

**DOWNTOWN LINKS CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING SUMMARY**

Monday, August 12, 2013

Accepted and Approved by the Downtown Links CAC on September 9, 2013

FROM: TDOT Project Manager Tom Fisher

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chair, Eugene W. Caywood, Old Pueblo Trolley
Vice Chair, John Burr, Armory Park Neighborhood Association
Daniela Diamente, Dunbar Spring Neighborhood Association
Richard Mayers, West University Neighborhood Association
John A. Sedwick, Fourth Avenue Merchants Association
Kylie Walzak, Tucson-Pima Bicycle Advisory Committee
Gail Ryser, Barrio Anita Neighborhood Association
Korey Kruckmeyer, Pie Allen Neighborhood Association
Susan Gamble, Warehouse Arts Management Association
Carlos Lozano, Tucson - Pima County Historical Commission
Michael Keith, Downtown Tucson Partnership
Susan Marshall, Citizen Transportation Advisory Committee

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Vacant, El Presidio Neighborhood Association
Mary Ellen Wooten, Tucson-Pima Arts Council
Erika Mitnik, Iron Horse Neighborhood Association

PROJECT TEAM PRESENT:

Tom Fisher, City of Tucson Department of Transportation (TDOT)
Sam Credio, City of Tucson Department of Transportation (TDOT)
Michael Bertram, HDR Engineering, Inc.
Kathy Jirschele, Kaneen Advertising and Public Relations
Joan Beckim, Kaneen Advertising and Public Relations
Britton Dornquast, RTA/MainStreet
Chelsea Marshall, Wheat Scharf Associates

1. Meeting Called to Order

Quorum confirmed. Vice Chair, John Burr called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m. Gene Caywood, Chair of the Downtown Links CAC arrived during approval of the minutes and resumed his duties as Chair of the CAC.

2. Introduction of Committee Members and Staff

CAC and Project Team Members introduced themselves.

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes of May 13, 2013, with changes was passed by a voice vote of 12 to 0. **Richard Mayer's asked that the word "concept" in Daniela Diamente's motion be changed to the plural "concepts".**

4. Announcements

No Announcements

5. Staff Reports and Presentations to DLCAC

- **Project Review**

Tom Fisher announced the death of fellow CAC member Chris Carroll and remembered him with a brief history of Chris Carroll's life. **Tom F.** also suggested that the group might get together with Susan Aiken, Chris Carroll's wife. John Burr suggested that it might be appropriate to name one of the Downtown Links Structures after Chris Carroll.

Overall Review – Tom Fisher gave a brief overview of the project reminding CAC members and the audience about the details of the RTA approved alignment for Downtown Links and what portions were complete (8th Street Drainage), in construction (St. Mary's section) and in design (Phase III, Church Avenue to Broadway). **Tom F.** said Phase III is the most complicated roadway project in the region. He thought it was safe to say that the design of Phase III was beyond 50% complete. The project has spent or obligated \$23.8 million to date from the \$76.1 million RTA budget. **John Burr** questioned what was said at Mayor and Council meeting last week regarding the cost of property acquisition. **John B.** said it was \$5 million and now it's \$6.5 million. **Tom F.** said he would have to clarify what **John B.** was talking about regarding the mayor a council meeting, but said that the latest number he had been given was 6.5 million. **Tom F.** said that number is all inclusive (relocation costs, real estate values and environmental clean-up). However, nothing can be done respective to future work until the properties are acquired and in the meantime, property values are changing. As a result, \$6.5 million is the latest number and is ever changing. **Tom Fisher** also updated the members on some clean-up projects along the corridor that they have undertaken; dead tree on Perry Avenue removed, trimmed trees on 9th Avenue and cleaned up the 6th Avenue underpass. Stone Avenue Transmission has been demolished. The owners asked to be bought out early, rather than waiting for construction to begin. Since the building has been vacant for a while, vandals have lit fires in it, there were dead birds and an extensive rodent population was living on the property. A report was submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and it was determined that the building was not eligible for status on the National Register of Historic Places. With the exception of some old wood, most everything from the site was recycled. The lot has been fenced and in the future will be used for overflow parking and will be managed by the City's Parkwise department. Soon, they will begin charging a fee to park there. Some abandoned fuel tanks were discovered during the demolition, so a phase one environmental study will be conducted.

