

**DOWNTOWN LINKS CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING SUMMARY**

Monday, September 9, 2013

Accepted and Approved by the Downtown Links CAC on November 18, 2013

FROM: TDOT Project Manager Tom Fisher

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chair, Eugene W. Caywood, Old Pueblo Trolley
Daniela Diamente, Dunbar Spring Neighborhood Association
John A. Sedwick, Fourth Avenue Merchants Association
Kylie Walzak, Tucson-Pima Bicycle Advisory Committee
Gail Ryser, Barrio Anita Neighborhood Association
Susan Gamble, Warehouse Arts Management Association
Mary Ellen Wooten, Tucson-Pima Arts Council
Carlos Lozano, Tucson - Pima County Historical Commission
Susan Marshall, Citizen Transportation Advisory Committee

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Vacant, El Presidio Neighborhood Association
Vice Chair, John Burr, Armory Park Neighborhood Association
Korey Kruckmeyer, Pie Allen Neighborhood Association
Richard Mayers, West University Neighborhood Association
Erika Mitnik, Iron Horse Neighborhood Association
Michael Keith, Downtown Tucson Partnership

PROJECT TEAM PRESENT:

Sam Credio, City of Tucson Department of Transportation (TDOT)
Michael Bertram, HDR Engineering, Inc.
Brent Kirkman, HDR Engineering, Inc.
Kathy Jirschele, Kaneen Advertising and Public Relations
Joan Beckim, Kaneen Advertising and Public Relations
Laura Mielcarek, Wheat Scharf Associates
Corky Poster, Poster Frost Mirto

1. Meeting Called to Order

Quorum confirmed. Chair, Gene Caywood called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

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 August 12, 2013 as written was passed by a voice vote of 9 to 0.

4. Announcements

- John Burr and Richard Mayers are members of the Infill Incentive District Subcommittee, which meeting conflicted with tonight's Downtown Links CAC meeting. They are both committed to Downtown Links, but the Infill Incentive District Subcommittee meeting required their attendance tonight.

- Daniela Diamente noted that she was the only neighborhood representative present at this evening's meeting. (Gail Ryser, Barrio Anita Neighborhood representative arrived at the meeting a short time later.)

5. Staff Reports and Presentations to DLCAC

- **Construction and Design Progress – Sam Credio, TDOT and Mike Bertram, HDR (a copy of the Power Point presented can be viewed at www.downtownlinks.info)**
 - **Scope, Schedule and Budget Overview – Sam Credio** recapped the elements of the Downtown Links corridor project, a 20-year RTA plan approved by the voters in 2006 and is a 1.3 mile long multi modal corridor linking I-10 and Broadway, next to the Union Pacific Railroad. The scope includes 4 vehicle lanes with medians and turn lanes; on-street bike lanes, sidewalks, a separate multi-use path, and a pedestrian bridge over Stone Avenue that provides connectivity to the multi-use path; major drainage improvements; new Tucson Arroyo culvert; 6th Street Underpass at the Union Pacific Railroad; four rail crossing upgrades to establish “no-whistle zone” eligibility; Links Avenue bridge across 6th Avenue; 9th Avenue deck plaza with public space, landscaping and art; native desert landscaping and passive water harvesting; public art; 6th Street/6th Avenue signal upgrade for two-way traffic; development of an optional Urban Overlay District. **Sam C.** also reviewed the schedule, which states, according to the RTA plan will be constructed between 2011 and 2021. Phase I – 8th Street Drainage Improvement project, *completed in May 2012*. Phase II – St. Mary’s Road, I-10 to Church Avenue Improvement project, *currently under construction*. Phase III – 6th Street/Links Avenue from Church to Broadway, *nearly at 75% design completion*. The RTA funds allocated to the project are \$76.1 million, approximately \$24 million have been spent to date. The alignment of the Downtown Links Corridor was approved by Mayor and Council in 2008. **Sam C.** next reviewed the major milestone planned; in 2014, the completion of Phase II: St. Mary’s Roadway from I-10 to Church Avenue construction, the RTA approval of funding for property acquisition, ADOT owned sites scheduled for demolition and clean-up and the mayor and Council to approve the Downtown Links Overlay District; 2015 Completion of Phase III design: Church Avenue to Broadway and finalize property acquisitions, demolitions and environmental clean-ups; 2016 Begin construction of phase III; Church Avenue to Broadway. **Sam C.** then gave an update on the upcoming activities of the St. Mary’s construction project and shared photos of some of the completed curb, sidewalk and median work.
 - **Phase III: Church to Broadway General Design Update – Michael Bertram** provided copies of the full series of channelization plans for the striping at Broadway and Links Avenue intersection and briefly explained each page. This is in response to the request made at the previous CAC meeting. **Michael B.** also provided a map that showed where the improvements to crossings would be made for qualification of the no-whistle zone. He next reviewed the Structural, civil and drainage/utility design items being completed for the 75% submission to TDOT. *Structures* include; 6th Street Underpass at UPRR, 9th Avenue Deck final design and scoping, Links Avenue Overpass at 6th Avenue, retaining walls and Geotechnical Investigation. *Civil* comprises typical roadway and pavement sections, geometry, paving and profiles, demolition (only curb, roadway and sidewalks. Not properties.), traffic (signing, striping, signal and electrical), landscaping, shoofly and right-of-way. *Drainage and Utilities* involve on and off site drainage and conceptual water and sewer plans. **Michael B.** reviewed the specific areas of concern for the Bicycle/Pedestrian Subcommittee which are; 6th Street/Church Avenue intersections, MUP connection at 9th Avenue, MUP crossing at Stone Avenue/Citizen Warehouse, 6th Street/Links Avenue, Links Avenue/7th

