

**DOWNTOWN LINKS CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING SUMMARY**

Monday, July 14, 2014

Accepted and Approved by the Downtown Links CAC members on August 11, 2014

FROM: TDOT Project Manager Tom Fisher

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chair, Eugene W. Caywood, Old Pueblo Trolley
Vice Chair, John Burr, Armory Park Neighborhood Association
Richard Mayers, West University Neighborhood Association
Daniela Diamente, Dunbar Spring Neighborhood Association
Carlos Lozano, Tucson - Pima County Historical Commission
Susan Gamble, Warehouse Arts Management Association
Korey Kruckmeyer, Pie Allen Neighborhood Association
Kristi Frank, El Presidio Neighborhood Association
Susan Marshall, Citizen Transportation Advisory Committee
Kylie Walzak, Tucson-Pima Bicycle Advisory Committee
Mary Ellen Wooten, Tucson-Pima Arts Council

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

VACANT, Iron Horse Neighborhood Association
Gail Ryser, Barrio Anita Neighborhood Association
Michael Keith, Downtown Tucson Partnership
Debbie Chandler, Fourth Avenue Merchants Association (non-voting member)

PROJECT TEAM PRESENT:

Michael Bertram, HDR Engineering
Brent Kirkman, HDR Engineering
Sam Credio, City of Tucson Department of Transportation (TDOT)
Kathy Jirschele, Kaneen Advertising and Public Relations

1. Meeting Called to Order

Quorum confirmed. Gene Caywood, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:38 p.m.

2. Introduction of Committee Members and Staff

CAC and Project Team Members introduced themselves.

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes

The meeting minutes from June 10, 2014 were unanimously approved with changes to a comment made by Richard Mayers.

4. Announcements

- **Mary Ellen Wooten** announced the artist interviews selection process, for artists working with the design team. The selection committee chose the artist team of Simon Donovan and Ben Olmstead.

- **Kathy Jirschele** announced that an email had been sent to the committee members inviting them, and any other people from groups they may belong to, to volunteer for the Streetcar opening weekend event beginning July 25, 2014.
- **Richard Mayers** thanked everyone who came out for the Garret Walker event on July 11, 2014. He said it was an amazing event with more than 200 people attending.
- **Sam Credio** announced that the City of Tucson had completed repainting the 6th Avenue underpass. He also said they had gotten a call from El Presidio neighborhood regarding some graffiti abatement needed on a wall along 6th Street west of Stone. Sam said it will be taken care of as soon as possible.

5. Reports and Presentations

- **9th Avenue Deck Plaza Review subcommittee report-** **Daniela Diamante** gave an update of the deck park review subcommittee that met on July 2, 2014. She wanted to remind everyone that keeping all the people on the email list in the loop with communication is important because they don't want people who want to attend subcommittee meetings excluded from the communication or the meetings. She explained that the Dunbar Spring Neighborhood Association meeting was scheduled for Monday, July 21st and that she would probably have more feedback to share at the next CAC meeting. She noted that the configuration of the deck plaza had changed since the last CAC subcommittee meeting and that some areas were being used differently. She shared that she thought the overall flow for pedestrian and bicycle traffic seemed better with this design. **Michael Bertram** said one of the larger changes in the design was the space allocated for emergency vehicle access. The new design is more effective for bicyclists and pedestrians. **Laura M.** said one of the issues that is still being resolved is the circulation on 9th Avenue. She also pointed out the location of the shade structure, trees, amphitheater, a tool shed, grass area, water harvesting & basins, the slope of the deck plaza, drainage areas and planters and where they lead to. **Daniela D.** asked for clarification about emergency access and asked whether or not they have to travel across the deck plaza. **Sam Credio** explained that emergency vehicles needed to be able to pull through on 9th Avenue if they were responding to a fire or other emergency at Steinfeld Warehouse; it wasn't necessary to access the deck plaza it was just for them to be able to pull without having to back up. The emergency vehicles need 150 feet to be able to back up, this design provides a circulation path that they can use. There was additional conversation regarding emergency access to Ash Avenue. **Daniela D.** asked if the Deck Plaza design could accommodate more than the three bike racks currently shown and also questioned where they would be placed. **Daniela D.** also commented on the art and said she wants to make sure it's not in a location that is hidden from the public, but rather it should draw people into the space. She also stated that there should be shade in the area of the amphitheater. She mentioned the idea of putting a composting toilet somewhere, and commented on how she wasn't sure who would manage it. She likes the idea of having partial seating along the planters, and would like to see that idea extended. She was not sure about bollards and how they would work with the flow of traffic or if food trucks needed access. **Kristi Kelly** questioned who would be responsible for the maintenance of the landscaped areas. **Sam** answered that TDOT would be responsible for maintaining this space. **Kristi** then suggested artificial grass for this area. **Daniela** explained that with drainage and the flow of water it would be helpful if it was a low-maintenance type of grass that doesn't require a lot of water. **Laura** then explained the type of grass that is being considered is a tufted grass that only needs to be cut about twice a year to stay healthy. **Daniela** said that she thought the grass was a city responsibility but that it can also be something that the neighborhoods embrace too. She hopes that in time they can establish some form of organization that helps maintain venues at the park. **Laura M.** mentioned food trucks being used within this area, movies being shown, and some of the organized events that have been discussed. **Mary Ellen Wooten** commented on the fairly defined artwork concept and she recommends that this be merely suggested, so that the artist can still have the ability to be creative. She also cautioned against using the word "play feature/structure" because it can create the necessity for a higher level of risk management, requiring that the art piece adhere to playground standards. **Daniela D.** explained that the committee envisioned this area to be playful and interactive for all ages.

