



1st Avenue Citizens' Corridor Planning Task Force

Thursday, June 12, 2025, 5:45 p.m.

Donna Liggins Recreation Center

2160 N. 6th Avenue

Tucson, AZ 85705

Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Co-Chair Karl Peterson called the meeting to order at 5:47 p.m. The quorum was established through roll call.

PRESENT	ABSENT
Caroline Bartelme	Mindy Gutzmer
Dave Boston	Maxine Dunkelman
Ruben Robles	
Melissa (Mimi) Noshay-Petro	
Kathleen (Susan) O'Brien	
Nancy Reid	
Kate Saunders	
Karl Peterson	
A.M. Rivers	
Marci Caballero-Reynolds	

2. Approval of April 17, 2025, 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 April 17, 2025. All 1ACCPTF members reviewed the minutes, and a motion to accept was made by Melissa (Mimi) Noshay-Petro and Kathleen (Susan) O'Brien seconded. All approved.



3. Call to Audience

No comments were received during the Call to the Audience.

4. Election for Chairman and Co-Chair

In the previous meeting, it was moved to elect Co-Chair, Karl Peterson as the new Chairman, but Karl was not present at that meeting. As he was present at the June 12 meeting, the HDR Communications Lead, Kristi Ross, asked the group if they wanted to elect a new Chair. The group asked Karl if he would be interested, and Karl accepted. Melissa (Mimi) Noshay-Petro moved to make Karl Peterson the new Chair of the 1ACCPTF, and Ruben Robles seconded. The group voted unanimously to elect Karl Peterson as the Chair.

Questions from CTF Members

- Susan asked if the task force has an overall plan for how long they will work on this project.
 - Patrick answered that the task force is a three-to-four-year term, and we will continue to meet until the Design Concept Report is complete by the end of 2025. We will need the approval of the Citizens' Task Force on the Design Concept Report (DCR) before we can move into final design. After that, we may only need to meet periodically once we get into the technical work of the project. We will look at this in early 2026.
 - Brent added that a lot of this depends on how involved the task force wants to be.

5. Intersection Configurations and Operational Models

Kittelson & Associates Principal Engineer, Felipe Ladron de Guevara, presented the Intersection Configurations and Operational Models. He spoke about the 2045 Traffic Modeling Process with the objective to accommodate 2045 traffic demand by improving signal operations instead of widening the roadway.

Felipe also brought into the future traffic demands, two new projects on the corridor that they know about currently, the Walmart expansion at 1st Avenue and Wetmore Road, and the Salad and Go at 1st Avenue and Limberlost Road, and how these will figure into the 2045 traffic volume update.

Felipe presented high-level preliminary treatments for the corridor that include signal timing at all intersections, dual left turn lanes at Wetmore Road, and right turn lanes at multiple locations. These treatments are a feasible strategy to reduce physical impacts and accommodate any increased traffic demand in 2045.



Felipe then presented how these treatments would work on two intersections along the project, River Road at 1st Avenue and Wetmore Road at 1st Avenue.

He went through River Road and 1st Avenue first, discussing how to use the three treatments for the corridor, which include signal timing and dual left turn lanes. You can increase the volume through this intersection.

He then went to Wetmore Road and 1st Avenue and discussed that this intersection will need to add dual left turn lanes for northbound 1st Avenue traffic turning onto Wetmore Road but that the traffic moving southbound on 1st Avenue turning left onto Wetmore Road has very little traffic using this so that is where the signal timing can be utilized to increase the volume of traffic through the intersection.

Patrick added that the big takeaway from this is to look at creative solutions instead of just adding lanes to roads.

No action was taken at this time.

Questions from CTF Members

- Karl asked if by utilizing the changes to the signal timing at an intersection, you can move more traffic through efficiently.
 - Felipe said yes, because we can see how traffic moves through the intersection by just adjusting the length of a green light going southbound at a certain time of day. We can increase the amount of traffic that can move through an intersection.
 - Brent added that historically, the city has been very traditional in the way they approach their signal operations and their phasing, because that is all that was allowed with the signal but now technology lets you do more with the signal operations with less space. Before, this was not possible, and you would just have to add more lanes, but now we have the option to move more traffic without adding lanes.
- Ruben asked about the flashing yellow turn lights that have been installed all over Tucson. He asked if they would still be used at the River Road and 1st Avenue going westbound through this intersection, because it is a very long intersection, and he feels that they cause more accidents. He agrees that flashing yellow left turn lights are helpful in some areas but not in others.
 - Felipe said that they do not have an answer to this yet, but they are looking into it.
- Susan added that she believes getting rid of the flashing yellow left turn lights would make this intersection safer.
- Susan asked if they are planning on adding a raised median just south of the Wetmore Road and 1st Avenue intersection where cars turn into the grocery store and other



retailers. She said that traffic moving southbound backs up there as people pull into the current shared left lane to try and get into the center.

