another member asked if the approval of this plan would mean the end of the committee or just the end of their involvement in that portion. Ms. Dillard explained that this is the committee that would be involved with that project when the issue goes out for public involvement.

Mr. Burr expressed that Mr. Campbell's proposal would have a negative impact on Armory Park and other Downtown neighborhoods, and will cut off all the linkages to the neighborhoods. He stated that they always wanted a way for people to go back and forth without it turning into a major route. Mr. Burr would like to talk to his neighborhood before making any official comment.

Mr. Durband suggested that the committee hear a presentation from John Campbell himself.

Mr. Burr expressed that he and the neighborhoods would be very upset if the Mayor & Council makes a decision on this before the next Downtown Links meeting.

Mr. Caywood suggested that the Committee make a yes or no decision based on the information they currently have. He also stated that he believes the City will find that this plan is not going to prove to be feasible, partially because the entrance and exit will be too steep if the current underpass is lowered.

The committee made a motion that they advise the City of their negative reaction to the project for the following reasons:

1. Connectivity for bicycles from south of Broadway to north 4th Avenue and the University area.
2. Connectivity off Toole onto Congress.
3. Grade issues and affect on Congress.
4. Safety issues for pedestrians and bicycles.
5. Destruction of the historic nature of the underpass.

Mr. Burr requested information on how long 4th Avenue would be cut off from downtown if the plan goes through. He also stated that he would like to be fair about the decision and hear from those people who support the Campbell plan. Mr. Keenan responded that if the new underpass were not built the old underpass would have to be rebuilt and gave a rough guess that the underpass would have to be closed for 12-16 months.

Mr. Kruckmeyer asked if there was a way to do the new underpass but change the south ramp to line up with the radius of Congress. Mr. Barton stated that engineers have looked at this option in the past and because of grade considerations it would create an undesirable “ditch” near the Rialto.

Some committee members stated that they are fed up with the delays on the 4th Avenue project.

Mr. Durband said that although he understands the committee members’ frustrations, he thinks it important to listen to Mr. Campbell’s presentation on his plan and the possibilities related to this proposal.

Mr. Hoyt Johnson said that he would like to hear from the Hotel Congress and the Rialto and that he would like to hear a presentation by Mr. Campbell sooner than the next meeting.

Mr. Burr suggested amending the original motion to oppose now pending further information provided by Mr. Campbell.

The motion was approved to tentatively oppose the plan at this time, pending a meeting in two weeks to hear the proposal and input from other interested parties.

X. Future Agenda Items

Meeting on Monday, Feb. 27, regarding Fourth Avenue and Jim Campbell’s presentation.

XI. Call to the Audience (per CAC meeting guidelines, Committee and staff are not allowed to respond to comments)

Mr. Dick Basye spoke about of the current Fourth Avenue plan. He believes that improving the Sixth Avenue underpass access for vehicle traffic and implementing the two way system is more critical to the vitality of downtown, according to what he has heard from business representatives. Fourth Avenue could be a pedestrian walkway and bicycle path from the Depot to Fourth Avenue.

Mr. Basye also felt that the public was not involved during the discussion of lowering I-10, and does not believe the public was ever told about the earlier study. He also does not understand why a second feasibility study had to be conducted since one was conducted five years prior and he feels that this issue should still be debated.

Ms. Carolyn Classen, Zoning Co-Chair from Sam Hughes neighborhood asked why we are listening to Jim Campbell's proposal while the modern streetcar is in the RTA plan. It appears that the right hand doesn't know what the left hand is doing and that these will harm the RTA vote.

Mr. Chris Stebe voiced his concern that he was frustrated that Jim Campbell was allowed to present a development plan and the irony on the timing of it. He asked where he could obtain more information regarding the I-10 plan.

XII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.