

DOWNTOWN LINKS CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE – MONTHLY MEETING

ACTION REPORT AND SUMMARY

Monday, November 13, 2006

FROM: TDOT Project Manager Shellie Ginn

Chair Gene Caywood called the meeting to order at 5:40 p.m. at the Joel D. Valdez Main Library.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

- Chair** Gene Caywood (Old Pueblo Trolley)
- Vice-Chair** Don Durband (Tucson Downtown Alliance)
- John Burr (Armory Park Neighborhood Association)
- Joseph Maher, Jr. (Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee)
- Natasha Winnik (Dunbar-Spring Neighborhood Association)
- John Sedwick (Fourth Avenue Merchants Association)
- Christopher Carroll (El Presidio Neighborhood Association)
- Mary Ellen Wooten (Tucson-Pima Arts Council)
- Jonathan Levy (Iron Horse Neighborhood Association)
- David Bachman-Williams (Tucson-Pima Bicycle Advisory Committee)
- David Aguirre (Warehouse Arts Management Organization)
- Gerald Juliani (Tucson-Pima County Historical Commission)
- Mindy Bernstein (West University Neighborhood Association)

PROJECT TEAM PRESENT:

- Andrew Singelakis, TDOT
- Shellie Ginn, TDOT
- Melissa Antol, TDOT
- Michael Graham, TDOT
- Mike Barton, HDR Engineering, Inc.
- Joan Beckim, Kaneen Advertising & Public Relations
- Corky Poster, Poster Frost

AGENDA ITEM/COMMITTEE ACTION	STAFF ACTION
1. Meeting was called to order at 5:40 p.m.	<u>NO ACTION REQUIRED</u>
2. Introductions of Committee Members and Staff.	<u>NO ACTION REQUIRED</u>
3. Approval of Meeting Minutes The minutes of the October 16, 2006 meeting minutes were approved with no changes.	<u>APPROVED MINUTES POSTED TO WEBSITE</u>
4. No Announcements	<u>NO ACTION REQUIRED</u>
5. Call to the Audience Mark Berman from Benjamin Plumbing Supply commented that what is being planned will create the most congested street in Tucson from 7 th Avenue to the freeway. He said the plan is to put 80,000 cars per day on 4 lanes and build an underpass that will be obsolete before it's started. He does not understand how the traffic will be moved to 7 th Avenue with	<u>NO ACTION REQUIRED</u>

<p>2 lanes each way and thinks that it will create horrible gridlock and horrible air pollution. He believes something is being planned that is half there, but the other half won't work.</p> <p>Michael Toney commented on the bad drainage by Barraza-Aviation and I-10 at Congress and wondered who works on that. As far as the 80,000 cars per day, he thinks the intention of the RTA was to make this regional which means that it should be designed to take a lot of traffic.</p>	
<p>6. Technical Review of Proposed Concepts</p> <p>Andrew Singelakis said that Mike Barton would go through the current thinking and analysis of what the project is, including some of the obstacles and opportunities they have found.</p> <p>Mike Barton reviewed that this Committee has recently been looking at a 6th St. connection and 7th Avenue connection. For simplicity, these have been renamed Concept 1 and 2 - Concept 1 being the 6th Street connection where 6th St. comes in and connects with Downtown Links, and 7th Avenue being the other connection. Several issues were looked at simultaneously including horizontal-vertical geometries, traffic, structures, and drainage. Each concept was a typical four-lane cross section coming up from the Broadway traffic interchange along the tracks northwesterly. It was assumed that they would develop either an at-grade or below-grade connection with 6th Avenue, and an underpass underneath the existing Union Pacific Railroad on 6th Street at 9th Avenue. As they started laying out the geometry they looked at both 6th Avenue and Stone Avenue and what would happen if they were to replace the existing underpasses. In order to comply with current standards, with an 8% grade and a 17 ½ foot vertical clearance, the replacement of either of the underpasses would create significant vertical impacts on Toole Avenue. It is proposed to save both the Stone Avenue and 6th Avenue Underpasses to not deal with this situation.</p> <p>Mike Barton introduced Jim Schoen from Kittelson and Associates who have been conducting the traffic modeling. Jim reported as follows: <u>Traffic Analysis Overview</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic Counts Collected in April 2006 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 40 Downtown Intersections • License Plate Survey on Congress/Broadway <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Used to Estimate traffic diversion to Stevens Avenue • Downtown Traffic Operations model Developed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Includes recent changes to the street network ○ Reflects reduced capacity resulting from constrained roadways • Applied Model to Assess Downtown Links Alternatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Future traffic demands ○ Planned circulation changes (Stone Ave./6th Ave.) 	<p><u>NO ACTION REQUIRED</u></p>

