



**Tucson-Pima County Historical Commission**  
Historic Landscapes Subcommittee  
Legal Action Report

**Thursday, August 17, 2023**

The Historic Landscapes Subcommittee of the Tucson-Pima County Historical Commission conducted a meeting on Thursday, August 17, 2023, at 3:00 p.m. via Zoom.

**1. Call to Order / Roll Call**

Meeting was called to order by Chair Grede at 3:01 p.m. Those present and absent were:

**Members Present:**

Steve Grede, Chair  
Geoffrey Ellwand  
J.J. Lamb

**Members Absent:**

Jan Mulder  
Alyce Sadongei

**Guests:**

Helen Erickson, TPCHC Member, Advisor  
Jodie Brown, City of Tucson Historic Preservation Officer  
Ryan Fagan, Project Manager, COT Department of Transportation  
David Marhefka, COT Department of Transportation  
Rebecca Field, Kimley Horn  
Melinda Pittman, Kimley Horn  
Chris Stebe, Norris Design

**2. Approval of Historic Landscapes Subcommittee LAR/Minutes from Meeting of: 7-6-2023 (Discussion/Action)**

Commissioner Lamb moved approval of the minutes of the meeting of 7-6-2023 meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ellwand and passed by a roll call vote of 3-0.

**3. Review Cases (Discussion/Action)**

- a. Traffic triangle at 5th/6th Street and Country Club, in front of the individually listed Villa Catalina and west of El Encanto historic district

Ms. Field presented the proposed design to preserve all the existing, living palm trees. Water harvesting, a replacement memorial tree to replace the dead palm, additional trees, and plantings. The planting palette would be medium-height, low-water use, desert trees. Plant selections will consider the safety of pedestrians moving through the traffic triangle. Commissioner Grede thanked presenters for their sensitivity to the historic landscape features.

Commissioner Ellwand moved to recommend approval of landscape design for the traffic triangle at 5th/6th Street and Country Club. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lamb and passed by a roll call vote of 3-0.

b. Activate El Presidio Streetscape Project

Mr. Stebe communicated that there has been community outreach and a draft report at this time but that this is a courtesy review as there are a lot of design decisions still to be made. The proposed project is in the El Presidio Historic District and is sponsored by Rio Nuevo to further activate commercial and community activity. The design is intended to be a temporary installation, although a sunset date is not provided. It will not physically impact any historic structures. The color palette is based on the historic courthouse dome tile.

Commissioner Grede discussed the importance of historic streetscapes as the setting for the structures within historic districts. Larger elements such as the 5'x5' planters with trees and the proposed shade structure will not only impact the historic streetscape but also the visibility of the historic structures. He suggested referencing historic streetscape photos for character-defining features and for inspiration. The seating area with the masonry seat walls and shade structure is of particular concern.

Commissioner Erickson suggested that bollards are a visual intrusion and asked if the paint alone could create the spaces. The locations of the parking kiosks could impact the viewsheds of historic structures. Mr. Stebe explained that the public art murals attached to structures are outside the scope of this project and have another review process. She commented that the provision of artistic renderings were particularly useful to communicating the design for the review process. Mr. Stebe spoke about the possibility of having an evaluation point where the project would be reviewed, possibly in three years.

Commissioner Lamb commented that creating spaces that encourage people to stay, linger, and enjoy historic spaces is important, but stressed the importance of the opinions of the residents of the historic district, who may well be concerned about gentrification.

Commissioner Ellwand moved that Activate El Presidio Streetscape Project design team incorporate HLS comments and present again to the HLS in an upcoming meeting. The

motion was seconded by Commissioner Lamb and passed by a roll call vote of 3-0.

Mr. Stebe plans to incorporate the HLS comments and come back soon to the HLS for input. He suggested that perhaps a specific time for a sunset review of the project be three years.

**4. Current Issues for Information (Discussion/Action)**

a. Reid Park Masterplan

Nothing to report at this time.

b. Armory Park Masterplan

Ms. Brown reported that Tom Fisher, who has been actively involved in the project, is going to retire. The archaeology clearance is being done.

c. Drachman Motels- Tucson Inn, El Rancho Motor Hotel, and Frontier Motel, Miracle Mile District

Nothing to report at this time.

d. Issues for collaboration between Transportation Subcommittee and Historic Landscapes Subcommittee

Commissioner Lamb reported the Commissioner Scoville is working on this issue and the Transportation Subcommittee plans to discuss at an upcoming meeting. She suggested looking into a designated seat on the RTA committee as transportation has a huge affect on historic resources.

e. Historic Landscape Subcommittee's possible role in researching, nominating, and reviewing rural and cultural landscapes

Commissioner Lamb suggested that the HLS look at whether Colossal Cave Road could be surveyed for its significance.

f. Followup on Villa Catalina replacement of turf with artificial turf.

Commissioner Grede reported the possibility of applying for a grant to assess the human comfort difference and microclimate impact between living lawn and artificial turf. He spoke with Rachele Hornby who has expertise in this area. She will be in touch with Ms. Brown.

5. **Future Agenda Items for Upcoming Meetings**

Activate El Presidio Streetscape Project.

6. **Call to the Audience (Information Only)**

No comments were received by the deadline.

7. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m.