Avenue, MUP connection to 6th Avenue, MUP crossing at 8th Street Spur, MUP connection at 4th Avenue and the MUP connection at Broadway.

Daniela D. asked what the significance of the October 11 date for 75% submittal was. She stated that she was concerned that the CAC would not meet again prior to that date and wondered if a meeting should be scheduled. **Michael B.** explained that the date is an internal milestone, a technical submittal. **Sam C.** added that the larger design decisions that could affect the design in a significant way have already been made. He said that everything moving forward still has time to be tweaked. **John Sedwick** stated that he was concerned with construction impacts because once it begins, it will affect every street going into downtown. **John S.** asked what the construction documents say regarding protecting the businesses during construction. **Michael B.** said that though it isn't typically done on TDOT projects, it may make sense to provide the contractor with construction sequencing, however, he reminded the members that the lion's share of construction will be built off-line – or out of traffic. **Gene Caywood** said that he though **John S.** concern was valid, and that he would like the sequencing documents shared with the CAC when they become available. There was additional conversation regarding other construction projects that dramatically impacted traffic and businesses. In addition to conversation regarding the management of underground work as it relates to drainage. **Sam C.** also said that impacts for special events will be addressed in the special provisions. **Gene C.** said that strict specifications must be written and that what is promised must be delivered. **Susan Gamble** asked that when construction is underway, and intersections are impacted, that the construction across the roadway get completed and then the intersection get re-opened, rather than being closed for months at a time. **John S.** also stated that when there are turn restrictions for extended lengths of time it causes more problems than if the road was closed for a month and then re-opened.

- **Bicycle/Pedestrian Review Subcommittee Report – Kylie Walzak, Chair of the Bicycle/Pedestrian Review subcommittee** prepared a summary report that she read aloud to the a CAC members (attached and posted at www.downtownlinks.info). **Kylie W.** stated that the subcommittee is not ready to make a motion at this time. She is planning a subcommittee bike/walk a-long of the corridor to further evaluate conditions and understand the complexities of the issues. **Gene C.** asked **Kylie W.** is she had a feel for when they would come to some conclusions and if she was looking for consensus on each issue. **Kylie W.** responded that she thought the process was leading towards ticking off the items that they have reached consensus on. There are two areas of concern; the 7th Avenue crossing and the west side of 4th Avenue. **Sam Credio** stated that TDOT is still vetting the changes requested for the 7th Avenue crossing and thinks that at the next meeting they should be able to give the subcommittee their resolution. **Gene C.** said a decision needs to be made so that they can be included in the 90% plans which are expected to be submitted in February, 2014. The information for the 90% plans need to be submitted by December, 2013 at the very latest.
- **Public Art Funding Opportunities – Mary Ellen Wooten, Tucson Pima Arts Council,** presented a power point with review of the artist/artwork designs to date, public art commission budget available/opportunities and needs, and determining commissions and selecting additional artists. **Mary Ellen W.** said she is ready to begin the process for call to artist, but needs to know how to allocate funds. She asked if they should work as the entire CAC or if it might make more sense to establish a subcommittee to consider the opportunities and make a recommendation to the CAC. **Mary Ellen W.** also thought that the subcommittee could provide a recommendation in a short amount of time. **Mary Ellen W.** also posed a question for future consideration; is forming the artist selection panel from CAC members or neighborhood associations most effective for the upcoming call to artists? **Gene C.** said a subcommittee is the best opportunity to provide recommendations to the CAC and asked for 2 -3 volunteers. **Susan Marshal, Susan Gamble and Gail Ryser** will join **Mary Ellen** to comprise the Public Art Review Subcommittee. Because there are several members

absent from the meeting, **Gene C** asked that staff send an email to those not in attendance asking if they wanted to be part of the Public Art subcommittee. **Mary Ellen** said she would begin the process and get the meeting scheduled as soon as possible.

