

Douglas Mance: Options available for Broadway project that meet RTA's 'functionality' test



15 HOURS AGO • BY DOUGLAS MANCE SPECIAL TO THE ARIZONA DAILY STAR

The last time I addressed the Broadway Corridor Citizens Task Force, I let them know I wanted those dedicated volunteers to succeed in their efforts to come up with a design that would be acceptable to all of the funding entities: the Regional Transportation Authority, Pima County and the city of Tucson.

On another occasion I addressed the same body as the ex-officio liaison to my CART Committee (Citizens Accountability for Regional Transportation). I let them know that I felt that their process now was like a “bowling alley with gutters.” My intimation was that if the task force put forth a plan that ignored the 2006 ballot language, they might jeopardize the chances of it being funded at all.

The Broadway task force now needs regional community guidance so it can avoid rolling a gutter ball. On Thursday the entire regional public needs to participate in a

public forum on this important Broadway project.

Prominently stated in the 2006 voter-approved Regional Transportation Plan is the overarching policy that “functionality is not to be diminished.” Some of the task force proposals would clearly diminish functionality.

At risk here is more than \$42 million from the RTA, more than \$25 million from Pima County and \$3 million from the city of Tucson. The obligation that both the RTA and Pima County has is to the voters of the entire region and the entire county. The obligation attached to the city of Tucson, the Broadway project manager, seems to be to city voters only.

The city’s apparent unwillingness to take into account other regional vested interests could paralyze the efforts to find a common ground. Or this could be a wonderful opportunity to allow three representative governmental bodies to work together to find an

elegant compromise solution for this important stretch of Broadway — a gateway to a vibrant downtown for the entire greater Tucson region.

I have served on the CART committee since its inception in 2006, and all of us on the committee have a stated mission to “ascertain that the Regional Transportation Authority plan is implemented as presented to the voters of Pima County on May 16, 2006.” The CART is a recommending body of citizen volunteers who will be making our recommendation on the Broadway Corridor RTA project directly to the RTA Board.

Like the volunteers on the Broadway Citizens Task Force, we CART members perform our duties because we believe in and we are very proud of our community. The CART committee is also dedicated to keeping the promises made to the 2006 regional voters. The Regional Transportation Plan is a comprehensive plan that contains many hundreds of incredible and visionary component projects, and naturally, not all the projects carry the same popularity levels.

That being said, the RTA Plan represents one of the most successful compromises that the Tucson region has ever agreed upon and funded, and if we endanger the plan now by going against the will of the voter and the taxpayer, we run the real risk of affecting the credibility of this entire plan and similar future plans.

Within the portfolio of Citizen Task Force Broadway Corridor design options that are now on the table, there are options that may meet both the functionality tests that the voters approved *and* the fiduciary responsibility that the RTA plan places upon the RTA Board. Unfortunately, there are also some options on the table that will diminish multi-modal transportation functionality on Broadway.

We have before us a wonderful opportunity to bowl a good score on this important transportation corridor. All we need to do now plan together and avoid gutter balls.

The Broadway Boulevard Project

The Regional Transportation Authority Plan's project No. 17 is described as: widen Broadway to six travel lanes, plus two dedicated bus lanes; bike lanes, and sidewalks. It includes Broadway from Euclid Avenue, just east of downtown, to Country Club Road.

The City of Tucson is leading this project, and is in the planning and design stage. Working with a Citizens Task Force, the project scope and roadway configuration alternatives are being reviewed.

For details go to <http://m.tucsonaz.gov/broadway>

Info box

A planning update and open house on the Broadway Boulevard project will be held at the Sabbar Shrine Hall, 450 S. Tucson Blvd., from 5 to 8 p.m. on Thursday, June 12.