

**DOWNTOWN LINKS CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE – MONTHLY MEETING**

**ACTION REPORT AND SUMMARY**

**Monday, August 11, 2008**

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, Downtown Tucson Partnership
- John Burr, Armory Park Neighborhood Association
- David Bachman-Williams, Tucson-Pima Bicycle Advisory Committee
- Daniela Diamente, Dunbar-Spring Neighborhood Association
- Korey Kruckmeyer, Pie Allen Neighborhood Association
- John Sedwick, Fourth Avenue Merchants Association
- Joseph Maher, Jr., Citizen Transportation Advisory Committee
- Susan Gamble, Warehouse Arts Management Organization
- Christopher Carroll, El Presidio Neighborhood Association
- Mary Ellen Wooten, Tucson-Pima Arts Commission
- R. A. Mayers, West University Neighborhood Association  
non-voting substitute for Mindy Bernstein
- Chuck Bressi, Iron Horse Neighborhood Association  
non-voting substitute for Jonathan Levy

**PROJECT TEAM PRESENT:**

- Shellie Ginn, TDOT
- Mike Barton, HDR Engineering, Inc.
- Tim Ahrens, HDR Engineering, Inc.
- Joan Beckim, Kaneen Advertising & Public Relations, Inc.
- Corky Poster, Poster Frost

<b>AGENDA ITEM/COMMITTEE ACTION</b>	<b>STAFF ACTION</b>
<b>1. <u>Meeting Called to Order</u></b> Quorum confirmed.	<u>NO ACTION REQUIRED</u>
<b>2. <u>Introduction of Committee Members and Staff</u></b>	<u>NO ACTION REQUIRED</u>
<b>3. <u>Approval of Meeting Minutes</u></b> Minutes of the June 23, 2008 meeting were approved and posted to Downtown Links web site.	<u>MINUTES APPROVED AND POSTED TO WEB SITE</u>
<b>4. <u>Call to the Audience</u></b> No comments.	<u>NO ACTION REQUIRED</u>
<b>5. <u>Announcements</u></b> Mary Ellen Wooten announced that the Tucson-Pima Arts Council	

would be starting the Call to Artists process within the next few weeks. The application process will be very open to allow a lot of flexibility to get one or more artists on board as soon as possible.

David Bachman-Williams thanked staff members for showing up at the Downtown Subcommittee of the Bicycle Advisory Committee. There was discussion regarding the alignment of the tracks on Fourth Avenue because of concern with the placement of the tracks. Bicyclists going north/south on Fourth Avenue don't have enough room between parked cars and the first rail of the line as evidenced by the first tracks laid from 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue north on 4<sup>th</sup>. Staff agreed that it would be simple to move the tracks one foot closer to the center of the street to allow extra space for bicyclists to get around if a car door suddenly opens. Other adjustments will be made which will create a very safe passage for bicycles. **(Issues regarding alignment of the tracks are being managed by TDOT's Modern Streetcar Project.)**

**CLARIFICATION ADDED**

**6. Staff Reports and Presentations to CAC**

**• The Next Project Phase: Roles and Responsibilities of the CAC**

Shellie Ginn, TDOT Project Manager, thanked the CAC for all their hard work during the first phase of this project. She reminded the members, now that they are entering the design phase of the project, of what they are trying to accomplish and encouraged them to attend all the meetings. Work will be time intensive because there is a lot to accomplish over the next few months so participation of the members, and the groups that they represent, would be appreciated.

**• Public Participation Approach for Land Use, Design Elements and Enhancements**

Corky Poster, Poster Frost Associates, spoke to the CAC about the work they had started on the urban design component of Downtown Links, but then it was put on hold pending the final decision on the alignment of the project. Now that the final alignment has been voted on by Mayor and Council, they are ready to get back to planning the urban design component. He reminded everyone where they were in the planning process, what differences have occurred as a result of the change of the alignment, and set out goals and a working schedule for how to get urban design issues resolved and into a final report by the end of the year.

