1st Avenue Citizens' Corridor Planning Task Force

Thursday, November 21, 2024, 5:45 p.m.
Donna R Liggins Recreation Center
2160 N. 6th Avenue, Tucson, AZ 85705

Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order

Due to the absence of the Chair and Co-Chairs for this meeting, the task force members present were asked for a volunteer to act as Chair. Melissa (Mimi) Noshay-Petro volunteered to be the acting Chair.

Acting Chair Melissa (Mimi) Noshay-Petro called the meeting to order at 5:48 p.m., duly seconded by Ruben Robles. The quorum was established through roll call.

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

2. Approval of October 17, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Melissa (Mimi) Noshay-Petro asked 1st Avenue Citizens' Corridor Planning Task Force (1ACCPTF) members if they had an opportunity to review the minutes from the previous meeting on October 17, 2024. All 1ACCPTF members had reviewed the minutes and Kathleen (Susan) O'Brien moved to approve the minutes, which Ruben Robles duly seconded. The 1ACCPTF reached a Consensus Decision and approved the October 17, 2024, meeting minutes.

3. Call to the Audience

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

4. **Public Engagement Update**
   HDR Strategic Communications Manager, Kristi Ross, updated current and upcoming public outreach, stating there were 422 responses to the survey so far. Kristi discussed the demographics of respondents. Kristi then presented the most up-to-date survey results to the task force members. Kristi also updated the upcoming pop-up events. No action was taken.

Questions from CTF Members

- Mimi asked if the 422 respondents who have responded so far are representative of the corridor.
- Kristi answered "No." We do have demographic gaps, mostly ethnicity and income-based gaps, and will try to fill them in as we go. There is a slight difference in responses between the east and west areas of the corridor. The east side has slightly more responses than the west side.
- Nancy asked if there have been any pop-up events in the Keeling neighborhood.
    - Kristi and HDR Senior Communications Coordinator, Carrie Wilkinson, answered, yes, we have done one at Woods Memorial Library on November 13th. Carrie and Kristi continued to answer questions on the upcoming pop-up and Cyclovita events.
- It was asked if members could get hard copies of the survey.
    - Kristi responded yes, if you would like them, we can arrange to get them to you.

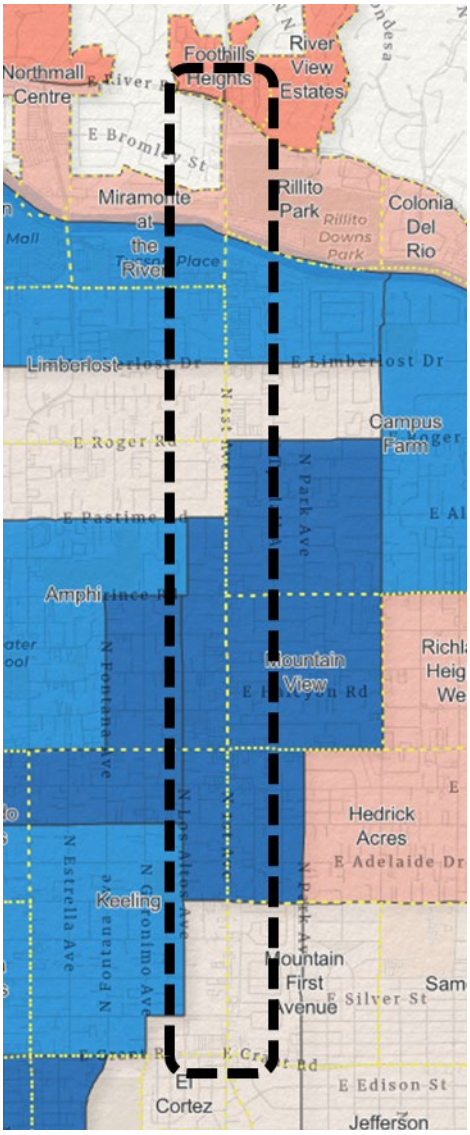
5. **Existing Conditions - Equity and Microsimulation Model**
   Kittelson & Associates' Principal Engineer, Felipe Ladron de Guevara, PhD discussed the 1st Avenue Design Concept Report (DCR) Data Analysis:
   - Community and Infrastructure
   - Travel and Safety Trends, Mobility Analysis
   - Equity, Simulation Model, and Intersection Types

Felipe discussed the areas that will be addressed on the corridor, including the abovementioned areas.

a. **Transportation Equity**
   Felipe discussed why equity matters in transportation.

