

# DOWNTOWN LINKS CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE – MONTHLY MEETING

## ACTION REPORT AND SUMMARY

Monday, December 11, 2006

FROM: TDOT Project Manager Shellie Ginn

Chair Gene Caywood called the meeting to order at 5:35 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)  
Charles Davis (Barrio Anita Neighborhood Association)  
Korey Kruckmeyer (Pie Allen 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

AGENDA ITEM/COMMITTEE ACTION	STAFF ACTION
<b>1. Meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m.</b>	<u>NO ACTION REQUIRED</u>
<b>2. Introduction of Committee Members and Staff</b>	<u>NO ACTION REQUIRED</u>
<b>3. Approval of Meeting Minutes</b> The minutes of the November 13, 2006 meeting minutes were approved with no changes.	<u>APPROVED MINUTES POSTED TO WEBSITE</u>
<b>4. No Announcements</b>	<u>NO ACTION REQUIRED</u>
<b>5. Call to the Audience</b> No Comments.	<u>NO ACTION REQUIRED</u>

Andrew Singelakis asked to read the following statement into the record:

At the last CAC meeting in November the committee narrowed down the selection to one alignment concept. The motion read, “Eliminate Concept 1, the 6<sup>th</sup> Street disconnect, from further consideration and pursue some version of proposed Concept 2.” The proposed Concept 2 would provide the predominant flow of traffic through a four-lane connection with 6<sup>th</sup> Street at 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue with connections at 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenues. That occurred after a detailed discussion where our engineer provided information that excluded 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenues as the primary traffic flow. With this unanimous vote we scheduled the item for the Mayor and Council Agenda for December 6 and brought the information to the Mayor and Council Transportation Subcommittee and the Río Nuevo Subcommittee. The week prior to December 6, some CAC members who voted for the motion expressed that they did not understand that the vote meant that the alignment concept was going to be sent to the City Council and as a result of this, the Río Nuevo Subcommittee requested that this item be brought to the CAC for clarification and to the Mayor and Council for action.

Andrew also explained the sequencing of the items on the Agenda and, to eliminate any confusion, explained what an alignment concept actually is and what else has to happen for this project to be approved. Over the past year and a half this committee has considered over 16 alignment concepts. The selection of the final alignment concept allows the City to focus its resources on the only feasible remaining alternative. The City intends to move into detail design and after the alignment concept is finalized and design has been completed, the entire plan, including design factors, mitigation, long term goals, it will all go back again to Mayor and Council for their approval. That is projected to occur within one year. At this meeting Andrew asked Corky to tell us what he is hearing from the extensive public outreach process that this project is going through, and his recommendations will be incorporated into the final plan. The second item on the Agenda will be to review all of the steps of the design process which will demonstrate the extensive work that does still need to be done. Tim Ahrens from the RTA was asked to be available to answer any questions. CAC Member Juliani has requested the City Attorney’s Opinion on two-lane versus four-lane alternatives, a copy of which was distributed to the CAC. Andrew also reminded the group that Downtown Links is the compromise to the original Barraza-Aviation Parkway alignment. Downtown Links is an alternative that was created to preserve the Historic Arts Warehouse District which eliminates a freeway coming in from Broadway all the way to I-10. It’s about a new city street and correcting the safety issues associated with the railroad crossing at 6<sup>th</sup> Street. Also, hundreds of properties are being taken out of the 100-Year flood plain by correcting the Tucson Arroyo problem. There is still a lot of work to do and this is just the beginning.

## **6. Land Use and Neighborhood/Stakeholder Meetings: Update and Preliminary Findings**

Corky Poster, with Poster Frost Associates, explained his work on the companion process to the roadway project to deal with issues related to urban design and stakeholder issues. So far there have been two sets of meetings and ultimately will be four sets of meetings, which are based on the following sequence: First meeting was presentation of information and listening to what folks had to say about concerns and issues within each of the five districts being looked at. The second set of meetings was aimed at putting forward some initial urban design concepts for the districts that run along the proposed Downtown Links. Third is an elaboration of those concepts into more detailed plans, and fourth will be implementation of those plans which will tie into funding sources.