Ultimately this process saves the project money because the discovery process is done prior to the contractor beginning construction and potential problems can be dealt with ahead of time. **Tom F.** then reviewed the steps for the future property acquisitions and demolitions which include a complete environmental report analyzing cultural, historic and contaminant elements of each property. When funding is available, the City Real Estate Department begins negotiations with the owners. This process could take six months to two years to complete. Once the properties are acquired and vacated, the City may have to conduct a Phase 2 environmental assessment. **Tom F.** said that if the members where interested, he would have someone from the Real Estate department present at a future CAC meeting.

Tom F. next briefed the members on the Downtown Links Urban Overlay District (UOD) and said there was not much to report on at this time. He has talked with Jim Mazzocco, City of Tucson Planning Administrator who is coordinating with the City Manager's office. Downtown Links UOD is being coordinated with other overlay zones; Infill Incentive District, Streetcar District and the recent downtown parking study. City staff will ask for direction from Mayor and Council on September 10, 2013. **Tom F.** suggested that the members along with general public start thinking about what is important to them in regards to the Urban Overlay. **Tom F.** ended his presentation with a summary of his trip to Washington D.C. with the Sustainable Cities Design Academy. The Downtown Links Project was one of only eight teams selected nationwide to be represented. Attendance at the workshop provided an opportunity to share specific urban projects with nationally-recognized consultants and other projects team members. The goal of the workshop was to work as a team to resolve key issues and develop innovative design solutions. Linda

Samuels has prepared a summary of the workshop. It can be reviewed at www.archfoundation.org **Kylie W.** asked if the summary could be provided to the members in a packet.

John Burr asked if someone could make a presentation related to UOD at the next CAC. He would like Corky Poster to present.

Construction Update – Sam Credio updated the CAC members on the 6th Avenue two-way conversion from Drachman to 6th Street. Currently, the signals are being upgraded to accommodate two-way travel. In one week, they will begin resurfacing 6th Avenue from Drachman to the underpass.

Phase II St. Mary's/6th Street, I-10 to Church Avenue Construction Project – the underground utilities are complete (i.e. sewer and water). Also, about 80% of the storm drainage system has been installed.

Landscape grading is complete along the north side of the road. There is irrigation, street lighting and traffic signals being installed. The contractor will begin concrete curb installation next and finally, roadway grading on the north side of the road has begun. **Sam C.** reminded everyone that the existing traffic control (one lane in each direction) along St. Mary's will remain for several months. Brady Street is closed at St. Mary's. Access to Davis Elementary School is by Davis Street to Anita Avenue. Parents of children attending the school have received notices and directional maps. Church Avenue at its intersection with St. Mary's is also closed. Upcoming restrictions or changes in traffic control include a traffic shift at the I-10 Westbound Frontage Road. No restrictions, the traffic will just be shifted periodically from one lane to another. Granada Avenue will be reduced to one lane in each direction through the St. Mary's intersection while the contractor prepares and paves the roadway. Left turn movements will be restricted during this phase. Stone Avenue or the frontage road can be used as an alternate north/south route.

Kylie Walzak asked if an asphalt path could be placed for bicyclist to use during this work.

Sam C. apprised the members of the sustainability effort related to the project. The City of Tucson asked Wheat Scharf to develop a set of guidelines/checklist for the contractor to follow and document all of the sustainable items on the project. For example, site salvaged materials like sidewalks and curb that will be used in other elements of the project. Plant materials will be salvaged and on site storm water will be managed. Additionally, the project will use regional materials, employ sustainable plant production, reduced water use and weed control. **Sam C.** included that as a representative of the City of Tucson and the Downtown Links Project, he attended a conference on sustainable infrastructure and it was determined that the project is very forward thinking and doing a great job incorporating some of the "green" sustainable features.

Tom F. added that there is a growing movement in using edible plants, such as Mesquite beans. He said we will be part of that movement by integrating edible native desert vegetation in our roadway designs.

Design Update – Mike Bertram updated the CAC members on the status of the Phase III final design effort.

