



1st Avenue Citizens' Corridor Planning Task Force



Thursday, October 17, 2024, 6:00 pm

Donna R Liggins Recreation Center Room 134

2160 N. 6th Ave., Tucson, AZ 85705

MEETING MINUTES

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Co-Chairman Karl Peterson called the 1st Avenue Citizens' Corridor Planning Task (1ACCPTF) meeting to order at 6:07 p.m. on Thursday, October 17, 2024, and the quorum was established through roll call.

| PRESENT | ABSENT |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Caroline Bartelme | Ruben Robles |
| Dave Boston | Mark Hachtel |
| Sofia Morago Franco | Mindy Gutzmer |
| Melissa Noshay-Petro | Jon Barger |
| Kathleen (Susan) O'Brien | Marci Caballero-Reynolds |
| Karl Peterson | A.M. Rivers |
| Nancy Reid | |
| Maxine Dunkelman | |
| Dana Higgins | |

2. Approval of September 19 Meeting Minutes

Karl Peterson asked 1st Avenue Citizens' Corridor Planning Task Force (1ACCPTF) members if they had an opportunity to review the minutes from the previous meeting on September 19, 2024. All 1ACCPTF members had reviewed the minutes, and it was moved by Melissa Noshay-Petro to approve the minutes, duly seconded by several task force members. The 1ACCPTF reached a Consensus Decision and approved the September 19, 2024, meeting minutes.

3. Opening Remarks

Karl Peterson thanked everyone for attending and then turned the meeting over to HDR Communications Manager, Kristi Ross.

4. Call to Audience

No comments were received during the Call to the Audience. No subsequent action was taken.

5. Public Outreach Update

HDR Communications Manager, Kristi Ross, updated current and upcoming public outreach:

- 325 responses to the survey so far
- 30 people attended the Open House on October 9th
- 13 people attended the Virtual Open House on October 10th and upcoming pop-up events through the end of the comment period

Kristi then presented the preliminary results of three critical survey questions. The three questions discussed are big information-gathering questions. These responses will help us start to prioritize when we get to the next phase.

Questions from CTF Members

- Nancy asked if the Farmers Market was at the Rillito Park.
 - Kristi answered “Yes”.
- Dana asked if the survey would show how specific user groups answered these questions, for example, how did bike riders respond in comparison to vehicle drivers?
 - Kristi answered, yes, we have that information as part of the results, and we can send preliminary results in full to the members.
- Caroline asked if the survey is reaching a wide enough audience, even though it is early on.
 - Kristi said she would have to pull up the responses by group and look at the percentages by user group to confirm. Kristi also said that we are tracking demographics and at about two weeks into the survey the team members will analyze responses to see what we might be missing, including zip codes. Then we can decide if any outreach needs to be changed.
- Nancy asked if any of the people on the street (1st Avenue) were being asked the survey questions.
 - Kristi answered that when we start the pop-up events along the corridor, we will reach people on the street.
- Nancy asked what a pop-up is.
 - Kristi explained that the pop-ups are the events on the corridor like the Heirloom Farmers Market and the Library pop-up and possibly the Pima County Health Department coordination. Sun Tran is also going to do onboard surveys of bus riders on the corridor (Route 6).
- Nancy asked what about a man or woman on the street interviewing people who are always hanging around the bus stops?
 - Kristi answered that we do not currently have a specific plan to do that. It was again clarified that the pop-ups are on the corridor.
 - Kristi further explained that the pop-up events are where we have a tent, table, and chairs and as people walk by, we can get their input, answer questions, handout information, etc.
- Mimi asked if we think we are getting enough survey participants.
 - Kristi answered that we are ahead of where we would normally be this early in the survey process. We are almost at 300 surveys in just a couple of weeks and that is good. And we will work to keep those numbers growing.
 - Patrick commented that we are working to reach the widest audience possible with our events and the onboard Sun Tran bus ride-along surveys will help reach riders and people at the bus stop, which is a population that we need to

include.

- Nancy again questioned reaching the right people. Her thought was to approach people congregating along 1st Avenue. She wouldn't mind walking in on this group and doing a survey with those folks, the people who may not go to the pop-up event
 - Kristi said that yes, we can target a specific group if everyone feels this would be beneficial. If anyone has a specific area, they feel that should be targeted for surveying, please let us know.
- MainStreet's Steve Taylor disagreed and said he would not feel comfortable going up to them.
- Nancy asked Steve to clarify the area. He answered 1st Avenue and Fort Lowell Road. She said she wouldn't mind walking up to them.
- Nancy again stated that she is concerned these are the ones who just walk out into the street. She wants to ask them "Why do you do this?" "Do you not understand where the crosswalks are, or do you want more crosswalks or what"?
- Jan Waukon added that these people may not be in their right mind. Jan added that people who cross in the middle of the block may do it for expediency's sake, she noted that on her way to the meeting, she almost hit someone and that they were not in their right mind.
- Dana said that he has observed that at Circle K at Prince and 1st Avenue, he sees tents set up and he doesn't think it is crazy to be out there. Maybe ask Circle K about setting up near their building. He understands what Nancy is referring to.
- Dana also cited examples of things he has seen at his shop in the corridor that are cause for concern.

