

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

***Attendees:***

**CAC Committee**

John Burr, Armory Park Neighborhood Association  
Charles Davis, Barrio Anita 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  
Donovan Durband, Tucson Downtown Alliance, DLCAC Vice-Chairperson  
David Hoyt Johnson, Tucson-Pima Arts Council  
David Bachman-Williams, Tucson-Pima Bicycle Advisory Committee  
Gerald Juliani, Tucson-Pima Historical Commission  
Mindy Bernstein, West University Neighborhood

**Project Team**

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

**Observers**

Terrence McMahon, Barrio Anita  
Claire Fellows  
Carrie Calvert, Barrio Anita  
Alex Hingle, Ward VI  
Byron Howard, City of Tucson  
Bruce Beenken, TransSystems  
C. Stuart Ferrell, TransSystems  
Richard Basye, Pima Association of Taxpayers  
Karen Masbruch, City of Tucson  
Chris Stebe  
Ron Wilson  
Tim Ahrens, RTA  
Richard & Shana Oseran, Hotel Congress  
Corky Poster, Poster Frost Associates  
Moon Yee, P.C.  
Jerry Kincaid, Iron Horse  
Dirk Arnold  
Irene Ogata, COT DUP&D  
Joe Hatch, HDR

## **I. Opening Remarks and Introductions**

Gene Caywood called for introductions around the table.

## **II. Approve Meeting Minutes from February 13, 2006**

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

## **III. Announcements**

There were no announcements made.

## **IV. Presentation of proposed Plaza Centro by Jim Campbell**

Gene Caywood, Chair, introduced Jim Glock, TDOT Director, and Jim Campbell, Oasis Tucson, Inc.

Jim Glock gave a brief history of the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Underpass reconstruction plans. Nine months ago the project was put out to bid and the one bid that came in was \$10 million over budget. In order to cut costs, they attempted to split the project into different phases, tried listing certain project elements as alternates so that when they bid, contractors could recommend eliminating one element or another, and then looked into alternative project delivery methods. One of those was Construction Management at Risk (CM@Risk) where the contractor is chosen by qualifications as opposed to low bid. The contractor, with the design team, would then work out alterations to the plans that could then be constructed for the budget available. Additional funds have been obtained through Pima Association of Governments to augment the construction budget.

Mr. Campbell gave a brief history of his involvement with the Greyhound Bus Depot parcel. Part of the 2004 Pima County Open Space bonds included the acquisition of a parcel at Craycroft and Ft. Lowell, known as the Atkins parcel. Neither the City nor County were successful in negotiating a sales agreement from the Atkins family, however, Jim Campbell was able to secure that property. He then negotiated the sale of that property to the City and included in the sales agreement the first right of refusal to acquire the portion of the Greyhound Bus Depot parcel.

Mr. Campbell said that he considers Plaza Centro as an opportunity to establish a gateway on the east side of downtown. He has been working with the Hotel Congress and the Rialto to try and figure out what could be done to link 4<sup>th</sup> Ave., the Hotel Congress, and the Rialto.

Mr. Campbell believes that by modifying the 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. Underpass plans there would be ways to eliminate part of the roadway to allow for the assembly of greater portions of land to facilitate development and architectural opportunities. Mr. Campbell also indicated that this could be done in a way that would help bring the 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. project within budget, create a gateway into Downtown, and it could be done with very little impact to the existing project time frames.

The City Manager's office had requested Jim Glock to sit down with Mr. Campbell to discuss the Plaza Centro option to see if a plan could be proposed that would meet Mr. Campbell's goals and objectives as well as the transportation issues that the City was hoping to achieve.

The key elements to his modified Plaza Centro Plan are as follows:

- The new 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. Underpass as currently planned would be eliminated, and the existing 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. Underpass would be reconstructed to accommodate all the functions proposed in for new underpass. This would mean that the existing underpass would be modified to accommodate

the modern streetcar, one lane of traffic in each direction with one of these lanes operating in the same area as one lane of traffic, bicycle lanes on each side, and adequate pedestrian space to create the link between the 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. shopping district and Congress Street (construction of only one underpass reduces cost).