The project goal is to develop an implemental land use urban design plan as a companion to the Downtown Links project. In accordance with RTA funding, the design phase of Downtown Links is charged with including the following urban design issues: neighborhood and business connectivity; pedestrian and bicycle amenities; noise abatement, streetscape themes; street lighting; access control; cross-sections of the roadway itself; neighborhood issues related to the project; view shed treatments, landscape themes; adjacent land uses; cultural resources; architectural treatments; decking over part of the

underpass by the railroad tracks; public art; water harvesting; and public transit.

The study areas are **Sub-Area 1** which is largely the Fourth Avenue Business District and the Iron Horse neighborhood, **Sub-Area 2** is the “triangle” area west of Fourth Avenue, and **Sub-Area 3 includes** WUNA, Dunbar Spring, El Presidio, and Barrio Anita neighborhoods. They would like to suggest, because of comments heard at the June 23 CAC meeting, a slight change to Sub-area 2 which would open up and pick up the area north of 6<sup>th</sup> Street east of Stone Avenue.

It is important that everyone keep the following in mind because in the past there has been some confusion about where the RTA money goes. As urban design moves forward, there will be three general categories or recommendations:

- 1. Physical improvements within the immediate project boundaries that are to be funded by the RTA.** Those will be determined by the design process. Most of the responsibility for that, since that will move forward to construction documents and construction, will fall under the landscape architect, Wheat Scharf.
- 2. Physical improvements (streetscaping, landscaping) within the urban design project boundaries that are funded by other public and private sources.** For example, the Modern Streetcar project or perhaps some improvements on 6<sup>th</sup> Street. These are improvements for which we will have recommendations, but will not be funded through RTA dollars through the implementation of this specific RTA-funded project. Poster Frost, working with Wheat Scharf, will develop urban design concepts for those, but they will not move forward to construction documents and construction unless they get funded by some other source.
- 3. Regulatory land use recommendations that are a companion plan to guide future development.** Zoning issues or recommendations for building on certain parcels adjacent to the site that will be contained in an urban design plan that is intended to be completed by the end of this year. That plan will be transferred from the Department of Transportation to the City of Tucson Urban Design Planning Department for implementation.

Corky presented the CAC with an ambitious urban design meeting schedule that included public workshops in addition to meetings with individual groups and neighborhood associations. **A motion was made to accept the urban design meeting schedule. Seconded and passed unanimously.**

(Upcoming meetings will be posted on the home page of the Downtown Links website at [www.downtownlinks.info](http://www.downtownlinks.info). See PowerPoint presentation dated August 25, 2008 under the **Land Use and Urban Design** link.)

MOTION MADE,  
SECONDED AND PASSED

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Design Phase Process and Schedule</b>  Michael Barton talked about all the issues they are looking at bringing back to the CAC which will help them evaluate where the project stands. The City is trying to coordinate with all projects in the downtown area so tasks are not duplicated in certain areas. On the engineering side HDR is developing the design concept report. There has also been discussion about taking certain parts of the project and segmenting them out separately and starting construction on some sooner than others. The St. Mary's and drainage pieces are two items that they have been looking at to see how they can segment the funding and make those happen and make sure they have funding to build the rest that they want to build as well. That's where they're headed with their technical studies. The plan is to present a draft of the Urban Design report to the committee in February and finalize it in March. </li> </ul>	
<p><b>7. Next Steps</b>  Shellie Ginn thanked the members for approving the future meeting list. Also, items for future meetings would be staff asking the members if there is anything else that needs to be addressed.  Future item request: Clarifying Item #1 - What can funded by RTA to meet with an element of the BAC to discuss bicycle connectivity through the entire project</p>	<p><u>NO ACTION REQUIRED</u></p>
<p><b>8. Call to the Audience</b>  John Kromko: There was an agreement on the route when it went down 6<sup>th</sup> Street and then there were objections by the railroad. He called a few people at the railroad and called other people who called the railroad and they can't find anyone at the railroad who negotiated or made any demands. He would like the records of those meetings and a lawyer has also sent a formal request to the City Department of Transportation about the communications of the railroad. Since this Committee is supposed to look into that, he requested that Mr. Caywood hand over all the information he has about the discussions between the City and the railroad and the intersection of the railroad tracks and 6<sup>th</sup> Street.</p> <p>Dick Basye: He is concerned about claims that have been made about what could or couldn't be done about threading the needle. If you go out there and pace it you'll see it's about twice the distance to the railroad tracks and Stone Avenue as it is from the Stone Avenue underpass to 6<sup>th</sup> Street. So you have twice the distance that's under the surface and 17 ½ feet is planned for this underpass so why can't you bring it to the surface before Stone Avenue? There is an easy detour down Toole and around that construction site without disrupting the downtown business district. For over 2 years some of you were involved with the Fourth Avenue Underpass and we spent \$2 million dollars for design work. Then Mr. Campbell came in and wanted to do something different so everything was dropped in the</p>	<p><u>NO ACTION REQUIRED</u></p>

