

What a year this has been! It is impossible to believe it's almost over! New Year's provides an opportunity for reflection on the many amazing things that have happened in 2008 for each of us as individuals, for our community as a whole - and for our entire nation. It is SO hard to know where to start, but I thought I'd share my perspective on some of the highlights of 2008 that give me great hope for 2009!

Two highlights that come to mind right away:

Two wonderful new council members joined the team. Regina Romero and Rodney Glassman add important new voices and perspectives to our efforts. [I know, they started in December of 2007, but their real work and contributions began in 2008.]

We elected a new President, one who gives me great hope for our future as a nation ... and a world! [Twenty days, and counting!]

So much has happened in the City. Here's my list of some of the many actions and activities in which I'm proud to have played a part.

* Rio Nuevo and Downtown: Let me start with these efforts, since downtown revitalization has been much in the news of late and so much has been happening! I just wrote in great detail about actions two weeks ago. Here's a brief update on those items ... and a reminder of what else has happened this year. In no particular order, here are a few of the highlights:

Bonding: Earlier this month we offered \$78-million in bonds for sale. After two days, we'd sold a bit more than \$70-million of the total and felt very good about the response - especially since at least one other municipality had floated bonds at about the same time and had to withdraw their offering due to lack of response. The two day response reflected the confidence the financial community has in our plans for downtown revitalization. The icing on the cake came on Wednesday, when our financial team was hit with requests that we re-open our offering because of continued interest! In a few hours, we sold the remaining \$8-million - plus \$2-million more for a total of \$80-million! That money is now ours to use moving forward with the convention hotel and Mission Gardens, plans for the arena and infrastructure for two neighborhoods directly impacted by our revitalization, and so much more.

Williams & Dame Pre-Development Agreement: One of the top inner city redevelopment companies from Portland will be master planning the east side of Downtown. Opportunities will abound for many local developers to become part of our revitalization as a result of these efforts. And we'll see key sections come to life in the next couple of years.

Rialto Block: New development partners are moving forward with plans to create a 20,000 square foot restaurant to be operated by Mr. An, famous for his great restaurants and his delightful television ads with Luis "Gonzo" Gonzales! It will be called An Congress! Love it. It's a couple of years away, but what fun to think about Mr. An downtown!

Skrappy's: The kids have a temporary home in their former building on Broadway until a permanent home is developed for this important program for young people of our community!

Federal and RTA Streetcar Support: We passed two major Federal hurdles this week, which means \$25-million towards the modern streetcar. An agreement with the Regional Transportation Authority adds another \$87-million, meaning we can continue streetcar construction from UA Main Gate to 4th Avenue, through the new underpass [to be completed next summer] and downtown, across a to-be-constructed Cushing Street bridge across the Santa Cruz to Avenida del Convento and up to Congress. I can't wait!

Madden Media at the MacArthur! Interior renovations are underway in anticipation of Madden Media moving its 80+ employees to the historic building it bought earlier this fall. We hope their confidence in Downtown will be contagious!

4th Avenue Underpass: Construction began last April and already the north side of the underpass has been demolished and the new one constructed. The railroad is now 'shoo-flied' across that structure while the south end of the underpass is rebuilt. It's all very exciting to watch!

Affordable housing downtown: We are following through on our commitment to assuring a full range of housing opportunities downtown. The replacement for MLK will be built once the parking garage is finished in 2009 and we are working with private developers to develop a mix of housing downtown including low income and workforce housing.

Facade Program: Grants were awarded to downtown property owners to bring their buildings' facades back to their original glory! It's a matching grant, so the criteria were quite specific. But expect to see old brick and wonderful clerestory windows returning to the area. It will help create a sense of our history ... our 'place' downtown.

Downtown Tucson Partnership: The Partnership has stepped forward on many levels. This public/private partnership hired Glenn Lyons, formerly of Calgary, to head up its operations. He helped negotiate the sale of the MacArthur, the awarding

of Facade Improvement Grants, strengthened downtown security, and has been working with the various member councils, including property owners, residents, businesses, arts community and more to assure everyone's voice is heard in the decision making process.

Downtown Links Alignment: The decision of where to put the continuation of the Barraza-Aviation Highway has been in the works for more a decade. This year the Citizens Advisory Committee finalized its recommendation and Mayor & Council approved a final alignment that runs along the north side of the railroad tracks from the Broadway Underpass to 7th Avenue, then north just above 6th Street, looping around and rejoining 6th Street heading west just past Stone. This four lane roadway will NOT be a highway, but a residential/retail street with a lower speed limit, allowing cars not going downtown to bypass it on the way to I-10 or the West side ... and creating a new mixed use residential/shopping area for our community.

One North 5th: This September, One North opened its doors for residents and has already rented more than 3/4 of its studio and one-bedroom apartments. People I've spoken with LOVE living downtown! And in front of the building is new retail ... the first new retail construction in downtown in decades! [The developers, Williams & Dame, opted to remodel and resurrect the old MLK building rather than putting thousands of tons of concrete in our landfill!]

Depot Plaza Garage: There is a gorgeous giant hole in the ground behind One North 5th with concrete supports coming out of the ground. This two story parking structure is part of the City's responsibility for infrastructure ... our primary role in Rio Nuevo. And there were two giant cranes helping the efforts earlier this week. It is happening!

Flats at Julian Drew: This remodeling of an old apartment building into mid-range condominiums is very exciting! That coupled with the renovation of the Julian Drew building will create another landmark corner downtown.