No action was taken.

6. Existing Conditions Traffic Operations and Mobility Analysis

Kittelson & Associates' Principal Engineer, Felipe Ladron de Guevara, PhD discussed the 1st Avenue Design Concept Report (DCR) Data Analysis:

- Community and Infrastructure
- Travel and Safety Trends, Mobility Analysis
- Additional Analysis in terms of Equity, Simulation Model, and Complete Streets - Case Studies

Felipe discussed the areas that will be addressed on the corridor which included the areas above.

Kittelson & Associates Engineer Bridger Helm then presented the following information:

a. *Traffic Analysis*

Bridger discussed that using replicate data, made up of transaction and GPS data, they can see where people travel, shop, work, and live. Data can be broken out by zip code and where trips begin and end and discussed how this helps in analyzing traffic in the corridor.

He also discussed that this data breaks down trips by weekday, weekend, origin, and destination, creating a study area. The study area is a half mile on either side and top and bottom of the corridor.

b. *Study Area Trips*

Bridger presented the most popular modes of travel on the corridor and the most popular travel purposes.

- Weekday: approximately 82,000
- Weekend: approximately 76,000

Trips under one mile are mostly made by vehicles and walking.

Questions from CTF Members

- Nancy asked how they gather this type of information.
 - Bridger answered that it comes from a large database of information and is not specific to a person only to the zip code level. It does not show people's address or personal information.
 - Dana asked if the study area included Mountain Avenue where there is a lot of biking.
 - Bridger answered that the study goes to the west of Mountain Avenue but does not take data from the actual avenue.
- Sofia asked how they capture information if someone doesn't use Google Maps.
 - Bridger answered that they use a variety of information, including automobile GPS information, to track people's movements.
- Sofia clarified that she was referring to bicycles and pedestrians.
 - Bridger answered that they normally use cell phone data to track this. He also said that they use a lot of different sources of data, but it is not 100% accurate, it is about 80% reliable.
- Caroline asked about mobility scooters because she sees a lot in her neighborhood.
 - Bridger said he was not sure, and Felipe said that they probably are tracking them in some way but may not know exactly the mode they are using because it is only 80% accurate.
- Dana asked what is considered "commercial" mode.
 - Bridger said "commercial" modes are delivery vehicles and trucks that have a CDL license.
- Karl asked if this study included people on the Loop.
 - Bridger answered yes, it would pick up some of that walking traffic.

c. *Driving Today*

Bridger then shared details on historical daily volumes:

- 15% decrease in vehicle volumes since 1998
- Currently, there are approximately 30,000 vehicles per day

Questions from CTF Members

- Dana asked why the traffic volume is decreasing. Is construction factored in, with people possibly getting diverted to 1st Avenue?
 - Bridger said construction is factored in. Traffic may have been affected by the Recession in 2008 and the Pandemic in 2020.
- Susan asked if it takes into account the number of businesses open on the corridor.
 - Patrick answered that there is a trend in Tucson across all midtown corridors. They are either flat or decreasing. He added that maybe job locations changing, commercial businesses chasing housing increases, and post-pandemic working from home may be some of the reasons behind the trend. There is a combination of factors, and it is not unique to 1st Avenue.

Bridger then went through the following topics:

- Existing daily volumes
- Intersection peak hour volumes
- Quantifying traffic operations
- Intersection operations

He stated that currently, all intersections along the 1st Avenue corridor are operating at an acceptable Level of Service (LOS) which is about 70% or above.

Questions from CTF Members

- David asked does this represent “flow”?
 - Bridger answered that yes, it does represent flow based on speed limits. The speed limit is set at 40 miles per hour, so if you are traveling at 35 miles per hour or higher you are in an “A” level of service.
- David then asked if this represents a “surge”? He said that sometimes you will see a ton of traffic on the corridor and then other times it is very little.
 - Bridger said, look at the next slide here, this represents “surge”. It looks at the level of service at certain times of the day.

d. **Walking Today**

Bridger shared details on pedestrian volumes at signalized intersections and noted that they saw a large number of pedestrians at major intersections, showing the need for improvements. He also did a brief overview of current sidewalk facilities. He then discussed information gathered about pedestrians, including *Pedestrian Level of Traffic Stress*, and discussed this in greater detail.

Questions from CTF Members

- Nancy asked when the new HAWK lights are going in at Blacklidge and Copper.
 - Patrick answered that these two projects have already been approved and will move forward this year and not wait for the 1st Avenue Improvement Project.
- Caroline then asked Bridger to define what a sidewalk is.
 - Bridger answered that a sidewalk is a path made from concrete and that only 24% of the current sidewalks on the project meet the City of Tucson’s Street Design Guide of six to eight feet wide.

e. **Biking Today**

Bridger went through the current bicycle network on the corridor. This included details on the level of Bicyclist Level of Stress.

Questions from CTF Members

- Dana asked about Copper becoming a bike lane.
 - Patrick answered the city received federal funds for Copper Bike Boulevard and the boulevard will be done this year. There is already a HAWK light at Copper and they are going to build out the entire bike network. It is currently in the design phase.
 - Patrick again mentioned that both Copper and Blacklidge bike boulevards will begin construction before this year.