Daniela wanted to further discuss the area of 9th Avenue and 5th Street; the possible use of bollards, but didn't want the area to seem quarantined off either. **Mary Ellen** mentioned artwork on another project that was designed to keep traffic from entering an adjacent neighborhood, and thought there might be an opportunity for something similar in this area. **Daniela** suggested signage options that could discourage vehicles from coming through the deck park, but not pedestrians and bicyclist. **Sam S.** said they could put in a no outlet sign. Michael Keith asked if 9th Avenue was going to be repaved if it's slightly raised. **Mike B.** answered that at this time the plans do not reflect 9th Avenue being repaved. There was additional conversation related to food truck access to the plaza and where they might park and also who manages the events and is responsible for removing bollards etc. Kristi Frank said El Presidio Neighborhood is interested in how the plaza will be taken care of. **Richard Mayer** said that in general he isn't a fan of bollards, would rather see something that cars can't get through, but is safe for bicyclist making sure there is adequate spacing between the bollards for cyclists. He also liked the idea of signage here. **Kylie Walzak** suggested solar bollards and said she would also like to see plans for lighting. **John Burr** wanted to encourage the team to use buffalo grass because it's so low maintenance and he thinks the longevity of artificial grass isn't as good as the buffalo grass because it deteriorates and starts to smell. **Kristi** commented on how she loves her artificial grass and how the city has actually thanked her for using it. **Sam** wanted to make sure that members agreed with where they were with the design so far, and asked if anyone saw any fatal flaws with the design. **Daniela** said that Dunbar Spring NA would meet next Monday (July 21, 2014) and she plans on getting feedback from them, but thought that design was moving in the right direction. There may be some small (though still important) tweaks, but she didn't see anything structurally that needed change. Daniela D. also emphasized that she would like to stay in communication with Mary Ellen about what the artist is planning in order to make sure he/she is moving in the direction that everyone had envisioned. **Richard M.** said that he would rather not see wave bike racks used. There was additional conversation about types of bike racks. To finish up with this part of the discussion, **Sam C.** pointed out that with the 90% design they will be getting an updated cost estimate and that this will really be the first time that they will get an idea of what everything will look like. They do have budget constraints that they are working with on this project and he said that when they are at 90% he will share with the CAC where they are in terms of costs.