Street Scapes: As party of the City's commitment to building infrastructure, the first street scape renovation is now underway along Scott Avenue from in front of the Temple of Music and Art up to Broadway. The plans are spectacular, as is the artwork that will grace the street. Look for it to be completed this Spring!!!!

Maynard's: The vision of Richard & Shana Oseran and Ross Rulney has come to life! You can now dine at Maynard's in the Historic Depot, enjoying wonderful food and beverage while watching the trains go by ... or you can stop by Maynard's Market in the waiting room at the Depot and pick up fresh local food for dinner, goodies for

lunch and more. It is terrific!

And that's just a partial list of Downtown activities! We didn't go into the new restaurants [On a Roll, Chile Verde and Tooley's, to name just three] and night life [Centro, among others] and MOCA making great use of the ground floor of the renovated transportation building next to the Main Library. There is just so much happening!

* Budget: But there are also many challenges. We spent the last half of this year making adjustments to keep our budget in balance. Although we've planned for this contingency the past two years, nobody could have anticipated the phenomenal collapse in our economy that is impacting every single one of us. An early retirement plan that's been in place for a few years along with attrition made it possible for us to reduce City staff by more than 166 people. No pay raises. No Cost Of Living Adjustments. Travel cuts. Program cuts. Cutbacks in outside agency funding. It has not been a fun few months. And next year promises to be equally painful. We begin the revision of the budget process in January. Your thoughts and ideas will be welcomed ... as will your understanding that the City simply can not provide all the services we've provided in recent years. Fewer staff doing more with less. I am so grateful for the dedication and creativity of our City team. One of my several New Year's wishes will be for a quicker turn around in the economy everywhere, but especially here in Tucson and Southern Arizona.

* Ordinances: My colleagues and I have taken significant action on many fronts. Here are a few of the projects in which I'm proud to have played a leadership role:

Kids in Cars: A new ordinance makes it illegal to leave a child under 10 in a car without an adult. We've had a law making it illegal to leave pets in the past, but none for children. That changed this fall.

Certificate of Occupancy Changes: We were making it almost impossible for new businesses to occupy older buildings. Working with dozens of stakeholders, we developed approaches that provide greater flexibility to allow businesses to move in and succeed, while still protecting the health and safety of those who worked in or visited the building.

Land Use Code Modifications: This is an ongoing process. Right now we're working to ease up parking regulations when appropriate for adaptive reuse of older buildings ... and to look at how to approach future buildings, too. It became clear through the C of O process that we can't expect a 'one size fits all' approach in both urban and suburban areas of our community. We're working to address that issue. And we've made a commitment to continue working on this and every other Land

Use Code issue until we have a more logical, workable code in place. [These efforts complement work on with my colleague Karin Uhlich has taken the lead: reorganizing the Land Use Code to remove contradictions and make it easier to navigate for everyone!]

Dance Hall Ordinance Amendment: We allowed all teenagers, ages 13-17, to attend events and limited the number of 18-20 year old events that could be held at establishments that serve liquor.

Solar Ready Ordinance: We worked again with a stakeholders group to develop an ordinance that requires all new homes to be stubbed out for solar hot water and solar electricity. The ordinance took effect last summer, but will not take effect until specific Development Standards for each stub out are in place. Solar Hot Water has already been finalized, and we're working to develop a smart, easy standard that will make it easier for folks to go solar electric in the future, without undue cost to those building new homes in our community.

* Other Reasons to Celebrate: Then there are the simply fun, wonderful things that have happened:

Mars Mission: What a joy to watch our local team of UA experts led by Peter Smith succeed in putting the Mars Lander safely on that planet! And oh, the glorious photos and amazing research that have resulted! We were honored to host an exhibit of some of the photo images at the Ward VI Gallery.

Zoo School Earns Platinum: The goal in building the new Zoo School had been to earn this highest environmental standard, but you never know until the rating comes in ... and the School earned more points than needed. Just one more reason to be proud of our Zoo!

Desert Living Is Different: Our office provided support and hosted a book signing for the youngsters from throughout our community who wrote essays and poems, drew pictures ... and more, to create this newcomers' guide to the desert. It's a charming book that helped develop the writing and drawing skills of its young authors.

Go Green III: We held our third information fair this year, with hundreds in attendance. As part of our efforts, we created a passive water retention system to serve as a demonstration project so folks who visit our offices can get ideas of simple steps they can take to harvest water at their own homes.

Town Halls: We held several this year, on subjects ranging from Streets Smart [safety] to water conservation. In addition, dozens of community organizations use our three public meeting rooms keeping them busy at all hours of the day and night! We are pleased to be able to offer this free space to neighborhood associations and non-profits community wide. [And we're proud of our award winning Legos Club, that picked up several statewide awards again this year!]

Voices! to DC: The powerful photo/essay exhibit we hosted last year went to Washington, DC early this year. A selection of the key photos and essays were on exhibit in the Rotunda of the Russell Senate Building for a week and several of the immigrant/refugee students who created this work spoke on Capitol Hill. I also had the honor of serving as Vice-Mayor for 8 months. This position is an added responsibility that gave me the chance not only to cut a few more ribbons and present a few more certificates, but also to chair several Council meetings, giving me a different perspective on those meetings and a deeper understanding of our role as elected officials in watching out for the safety and well-being of all our citizens. Our Council rotates this honor amongst all of us so everyone has a chance to serve as Vice Mayor once during her/his 4-year term.

And so, with these few highlights, we say good bye to 2008 later this evening. I do hope [If you're reading this in 2008] that you'll join us downtown for our Inaugural First Night. Family friendly activities throughout Downtown from 4PM to Midnight.

May we all find peace, health and happiness in the New Year!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nina".

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