The urban design improvements can be put into three separate categories: First is mitigation which are things that are directly associated with the road project and are likely to be funded by road project funds. Second are things that are improvements that are likely to be funded by other public sources. Third is regulatory or policy issues. Half the land in these districts is private property so the question is what are the public policies that can influence and guide the development that is occurring on private property. As recommendations are reviewed by districts, one can start to see how those might fall into one of those categories. The goal is to implement all of things we are talking about, but where do the funds come from? The answer is road projects, other public funds, and private investment. There are five separate districts starting with Ironhorse neighborhood on the east end to El Presidio and Barrio Anita neighborhoods on the west end. There are four topics to be covered with the five districts for a total of 20 meetings. A round of five meetings was just completed proposing some preliminary concept plans and summaries of those five meetings with recommendations follows:

### *Ironhorse Neighborhood*

PRO Neighborhoods has been working closely with Ironhorse and has done a great job in developing concepts for this neighborhood which has actively engaged in developing their own plan.

1. Coordination with PRO Neighborhoods plan
2. Multi-use bicycle/ped path from Snake Bridge to Santa Cruz River
3. Gateways on each end of Ninth St.
4. Create a boulevard character to Ninth St.
5. Mitigate cut-through traffic exacerbated by Downtown Links
6. Minimize Tucson High Magnet School traffic impact
7. Family-oriented retail uses along Ninth St. and Fourth Ave. district
8. Improve neighborhood park on Tenth St.
9. Preserve historic character
10. "Green" Arroyo Chico - treat like water in the desert
11. Control area noise, i.e. train whistle and related safety concerns
12. Public art and the need to incorporate it early in the process

NO ACTION  
REQUIRED

*Fourth Avenue District*

Lots of interest, particularly regarding questions about area west of 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. A significant land owner is very anxious to proceed with development consistent with some of the recommendations.

1. Continuous bike path with north and south connections
2. 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue improvements to make something good a little better
3. Development opportunities, particularly corner parking lots
4. Encourage mixed-use development on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 7<sup>th</sup> Street
5. Streetcar maintenance yard
6. 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Street improvements, i.e. streetscapes, sidewalks
7. 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue improvements as extension of 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. commercial district
8. Pedestrian improvements along 6<sup>th</sup> Street
9. Public art

*Sixth Avenue to Stone Avenue District*

Very productive meetings with many people attending who have property and businesses in the area. They were anxious for straight-forward discussions about Downtown Links and how their properties will be affected.

1. Bicycle/pedestrian-friendly
2. Connectivity north and south is key
3. Honor Historic Warehouse District Master Plan
4. Respect adjoining historic neighborhoods
5. Development vacant land
6. Develop consistent with district assets and goals
7. "Green" drainage plan
8. Sustainable and environmental plan
9. Bicycle/pedestrian amenities, what elements are needed to do that
10. An urban design plan that will be implemented

*Stone Avenue to Main Avenue District*

Lot of emphasis on making urban design elements a high priority. Less interested in talking about the roadway and more interested in what types of improvements could happen. Heavy emphasis on bicycle/pedestrian uses, and have also been doing their homework, particularly on the "Building Bridges" program - those elements have been incorporated into the recommendations.

1. Focus on urban design
2. Multi-use bicycle/ped path
3. Preserve Arts District buildings and properties
4. Preserve historic character
5. Develop vacant land
6. Develop railroad park at 9<sup>th</sup> Street
7. "Green", flood-free drainage
8. Sustainable and environmental plan
9. Safe, "no-whistle" crossing in Main Avenue
10. An urban design plan that will be implemented

*Main Avenue to I-10 District*

Representatives from Davis School, El Presidio and Barrio Anita

<p>discussed safety to and from the school. Extensive discussion regarding the railroad crossing on Main Avenue. From neighborhood's point of view, an underpass or overpass is not a recommendation because the changes occurring at the Drachman/Oracle circle are likely to increase Main Ave. traffic. If there is an underpass at the railroad, it would likely cause an additional increase to traffic. A lot of discussion about the isolation of Barrio Anita and how to make sure one will be able to enter and exit the neighborhood safely.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Focus on quality of life</li> <li>2. Connectivity is key</li> <li>3. TPAC Cultural Plan</li> <li>4. Respect adjoining historic neighborhoods</li> <li>5. Develop vacant land</li> <li>6. Redevelop key sites</li> <li>7. "Green" drainage plan</li> <li>8. Sustainable and environmental plan</li> <li>9. Focus on traffic problems and bicycle/ped amenities</li> <li>10. An urban design plan that will be implemented</li> </ol> <p>Corky explained that the next step is to start to elaborate each plan to make sure everyone is on the same page and to have a set of concepts that everyone is in support of. More one-on-one meetings will be planned with the various stakeholders to work out some guidelines that will direct and guide future planning.</p>	<p><u>NO ACTION REQUIRED</u></p>
<p><b>7. Review of Project Schedule and Deliverables During Design Phase</b></p> <p>Mike Barton presented the schedule for the next steps in the design process. Some members were concerned that the input phase was complete and the team was moving on to design and that is not the case. Roadway development is in the conceptual phase and must now move forward with more detailed design elements from which the team will develop a concept design, a process that will take approximately one year. Assuming that there is an approved concept around January 1, the next task will be to do a structural and historic review of both the Steinfeld Warehouse and the Citizens Warehouse to be sure they can be preserved and the roadway facility can be built. While that study is underway, the specific cross-section will be developed. Once those processes are complete, the CAC will reconvene around March for a presentation of updated project information. Future meetings will be scheduled when there is a significant amount of information to present for discussion. During periods of time when there are no meetings, the project team will out there talking with various stakeholder groups if necessary to discuss major issues that may come up during planning that may effect them.</p>	<p><u>NO ACTION REQUIRED</u></p>
<p><b>8. Review of Concept Selected at November 13, 2006 Meeting: Recommendation to Mayor and Council</b></p> <p>Gene Caywood commented, that as Andrew Singelakis previously stated, the Mayor and Council Río Nuevo Subcommittee has requested that the</p>	