- 6th Street/6th Avenue Intersection – In relation to the conversion of 6th Avenue to two-way travel between 6th and Drachman Streets, each quadrant of the intersection is being reconstructed to introduce ADA compliant curb ramps.
- **Structures**
 - 6th Street Underpass at UPRR – **Michael Bertram** informed CAC members that the design team submitted their bridge selection report to the UPRR. The preferred alternative design presented was rejected by the UPRR because it deviated from their new design standards. They also denied the *skew* request. The team decided that with the aesthetic impacts and monetary expenditure associated with this alternative being rejected that it was worth going back to the UPRR a second time with a more robust argument and a slightly altered preferred alternative (precast concrete AASHTO girders). So, the team went back to UPRR a second time and was ultimately granted relief from the *rolled steel super structure* requirement and the *structural skew*, which amounts to approximately a \$3 million dollar savings. The team is moving forward with finalizing the revised bridge selection report and

preparation of 75% design plans.

- 9th Avenue Deck Final Design Scoping – **Michael B.** said they have prepared the scope of work to design the Deck Park and have submitted it to the City for vetting and approval. When approved, the plans will be prepared and included with the 75% design submittal.
 - Links Avenue Overpass at 6th Avenue - **Michael B.** said that the Bridge Selection Report submitted for this structure has been approved by TDOT and their third party reviewer and that a single span, cast- in-place box culvert type superstructure is the preferred alternative. The design team has subsequently begun preparing 75% design plans. **Kylie W.** asked if a 3D rendering could be provided. **Michael B.** submitted that when the design is further along, they would be able to provide a 3D rendering. **Tom F.** said that HDR should plan to provide something similar to the Deck Park plans that were shown to the CAC. **Gene Caywood** said he would like the members to have input on what it looks like and is concerned that if the designs are at 75% before they get to see them it might be too late for CAC input. **Gene C.** further said that he wants to see the elevations for Stone and 6th Avenue and would like to see them as soon as possible. **Daniela D.** asked what if we don't like it. There was further discussion regarding the elements of the single span structure and dates of 75% completion. **Carlos Lozano** asked what SHPO has said in regards to the bridge structure. **Sam C.** responded that they do not want the new bridge to look like an old bridge; they asked that there be a clear distinction between old and new. There was further discussion regarding the bridge structure and drawings, plans renderings. **Daniela D.** asked if the 2D drawing could be shared with the members. **Michael B.** said he would send them to Kathy J. and she would send them to the CAC members.
 - Geotechnical Investigation Program – **Michael B.** said the geotechnical field work is done, and that preliminary results have been passed on to the structural engineers. There may be a need for three additional borings in the area of 6th Street UPRR structure. **Michael B.** explained the geotechnical research process in detail for the CAC members.
- **Civil Plans**
 - **Michael B.** briefly updated the members on the six on-going elements of the design; typical Roadway and Pavement Sections, Geometry, Paving and Profiles, Demolition, Traffic (signing, Striping, Signal, Electrical) and Shoofly. **Michael B.** announced that the plans had been submitted for review internally and they were moving ahead with completing 75% plans for these sheet series.
 - **Drainage**
 - High School Wash – **Michael B.** briefly reminded the members where the improvements would be made. **Michael B.** confirmed that the Army Corp of Engineers will pay for and construct the improvements. Because the Corp is constructing the improvements, the new culvert will have to be a cast-in-place structure, which means it will take longer to construct. Construction is expected to begin in January of 2014 and will take 5 – 6 months to complete. Hunter Contracting has been selected by the Corp to build the project. **John Sedwick** asked who the contact person was so he could discuss the schedule as it relates to activities along 4th Avenue. **Michael B.** provided Larry Robison at PC Flood Control as the contact. There was discussion regarding the 100 year flood plain.
 - On-site and off-site Drainage – **Michael B.** said they are moving forward with 75% plans and accompanying drainage reports.

“Quite Zone” Update

- “No regular use of the Train Horn” Zone – FRA calculator – **Michael Bertram** described their on-site meeting with the Federal Rail Administration (FRA), Union Pacific, Amtrak and the Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC). He reminded the members that the team thought the area from Granada all the way to Broadway would be eligible for the Quite Zone. He said that if a quite zone is

declared, it does not mean a horn can never be blown. The train engineer can blow the horn at his discretion. The correct term is “No regular use of Train Horn Zone”.