- Felipe said that they cannot do a raised median from Wetmore Road to Limberlost Road, but they can add some raised median to stop people from turning left into the center close to the Wetmore Road and 1st Avenue intersection.
- Brent added that they are only showing these two intersections tonight, but that they will be utilizing these three treatments at all the intersections along the corridor. He also added that in the past, stoplights could only be set by timers, and now we have many more options to control them, giving us options to move traffic more efficiently without adding lanes of traffic.
- Susan asked if the new signals are sophisticated enough to understand that traffic may be backing up, and adjust as needed?
 - Brent answered that they are not sophisticated enough yet to adjust automatically to traffic volumes, but who knows if they will be able to do that sometime in the future.
- Susan asked if there is any way for the traffic signals to consider when there is a special event happening at Rillito River Park and the traffic volume spikes. Can the signals adjust for this?
 - Felipe said that at this time, that is not possible, but in the future, it probably will be available.
- Kate asked if any data shows the differences in the number of crashes in intersections with protected left turns and intersections that do not have protected left turns.
 - Felipe said he believes that it is safer to have restricted movements for turns in an intersection in comparison to free movements.
 - Brent added that the new designs presented for the intersections may include restricted movements for both left and right turns as needed to increase both volume and safety.
- Ruben asked with these new traffic signals what type of power source they will run on, because currently, if there is a power outage, it interferes with traffic flow.
 - Felipe answered that it will still be electricity that serves the traffic signals, but they may look at emergency backup generators for the traffic signals.



6. Preferred Alternative Prince Road to Roger Road

HDR Project Manager, Brent Kirkman discussed a key goal of the 1st Avenue Project, which is to *minimize the impacts of 1st Avenue improvements on adjacent residents and businesses*. The project team developed design strategies to minimize property and structure acquisitions.

Brent then presented Prince Road to Roger Road, the most constrained segment on the corridor that includes the most amount of residential property, and the two alternatives they developed in this segment.

The narrow cross-section alternatives were presented to the group; one of the alternatives is the 11-foot center turn lane with median islands, which would provide more access along this segment, and the other is a four-foot narrow landscape buffer median, which provides less access.

Brent then went through the wider sections along the corridor and added that the team is seeking recommendations from the task force on how to use additional space along the corridor.

City of Tucson DTM Administrator Patrick Hartley then asked the members if they were ready to decide on one of the two options tonight. Caroline Bartelme said that she feels the wider turn lane with the smaller median islands is the option they should move forward with. Caroline made a motion to accept this option. There was discussion on this motion. After the discussion, Karl Peterson seconded Caroline's motion, and 10 members moved to approve the motion with one member, Kate Saunders, abstaining from the vote. The motion was approved.

Patrick said that the project team will now work on the selected option to get the most out of it.

Questions from CTF Members

- Nancy asked if there are any studies showing the number of pedestrian crossings in the Prince Road to Roger Road area?
 - Patrick said there are no studies, but they know that this is the area where they have the largest number of pedestrian issues. It is a "hot spot" for pedestrian-involved crashes, and the HAWK signal is the second highest priority one in Tucson.
- Caroline asked if there is any data on how medians on Campbell Avenue work. Do they help with safety? Do people like them or hate them?
 - Brent answered that he is not aware of any data on the Campbell Avenue medians.



- Patrick added that there will be some compromise on safety because you are giving up some access control in the Prince Road to Roger Road area with the use of smaller intermittent medians. With the wider center turn lane median, you will have even more points of conflict with the ability to make left turns anywhere in this section, and you will also lose the pedestrian refuge area with this plan. These are the trade-offs we are asking the task force to look at and decide on which alternative to move forward with.
- Karl asked if any data shows if there are fewer accidents on roadways that have U-turns on them as opposed to roadways with open left turn lanes. He is not a fan of U-turns.
 - Brent said that it would be a matter of operations: do we allow U-turns, or do we only allow protected U-turns? He agreed that U-turns do require more decisions than a left turn.
 - Patrick added that U-turns may have more chances for accidents, but that they will be less severe due to the speed factor difference between making a U-turn and making a left turn.
 - Brent added that the smaller intermittent medians shown on the roll plot right now are not the same as the ones on Campbell Avenue; the ones on Campbell are small, these are larger, and we just dropped them into the plan intermittently, but we have flexibility moving forward on them.
- Susan asked if you have any idea if the smaller intermittent islands deter jaywalking?
 - Patrick said that studies show that medians help reduce pedestrian crashes by 30 to 40 percent over having no median. He said human behavior shows that people are going to continue to cross outside of marked crosswalks. By putting medians in, you are giving someone a place to stand where a vehicle isn't going to be, and that has a huge benefit.
- Susan added that she was wondering about the taller planter-type medians; do they help?
 - Patrick said they do not help as much as the lower type medians, but they do help push people to a marked crosswalk.
- Kate wanted to share something, maybe more philosophical, in deciding between reducing jaywalking and providing more access. She realizes that it is true that people are going to jaywalk, but comparing the two, which option fits into the task force's goals better? She said that she feels safer if there is a median around, even when crossing at a crosswalk, and because safety is the top priority in our goals, are we being true to that by selecting an option for more access and convenience? She wants people to keep that in mind.
- Caroline asked for clarification on what the task force will be asked to decide on. The option with one thin median and U-turns, and the option with the wider center area and smaller medians intermittently placed along the section. Is this correct?



