

Happy almost Thanksgiving!

It's been a couple of weeks since we've 'spoken', but the days sometimes seem far too short to get everything on my To Do list accomplished! But let's catch up now.

At last week's Council meeting we dealt with several important issues:

Kino Parkway to Tucson Blvd Alignments: We took a few major steps forward for east/west traffic flow along 22nd Street during our regular session last week when we approved alignments for the Kino Overpass and the 22nd Street Bridge. *Special thanks to the Citizens Advisory Committee members [CAC] for all their hard work in developing options for the widening of 22nd Street, the Kino Parkway overpass design, and the creative decision for reconstructing and widening the bridge over the railroad tracks between Kino and Tucson Blvd.* Here are a few of the high points of this RTA funded project:

- **Kino Parkway Overpass:** We adopted the SPUI approach to Kino Parkway going over 22nd Street. This is 'government speak' for a specific kind of intersection that offers the least encroachment on space with the best flow not just for vehicles, but also with accommodations for bicycles and pedestrians. When this is completed it will have a positive impact on traffic flow north and south!
- **22nd Street Bridge:** The CAC developed an alternative to the three possibilities with which they were first presented. This approach allows us to maintain current levels of traffic flow across the railroad tracks throughout construction. And it requires us to take less land. And it will result in an overpass that is friendly not only to cars/buses/trucks, but also bikes and pedestrians.
- **Widening:** This project we approved will set the standard for the widening of 22nd all the way to the freeway, so we all were quite specific about some of the basics: 6-foot wide bike lanes to encourage more alternative forms of transportation; 11-foot travel lanes to encourage smooth traffic flow, but not high speeds; and care in creating a sense of 'place' along the roadway, rather than creating a mini-freeway gash between the neighborhoods to the south and the rest of the city. I am confident the Citizens Advisory Committee and our excellent City staff will come up with final plans that will accomplish all our goals.

Several items of importance also came out of our Study Session last Tuesday:

- **Tumamoc Hill:** We took steps to work with the County to acquire and preserve Tumamoc Hill, an important natural resource research parcel and

precious inner city open space located behind A Mountain. We hope this land will remain in near pristine condition for generations to come.

· Calculation of Poverty: We also looked at how poverty is defined according to federal standards and found those figures to be out of sync with reality. Far too many people are barely making it financially, but they don't qualify for key programs that could make the difference between having someplace to live ... and not. We asked the City Manager to come back to us with figures on the cost of incorporating broader qualification standards for local programs over which we have control.

During Study Session, I offered a summary of the many items we discussed at last week's Rio Nuevo/Arts, Culture and History subcommittee meeting. Let me give you a brief overview, because it's important you know how much IS happening downtown:

- El Ojito Springs: In a sense, these springs were the 'source' of Tucson. City staff did a wonderful job of researching their actual location. Imagine our surprise when it turned out to be land already owned by the City that now houses La Pilita, a wonderful historic center in Barrio Viejo. We decided to move forward with signage to explain the historic significance of the site. We also decided to pursue federal funding for renovation - or at the very least preservation - of the historic building on the site so it doesn't crumble before we can repair it! Eventually we hope to add benches and other amenities to mark one of the foundations of our community.
- Historic Signs: We asked staff to find a way to modify our existing sign code to allow for historic signage in the downtown core ... and possibly in other historic areas where appropriate. Imagine a downtown with a refurbished version of the old hoop dancer in neon or the Screening Room with a replica of an historic sign providing a midway between the Rialto and Congress and the Fox! The sign code plays an important role in throughout our city for continuity, clarity and keeping clutter at bay ... and along scenic routes to preserve the natural beauty, but there are places, such as the historic downtown, where we need to be able to recreate what once was so special ... and add a bit of pizazz!
- Origins Heritage Park: We were given a glimpse into things to come at Origins ... on the bridge that will cross the Santa Cruz to get us there in the modern streetcar. That vision is filled with art and rooted in our history

and sense of place. Here are a couple of items.

- o Chapel: Apparently there are detailed descriptions from the 1800's about the religious artwork that once graced the chapel. A call to artists has been issued, with proposals due December 3rd. Carvers, painters, sculptors, and other artists will offer their approaches. A team of historians, folklorists, community members, art historians and more will help us decide who will help us recreate the artwork within the Chapel at Origins. Work on the mission complex - including the Chapel - is due to get underway next year.