- **ADOT property tour – Susan Gamble** gave an update of the tour and said they toured three properties, two of which we know are scheduled for demolition and have no quarrel with. They were reviewed for possible salvage material – especially for materials that could be used in the Deck Plaza. The tour was well attended with representatives from the Mayor's office, the Manager's office, Ward 1 and Ward 6. She said that an engineer's report has not been done on 15 E. 6th Street (locally known as the Schwam warehouse), **Sam C.** said that there has not been a sealed, structural report performed but reminded the members that ADOT, the property owner, has done their feasibility study on this building. Susan G. said this particular building was in question because there was an additional structure added to it in approximately the 1950's. Susan G. went on to explain that they were hoping to learn if taking down the non-historically significant portion of the building would have a structural impact on the older, historic structure, and if so what would it take to stabilize it and what would the cost would be. Susan G. said that it is the CAC and WAMO's mission to save as many of the historic building as possible within this district. However, additional consideration needed to be placed on the fact that ADOT owns the building and if money was spent on stabilizing the building, could ADOT still auction it to an entity who will not conform to the bigger plan for the area. Susan went on to explained that WAMO wrote a letter to TDOT regarding the possible use of the Tucson Historic Art District escrow fund and it's her understanding that using the money for stabilization efforts is not considered an appropriate use of the moneys as established in the escrow guidelines. She then told the group that the next WAMO board meeting would be on July 26, 2014. Susan G also said it is her opinion that at a minimum, an engineer's report should be obtained.

Daniela wanted to know if there was much discussion regarding salvaging materials. **Susan G.** said yes that two of the buildings were looked at heavily since they are to be demolished. Wheat Design, HDR and a representative from ADOT were all there. She said the trusses' and bricks were the best possibilities for salvaged material. **Susan G.** also talked about the specific requirements related to the deck plaza shade structure **Sam C.** added that if someone was interested in acquiring some of the salvageable materials they could contact the demolition company directly and negotiate with them. He also said that what the city is looking at are items that can salvaged and actually used in the project. He pointed out that the shade structure on the deck plaza is specifically designed to align with the pier columns, and it would be difficult to find a salvaged beam that

precisely matched the required dimensions. **Sam C.** said there may be other areas that salvaged materials could possibly be used. **Sam C.** also added that they are reviewing the possibilities for some of the materials that they thought could be salvaged. **Susan Marshall** asked why there were so many people from the department in attendance. **Sam C.** discussed some of the specifics about the money that is in escrow; he said there's \$162,000 in HURF money, (which is money that has to be used for transportation) and there's about \$20,000 from the General Fund - spending from that is a little more flexible. There was a short discussion about the escrowed monies. **Susan G.** said it would be helpful to see the accounting of the escrow account.