- Patrick answered yes, you can vote to select one of these two options and move forward with that design, or the team can take your comments on these options and bring back a new design after the summer break that will be moved forward.
- Caroline added that she feels they should move forward with the option that has the wider version with smaller medians to provide both access and safety for pedestrians. She added that since this section of the roadway is heavily residential, it is better to provide them with access and smaller medians rather than one long median and U-turns.
- Susan asked if they could vote on that option. She believes they should bring it to a vote.
- Caroline made the motion to bring the smaller median option to a vote to accept as the design to move forward with, or the wider option.
- Karl agreed that this is the design he prefers
 - Patrick added that they need to bring it to a vote to accept the option that has been moved by Caroline.
- Ruben asked if going with the wider center median area would require acquisitions in this area?
 - Patrick answered no; both presented options fit within the constrained area of the roadway.
- Kate to rephrase our goals. Everyone keeps talking about access, but isn't safety one of our top goals? She believes that if we went with the one long median and U-turns, it would provide people with safer places to cross the street and larger planning areas to help shade, etc.
- Caroline added that with the wider middle area and smaller medians, we are still providing a safer place for pedestrians to cross.
- Karl added that he believes an advantage to the wider center section with intermittent medians gives you a chance to add some shade in those medians where the one long skinny median would not allow for planting.
- Kate said she doesn't want to compromise their goals of safety by putting access and cars ahead of pedestrians and bikes. She believes this will not meet their goal of increasing safety for people and that long skinny median provides more safety for all modes, pedestrians, bikes and people driving. Why wouldn't we want to select this option.
- Caroline said that this section of the project has so many homes in it and that limiting access for people to reach their homes is not equitable. Each section of the 1st Avenue Improvement Project is so different, and the needs of the people in each section should be accounted for. She feels that one long skinny median with U-turns would cause an issue near the Satori school and cause drivers to make a lot of U-turns to access the school.
- Kate said she feels she has not had enough time to look at the options in this section carefully and doesn't feel comfortable voting on an option now.



- Patrick reminded the group that they can kick one of the options back to the project team to rework the comments collected at tonight's workshop. Not forcing a vote tonight. But he doesn't want to take both options back for rework because this will cause everything to fall behind schedule.
- Karl followed Patrick's statement by saying that what he hears is that you need a singular decision on this section of the project.
 - Patrick added that it doesn't have to be a decision; it can be a direction for the project team to bring back a new option.
- Susan said she feels that anything you can do to avoid U-turns will be better for reducing crashes.
- Karl clarified that, in theory, we are deciding whether we want the median to be wider or thinner.
- Marci asked if we could bring up the cross-section slide for the two options again.
 - Brent brought the slide up and pointed out the two options shown in cross-section.
 - Patrick added that from a pedestrian comfort perspective, the thinner long median would provide more comfort than the wider version, with intermittent places for the pedestrians to get refuge.
 - Brent said there is a lot to take in here, but if the group has a consensus on one of the directions they prefer, that is helpful to the design team.
- Kate added that she believes that the long, continuous thin median would make the road feel thinner, therefore causing a reduction in speed for vehicles.
 - Brent added that the design presented for the wider median with intermittent islands is only one option for this area. There are other ways to lay out the intermittent islands. The wider median allows us to provide access; we don't know exactly what that will look like, but there will be more access. The wider version gives us more options.
- Karl asked if the sidewalk is the same width in both options.
 - Brent answered that yes, it is the same; they just take a little from all the features to give the wider median.
- Kate asked if you go with the wider median, are you committed to having dual left turns from the median area?
 - Patrick said there could be a hybrid option where there are spaces where we could provide more controlled access.
 - Patrick asked if there had been a second on Caroline's motion?
- Karl said that he seconded the motion.
 - Patrick said then you must put the movement to a vote tonight.



- Dave added that he believes the wider median selection provides more options for vehicles, and that is what roads are for. There will still be bike lanes and sidewalks for pedestrians and cyclists with this version.

7. Roadway Alignment Workshop

HDR Project Manager Brent Kirkman and City of Tucson Department of Transportation and Mobility (DTM) Administrator Patrick Hartley spoke briefly to the task force members and invited them to move over to the large roll plots of the project with the latest recommendations and asked the task force members to please utilize the pens and sticky notes to add their comments, questions, etc. to the roll plots.

Questions from CTF Members

- Susan asked what the width of the median is that they are planning on reducing?
 - Brent answered that he would show this in a second. He wanted to make sure that everyone understands that we have options within the cross-section.

9. Future Agenda Items

HDR Communications Lead, Kristi Ross, announced that the field trip on the project will be postponed until the Fall when it is cooler. Kristi also announced that the July CTF meeting and possibly the August CTF meeting will be cancelled so that the project team has time to work on the project and then come back with updated materials for the task force to review.

10. Adjournment

Karl moved to adjourn the meeting; Ruben Robles seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.