



## **Project Update**

May 31, 2012

Dear Downtown Links Citizen Advisory Committee (DLCAC) members,

A lot of progress has been made in recent months on the Downtown Links project and I want to provide you with a detailed update on each element. As you know, there are four major phases of the corridor, plus an Urban Overlay District zone to help guide future land use development along the corridor. This project is part of the 20-year Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) Plan and funded with \$76.1 million in regional sales tax revenue. The timeline for construction of all phases is between the years 2011 and 2021, based on the 20-year plan schedule. An update for each phase is detailed below.

### **Phase I: 8th Street Drainage Project.**

This phase of the project involved the reconstruction of a three-block section of the Tucson Arroyo drainage culvert along 7<sup>th</sup> Street from 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue between 7<sup>th</sup> Street and 8<sup>th</sup> Street, and 8<sup>th</sup> Street between 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The project began in October 2011 and was recently completed in mid-May by Tucson's own Borderland Construction Company. A new double-barrel concrete box culvert was installed to accommodate stormwater from both the Tucson Arroyo and High School Wash. This is the first segment of the culvert's reconstruction which will be fully completed with the Downtown Links roadway improvements in the coming years. Ultimately, the new culvert will remove nearby properties from the 100-year FEMA floodplain.

The 8<sup>th</sup> Street drainage project also included: new asphalt paving and striping on sections on 7<sup>th</sup> Street, 8<sup>th</sup> Street, and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and; the two-way conversion of 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue between 6<sup>th</sup> Street and 7<sup>th</sup> Street. We are happy to report that the conversion is working well for vehicle, pedestrian, and bike circulation in all directions. And the 4-way stop at 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> has improved safety for all modes.

We want to give a big "thank you" to Borderland Construction and their subcontractors for completing a very difficult job in a very confined work area. And a big "thank you" to all property and business owners for your patience with the construction work. This project is finally over.

### **Phase II: St. Mary's Roadway Improvements**

This fully-funded project involves the reconstruction of St. Mary's Road between I-10 and Church Avenue. It includes: new storm drainage collection and conveyance system, sidewalks, bike lanes, lighting, desert landscaping, median islands, asphalt paving, and a new bike/pedestrian crossing by Davis School. The 4-lane configuration will be maintained and upgraded with substantial safety and aesthetic improvements.



Design of this segment of the corridor project is 100% complete. It took longer than expected because of major utility (water, sewer) upgrades and modifications that had to be reviewed several times to confirm location and dimensions of pipes and lines. The City will advertise the project for bids in the next few weeks and hopefully select a contractor by early July. If all goes according to plan, a pre-construction meeting will be held in August so we can look at the plans together and discuss the schedule with the contractor. This is the time when we will determine construction phasing and detours, and make sure we understand all concerns.

### **Phases III and VI: 6th Street Underpass and Links Avenue to Broadway**

These two phases (potentially completed as one) involve the construction of: a new Tucson Arroyo drainage culvert; a new UPRR underpass at 6<sup>th</sup> Street, new overpass at 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, pedestrian bridges at 9th Avenue and Stone Avenue; and a new 4-lane roadway connection parallel to the UPRR line between 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Broadway. The project also includes new sidewalk and bikeway facilities (lanes and paths), artwork, lighting, landscaping, bridges, signals, and more.

The 6th Street Underpass and Links Avenue segments are at 30% design completion and on hold until additional funds become available for design. The Tucson Mayor and Council recently approved TDOT's request for additional RTA funding for design. The request now goes to the RTA Board on June 14<sup>th</sup> for their final approval. If all goes well and funding is in place, then we'll starting setting up CAC meetings once again to review all aspects of the project and make some key decisions.

TDOT continues to work with residents and business owners along the corridor who have questions about the alignment, project timeline, and coordination with future redevelopment plans. The exact alignment will be confirmed as we get further along in design and can identify soil stability, slopes, utility locations, and structural engineering needs. This is by far the most complex roadway corridor project in the region.

The City will continue its cultural analysis and environmental studies over the next few months to ensure we know what underground features need to be protected or removed prior to major construction work. There is a long history to the ground disturbance adjacent to the 120 year-old railroad line and now is the time to remediate any potential problems.

Also, in preparation for future corridor construction, the City has approved the demolition of the old Stone Transmission building (529 N. Stone Avenue) by mid-summer. This building was built in 1955 and has been documented as a non-contributor to the National Register of Historic Places. The demo includes removal of any soil contamination or asbestos on the site. We will keep you updated on the demo schedule as we get closer.

### **Urban Overlay District (UOD)**

In mid-November 2011, Poster-Frost-Mirto Architects made the second submittal for the Downtown Links District that will serve as an optional zoning choice to encourage mixed-use development along the corridor. The UOD is still under review by Planning and Development



Services as there are a few sections of the document that needed clarification and consistency. There will be a public hearing in the coming weeks to review the UOD and receive any public comments. You can view the final draft of the proposed Urban Overlay Zone at [www.downtownlinks.info](http://www.downtownlinks.info).

Despite the future adoption of the UOD, there is much redevelopment already taking place along the Downtown Links corridor through the standard zoning and rezoning processes. We are finally starting to see major revitalization efforts along the north side of the tracks. This is why the completion of the corridor is so important.

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If you need additional information, I can be reached at 837-6752 or [Tom.fisher@tucsonaz.gov](mailto:Tom.fisher@tucsonaz.gov). Thank you for your involvement.

Tom Fisher  
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