License Plate Survey

- 70% WB PM Peak Traffic Entering is Through Traffic
- 47% EB AM Peak Traffic Entering is Through Traffic

Future Traffic/Network Conditions

- PAG 2030 Traffic Forecasts
 - 3% annual growth in the downtown area
 - 10 year horizon evaluated – 30% growth
- Planned Circulation Changes
 - Stone Ave., 2-way, 2 lanes each direction
 - 6th Ave., 2-way, 2 lanes each direction south of Toole Ave.,; 1 lane each direction north of Toole Ave.
- Congress/Broadway
 - 1-way for this analysis

To take a look at what the diversion might be to 22nd St., PAG has done some model runs. They added another connection to Barraza-Aviation to allow more trips to go to 22nd Street. The model showed about a 10% reduction in trips on Barraza- Aviation from traffic diverted to 22nd Street, but only for through trips headed south on I-10. Mindy Bernstein asked that 22nd Street be studied more thoroughly as a possible conduit and believes that this study must be relevant to the decision they are making. Jim said that the intent of the license plate study was to get an idea of where people want to go, and in the PM westbound direction, about 25% want to go to Stone and Oracle so these people will be the ones to have a significant benefit from this connection. 22nd Street will benefit drivers who want to go south.

Mike Barton said that there are currently two other City projects in various stages of planning that the Links project will need to coordinate with. The 22nd Street at Kino Blvd intersection study is looking at a grade-separated intersection there, and another project with planning to start next year is 22nd Street to the freeway. These projects will all determine how things will work on 22nd Street.

Chris Carroll commented on how Option 1 was physically impossible and suggested that the alternative should be abandoned. Don Durband asked for more information on the backups and the daily traffic volumes on Congress as they're impacted by the three alternatives. Natasha Winnick asked for a model that would show connections at 5th and 6th. Gene Caywood commented that he thought the second option showed those connections and Mike Barton confirmed that the alternative showed connections at 7th Street and a connection onto 6th, and also an intersection at 5th. Gene believes that this option works better because of the better distribution of traffic. Mindy Bernstein asked for modeling projecting use on S. Park to 22nd St. Jim said they could use the PAG projections to see what the potential would be for that route. John Sedwick said that if they make a core decision they can get more data and see where they go from there. Dealing with several alternatives makes it more problematic. Option 2 shares the load on 7th, 6th and 5th and gives

people more alternatives to get where they're going and his suggestion would be to give staff approval to go forward with this alternative.

Mike Barton continued his presentation by talking about some of the potential cross sections. An example used was west of the crossing over 4th Avenue. Total width of this section is 64 feet assuming a four-lane cross section with a bike lane on each side, a sidewalk on the north side, and a 7-foot landscape buffer to the roadway right of way. They are using 12 foot lanes as the guide. About 13 feet is identified for noise mitigation which is consistent with what has been planned in the 4th Avenue project. The alignment may shift for changes to be made as planning progresses. David Bachman-Williams recommended that especially with 5th Avenue that they look at putting the sidewalk next to the edge of the right of way and put the landscaping between the sidewalk and the street which makes it safer for pedestrians. Also he stressed the recommendation for 6 foot bike lanes and perhaps 11 ½ foot traffic lanes to accommodate this which will also slow traffic. Mike Barton showed another cross section on 7th Avenue and 6th. They will continue to study the affect on Benjamin Supply and Small Planet Bakery.

Mike Barton continued to discuss the different types of cross sections at the 6th Street underpass and the problem of squeezing between the Steinfeld Warehouse and Citizens Bldg. There are 12-foot lanes with 5-foot bike lanes with no pedestrian accommodation underneath. David Bachman-Williams recommended that there be no bike lanes under there at all so you can narrow the lanes down. Natasha Winnick commented that from a neighborhood recommendation that it feels like a tunnel and is not friendly to walk or bike through there. Corky Poster, urban design consultant from Poster Frost Associates, talked about the notion of a separated bicycle path and the different ways that could be done. Mike Johnson from HDR presented information on the drainage situation and explained that the recently constructed complex of detention basins called South Randolph and the Park Avenue basins which are about to be constructed and will together reduce the discharge. Other good things will happen with this because they have to move the culvert to avoid the roadway, they need to pick up the flood plain to keep the underpass from flooding, but also you will be able to develop that area.