CAC take another look at the action taken at the last meeting on November 13.

Gerald Juliani, from the point of view of historic preservation, spoke about the request he made several months ago that City staff give a report on how they are complying with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The law requires that this be integrated with the planning process and must be addressed. He also asked about the City Attorney's opinion of the validity of the RTA's language regarding Downtown Links. The publicity pamphlet says "Downtown Links, I-10 to Broadway, new four-lane urban linkage, enhanced mobile features, drainage, and noise mitigation measures" which clearly states that this project is to link Broadway to I-10. He understands that when you hook up with a federally funded project and there are historic buildings that could be adversely effected, then there is a requirement to do an environmental impact study. Andrew said that he is certain that it's really the funding that triggers an environmental impact statement and since this project is not federally funded it does not require one. Chris Carroll believes that when you talk about linking Broadway with I-10, they're not talking about I-10 as a freeway but rather as a placement. When the design was changed to eliminate on and off ramps at St. Mary's, that disconnected it from that kind of system. Andrew said that at the next meeting they would have reports on both the need for an environmental impact statement and Section 106 of the NHPA.

Natasha Winnick said that she thought the funding to study the underpass at Sixth Street and Ninth Avenue was federal money. Andrew said that this is a completely RTA-funded project including the underpass. Tim Ahrens confirmed that there is no federal money involved on this project.

Gene Caywood said that since Mayor and Council asked the committee to review their motion of the previous meeting, there needs to be a motion made to send back to them. Andrew said that there can be a reconsideration of the original motion, which would require someone who voted for it to make the motion, second it, act on it, and redo a different motion. Another alternative is to have a motion to send to Mayor and Council which is something that was not talked about at the last meeting that this motion can be part of. Procedurally this is what has to happen on a motion that has been passed per Robert's Rules of Order. Don Durband volunteered to make a new motion that specifies more of the issues related to the original motion in light of the continued planning that needs to occur.

Don Durband **MOVED** that the Downtown Links CAC recommends that the November 2006 proposed concept be forwarded to the Mayor and Council with the full recognition that many design characteristics still must be addressed by staff and the community. This alignment depicts the four-lane roadway traveling adjacent to the railroad tracks and then northward along or near the 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue alignment to meet up with 6<sup>th</sup> Street. The concept includes connections to 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue

STAFF TO REPORT  
ON SECTION 106 OF  
NHPA

STAFF TO REPORT  
ON NEED FOR  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
IMPACT STATEMENT

as well. Design details concerning a variety of issues still need to be developed with the input and guidance of the CAC. Once the Mayor and Council approves the alignment concept, the CAC will continue to work with staff to address roadway cross-sections, pedestrian and bicycle access, design of the 6<sup>th</sup> Street railroad underpass, landscaping, preservation of structures, neighborhood mitigation, on-site mitigation, turning movements, intersection characteristics, signalization, land use opportunities, etc. The CAC will forward recommendations to the Mayor and Council on those issues at the appropriate time. Motion **SECONDED** by Chris Carroll.

After discussion, an amendment to the Motion was made by John Burr: The Downtown Links CAC further recommends that the Mayor and Council formally abandon the previous alignment of the roadway through the Warehouse District, south of the railroad tracks from 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 6<sup>th</sup> Street.

Amended Motion **SECONDED** by Chris Carroll. Motion **PASSED 12-1** with one nay vote by Gerald Juliani on the basis that for the 10 months that it has been on the agenda, there is still no compliance to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

**9. Call to the Audience**  
No comments.

**10. Meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.**