• **Bicycle Pedestrian Review subcommittee report** – **Kylie** gave an update on the bicycle and pedestrian subcommittee meeting that met on July 2, 2014. She told the group that they were presented with three different concept plans and how they went through the plans as a group and gathered feedback that they'd be sharing. She announced that they will be meeting the second week in August, however, **Kylie** said she's not entirely sure she needs to take it to them. **Kylie** then went over some of the details of the three concepts. **Daniela** said that they would like to see a continuation of the Deck Plaza planter seating/bench area. They would like it to be a physical barrier so that it's clear that the bicycle and pedestrian traffic is being directed away from the tracks and then they should be funneled into a safe crosswalk area to access the Steinfeld building at the proper place. **Sam C.** added that they want to make sure that we are funneling people to this specific crossing point so barricades may be added. He said that it's easier to direct bicyclists than pedestrians and they want to make this area undesirable for a pedestrian to cross so some form of barricade would help with that. There was a discussion of fencing, raised curb, gravel or rock also being added so that people have a harder time crossing. The group also talked about the "pork chop" median at Church Avenue & Franklin. **Daniela** wanted to know if she could still cut through the parking lot on her bike. **Sam C.** explained that they were planning on having raised curb through this area. **Gene Caywood** asked about parking along (9th Avenue?) and pointed out the Southern Pacific Freight House yard property. **Sam C.** discussed their plans on making more of a buffer zone so that there is more space for parking. **Gene** suggested putting a little bit of landscaping where the cars are parked and where the bike/ped path is. **Daniela** asked if when a train is not passing and the gates are up is there going to be a stop sign or a yield sign. **Sam C.** explained that they are going for a quiet zone within this area so trains will not blow their whistle, but there will be signs. **Kylie** discussed 7th Avenue and the railroad crossing the committee's concerns were what to do with the pedestrian traffic once they get to the southern-most point of the crossing. The subcommittee liked the idea of marking this area so that bicycle/pedestrian traffic was directed onto the wide sidewalk and then to head toward the wide crosswalk. She explained where the cycle track will be within this area. **Daniela** pointed out that cars may be backing out of their driveway and doing a U-turn in this area and that they wanted to keep the bicyclist and pedestrians away from that. **Sam** added that Tucson Fire needs access across the tracks in this area so there has to be a 20-foot access path. Additionally Environmental Service vehicles need access in order to service businesses in the area. **Sam C.** noted that these types of requirements add to the levels of complexity in making areas like this function for the residents and businesses. There was discussion regarding the rail road gates. **Gene C.** commented that he thought it was a nice plan; wide right of way, with room for a landscaped area, bicycle pedestrian path and emergency vehicle access. There was additional discussion regarding the landscaped median area. **Richard M.** said he does not like any of it because (inaudible) overarching and not specific enough. **Kylie** suggested pedestrian flashing signs at one of the crosswalks. The next discussion focused on the 6th Ave. 7th Street design. **Kylie W.** said that the subcommittee talked about utilizing the south side of 7th Street, between Ferro and 6th Avenue as an alternate means to access the MUP. **Kylie** also noted that the area along 6th Avenue between the underpass and 7th Street will be landscaped, preventing pedestrians and bicyclist from cutting across into 6th Avenue, they will have to use the intersection. **Kylie** also described the different access options for eastbound travelers to access the MUP at 6th Avenue. The group also talked about making sure delivery trucks would have continued access to businesses in the area, while still providing a safe roadway and atmosphere for pedestrians and bicyclist. **Kylie** asked what the height of the wall would be by 7th Street. **Mike B.** said probably in the range of 8-10 feet at the bend. There was discussion about the left turn lane being eliminated. **Sam** pointed out a concrete apron and explained how that was delineated on the map. **Carlos** asked about plans for a pocket park. **Sam** said that he did not know anything about a pocket park being in this area. **Kylie** said that there may be a Parklette (which is basically turning a couple parking space into a seating area that the business takes care of) at the northwest corner of 6th Avenue and 7th Street near XO coffee. **Sam C.** talked about the reconfiguration of 6th Ave. at 7th Street, the function of

the HAWK crossing, the changes to the area along the east side of 6th Avenue north of the underpass and options for landscaping and other improvements.

6. Next Steps

Items for Future Meetings

An on-site meeting to review the privately owned buildings at 7th Street and Farro. Doodle poll to CAC members only – invitation will go to the full Downtown Links email list.

Confirm Future Meeting Dates

The next CAC will be held on August 11, 2014 at 5:30 p.m.

7. Call to the Audience

Hi, I am Karen Green, Dunbar Spring, a few points and comments - I was one of those people that Daniela keeps alluding to that was not notified of committee meetings. I am nerdy enough that I actually will take vacation time from work and use my vacation time to attend these subcommittee meetings so I really would like to be notified when they happen. So I am just throwing that out there and then after the last meeting last month, we talked about the crossing on Old Main and how it was on that angle and so just for fun I was at the Mercado and I biked home and I did that protected bike path which was fabulous and I used to think it was just silly because it was so small but I rode on it and I felt fabulous and I want them everywhere, but then I did in fact cross it and it is, it's just a little bit off. It's just a little angle but then you almost make it to the corner, but you don't. So I'm just reiterating that if there's a way to make it so that it's straight (instead of an angle) that'd be great. Then the last thing that I have noticed for probably the last six months or so is that there has been a different feel when some of the various folks have brought up some of the different types of questions. So the bicyclist that was killed a few weeks ago was a neighbor of mine and I just want to reiterate that we keep bringing these up and they are not just amenities, we are trying to stay alive and that's the reason why we keep focusing on these issues and why they are so important. So I appreciate the change in the tone, that it doesn't feel as antagonistic, it feels a lot more like home. Let's see what we can do and I appreciate that change. Thank you.

8. Adjournment at 7:09 p.m.