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Ward 6 Newsletter

Tucson First

December 28, 2015

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Year in Review

I always enjoy watching the Year in Review shows on the tube this time of year. It is fun to see what the media feels were noteworthy stories in retrospect, and then comparing their list to maybe what I felt were more compelling ones. As I do the year in review for our Ward 6 work, I suspect others will similarly be able to identify topics they'd have included – and to be fair, I could change this list around quite a bit and still have significant public policy items to report. But this month-by-month review is a pretty good summary of the sorts of things that have occupied our time at the Ward 6 office during 2015. I hope you enjoy the look back.

January

Infill Incentive District

I'm going to begin this review, and end it with some important policy items, all of which took quite a bit of time and effort on the part of many of us to finalize. I use that word advisedly; their never "final"… but are always subject to tweaking as we learn through seeing the codes being implemented. That's true of the IID rewrite we took on.

Important Phone Numbers

Tucson Police Department
911 or nonemergency
791-4444

Water Issues
791-3242/800-598-9449
Emergency: **791-4133**

Street Maintenance
791-3154

Graffiti Removal
792-2489

Abandoned Shopping Carts
791-3171

Neighborhood Resources
837-5013

SunTran/SunLink
792-9222
TDD: 628-1565

Environmental Services
791-3171

Park Wise
791-5071

Planning and Development Services 791-5550

Pima Animal Care Center
724-5900

Pima County Vector Control
Cockroach: **443-6501**
Mosquito: **243-7999**

Continued: A Message From Steve

In January, we finished what had been a multi-year public process that involved literally thousands of human-hours of time invested in updating our incentive package related to how we develop properties in midtown. Residential and commercial infill is a topic that's pretty much Wards 1, 3 and 6 issues. Getting the right balance into Code wasn't an easy process.

In 2013 we initiated the IID amendment to our zoning rules, and had a sunset date built in so we could go back and make changes. It's those changes we finalized early this year. Getting there involved Planning Commission hearings, subcommittee meetings, a citizen's task force which was formed to review the process as it went along, and there were multiple M&C reviews, too.

The IID is an optional set of rules that guide development of infill projects. Clearly there were multiple points of view to try to incorporate into our final update. The IID gives developers incentives to build less intensively than what's allowed under existing zoning, and in return gives some leniency on existing zoning requirements (parking, setbacks, landscaping, etc.) Finding that balance was the trick.

I won't go back into all of the details here, but check my 1/22 newsletter if you want to go into depth on the actual terms/conditions we approved. In short, we were tasked with maintaining the character of the 4th Avenue area, buffering surrounding neighborhoods, respecting historic designations, honoring the property interests of people living around the El Presidio sub-district, and approving new development for the 3 primary sub-districts located in the IID. One of those was the Warehouse Triangle (bordered by Stone, 5th Ave, 6th St. and what will eventually be Downtown Links.) For that piece we eventually said "no" to more student housing towers without the final approval by M&C. That was a bit of a tussle.

The IID ended up with a good Design Review Committee that'll include all impacted parties, plus design professionals to guide the architectural development process. And we included a new sunset date so we can continue to monitor how these new alterations to the development code are working. Getting the IID redrafted was a heavy lift for which staff and members of the community deserve a ton of credit.

February

Sex Trafficking

With a topic as tough as trafficking, every even small step forward is worth noting. We work hard on this issue at the Ward 6 office, and 2015 really does have some positives to report back. Some legislative, some corporate, and some bi-partisan. And none of it's enough.

In what was a promising start to the year, State Repre-

sentative Victoria Steele introduced a trafficking bill up in Phoenix. I fully supported her work, and in fact had hosted a press conference with her prior to the November 2014 election in which she and I committed to moving on the issue once she was back in office.

The intent of the bill was to allow a person who had trafficking convictions to go before a judge and have them expunged, allowing her to put her life back together. Eliminate the convictions for crimes committed while she was a victim of sex trafficking.

The bill began well, but was later hijacked by State Senator Eddie Farnsworth. In the end three compromises were forced into the law that for me made it highly problematic. Those changes made the law only retrospective (it only covers trafficking charges from prior to July of last year), does not cover crimes other than prostitution, and raises the legal bar the woman will have to meet when going before the judge. Kudos to Victoria for fighting the good fight, but the partisanship got the best of the efforts when the bill was in its final draft. One step forward, but a couple huge ones in retreat.