- Congress Street would remain open and provide access to Hotel Congress and points east while we continue to operate Broadway and Congress as a one-way pair (may change once Downtown Links at Stevens and 22<sup>nd</sup> are constructed).
- Toole between Congress and 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. may be closed and Herbert and 10<sup>th</sup> St. would function as pedestrian alleys or corridors. The viability of traffic circulation for this still needs to be assessed.
- This particular concept would require the connection between 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. to be closed during construction.
- The Plaza Centro project will include a parking garage.

On March 9th, the Plaza Centro Concept was presented to the Rio Nuevo Downtown Mayor and Council subcommittee.

- The Rio Nuevo Mayor and Council subcommittee will facilitate all of the community participation for this project.
- This subcommittee endorsed the concept and directed staff to continue to work with Mr. Campbell on this particular plan, and develop an alternative to what we originally sent out to bid.
- Staff was also directed to accelerate the redesign process with the current designer and the construction manager at risk contractor that we are in the process of selecting for 4<sup>th</sup> Ave.
- It was understood that the redesign can be done concurrently with the railroad right of way and/or permitting required.
- Mr. Campbell and his team will be able to evaluate the development opportunities associated with the remaining property and put a development package together.
- It was estimated that construction would start in 16 months, which is about 12 months behind the original schedule. (Closing the 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. connection to Congress during construction shaves about 6 months off the construction time and helps to reduce costs.)
- Plaza Centro will be presented to the Mayor and Council Transportation Subcommittee as well as the full Mayor and Council.

The following items regarding the presentation were discussed:

- **General**

Concern was expressed that the Rio Nuevo Mayor and Council Subcommittee made a decision without consulting the Downtown Links CAC, and before the DLCAC could see the presentation from Mr. Campbell.

- **Bicycles and Underpass Cross Section**

It was confirmed that the new 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. Underpass design having sufficient and separate lanes for bicycles. A streetcar could not operate in the original underpass and maintain the 2-½ feet on each side of the vehicle required by fire code, and bicycles could not operate safely in the same lanes as the streetcars. The committee also suggested that bicycles and pedestrians could be split off and come in from the northwest end of the complex so they would not be in the same lanes as the streetcars and cars.

- **Congress Closure and/or One-Way to Two-Way**

It was clarified that Congress St. would remain open and one-way for now. It is the desire of many of the downtown stakeholders along Congress to make it two-way, but neither Broadway nor Congress could be turned into two-way streets until several other options for getting people in and out of downtown were constructed. At a minimum, the Downtown Links “Stevens” extension of Barraza Aviation up to 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. could help provide that. Further traffic studies can determine what other improvements will be needed to get the traffic flow into and out of downtown to work. At this point the City cannot support two-way on Congress or Broadway without providing the additional capacity.

- **Construction Contracts**

A question was asked how the City could go directly to design with no bid without violating City laws considering the size and cost of this project. It was explained by Jim Glock that within the last five years the state legislature has allowed for alternative project delivery methods. One method is called Design-Build where you select a designer and a contractor at the same time, establish a guaranteed maximum price, and they provide you with a finished product. The COT Pennington Street Garage project was a Design-Build project. Another method is called Construction Manager at Risk where you have a fairly developed design, then bring in a contractor based on their qualifications to work with design teams and establish the costs.

- **Relocation of Utilities**

The utilities running down Toole and south on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue are going to be realigned to go down Herbert and then turn off to go south on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The most problematic utility work will be relocation of a major trunk line for the phone company coming out of Downtown. Relocation of phone lines and sanitary sewer will still be required but perhaps not at the same magnitude. Staff is currently meeting with designers to determine the full extent.

- **Grades of new Underpass**

There was discussion about the new underpass meeting the grades necessary for the historic trolley to make it through the underpass, the grades at the Hotel Congress, and the location where the underpass grades would meet existing grades.