interest of that redesign. After talking to the contractor and those involved now, they haven't seen Mr. Campbell. He guesses that there's not too much desire for condos downtown anymore so we spent a lot of money and got nowhere. It seems like land use is driving us, not the public interest. You need to look into the height of the 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue underpass because a 9 to 10-foot high overpass at North 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue would be a two-block long, raised 4-lane roadway that would be like I-10. Those are the things that you should look at because they haven't been shown by Mr. Glock to City Council.

Michael Toney: Remembering Presidio Terrace, too bad they couldn't get something going there. He is interested in the situation with the railroad because if the railroad does not need the 17 ½ foot underpass there is another way to go. It's very difficult to resolve this because of the intense presence of the railroad tracks there and the fact that they want 3 tracks going through there. If the City decides not to waste \$250 million on a UA Science Center and give the UA \$130 million TIFF dollars, that money might be available for something else. The rezoning is a problem because of the changes in the area.

Terrence McMahon, Dunbar Spring: Corky Poster talked a little bit about the drainage in Barrio Anita. He doesn't know what the designers have in mind for the drainage plan, but the drainage below Perry is going to increase significantly with the drainage around Fourth Avenue. All that water will go into Tucson Arroyo and that water will go down. He said that Mr. Cayhill (Caywood) said at the last council meeting that everything that happens outside the Links project is irrelevant to the choice of the roadway. He doesn't know if he meant that the issues weren't important and that people would be flooded out of their homes. Proposition 207 said that any impact of a public project excluding roadways, you can get compensation. This arroyo is not part of the roadway so he will check with the City Attorney to see what the implications of liability are and what will happen, if properties will lose value, they will be faced with more expensive insurance, if you have to build the buildings have to built in a different way. He would like Mike to explain what will happen from Perry to the river which is very important to people who live in that area. There aren't many people from Barrio Anita who talk about this but they lost 25% of their neighborhood to I-10, they can't drive onto Speedway in and out, Main Avenue has created tremendous congestion at Main and St. Mary's, and now traffic will come through and the frontage road will back up, the trains will come, and Corky Poster said that Van Alstine is the shortcut to the freeway which is a straight shot, no stops right onto the freeway on the other side of Speedway. That is a major concern to people in Barrio Anita and those are two issues he would like to see addressed.

Audience Member: Introduced himself as someone involved in one of the downtown projects. Commented about the West University area becoming involved so they could have control over the development as far as zoning. He asked if there were studies done to show where people are coming from that use these areas, the traffic system. He asked if anyone had talked about how this will incorporate the University and is there an incentive for people to live downtown. A lot of input has already been given from those that live in the area about their concerns of what will happen with property values. While people might be concerned about the property value that they have now, if you give a good location for someone, like University students to live, people that are coming out of the UA and starting their career and want to stay here, those could be the people you want to bring downtown to increase the population and that would increase the property value. Chairman Caywood thanked him for his questions and explained that under the rules of the City Clerk the committee is not allowed to answer questions and only listen to comments during the Call to the Audience. He was asked to leave his contact information with staff so they could get back to him with the information he was requesting.

**9. Adjournment** at 6:55 p.m.