On the heels of that though, Congresswoman McSally used the Ward 6 office in February to host a forum on the issue. Victoria and I were involved, along with Board of Supervisor Ally Miller, and several representatives from law enforcement and service providers. Martha moved forward at the Federal level working for funding related to treatment of victims and other measures. More to come from that level.
Shortly after the forum, Ally brought to the Board of Supervisors a proclamation committing resources and attention to the issue here in Pima County. Here's the final tagline from that resolution:

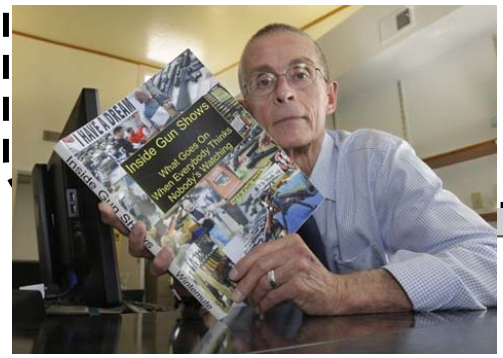
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED that the Pima County Board of Supervisors designates Pima County as a Zero Tolerance Human Trafficking zone and will ensure the Sheriff and County Attorney continue to have sufficient resources to interdict and prosecute any individuals who are involved in criminal activity of Human Trafficking and applauds the efforts of other organizations and individuals and governing bodies who raise awareness of and work to actively put an end to Human Trafficking.

We continued working our Project RAISE events and securing diversion for women brought in during those operations with the hope that they'll find a way out of the dehumanizing subculture of prostitution/trafficking. We'll continue with those efforts during 2016.

And in August, trafficking got some national attention when Master Card, Visa and American Express joined forces and announced they're no longer going to allow themselves to be used as payment for advertisements purchased on the Backpage.com website. That's the one notorious for selling trafficking victims under the guise of the "services" being escorts.

The February State level work, along with the Board of Supervisors resolution, and the McSally forum were each encouraging ways to continue our work on this topic in 2015. It's not a topic we're going to eradicate, but for every life we can touch in a positive way, we'll take comfort in knowing even the baby steps are meaningful.

March



Gun Control

Here in the wild, wild west, you can buy a gun, cash and carry with no questions asked from the trunk of a car in a parking lot. In 2015 I worked with people who were shooting a film that'll air during the Sundance

Important Phone Numbers

Senator John McCain (R)
520-670-6334

Senator Jeff Flake (R)
520-575-8633

Congresswoman Martha McSally (R)
(2nd District)
(202) 225-2542
Tucson Office: 520-881-3588

Congressman Raul Grijalva (D)
(3th District)
520-622-6788

Governor Doug Ducey (R)
602-542-4331
Tucson office: 520-628-6580

Mayor Jonathan Rothschild
520-791-4201

ZoomTucson Map
http://maps.tucsonaz.gov/zoomTucson/

Film Festival in which they purchased 4 weapons in one morning at a local gun show, none of which involved showing any form of I.D. That's not safe, in anybody's world.

On March 9th I opened one section of the newsletter with this quote:

"If the government has enough money for teachers' firearms and firearms training, why doesn't it have enough money for school supplies and professional equipment?" Anon.

That was on the heels of announced significant cuts to education at the state level, and the effort by the state to implement new laws allowing guns on campus, setting up a multi-state compact that would control efforts to implement gun safety laws, a bill that targets our policy requiring background checks at the TCC, and the seemingly annual effort to hold electeds open to being sued personally if we (I) enact gun laws which are later to be found pre-empted by the state. During committee debates on that last bill several of the state officials called me out by name. In response, in March I filed a public records request to secure emails and other correspondence related to those discussions. The message was simply as long as they're going to explicitly target me and Tucson, we'll fight back.

One of the legislators I filed on (Kavanaugh) counter-filed on me. The difference is that when someone files a records request on me, the City Clerk proxies my emails and sends them relevant material. In the case of the state, they're on their honor to send me what I had requested; nobody checks their material. I had nothing to disclose. Who knows (other than them) if the legislators did.

The state legislative session ended with only one of the bills passing; the one targeting the TCC policy. We'll fight it if they ever want to push that item. To the dismay of the NRA, even the one aimed at elected officials failed to pass. I suspect it'll be back this time around, again.

We continued working this issue throughout the year. I supported the ASK Campaign in which parents were encouraged to ask friends of their kids whether they had unlocked weapons in their homes prior to sending their children over to play. And I presented to the M&C for their unanimous adoption a resolution in support of the Brady Code of Conduct. That's a strong statement in favor of background checks and prosecuting vendors who take part in straw purchases (later in the year one such store was convicted after their irresponsible behavior ended up in two police officers being shot with a gun purchased through a surrogate).