- There are some grade limitations in order for some historic trolleys to make it through the underpass. The newer trolleys can make it through steeper grades than historic trolleys, and steeper grades get the underpass to street level in a shorter distance. It was also noted that the amount of cover material over the old underpass is more than the current requirements for a new underpass, so things could be adjusted up as well.
- Jim Campbell questioned whether the historic trolley should be going through the tunnel, or just back and forth from the Main Gate to South 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue or up and down Congress Street. He wonders if it’s necessary for a tourist attraction to go full length from UMC to Rio Nuevo.
- Jim Glock said that it has not been decided whether or not this concept, and the grades that we are to apply here, are going to prevent the historic trolley from operating here.
- Gene Caywood said that main purpose of the historic trolley organization (Old Pueblo Trolley) is to make the connection between 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, the University and downtown. This organization doesn’t support running two different shuttle lines in different locations.
- The City staff will take a closer look at various types of trolley requirements and make sure these items are addressed in the new underpass design.
- It was also requested that City staff look at grades that facilitate bicyclists.
- The previous 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. Underpass design had retaining walls that wrapped around the Rialto Theatre and Hotel Congress. This was similar to the original look at the Warehouse District and the then current plans for the Barraza Parkway on Toole. There was a deep channel isolating some of the warehouses rendering them inaccessible and useless. That led to a rethinking of the plan and placing the Parkway on the north side of the tracks. There is some

thought that it is the same here, which is that in the name of saving the historic underpass we would be rendering, from a pedestrian standpoint, three of downtown's historic landmarks, the Depot, Hotel Congress, and The Rialto virtually inaccessible. There was discussion that the underpass should have the purpose of connecting people from one side to the other and to a great place.

- Jim Glock stated that staff and designers are looking into meeting the existing grade by the corner of the Congress Hotel. Congress Street would not be 8 feet lower as currently planned. He recommended members go to the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the Public Works Building where they have a model of an earlier rendition of 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and you can get a better sense of this. Essentially the grades they're looking at are very similar to Stone Avenue Underpass.

- **Funding**

Jim Glock stated that he is confident that the funding programmed to date will still be available. There may be some 12.6 Percent Urban Area Highway User Revenue Funds available if everyone recognizes that the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Underpass is absolutely critical, especially if they want to see the Stevens/Barraza extension.

- **Historic Status**

- Concerns were raised regarding how much of the historic 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. Underpass would be preserved as part of this "rebuild" to meet the desired cross section and grades. It was discussed that considerable time had gone into the previous 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. Underpass design to make sure that a compromise was reached that was agreeable to the Historic Commission. Mr. Campbell agreed to present the new plan to the Tucson-Pima County Historical Commission, since the rebuild would not retain much of the current underpass. At that time the Commission could discuss creating a gateway to the eastern end of downtown and the value of keeping the underpass versus destroying it or creating something new that retains the character of the area.
- Concern was expressed that the historic buildings and neighborhoods that are protected should not be compromised.

- **Toole Closure**

Clarification was requested regarding the closure of Toole specifically as a permanent measure or as a temporary event option with removable bollards.

- The desire to close part of Toole for Plaza Centro would be to balance the plazas on both sides of the underpass.
- A decision has not been made on the future status of Toole yet.

- **Impact on Downtown Links**

- It was indicated that with the new plan there is still room for Barraza-Aviation to come across Broadway and the 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. Underpass on the north side of the railroad tracks.
- The traffic modeling would be updated to include newer issues in the downtown area, and extend far enough east and south to study the impacts at 22<sup>nd</sup> St.

- **Impact on other Downtown Projects**

- The Warehouse District Master Plan terminates at the north end of the Depot, so this underpass modification would not affect it.
- The only element of the new underpass that relates to the Depot Plaza Project is the recommendation that a 10<sup>th</sup> St. pedestrian alley be maintained. It was requested that staff look at 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. again.

- **Construction**

- It was suggested that if during construction 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. was closed off, that an alternate access for Tucson High students traveling to the Ronstadt Transit Center be provided.

