

**Responses from the City of Tucson**

***Note:** In reviewing the Comment Cards and emails, the following comments & questions seemed most appropriate for response from the City. The responses below were prepared by the City's Office of Integrated Planning.*

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**FROM COMMENTS CARDS**

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■ **City-1 – Comment Card**

**Why is this space still being considered as a transit center and not an area closer to freeway near the Greyhound Center?**

**Why isn't Congress Street being closed and only used as a pedestrian/biking street?**

Mayor and Council directed staff to utilize the Federal Transit Authority (FTA) Joint Development guidance to develop the Request for Proposals for this project. The FTA guidance calls for joint development of transit with mixed use (retail, commercial and residential uses); therefore the transit center will remain in this location.

The City has contemplated the closure of Congress in the recent past but the current national research indicates that closing downtown streets is not beneficial to businesses. Reconfiguration of downtown streets can be reconsidered in the future if changes in the development pattern warrant closures.

■ **City-2 – Comment Card**

**What is availability of sewer, water, electricity, trash collection? Who pays to increase and expand? Taxpayers?**

**Will Fire Department need more tall ladder trucks for fire safety and rescue?**

**How about that great looking antenna on the Phone Co. Building that holds communication equipment. What are you going to do to shield it?**

There is sewer, water, electricity and trash collection available. The details of the utility services will be finalized during the development agreement negotiations.

The Fire Department will also be involved in the development agreement negotiations to determine if there are any fire department safety concerns.

The City cannot control the view of the antenna on an adjacent property although the final design may be able to take viewshed into consideration.

■ **City-3 – Comment Card**

**Is this two separate proposals or a joint project between the two companies?**

There are two separate proposals. One from the Alexander Team and one from the Peach Properties Team.

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### ■ City-4 – Comment Card

**Why were the development proposals not open for view to public before today? Doing this way cuts off drastically the public's potential to properly study and formulate constructive opinions of such proposals. This is especially true for lower middle, and especially low income riders, who are at this time 80% of SunTran riders. Please answer both the question and the commentary.**

The Request for Proposals (RFP) to which the proposing teams responded was developed through a public process that included a series of meetings attended by a variety of stakeholders, including bus riders, downtown businesses, downtown neighborhoods, institutions, developers, and others. City staff and stakeholders worked together to develop the goals that are included in the RFP. The discussion that led to the development of these goals included consideration of the diversity of people that currently use and would be continuing to use the project site and the range of needs that should be addressed.

Materials from the July 22, 2015, public presentations were posted on the Office of Integrated Planning (OIP) website at <https://www.tucsonaz.gov/integrated-planning/ronstadt-transit-center-joint-development> and comments and questions on the presentations were accepted through August 3, 2015. Both the comments and questions from the Comment Cards provided at the Public Presentations and from emails received during the comment period are posted on the OIP website and were shared with the two proposing teams for their responses. The teams' responses are also posted on the OIP website.

Finally, the selection process, which includes detailed consideration of the team's technical proposals, is being undertaken by a committee that is made up of diverse stakeholders, including SunTran bus riders, downtown businesses, downtown neighborhoods, developers, institutions, City agencies, and subject matter experts.

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### FROM EMAILS

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### ■ City-1 – Email

**I know it's too late and probably others have commented on guarantees. How will the COT ensure that whatever project is selected will be built out close to the design presented? No major changes, no elimination of major elements, no last minute we didn't anticipate this so we have to cut back. No Bourn excuses. Will the COT retain the right to pull the plug on the project if the developer can't perform as presented? Will the COT set a timeline for the project to start and finish and for penalties if the developers do not perform to their schedule and promises? The Hub at Main Gate is an example of a project that had major changes that were caught by the WUNA rep after the fact and the remedy does not work.**

If and when Mayor and Council select a proposing team, the final project will be determined through the development agreement process. While a project will likely evolve as the details are worked through, the major components of the project should be consistent with what was presented, reflecting the goals developed through the public stakeholder process and presented in the Request for Proposal. First and foremost is the integration of the transit center with similar or improved services into the project. Other goals in summary include a mix of uses; open space;

## Comments & Questions from Members of Public Most Appropriate for City Response

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multiple transportation mode accommodation; private investment to economically benefit public transit, the City's tax base, and downtown revitalization efforts; and a collaborative approach to project development.

The development agreement, which should establish a project that the developer can deliver, must be approved by Mayor and Council, and that agreement should clearly articulate performance criteria and consequences of not meeting those criteria. The performance criteria should address the project development schedule.

In accordance with the project Request for Proposals, the proposing teams were asked to detail in their technical proposals their commitment to "regular, collaborative meetings and communication with the City and other agencies, and community engagement with stakeholders." This emphasis on a collaborative approach, with public engagement, was included to help ensure that there would be opportunities for the public to learn about the evolution of the project and its overall adherence to the project goals.

#### ■ City-2 – Email

**I have a question about the process from here out. It was my understanding that the meeting on weds night was to see the two final proposals. It sounds like now those proposals could be radically changed. Is that correct. Also, are comments public record? Is there an opportunity to express thoughts or concerns directly to the committee charged with making the recommendation on who to choose!**

See **City-1-Email** response to above. In addition, public comments and questions received on Comments Cards at the July 22, 2015, public presentations, as well as by email between the July 23, 2015, and August 3, 2015 comment period, are posted on the City's Office of Integrated Planning (OIP) website at <https://www.tucsonaz.gov/integrated-planning/ronstadt-transit-center-joint-development>. These comments were made available to the proposing teams for response, and those responses are also posted on the OIP website.

Selection Committee members -- who represent a variety of stakeholders, including SunTran bus riders, downtown businesses, downtown neighborhoods, developers, institutions, City agencies, and subject matter experts -- are committed to confidentiality during the technical proposal review process. Their recommendation will go to the Mayor and Council, which will determine the final recommendation. Please note, however, that the July 22, 2015, public presentations were included in the process as an opportunity for community members to see and comment on both teams' proposed project concepts. These comments and questions, as well as the proposing teams' responses, are among the materials the Selection Committee will be taking into account as they review the technical proposals.

#### ■ City-3 – Email

**If my understanding is correct it's possible that the final project might not look anything like what was shown at the meeting last week. Am I correct?**

See **City-1-Email** response above.

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■ **City-4 – Email**

**How much public money is being invested?**

The RTC Joint Development Project Request for Proposals (RFP) presented “Potential City Incentives” that “are currently available to developers if they meet certain requirements.” These include: Government Funding Lease Excise Tax (GPLET), Primary Jobs Incentive, Site Specific Sales Tax Incentive, Tucson Community Development Loan Fund, Tucson Industrial Development Authority (IDA) Bonds and Loans, and Downtown Infill Incentive District. “Other Potential Incentives” called out in the RFP “that may be available to developers if they meet certain requirements,” are: New Market Tax Credit and Low Income Housing Tax Credit. No additional public funding has been offered by the City, however this could be requested by the selected team and discussed during the development agreement negotiation process.

■ **City-5 – Email**

**Will taxes increase as a result?**

If the question is asking whether an individual’s taxes would increase due to this project, the answer is, “no.” If the question is asking whether the City would realize additional tax revenue as a result of this project, the answer is, “that is a goal.”

■ **City-6-Email**

**Where will parking be provided for residents? Or the public?**

The parking for the development would be related to the mix of uses and proposed by the developer. There are public parking garages that the City operates directly west and east of the site.