   Felipe then presented the City of Tucson Equity Priority Index and explained how it compares to the 1st Avenue Study Area Equity Priority Index.

Here is the Equity Index for the 1st Avenue Study Area that was presented:



Tucson Equity Priority Index Census Tracts

Tucson Equity Priority Index - Mean (Percentile)

- High (80 - 100)
- Moderate-High (60 - 80)
- Moderate (40 - 60)
- Low-Moderate (20 - 40)
- Low (0 - 20)

Questions from CTF Members

- Discussion by several task force members about what the 1st Avenue Equity Priority Index map shows. Task force members asked what the almost white areas are on the maps, members chimed in that those are disadvantaged areas. Task force members asked how they came to conclusions about people on the corridor.

It was answered that this comes from census data. The census tracts shown on the map are a combination of all the data, including income, education, disabilities, language, etc.

HDR Project Manager, Brent Kirkman, cited an example that in the study area there are 13.6% of households without a vehicle, compared to 9.7% found in the city. This confirms why we see more people walking on the corridor and when we plan the roadway, we need to take this into account.

It was asked why there was a large white area on the map near Limberlost Road.

- It was answered that this is a large empty lot and many businesses. Businesses are not included in the census data.
- Felipe reminded everyone that this data is only for looking at the corridor as a whole and making sure that when planning the roadway, you consider the areas that need more assistance.

Nancy is concerned that the less advantaged areas will be considered a lower priority when it comes to roadway design. She is especially concerned about the Grant Road and 1st Avenue area because this is her neighborhood, and it is in the white area.

- Several members explained that this is just census data and doesn't mean that certain areas are lower priority. It was also mentioned that the census information presented for the corridor will allow the team to design the road for the most disadvantaged users and this will ensure that the roadway works for everyone who uses it. Another point mentioned about the Grant Road and 1st Avenue area is that there is a lot of retail here and that is not included in the census data.
- People commented that the term "equity priority" may be what is causing confusion. It doesn't mean that people in the low-equity areas are less important. It was suggested that using another word might make it easier to understand.

b. Simulation Modeling

Kittelson & Associates' Engineer Joel Amarillas presented Additional Analysis, Simulation Models, and Intersection Types.

Joel presented an overview of his presentation:

- Transportation Modeling
- Microsimulation
- Why Use Microsimulation?
  - Strengths
  - Limitations
- Performance Measures

- 1st Avenue Simulation Model

Joel then presented some of the microsimulation models that were done along the 1st Avenue corridor.

Joel then presented existing condition results for corridor travel times, which confirmed the simulation model results were like the observed actual results.

Questions from CTF Members

- Mimi asked Joel to clarify what the letters refer to that are given to each intersection.
  - Joel explained that the letters refer to the "level of service" of an intersection. For example, a "B" intersection has less delay than a "D" intersection.
  - Patrick clarified that while there is this scale for intersections, the roadway will not be at an "A" level all day because that would mean they overbuilt the road. The city aims to have a level of service of "D" at an intersection during peak hours, which is acceptable.
- Dana asked if the data was collected at a more heavily traveled time like wintertime vs. a lower traveled time like summer.
  - Joel explained that they collect the data over time to ensure that they are getting the best average for the roadway. They do not want the high time or the low time representing an average roadway use time.
- Nancy asked how the information was collected.
  - Joel explained the information was typically collected by video and then counted by hand.
- Dave asked about the tubes they lay across the road for traffic counting.
  - Joel answered that those are the 24-hour counters. Those were used for the corridor travel times, vehicle speeds, and intersection operations.
- Susan said she was confused about when they collected the data on average travel times, doesn't that discount those special events and seasonal times when the traffic is heavier?

  For example, when the winter visitors are here the traffic counts increase, and it affects 1st Avenue. So, if you are collecting in March, you are missing some of those big events like the Gem Show.
  - Brent answered that they want to pick a time that is representative of the average road usage. If they picked a heavy time like during the Gem Show that would not represent the average. March is a good time because school is in session, not during spring break, and winter visitors are still here. This is a good average representation of average traffic usage.
  - Felipe also supported Brent's explanation of why they do the count in March. That it isn't a super high use time but also not super low use.