- Toole is a major access for Armory Park residents, and they were wondering if the construction on Toole could be done in an early phase so that they can have Toole open before the rest of the access points are closed down.

- **Schedule**

- The Plaza Centro and new 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. Underpass issues will be taken to other Mayor and Council subcommittees in March and April before it goes to the full Mayor and Council.
- The geometrics of the new underpass plan should be available in late May 2006.

- **Public Outreach for the new underpass design**

- As mentioned above, the Rio Nuevo Mayor and Council subcommittee will facilitate all of the community participation/Public Outreach for the redesign of the 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. Underpass project.
- Jim Glock provided the committee with the assurance that there would be public involvement in the new design process through the Rio Nuevo Mayor and Council subcommittee. He also said that he would personally bring up the issue at the next subcommittee meeting so that the public will have the opportunity to follow along with the design development.

## V. Call to the Audience

- Richard Oseran commented that as a former member of the committee, one thing he never fully appreciated were the grade changes, retaining walls, lowering the road, and the inability to cross over to the Rialto at the east corner of Congress St. because those things weren't really clear at that time. When he saw the cross section of the grade he saw the new underpass would be about 5 lanes, two trolley lanes, two car lanes, the bike lanes and the sidewalks which is about the width of Speedway around 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue which is huge. To try to retain the sense of a historic area with the big transportation issue driving everything doesn't make a lot of sense. When Jim Glock had talked to him about creating a gateway using the properties on the east end, it seemed like a great idea. As owners of Hotel Congress, they're thinking about how they feel about the closure of Toole and Richard agrees that if it's closed with bollards, it could always be opened if needed, but it's really important to maintain the historic grid. The MLK/Depot Plaza plan is changing the direction of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, which they are opposed to. The streets and angles there have been created in a historic manner because of the railroad and when planning a new urban environment you don't want to change that. Even if Toole was closed off, the site lines are extremely important and as Jim Campbell mentioned maintaining the existing historic site line of the existing 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue underpass is very important because its creation prompted everything that's there to be developed around it. Richard said he and others have a really good feeling about the potential of what could happen here and he thinks the City ought to give it a shot.
- An audience member asked the committee what happened to the original idea of the new underpass. He thought the old underpass was to remain a pedestrian and bicycle route and the new underpass was to help alleviate the everyday traffic congestion for the people who use the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Underpass. He wondered if this city has ever completed one project they have started without changing it a hundred times.
- An audience member asked if the City utilizes urban planners or traffic engineers to design projects. For years he personally has had issues with the absurdness of a solution that a committee came up with. It doesn't look good to him and traffic flow doesn't work right and he has been concerned that this project would not happen and is actually happy that it may not happen.

**(Return to Item IV after Call to Audience)**

**IV. Presentation of Proposed Plaza Centro by Jim Campbell**

Don Durband thanked Jim Glock and Jim Campbell for all their hard work in working together on this project. Don Durband also stated that Jim Campbell doesn't have a guarantee that he will be the developer of this site, and may not be the one to build this great gateway on the east end. Hopefully because of his efforts the City will wind up with something that will work out for him or someone else.

A motion was made to encourage Jim Glock and Jim Campbell to:

1. Continue this effort to design a single underpass at approximately the same historic alignment of the existing 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Underpass that will accommodate various transportation uses, pedestrian, bicycle, trolley, modern streetcar, vehicles, and also recognizes the economic potential of the eastern gateway to Downtown,
2. Continue to talk to and listen to all the groups represented at the table,
3. Continue to clarify the concerns about grades,
4. Continue to work with the historic community regarding the preservation of the underpass,
5. Consider the goals that are part of the 15 years of planning and part of this evening's discussion including but not limited to:
  - a. Creating a pedestrian-friendly area at the east end of downtown
  - b. That we not isolate our historic assets from each other
  - c. Recognize the historic character of those assets, and
  - d. Build a new underpass that will accommodate all uses that need to go through there.

Chris Carroll seconded the motion.

The motion was passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.