- Caroline asked if these two projects at Copper and Blacklidge will inhibit the 1st Avenue Improvement Project.
 - Patrick answered that the Copper and Blacklidge Bike Boulevard projects will be completed and serve the needs of the bicyclists for four years and then when the construction begins on the 1st Avenue Improvement Project, they may need to adjust depending on the alignment chosen.
- Caroline then asked, so it is not set in stone then.
 - Patrick said no it is not.
- Nancy asked “Are you saying that the Blacklidge route will be moved?
 - Patrick answered, no, we just might need to move the poles for the Hawk light when we do construction. So, if the road changes, the location is going to change.

f. Transit Service

Bridger presented transit infrastructure and transit ridership results on the corridor. There are quite a few routes that do cross 1st Avenue, which creates connectivity. He also shared details of existing transit ridership which are further highlighted below:

- Route 6 Northbound Average Transit Ridership
 - The heaviest ridership happens at 1st Avenue and Grant Road and then at 1st Avenue and Fort Lowell Road
- Route 6 Southbound Average Transit Ridership
 - The heaviest ridership happens at 1st Avenue and Fort Lowell Road and at 1st Avenue and Grant Road

Questions from CTF Members

- Dana asked who picks where the bus stop locations are located. Is it the city or Sun Tran?
 - Bridger answered that Sun Tran has the ultimate jurisdiction but it's in cooperation with the city.
- Dana asked if you correlate the transit numbers with locations of grocery stores or apartments.
 - Bridger answered yes, we are seeing higher transit rates in more commercial areas. Felipe also added that there is a database of all the stores, and they can visually see how they connect.

No action was taken.

7. Project Overview – Transportation Design 101 Roadway Building Blocks

HDR Project Manager, Brent Kirkman, gave a project overview. Brent updated the task force on where we currently are on the DCR. We started with existing conditions analysis, and we are slowly transitioning into framework and goals development. He explained that this is taking what they learn in existing conditions and applying that to the framework and goals development. Brent shared details on the city’s Complete Streets Guide, which is the City of Tucson’s newest street design guide. He explained that the 1st Avenue Improvement Project is the first major roadway project the city will complete under this new guide. Brent then shared the guiding principles of Complete Street, which included:

Designing roadways for the most vulnerable users

- Working from the outside of the roadway to the inside

- Utilizing the zone system determines how space within the right-of-way allocated
- Prioritization of all roadway users

Brent noted that the team is aware of what challenges are most important and they need help prioritizing them in the available space. He explained that this is why the survey is important; it helps the team prioritize what challenges are important to the public.

Brent presented the different “Zones” along the corridor and the challenges for each of these. He also shared photos of zones around Tucson.

Questions from CTF Members

- Susan asked if there was 100 feet of width available all along the corridor.
 - Brent said they have 100 feet in some areas, but in others are closer to 75 to 80 feet. They will survey to get exact measurements and look at historical records to learn what needs to be designed to make it all work.
- Carolyn asked for the definition of a sidewalk.
 - Brent said only where it is concrete.
- Carolyn asked who does the upkeep of this zone or decides what is to be planted.
 - Brent said the city does it.
- Karl asked if the team needs to design the roadway for TEP.
 - Brent said no, we just need to coordinate with them.
- Karl then asked do they had to run their poles down the corridor or can they put them someplace else.
 - Patrick and Brent answered that they have the right to be in the public right of way but that there is a lot of coordination that takes place. The bottom line is they must adjust to the roadway.
- Carolyn asked how wide the bike lane is on Mountain Avenue.
 - Patrick answered that they are about 11 feet wide.
- Susan asked what the width is of the existing lanes on 1st Avenue.
 - Brent answered that they are 11 feet wide.
- Dana said, “I have a question”. I went to the Open House last week and on the way home, I noticed that many of the streetlights along 1st Avenue are not working. I know you have plans to add a HAWK light soon, but do you have plans to change the bulbs on those lights that are out?
 - Patrick answered that this is a bit of a crisis right now citywide. What has happened is there has been a huge increase in the last couple of months in wire theft. People are opening the streetlights stripping the wires out and selling them. The city is on a three-month backlog on fixing the lights because they can't keep up with the thefts.
- Dana asked if there is a solar option.
 - Patrick answered that it is not economically feasible to use solar. They are experimenting with putting in obstacles to try and stop or at least slow down the thefts. Hopefully, the price of copper will go down.

No action was taken.

8. 1ACCPTF Open Discussion

Patrick asked the task force members if they liked the Donna Liggins facility, and the CTF agreed that it was better than the Satori school. Patrick also asked if the task force would be amenable to shifting the meeting start time to 5:45 p.m. and the task force agreed. Patrick asked if the task force would like to skip the December meeting and start again in January. They agreed to this as well.

No formal action was taken.

9. Adjournment

Melissa Noshay-Petro moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:41 p.m. Caroline Bartelme and Nancy Reid both seconded. Meeting adjourned.