- Susan asked if this happened in just one day.
    - Felipe answered, “Yes” one day.
- Dave asked if this is a “one size fits all” sample.
    - Felipe answered that when they plan the roadway, they do it on not one single number for traffic counts but a range. This range is formulated from the travel count data collected in March.
- Nancy asked what are the tubes that someone mentioned.
    - Joel said sometimes when you are driving you will see some black tubes across the roadway, counting traffic volume.
- Nancy added, “How do they count if two or three cars are going over the tubes at the same time?”
- Joel said he thinks they can separate the succession of the bumps on the tubes even if several cars drive over the tubes at the same time. Mimi asked once we are done with all the modeling, what is the purpose? How does this help you?
    - Joel answered that all the current road conditions information they have gathered will be compared to what they want the future roadway to be. If in 25 years the traffic is expected to double, will the new roadway design accommodate this?
    - Felipe added that you can look at the roadway and ask, “What if you add a right turn lane here” and you can see how this feature affects the roadway.
    - Dave added that, for example, you can simulate what would happen if, for example, you added a roundabout at one of the intersections and then see how this affects the flow of the roadway. Does it make it better or worse?
    - Steve Taylor from MainStreet Business Assistance Program added that you can also look at these simulations as the behavior of the roadway and how the new design affects the behavior and then you can tweak the design.

c. Transportation Design

Felipe discussed a variety of different intersection types and how and why they are utilized. They did note which types might be used on the 1st Avenue Corridor.

- Conventional Signalized Intersection
- Protected Intersection
- Roundabout
- Median U-Turn or Michigan Left
- Restricted Crossing U-Turn
- Thru-Cut Intersection
- Displaced Left Turn
- Diverging Diamond Intersection

Questions from CTF Members

- Caroline asked if we could take the protected intersection and simulate it to see if it works on a certain intersection on the corridor.
    - Felipe said yes, we can do that.
- Ruben asked about the different signal lights used at a protected intersection. How do bikes and cars know what signals they are supposed to follow?
    - Felipe said there are different types of lights for each mode of transportation, so it is easy to follow.
- Steve asked if Roundabouts would be used anywhere on 1st Avenue.
    - Felipe, Brent, and others all answered “No”
    - Felipe answered that roundabouts need a very wide intersection area to work.
- Mark commented that it is much harder to execute a Michigan Left on a two-lane road, compared to a three-lane road.
    - Felipe said that is correct.
- Brent added that the Restricted Crossing U-Turn type intersections are very popular when there is a higher traveled road crossing, a much less traveled road, or an unbalanced roadway.
- Susan asked if there are any of these Restricted Crossing U-Turn intersections in the area.
    - Brent said “no”.
- Ruben asked if Valencia Road and the freeway is a Thru-Cut Intersection.
    - Felipe said “no”, the one Ruben is referring to is another type of intersection only used on freeways.
- Susan questioned how intuitive using a Displaced Left Turn would be. She cited the new Barraza Parkway meets the Aviation Highway and how confusing that can be.
    - Brent promised that once it is finished it will be much easier to understand.
- A.M. Rivers said that when she takes an Uber she watches carefully to see if the driver understands where he is going. She added that we need to constantly be educating drivers, and public education needs to keep happening so that new drivers, visitors, etc. are always informed.
    - Brent said you are correct. Sometimes we are in such a hurry to get things done that we forget it's new to the drivers and we need to help them. He cited the Houghton and I-10 interchange which is a diverging diamond, which is like the displaced left turn, and how when ADOT announced what they were doing, the public reaction was not good, but that ADOT knew this was the best design for the interchange. Now that it is done and people have used it, they love it.

- Maxine added that in Olympia, Washington they added a diverging diamond intersection near the Costco, and she said no one likes it.
- Dave said he thinks adding concrete curbs within the design might be helpful to keep cars in the correct lanes.
- Brent agreed and said they do add safety features like that to help drivers.
- Kristi added that sometimes it is hard to picture these intersections we are discussing because they are presented in a flat format and once you see them built out, you can see that there are structures to keep people from going into the wrong lanes.

- Maxine wanted to add an overarching thought. She believes that the right turn on red that is currently allowed in the state of Arizona is going to go away in the next 10 to 15 years because they are just too dangerous. She asked if the team was thinking about this possibility.
  - Brent said he doesn't believe they are taking that into their design for 1st Avenue because it is still law in Arizona. He said there are ways that we can mitigate the dangers. Felipe added that we can add arrows for right turns if needed. Brent said we can add things in our microsimulation modeling and see how they work.

