

Broadway - Re: Broadway Blvd RTA OpEd

From: Jennifer Burdick
To: Bob Cook
Date: 6/8/2014 4:20 PM
Subject: Re: Broadway Blvd RTA OpEd
CC: roadway
Attachments: 2014_06-08_DMance-OpED.pdf

Thank you, Bob, for sending this in. I have also been alerted that Doug Mance has an editorial in the paper, as well (see attached).

Both your's and Doug's OpEds will be shared with the Task Force tomorrow, and I'll include them in the Public Input Report.

As we move forward, the 6+2T has been removed from consideration. Our design process with the Task Force will begin to work through with them issues related to the width. They have already begun to identify the 'inspiration/pinch points' along the roadway, and we can pursue with them what facilities could be narrowed down, as you suggest in your email.

As you mention, transit will be a key point to address, especially how to take advantage of this current project to enhance existing local bus transit - and prep for future mass transit (such as streetcar, as well as Bus Rapid Transit and/or Light Rail).

Thank you for taking the time to submit your opinions and for drawing attention to key issues at the heart of this process, and sharing your thoughtful suggestions for solutions.

See you Thursday!

Respectfully,
~Jenn

>>> On 6/8/2014 at 4:04 PM, Bob Cook <unispan@dakotacom.net> wrote:

Dear Jenn,

I am writing in response to the Guest Opinion published in the Sunday Arizona Daily Star June 8th (see attached) While I was the author supporting the vision of the Broadway Coalition and the Citizens Task Force, the piece represents the work of hundreds of committed professionals and activists in this community who are at the forefront of bringing forth solid analyses as well as forward-looking ideas about what is to be done.

We want to expand the community's conversation about such complex issues -- since that may be the only hope for making better decisions and taking more effective actions. The fundamental economic truism we

must face is simple: To do what is needed for our prosperity, we have to stop public expenditures on what is not needed. And we do not build what we can not maintain.

As I wrote in the Star piece, the design outcome of the City of Tucson's Broadway Boulevard, Euclid to Country Club Project is going to say a lot about whether we will become a more resilient and vibrant region. There is so much good research out there to show why the community stakeholders' vision is the direction we should go. For example, a recent study in Omaha, shows that transit incentive programs increase demand for transit and are less costly than providing parking. We have not even begun to talk about this research and its implications for better solutions here in Tucson.

We have heard from Douglas Mance and other proponents of the view that every specification in the 2006 RTA Plan must be rigidly followed to maintain credibility with the voters. That is nonsense; in fact, the opposite is true. Investing precious public funds in unnecessary infrastructure raises greater questions about public accountability. While I personally believe the RTA is one of the best performing local public agencies in managing and delivering projects, in this case insisting on a rigid interpretation of the 2006 RTA Plan can only damage its reputation. Excellence in public works also requires creativity, good design, and responsiveness to quality of life issues and the economic realities of the community.

The proponents of the rigid RTA interpretation also tell us that the community's preferences for the Broadway redesign would reduce "functionality of mobility," a key goal of the Plan. Again, the opposite is true. As a "smart growth" strategy, transit-oriented development doesn't diminish, but actually increases "functionality of mobility." The recent transformation along the Street Car route is dramatic evidence that even when no roads are widened, mobility functionality as well as economic vitality can increase significantly. The UA is planning to serve 20,000 additional students in the next decades with thousands more staff and faculty as well. The Street Car will play a critical role in their mobility.

While the many benefits of the community-supported design are clear, the remaining question is who will pay for the consequences of an unsustainable, out-of-scale roadway if we end up rigidly following the ballot language specifying a 150ft-wide, 8-lane design? I think the answer is clear -- it's us, our children, our grandchildren and the generations to come. Contrary to official rhetoric, the RTA and County can remove the obstacles to what is best for the region. So please, join us and help make this project one we won't regret, a project which will make Broadway Blvd, Euclid to Country Club, a Tucson Centro destination that the whole region can enjoy and benefit by.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration,

Robert Cook,
Member, RTA Citizen's Accountability for Regional Transportation
Committee