

GOALS Presented in Community Planning Process, Ronstadt Transit Center Site Development, City of Tucson

The goals below are from the report titled “Community Planning Process Ronstadt Transit Center Site Redevelopment, City of Tucson,” May 24, 2013, prepared for the City of Tucson by Poster Frost Mirto. These goals are included in the final pages of the report’s Executive Summary and were presented in a running list.

These *goals provide a starting place for discussion* with stakeholder on possible goals for inclusion in the solicitation for the RTC Redevelopment Project.

PLEASE NOTE: To make these goals more quickly accessible, City staff has organized them in 3 categories: (1) Physical Project; (2) Process; (3) Expertise/Qualifications and added some key words to each goal to indicate focus. Additionally within the categories, the goals have been reordered to reflect similar topics.

PHYSICAL PROJECT

1. **“Downtown Is for Everyone”**: The phrase that was common to the *Bus Riders Union* and to the *Downtown Tucson Partnership* (Merchants Sub-Committee) is that “Downtown is for Everyone.” The greater Ronstadt Transit Center site should be successfully transformed to accommodate new development for a variety of mixed uses at the same time as it can provide an efficient and pleasant downtown transportation hub for all Tucsonans.

2. **Flexibility re Uses**: The potential development uses for this site will be driven to a large extent by the feasibility of land uses in the marketplace. Proposed uses should be in accordance with community desires, but in the end, development will be driven by what feasible uses can pencil out on this site. The Tucson community needs to be flexible and open-minded in its evaluation of proposed uses for this site. Developers need to be creative and thoughtful in their proposals. Projects that meet a local downtown need for services and activities will be most welcomed.

3. **Potential Future Uses**: Views on appropriate new land uses for the Ronstadt Transit Center site vary. Additional student housing in non-adaptable suite formats is not well supported, but market-rate housing and workforce housing would be a key component for redevelopment. Educational uses, commercial/retail uses, public health, food (grocery and food carts), urban conveniences, open space, and adequate parking would all be among welcome uses.

4. **Open Space**: The need for urban open space on this site has been expressed by all stakeholders in this community process. This open space will only be successful if it is

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urban in character, is highly used by the community, is integrated in an active well-used commercial setting, and has lots of eyes and ears on the space. It will not work as an urban open space if it is allowed to function as neutral territory with no sense of community ownership and oversight.

5. **Multi-Modal Transportation Center:** Ronstadt needs to not just be a transit center, but must evolve into a transportation center for public buses, the Modern Streetcar, bicycles and bike-share, pedestrians, car-share, “park-once” parking, inter-city train, inter-city buses, vans, shuttles, taxis, kiss-and-ride, and other forms of transportation evolving and changing.
6. **Transit Service & Facility Quality:** The redevelopment of this site needs to be a win for transit users. Level of service, efficiency, quality, much-improved comfort and amenities, and convenience for the transit user needs to improve significantly as a result of this project.
7. **Short-Term and Long-Term Transit Needs:** The short-term and long-term needs of Sun Tran must be satisfied within any redevelopment proposal.
8. **Relationship of RTC and Modern Streetcar:** As the specific location of transit and other transportation facilities is considered, it must be remembered that the Modern Streetcar will connect at the RTC’s southern boundary. Proximity to the Streetcar connection will be important. As the distance from the Streetcar to other forms of transportation increases, the quality of the experience between the two needs to also increase. Said another way, if the distance between the two is long the connection needs to be very interesting and comfortable for pedestrians.
9. **Architecture/Arts:** The architecture should be exciting with a strong connection to Tucson. It should be place specific. The arts should play a big role in the new development. Day and night uses are essential.
10. **Historic Resources:** The greater Ronstadt Transit Center site is in the midst of an historic downtown. The historic urban fabric should be maintained. Efforts should be made to avoid closing Pennington or Toole. The historic brick arcade façade and the Melody Peters ceramic public art should be maintained if possible. Historic building massing, scale, rhythm, and streetscape should be maintained along Congress and 6th Avenue as much as possible. These streets should be largely filled in as they historically were, but with permeable entries on 6th Avenue and Congress. The Tucson Pima County Historic Commission should be involved in this design process.

PROCESS

- 11. Careful Process:** The development process needs to be carefully vetted and analyzed. This is not a time for hunches and guesses. The next change to this site will **(not)** be for a long time and needs to be done carefully.
- 12. Neighborhoods:** The needs of the downtown neighborhoods should (be) paramount in the redevelopment. Developers, Sun Tran, and the City of Tucson must commit to ongoing dialogue and negotiation with neighborhoods.
- 13. Local Downtown Businesses:** Care and protection should be given to local downtown businesses. Efforts should be made to avoid existing business displacement. Downtown merchant should be involved in the process of development of this site.
- 14. Solicitation Process Recommendations:** A two-stage process for the selection of a developer is recommended. Stage One would be a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) with general information on the project goals and objectives. It would request the submitter to describe skills and qualifications of team members, similar project experience, references, demonstrate understanding of the project, and propose a general project approach. From the Stage One submitters, up to three developers would be selected. They would move to Stage Two Request for Proposals (RFP). They would be given a very much more detailed project description, elements, and requirements and would be asked to propose a specific preliminary design, cost estimate, pro forma, incentive package, tangible benefits to City (sales tax, multiplier, jobs, etc.), timeline, etc., for the development of this site. The City should consider a modest (\$15,000 per team?) stipend to offset the costs of this proposal preparation.
- 15. Development Agreement Quality:** The site will develop under a City/Developer development agreement. The City of Tucson needs to dramatically improve its ability to create effective development agreement documents. This document needs to be the best of its kind with milestones, timelines, and deliverables that protect the public's interest in this site.
- 16. Deliberative Timeline:** The timeline for the RFQ/RFP should be deliberate not fast. It should coincide with the completion of the Sun Tran Operational Study expected by the end of November. RFQ could be September – November 2013. RFP could be January – April, 2014. RFP's should be reviewed in a very public process.

- 17. Sun Tran Study:** The needs and operations of Sun Tran are also changing and evolving. Sun Tran is in the process of developing a detailed and thorough on-board survey and operational plan in the Fall of 2013. The new transportation center, and the developer chosen for its redevelopment, must work closely with Sun Tran as it develops its short term and long-term operational plan. The process needs to move slowly enough for this Sun Tran planning process to develop.
- 18. Incentives:** The real estate deal that emerges from this process will not be easy and it is likely to be high-risk. It will require substantial pre-leasing. It will also require substantial incentives by the public sector to reduce risk. Incentives will need to be aggressive. The best incentives will be programmatic, regulatory, financial and political. Actual cash investment of public funds will be more difficult to undertake in the current tight budget and economy.

EXPERTISE/QUALIFICATIONS

- 19. Needed Developer Experience:** Developers considered should be experienced in public/private partnerships, urban mixed-use, and transit-oriented development. They should demonstrate a commitment to transparency, consensus building, and strong/positive government relationships.
- 20. Multi-modal Traffic Engineering Experience:** Traffic needs to be a careful element of any redevelopment plan. Teams considered need excellent and creative traffic (especially transit) engineering consultants to insure an orderly flow of vehicles of all types in the downtown area.