John Burr asked that the City consider pedestrian-friendly areas and public spaces. Just south of the Ironhorse neighborhood the City at one time considered developing that as a public space. Andrew Singelakis said that the public space issue is the point of the land use planning meetings that are currently being held by Poster Frost Associates. Mary Ellen Wooten asked about how this plan affects the business plan of Benjamin Supply. Since he was present, the Committee agreed to ask the owner to comment on this. This plan will probably require the business to move because they will not have the room for large trucks to load and unload. He does not know for sure, but this may mean that the business

will have to move. The City will work with Benjamin Supply to see about the possibility of accommodating large trucks and parking.

Gerald Juliani asked Shellie Ginn about the request made for the RTA's version of the ballot issue and she was asked to request an opinion from the City Attorney. Andrew Singelakis explained that two opinions came out – one from the CA's office and one from the City that said that the Downtown Links project does need to be a 4-lane facility. Discussion ensued regarding whether or not the 4 lanes needs to be contiguous or if they can be divided over two different surface streets. John Burr said that he believed that this Committee already voted that they would proceed with the language of the RTA plan. After more discussion, Gene Caywood said that what would have to happen in this case is that the issue would have to be raised by someone who voted for it, and they would have to make a motion to reconsider.

Don Durband **MOVED** that the Committee eliminate Concept 1, which is the 6th Street disconnect, from further consideration and pursue some version of proposed Concept 2. **SECONDED** by Gerald Juliani. With no discussion the motion **PASSED** unanimously.

7. Warehouse Arts District Update

Andrew Singelakis introduced Lou Ginsberg who has recently been appointed by the City Manager as a Special Projects Manager for the Real Estate Division to handle the implementation of the Warehouse Arts District Master Plan. Lou announced that the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) has begun to make phone calls to tenants of the Steinfeld and Zee warehouses giving them 60 days notice of lease termination asking them to vacate by January 15, 2007. These leases do not provide for any relocation or financial assistance and the City of Tucson has no responsibility to provide that. However, the City feels it is important to assist these tenants with relocation as part of the approved Master Plan. An emergency "rescue" plan has been put together to assist with financial assistance using federal relocation guidelines and TDOT funding sources. Each tenant will be contacted to find out what their needs are. Also the City has recently met with several local artists who have available space to assist with this effort in addition to other identified space that the City owns.

There are also occupants of some of the warehouse district space that are occupying it as a residential unit. Whether it's legal or illegal, there is a need to have this component made part of the relocation package. A handful of low income housing units will be made available to occupants of those buildings who need a place to live and work. The City of Tucson would like to invite TPAC, MOCA, WAMO and Art Fair to form a committee who will look at long-term strategic planning for the recreation of this arts district corridor from 9th and Franklin down to 6th and Toole. The City would like to take the lead position in the attempt to preserve the buildings for repopulation by the artists.

NO ACTION
REQUIRED

<p>After questions and discussion from the Committee, it was decided to continue to discuss strategy after the completion of the DLCAC meeting.</p>	
<p>8. Call to the Audience Corky Poster, Poster Frost and Associates, commented on the Warehouse District Master plan and the reasons that it started with enthusiasm and then died. One reason was the uncertainty of the route of Aviation Highway and nothing could happen until that was resolved. Second, there was no funding source and with the passage of the TIFF extension, many of the warehouses are within those boundaries and the third issue was control of the buildings and in order to implement the Arts District Warehouse plan the City of Tucson needs to control all the buildings and be able to move forward with what happens to them. This situation really highlights what direction we need to move I</p> <p>Nancy Lutz, TPAC board president, reassured everyone that the Arts Council is committed to working toward solving this current crises and planning the successful future of the district.</p> <p>Michael Toney said that he thinks the committee chose the right alignment with the three exits and thinks the RTA will approve of that. He also thanked the City Managers office for getting into the Arts district and making it easy for the artists. The TIFF gives them an extra edge that the arts district needs</p> <p>Bob Freitas, El Presidio Neighborhood Assn., would like the committee to consider the importance of emphasizing Euclid/Park to 22nd. If the City is improving Kino at 22nd to I-10 it is an ideal opportunity to do so to make 22nd improved access. Regarding the Stone underpass improvement the modeling showed very little traffic moving north at peak times. Stone is an arterial roadway. Stone to Speedway makes the most sense with respect to diverting traffic from downtown. Pedestrian/bikeway access at University and Stone is essential and he hopes this committee addresses this. An overpass or separation of this bikeway is essential to improve the conduit of Stone as an arterial. The comments about separating the pedestrian bikeways are essential when considering the livability of the downtown area. Concept 2, which is being favored, should also consider access to Tucson High for bike and pedestrian traffic for students coming from the west going eastward toward Tucson High which would involve 5th, 6th and possibly 7th Avenue.</p>	<p><u>NO ACTION REQUIRED</u></p>
<p>9. Adjournment Meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.</p>	