Application of Criteria for Pima County Bond Project Proposals

Project Name: Sunshine Mile - Modernist Corridor Historic Façade Rehabilitation Program.

Location: This project is located along a two mile stretch of Broadway Boulevard between Euclid and Country Club Road (known as the Sunshine Mile). The boundaries of the anticipated Broadway Boulevard Mid-Century Modern Historic District are within the incorporated jurisdiction of the City of Tucson Ward 5 and Ward 6, and therefore within Pima County Districts 5.

Scope: Cultural and Historic Resources category. This Historic Preservation project is a façade restoration program that leverages private dollars, enhances a critical commercial corridor and the eastern gateway of Downtown Tucson, and re-energizes a disinvested commercial strip to build on the capital community goals as outlined in the recently adopted Plan Tucson. This project is consistent with the community-ranked number 1 performance measures identified as part of the RTA Project both Individual selections and Group selections. (Report September 2013)

1. Broad Demonstrated Support by Public: Community and regional support for this project is large and growing. Broadway Boulevard, Tucson’s most important modernist architectural corridor, expresses American optimism and the post-World War II economic boom which transformed the nation from the 1950s through the early 1970s. The recent renewed appreciation of modern architecture of the last few years has created expanding interest in protecting and enhancing this historic resource from the recent past.

During the Mid-Century Modern period, Broadway was the key automotive avenue connecting the suburban communities of Tucson to the urban core. Along its edge were constructed some of the region's most dynamic and innovative architecture of this era. The expressive structures built along its edge supported the new neighborhoods which understood the importance of the corridor as a destination. Broadway reflected the American Dream. An upscale shopping district with new stores met the new demands of the new economy. Furniture, lighting, photographic equipment, shoes, clothes and cars were just some of the businesses along Broadway.

Glass storefronts, geometric designs, new materials and evocative signage combined to create a vision of Tucson as a modern metropolis. In 1953, a contest was sponsored by the East Broadway Merchants to name the commercial strip between Campbell and Country Club. Over 5,000 ideas were submitted; the winning entry was “The Sunshine Mile.”

Interest in this rediscovered historic corridor has grown significantly. In 2012 the Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation launched Tucson Modernism Week, a multi-day event celebrating our region's mid-century Modern era and Broadway's important part of this story. Thousands of Pima county citizens attended. The events and educational programs focused on the cultural and architectural significance of Broadway. In November 2012, the Arizona Preservation Foundation identified the segment of Broadway from Euclid to Country Club, adding it to its list of our state's most endangered historic places. That same month, the Broadway merchants officially re-launched the “Sunshine Mile.” Private, public, and non-profit-sector partners have participated in various events and activities along the street. Broad-based support for preserving and revitalizing this corridor has emerged. In early 2013, the neighborhoods along Broadway came together to financially underwrite a National Register of Historic Places Nomination for the corridor (listing anticipated in 2014). In 2013, the second Tucson Modernism Week attracted over 3,500 people to the corridor.

This project is designed to enrich and enhance the RTA Broadway Improvement project. It is critical that with investment into transportation elements, a parallel investment be made into the historic resources along the road so that Broadway becomes not merely a corridor, but a destination. In September 2013, as part of the Broadway Roadway Improvement project, over 250 members of the community attended a public forum. The performance measure voted number one, and most critical to the community, was Historic Preservation.

2. Has Regional Public Benefit: This central corridor, the gateway to downtown Tucson, serves employees and students at the University of Arizona, and with revitalization, will regain its original identity as an
extension of downtown with a focus on retail. This is the most important concentration of Mid-Century Modern storefronts and commercial buildings in Tucson and the Southern Arizona region. Collectively, the revitalization of this corridor will cultivate small businesses, expand the city’s sales tax base and increase property values within the area, enhance the appearance of the district, facilitate multiple modes of transportation, and encourage heritage tourism, while celebrating our unique historic resources.

In addition, the historic buildings eligible for façade improvements are part of the catchment of the Tax Incentive Financing District that funds Rio Nuevo. The success of this item has broad implications and significant community return.

3. **Partnerships:** Numerous organizations have collaborated to advocate for this corridor, including Tucson Modernism Week, Sunshine Mile Association, The Broadway Coalition, Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation, Sam Hughes Neighborhood Association, El Encanto Neighborhood Association, Broadmoor/Broadway Village Neighborhood Association, and Rincon Heights Neighborhood Association. In addition to these partners, other Tucson businesses, Pima Community College, and Chase Bank have all supported and/or partnered on events and programs to encourage re-investment into the corridor. The Tucson City Council has unanimously voted to encourage the preservation of these structures as the RTA corridor design is finalized. This item is predicated on public-private partnership that grantees long-term success.

4. **Other Funding Sources or Matches:** The façade funding is conceived as 1 to 2 (private-public) matching grants for businesses and property owners along the corridor. Similar models have successfully been implemented in downtown Tucson for historic facades. 2M bond dollars leverage an additional 1M. This 3M leverages 20% federal historic tax credits for rehabilitation, and state Tax credits. This increases the overall investment 3.6M.

In addition the streetscape, and multi-modal improvements funded by the RTA will significantly enhance bond funding to improve the retail district. To insure the longevity of public funding into the historic resources façade, easements and local historic designation will be convened in exchange for the matching grants.

5. **Education and Workforce Training:** Although no formal plans are in place at this time specific to education and workforce training, high craft historic preservation construction offers an opportunity for the job training and potential partnership with Pima Community College or the University of Arizona. UA CALA has been involved in design projects for downtown and other County property (currently with the Himmel Park Library). This project would fit within the colleges teaching program for architecture students.

6. **Advances Board Adopted Principles of Sustainability and Conservation:**
The renovation and re-use of many small business storefronts along the Sunshine Mile is the most sustainable option for our city. Buildings of this era were built to last with materials and workmanship that cannot be matched with today’s dollars, and are ideal for local small business with their individually unique storefronts. Most require only minor improvements, such as replacing storefront glass and updating mechanical systems to become more energy-efficient. This project provides tremendous opportunities to create historic adaptive reuse sustainable models.

7. **Previously Authorized Large-scale Bond Projects or Programs that are Now Short of Funding:** none

8. **Phasing of Large Projects:** Can serve to compliment design and function of RTA Broadway corridor project. The project implemented over time will show ongoing success.

9. **Impact on Operating and Maintenance Costs for Governments and Commitment to Fund These Ongoing Costs:**
No direct long-term or maintenance costs for governments are anticipated for this project.

10. **Project or Program is a Capital Improvement, Not a Repair or Maintenance Project:**
The program project is a façade program that invests capital into the mid-century modern buildings of Broadway. Capital investments are insured by historic preservation conservation easements and resulting in the direct economic transformation of an important community corridor and local business district.