No action was taken.

6. Transportation Design – Intersections and Intersection Alternatives, Non-Vehicular Crossings, Bus Pullouts, Turn Lane Tradeoffs, Alignment Design Criteria

HDR Project Manager, Brent Kirkman presented "Transportation Design: Intersections, Non-Vehicular Crossings, Bus Pullouts, Turn Lanes, Alignment Design Criteria".

Brent went through the design standards and conceptual guidelines and how we can design smarter to meet the needs of all users.

a. Design Elements

- Protected Intersection
- Curb Return Radius
- Left-Turn Lanes
- Right-Turn Lanes
- Channelized Right-Turn Lanes
- Pedestrian Design Elements
- Bicycle Design Elements

Questions from CTF Members

- Nancy mentioned that when she is going south on 1st Avenue and turning east onto Grant Road there are a lot of pedestrians crossing and some of them do not make it across in time and get stuck in the middle.
    - Brent said that is why we create the refuges in the middle that you see on raised median islands. So those people can stay safe.

Brent added we also try to keep roadways smaller so pedestrians can cross during the light cycle. He gave an example of the Broadway Boulevard project. The road was supposed to be eight lanes across, but studies showed that with eight lanes, the green light cycle would be used up by pedestrians, so going to a six-lane design was more efficient.

b. Non-Vehicular Crossings, Bus Pullouts, Alignments

- Non-vehicular crossings named for birds.
- Bus Pullouts – can be great in some places, detrimental in others. Something that will be considered for this project.
- Alignment Design Criteria – Centerline, Tangents and Arcs. Roadway with a “crown” which allows water to run off to the sides of the road for drainage.

Questions from CTF Members

- Mimi asked about the dip in the road on 1st Avenue between Prince and Fort Lowell that sometimes floods.
    - Brent said that it is the Navajo Wash, a mapped flood plain that they are aware of, and looking at options with Pima County Flood Control and the City of Tucson as they get further along. The goal is to capture as much of that water as they can and minimize the dip as much as possible. There are a lot of regulatory issues they must consider.
- Dave asked if TEP had to run their poles down the corridor or could put them somewhere 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 how wide the existing lanes on 1st Avenue are.
    - Brent answered that they are 11-feet-wide.

No action was taken.

7. **Existing Conditions Review – Open Discussion**
   No discussion

8. **Future Agenda Items**

   - No December Meeting, Happy Holidays to All!
   - Drainage

Questions from CTF Members

- Nancy asked about the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) being out of money as noted in a local newspaper article.
  - Patrick said the conversations with RTA are ongoing, and they are looking at other funding solutions, including phasing this project to match funding sources. The current RTA runs out next year and right now there is no other plan in place for the half-cent sales tax to continue; however, there are many other sources of funding available.
  - Brent mentioned that he has worked on other projects where there was no funding but once the project was designed and presented, they found a way to fund it.
- Nancy asked when we will be discussing pedestrians.
  - Patrick answered that we have spent a lot of this first half focusing on giving everyone the basics, the project history, and features we might be considering. The next steps will be to take a lot of the information and concepts we have been presenting and look at how we start to apply those to the corridor. In January, we will be taking what we have heard from the community and the 1ACCPTF and start designing this roadway. These first six months were foundations.
  - Brent said he's hoping by our January meeting he can come up with a very preliminary map that we can use as a starting point.
- Caroline said that she is finding the terminology that is being used tough while going through this. She said she feels like she needs a crash course on terminology.
  - Kristi suggested that maybe we create a cheat sheet with terms and technical items that could help the task force members.
  - Caroline said that it would be helpful as we are going through the design and if we all have the terminology it will make things easier.
  - Brent added that he was grateful that everyone was willing to sit through all their "lectures" on these items, he knows it is a lot, but it will be helpful in the future.

No formal action was taken.

9. **Adjournment**
   Acting Chair Melissa (Mimi) Noshay-Petro asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting, Nancy Reid moved to adjourn the meeting and Ruben Robles seconded. Acting Chair

   Melissa (Mimi) Noshay-Petro adjourned the meeting at 7:44 p.m.