In 2015 we continued to experience carnage on school campuses, in the streets, in office meetings and churches. And we continue to hear that laws controlling prohibited possession won't work and background checks won't make any difference. Tell that to the congregation at the AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina who watched a kid kill congregants because a gun store didn't finish the background check on the gun he used. And as long as my friends can buy 2 AR-15's, a .45 and a shotgun from the trunk of a car with no questions asked, I won't stop advocating for sensible gun safety legislation.

April

Pima Animal Care Funding

We're still digging our way out from under some poorly written agreements the City signed onto years ago. One of my commitments to the taxpayers is to do whatever I can to avoid any more contracts, Memorandums of Understanding, Development Agreements, or other long term deals that put the City potentially at risk. The Pima Animal Care Center

IGA with the County was one such example.

I totally support the work being done out at PACC. Their staff, and the hundreds of volunteers are committed to the welfare of the animals. The no-kill philosophy that guided the successful bond election related to the new facility is also something I embrace. All of that having been said, I did not support the terms and conditions that came to us in the proposed intergovernmental agreement that has now been signed, and that will now guide our obligations to the County over how PACC is funded.

There'll be another example of this sort of thing below (County Bond Proposal language,) but my conflict exists between supporting the general work of the agency, but voting against the contract that funds their work. In the case of PACC, I didn't agree with two provisions in particular. One is charging the City with overhead administrative expenses that have nothing to do with the actual operations out at the facility. The other is our failing to put into the new agreement any protections against the County making capital improvements on or around the facility, and then billing us later for a portion of the construction. Both of those are incorporated in the new IGA, and they're the reason I voted against its approval.

Sure, I still get some stares of disbelief from those who should know I'm a supporter of their work. But my over-riding responsibility is to protect the City taxpayers from voting for contracts in which their best interests aren't reflected. If somebody has the ability to charge the City for overhead costs unrelated to actual operations, and if we're presented with an agreement that allows capital improvements to be made without our agreement beforehand, I'm voting against that deal 10 times out of 10.

PACC does important work for the region. We should pay our fair share. It was in coming to terms on what "fair share" meant that drove me to oppose our current contract with PACC. It's an example of a larger principal that should govern our decisions in all areas.

May

City Budget

It was in May that we really focused in on the budget that was eventually approved for FY'16. On May 20th I devoted the entire newsletter to a series of over 30 questions I had asked staff relative to the budget, and gave the verbatim answers they provided. The general point was that we were again agreeing to a budget that relied on one-time fixes (land sales and dipping into reserves,) leaving revenue options untapped on the table, and continuing to operate with a structurally unbalanced budget. Those points were validated when Fitch dropped our bond rating, thus causing us to pay more when we borrow money.

I'm going to give just one example of the condition this budget has left unaddressed. Here's an answer I received in the 5/20 newsletter related to public safety vehicles:

"*Tucson Fire Department's emergency response vehicle fleet has reached a critical state of readiness, and must see some relief…If we identified funding today, by the time the new vehicles are placed into service, 76% of our pumper fleet, 93% of our paramedic fleet, and*

33% of our ladder fleet will be in need of replacement."

The same is true of our police equipment. We continue to pay a premium for repairs by keeping some of that, and routine PM work in-house. We rotate vehicles out of service in other departments when they might serve well the needs of public safety if rotated into either police or fire functions. We're beyond being able to jot statistics on paper and throw up our hands in frustration. We gave raises, absorbed 100% of health plan cost increases, and haven't done things like attract new revenue through bus fares, route efficiencies, and even collecting over $1M on performance bonds that have been due to us for over 6 months. All of that while sending public safety workers out in deficient vehicles.

We've got a new City Manager who all evidence so far indicates is not going to sugar coat the fact that without significant changes, the City could face insolvency. The bond rating agencies have told us this is serious.

The rest of the M&C know that I'll be at the end of more 6-1 votes if we don't get our arms around a plan to fix our finances. That discussion will begin right after the first of the new year.

June

Broadway Widening

In June we approved a draft alignment, along with a series of design parameters that were unanimously adopted by the Citizen Task Force. The purpose of that draft, and of those design considerations is to give staff and our consultant team a starting point from which to begin creating 30% construction documents. Those are to be completed early this spring, and from there property acquisition discussions can begin with both business and residential properties that will be "taken" by the project.

This project has been full of controversy since even before the formation of the CTF. Back in April, 2012 I was joined by a couple of hundred people, representing well over 20 neighborhood associations out at Campbell and Broadway for a rally questioning what at that time was the proposed alignment; 150' wide, 8 lanes, and all of the added space was to be gained by shifting the roadway to the north. Not only was the width unnecessary, the number of takings that would have occurred with that alignment would have eliminated the tax base needed to pay for the project, would have impacted in a significantly negative manner the quality of life in residential neighborhoods to the north, and would essentially have resulted in a roadway that would have been overbuilt for 22 hours of the day. The draft alignment we approved in June was a noteworthy improvement from where the project began.