- o Cushing Street Bridge: This is going to be absolutely glorious! The bridge design itself is a work of art. Add to that the actual art to be commissioned and we have a landmark in the making. The structure will carry pedestrians, cars, bikes and the modern streetcar from the Civic Plaza and Barrio Viejo across the Santa Cruz into Origins Park. It will have images of cottonwood leaves sandblasted into it. But in the pavement, dates of significant events of ancient and recent history will also be sandblasted. Holes will be carefully placed in the large shade structures along the bridge so sunlight will highlight each event on the calendar date it occurred. Doesn't that sound super?

- Parkwise Transfer: After a presentation outlining the many benefits for our community, we are asking the Council to approve a plan to hire the Downtown Tucson Partnership to manage parking in downtown. All City assets remain the City's, but this agreement will allow us to save as much as half-million dollars the first year through economies of scale and creative management approaches. This public/private partnership, if adopted by the full Council, marks another step forward in working together to rebuild our downtown.

- Downtown Streetscape Groundbreaking: Today - Monday November 24th - is the official beginning of the streetscape that will extend from the Arizona Theatre Company's home on Scott north to Broadway. This is the first of many groups of blocks that will feature native plants, water harvesting, sitting areas, artwork, and more. When completed, it will set a tone and sense of place for downtown for all of us to enjoy. I hope you don't

receive this too late to join us at 3:30PM. [As a side note, this project was approved last November, put into design last January with a vendor selected last May ... and is starting today!]

- Financial Accountability: Please visit the Downtown Tucson website to review a summary of how every penny of Rio Nuevo money has been spent to date. This information is updated every month, with our subcommittee reviewing details on a quarterly basis. More detailed information is available elsewhere within that site.

http://www.tucsonaz.gov/rionuevo/maps_and_plans/RioNuevoFlowofFunds.pdf

- Project Update: Here are a few updates on what's happening downtown:
 - o 1 North 5th Avenue [the old MLK apartments] has opened and already boasts ¾ of the apartments rented. The street level retail they're building is almost complete.
 - o A sales office has been opened for the Flats at Julian Drew. These mid-range condos are being converted from apartments and renovated as part of our latest downtown housing project.
 - o Convention Hotel: a formal agreement has been reached with the hotel team, which is now fully assembled; we should know the exact room count/meeting room space/materials soon, but please know there will be considerable community input during the design phase.
 - o AZ Historical Museum: The design team has visited several times, so that project is moving forward ... and we're working on the exact footprint for that museum ... and the Tucson Children's Museum.
 - o Bond Ratings: I should be able to update you on this in the next week or two, along with more specifics on our plan to issue our first Rio Nuevo bonds before the end of the year. We anticipate selling about \$65-million dollars to allow us to move forward with several projects ready to go. More as soon as I can!

There is always so much happening! Here are a few things to consider:

THE GALLERY AT WARD VI:

- You can still visit Mars at Ward VI! The spectacular images captured by the Mars Lander will be on display in our gallery until December 4th, so do stop by. Project Director Peter Smith offered delightful commentary on the

project and its significance during the opening reception for the show earlier this month. Thanks so much to him, his team members and UA President Shelton who were in attendance ... along with a group of young students who were mesmerized by the whole event, but especially the 3-D photos [special glasses are on hand].

Catalina Magnet High Refugee and Immigrant Student Show: Last year, a talented group of refugee and immigrant students shared their perspective on making Tucson their new home. It was a powerful combination of written and photographic essays. Wednesday, December 10th, please join us for the opening of the work of this year's students, again through photos and writing helping us better understand our country and our community by seeing it through the eyes of these young refugees and immigrants. I hope you will stop by for the opening ... or any time during regular business hours to see this important work. It will be up through the end of the year ... and beyond.

On a personal note, I just had the pleasure of traveling to Washington, DC last Friday to help my dear Aunt Ethel celebrate her 90th birthday! What a joy meeting many of her friends and sharing a lovely dinner with them all in honor of my aunt. Hers has been a full and rich life - with more to come!

I'll be in touch again soon. We are meeting again this Tuesday, but if I don't succeed in getting an email off to you before the holiday, I hope you and yours enjoy a wonderful Thanksgiving together. Ours is a wonderful community. I am so honored to have this opportunity to serve you as the Ward VI Councilmember.



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