- **Diagnostic Review – Michael B.** said that removing the general purpose traffic conflicts at 6th St and 7th Avenue and proposed improvements at Granada Avenue and 5th Street were sufficient to make the area eligible to become a “no regular use of the train horn” zone but that Additional improvements would be needed the 7th and 9th Avenue for pedestrians and bicyclist to cross the tracks as well as emergency service providers. However, when they met on site, the diagnostic review team liked the alternative plans that were presented.
- **Main Avenue and 5th Street** – will have raised medians, revised channelization and possibly overhead signal placement modifications.
- **9th Avenue and 7th Avenue** – will have train actuated gates and signal beacons, channelization and signing. There will be signing and striping improvements to clearly educate/inform the pedestrians bicyclists. **Michael B.** gave an example of a “Look Left” or Look Right” sign. These improvements, along with what was already proposed, should make this area eligible for the “No regular use of the Train Horn” zone. There was conversation regarding through and turn movements at these intersections. **John B.** asked if any of these relate back to the RTA VA. **Michael B.** responded that he would have to refer back to the spread sheet. **Kylie W.** asked if the proposed improvements could be installed soon, or did we have to wait for construction. **Michael B.** said the 5th Street and Main Avenue improvements could be if there was funding available. **Tom F.** said that the City has already been working with the RTA on these issues. The improvements could happen – but, **Tom F.** reminded the committee that it would not make it a no whistle zone because all the improvements would not be in place. **Gene C.** said the RTA has a ‘safety’ category and maybe the funding could come from that. There was additional conversation regarding funding. **Richard M.** questioned how far south the median will extend at the Granada crossing (60 feet to the south from the existing stop bar). **Daniela D.** voiced her concerns for impacts to bicyclist the median at 5th Street may create.
- **Process – Michael B.** reviewed the process that must be completed to obtain the no whistle zone designation. UPRR and TDOT must enter into an Operation and Maintenance Agreement. The Arizona Corporation Committee must agree and finally, the Federal Rail Association must issue a Notice of Intent. During this time, TDOT may implement a public education campaign for the no whistle zone. It may take 3 – 4 months from substantial completion of the construction project before the no whistle zone is implemented.

CAC Bicycle/Pedestrian Review Subcommittee Update – Michael B. briefly informed the members that the subcommittee had met twice and then he reviewed the 9 major interface points that the subcommittee is reviewing;

- 6th Street/Church Avenue intersection MUP connection at 9th Avenue
- MUP crossing of Stone Avenue/Citizens
- 6th Street/Links Avenue intersection
- Links Avenue/7th Avenue
- MUP connection to 6th Avenue
- MUP crossing at 8th Street Spur
- MUP connection at 4th Avenue
- MUP connection at Broadway Boulevard

Michael B. said that he would let the subcommittee speak for themselves at the next meeting to ask for the CAC consensus. Michael reviewed the interface points that had already been already presented to the subcommittee, briefly expanding on the presented conditions. He explained that some would like to see a HAWK at the Links Avenue/7th Street crossing and some are strongly opposed to it. The issue is still being vetted by TDOT.

- **Deck Park** - The scope for the Deck Park is still being vetted by TDOT. Wheat Scharf is working

on renderings. **Michael B.** reminded the committee that this does not represent the final features. **Kylie W.** asked about the MUP connection to 4th Avenue. **John B.** asked about the Pump House. **Michael B.** said that it has been determined that the Pump House is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. There has been some minor discussion about possibly relocating it. **Tom F.** said that they had met with the City's historic preservation officer and explained the impacts and other related costs. The officer agreed that writing a letter might help in terms of being able to relocate it. Relocating the structure would provide a substantial savings to the project. However, there is no money in the budget to move it. **Michael Keith** said he would like to see it utilized and supports relocating it. **Gene C.** thinks moving it straight north makes the most sense.

6. Next Steps

Items for Future Meetings

- Have Corky Poster present on the Urban Overlay District.
- Have Mary Ellen Wooten present on Public Art Funding and Opportunities
- Report from the Bicycle/Pedestrian Review Subcommittee

Confirm Future Meeting Dates

The next Downtown Links CAC meeting is set for September 9, 2013.

7. Call to the Audience

The following people addressed the Committee:

Karen Green, Dunbar Springs Neighborhood Association, is very happy about the *No regular use of train horn zone* outcome. The sooner it can happen the better. Dunbar Spring will be very happy.

Mary Barraza would like to talk about a memorial for Mr. Barraza. She would like to create a lasting memorial in his memory in the form of changing the name of Barraza Aviation Parkway to Barraza. There will also be an art installation. She asked to be agendaized on a future meeting so she can present to the committee. (Gene C. requested this be added to a future meeting agenda.)

Lucy Mitchell, Small Planet Bakery, could not respond to questions at call to the audience.

8. Adjournment at 7:16 p.m.