- **Downtown Links Urban Overlay District – Corky Poster, Poster Frost Mirto**, reviewed the background history of the Downtown Links Urban Overlay District and then presented a power point (find it here www.downtownlinks.info). **Corky P.** briefed the members on how the Streetcar Land Use Plan intertwines with the Downtown Links Urban Overlay District. **Corky** explained the process of analyzing properties within a ¼ mile focus area, divided into 8 districts, to best prepare for the appropriate land use plan, zoning and design; identifying subareas with unique characteristics and concerns; reviewing input from stakeholders; preparing an innovative and solution oriented land use approach that leads to legislative amendments that expedite high quality development; identifying areas along the streetcar line where higher density/intensity mixed-use development is appropriate; recommend policies and standards for the legislative process; prepare supplement strategies on streetscapes, parking and affordable housing and; identify financial mechanisms to implement the land use plan. The Regulatory/Land Use recommendations for the Fourth Avenue/West University area are to Expand Downtown Links UOD to subsume the central portion of the Infill Incentive District and reframe the Infill Incentive District area requirements through a new public process. This would require an evaluation of Prop.207 issues, and would entail a new content-driven public process to determine the character and details of a new Downtown Links urban Overlay District/Infill Incentive District. The goal would be to be consistent with West University Plan and avoid Plan Amendment. Also, inconsistencies with the plan would require Plan Amendment and would extend the time-frame.

On March 19, 2013, Mayor and Council directed them to 1) Give more prominence to neighborhood protection. 2) Clarify the role of formal commitments that run with the land. 3) Provide for an improved design review element. 4) Look to not create redundancy with other overlays such as the proposed Downtown Links overlay and Infill Incentive District as is practical and 5) work with the Streetcar Land Use Plan consultant team to ensure consistency with streetcar corridor planning.

Throughout the process, they began to notice some deficiencies as written in the Downtown Links Urban Overlay District, they are; it doesn't have a process for design review; it doesn't deal with 4th Avenue north of 6th Street or the north side of 6th Street west to Stone; It leaves part of Iron Horse (north) neighborhood and Armory Park in IID, out of Downtown Links Urban Overlay district; It doesn't resolve streetscape design and funding issues; the parking recommendations need further study and; Parking incentives may not be attractive if IID offers the same relief without *quid pro quo*.

The recommendations that will be made to Mayor and Council tomorrow night are to 1) Expand Downtown Links Urban Overlay district to subsume the central portion of the Infill Incentive District and reframe the IID area requirements through a new public process, and 2) In the revised/expanded Downtown Links Urban Overlay district, look closely at Group Dwelling as an allowable use. (This is the use that allows rental by the bedroom for student housing.) Ultimately they will be asking the Mayor and Council to cover six additional areas.

John S. asked about the six month process and what would happen if someone wanted to develop something right now. Corky said that they would follow the current laws.

Daniela D. asked if Corky was looking for a recommendation from the CAC and also asked how the DT-UOD was different from the IID. Corky responded that the IID does not have and requirements relative to historic buildings. Downtown Links UOD is very specific towards historic properties and if you do anything to cause an historic property to be delisted, you cannot use the DT-UOD. **Susan Gamble** asked if a recommendation from the Downtown Links CAC would help, and **Gene C** said that as a committee appointed by the Mayor and Council, it's their responsibility to comment on items as they relate to that committee. **Daniela D. made a motion to approve the inclusion of the six additional areas in the Downtown Links Urban Overlay District. John Sedwick seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously with a voice vote.**

6. Next Steps

Items for Future Meetings

- **Gene Caywood** suggested that the next meeting should be scheduled after 75% submittal. **Michael Bertram** agreed that he would have more information to share if the next meeting were scheduled in November.

Confirm Future Meeting Dates

The next Downtown Links CAC meeting is set for November 18, 2013

7. Call to the Audience

The following people addressed the Committee:

Karen Green, Dunbar Springs Neighborhood Association, read a book called Talk Up Tucson, by Anita Fonte. Karen recommends everyone should read the book.

8. Adjournment at 7:05 p.m.