Getting to the June vote was the result of hundreds of hours of work by both the CTF members, and by staff. The affected neighborhood and business representa-

tives were all very active in the CTF meetings, as well as at the several public open houses that led to the draft alignment. I continue to hear that either I crafted the result at the expense of business interests, or that the CTF members, led by "neighborhood activists" did. Neither is remotely close to being true. The draft evolved through a significant public process.

That process continues. There needs to be due consideration given to the design parameters the CTF and M&C approved. Staff will keep working with property owners, and other affected parties as they move closer to the 30% design alignment we'll see likely in April. Buffering the residential areas that lie to the north will be a key part of the design. Balancing preservation along with respecting the private property rights of owners along the corridor will continue to be a challenge. Keeping the project within budget is non-negotiable. And keeping the pace of the project moving ahead is necessary since no investment is taking place along the 2 mile stretch of roadway as long as uncertainty exists as to where the final alignment ends up.

This has been a tough item to move forward. Lots of competing interests, and $74M in taxpayer dollars at stake. Getting to the June vote was an important milestone – and getting to the 30% design will be yet another one. You'll be seeing plenty more in these newsletters, and likely in the media as we move forward with the Broadway project in early 2016.

July

42 Day Sun Tran/Teamster Strike

At the end of July an unprecedented 42 day strike began that took much of our fixed route bus system out of service until September. During the stoppage, our management contractor, Transdev ran a limited number of routes, increasing service as the strike continued. Thousands of people were impacted. That included the bus riders, businesses who lost customers, and businesses who had employees reliant on the bus system to get to work.

I took the position throughout the strike that the offer that was on the table to begin with was fair, and that the workers should accept the fact that we had set our budget and weren't inclined to reopen any portion of it to get more money into the transit system. I still feel that way. When the strike was finally settled in September, the additional dollars that ended up in the settlement package weren't new funds, it was money that accrued as a result of savings Sun Tran realized by running a partial menu of routes during the strike. The fact that some of that money ended up as a means by which the strike was settled will end up costing the General Fund more in the out years. And the drivers won't ever recoup what they lost in wages during the 42 days they were out of work. Everyone loses.

If there was any silver lining to the strike it's the possibility that we'll take a fresh look at how the transit system is managed. There are models we can explore that may reflect the true regional nature of the system, but could be formed in a way that included some weighted voting element so the Tucson investment into the system would be reflected. And if there's a way to cap our General Fund subsidy to the system, looking at a new model

could help us with our budget over the long term.

What's clear from the strike is that the status quo isn't acceptable. We have to explore new management ideas, whether those include retaining an outside firm such as Transdev, or some other form of management; all options have to be on the table. Fitch, the Bond rating agency noted our increasing transit costs as one reason they dropped our rating. Our General Fund has to be given some relief when it comes to transit costs. The public and businesses need to see a more reliable model. And there needs to be more clarity on exactly what form of input, and at what times during the negotiating process, we as a governing body can offer.

Sun Van is our transit component that serves the disabled community. They're managed by Transdev, and their workers are organized by the Teamsters. That's the same "team" that couldn't find a way to avoid the Sun Tran strike. The Sun Van contract expires on 12/31. Back in September I let staff know that we could not see a repeat of a work stoppage when it came to Sun Van. At the time I requested periodic updates on how those negotiations were going, and as recently as Christmas Day I reached out to staff for an update. What we saw beginning last July should have served notice on everybody who's a party to the Sun Van negotiations that the greater good of the community demands a settlement. We'll see as this week unfolds whether or not that message was properly received.

August

County Bond Language

Throughout the year there was a lot of talk about the $815M County Bond package we were all voting on in November. More on that in the November recap, below. As I noted in the April section above, I make it a practice to read through all of the agreements we're being asked to approve. When I read through the Bond Intergovernmental Agreements in June, I found them to have some significant hidden flaws. It took until mid-August to work out the details of a fair solution.

It's common to hear that the City and the County don't get along. People can cite examples, and there's no sense in trying to deny that until recently we've had our issues. (See November – I think that has changed). Embedded in the Bond language was a provision that gave the County the right to advise any jurisdiction that they felt it wasn't maintaining Bond assets properly, and if the maintenance concerns weren't addressed to the County's satisfaction within 120 days, either the jurisdictions upcoming bond projects would be placed on hold, or the County would do the repairs and send the jurisdiction a bill. That agreement was to stay in place for 25 years after the project was built, regardless of the useful life of the asset.

Not only was I disappointed to see our staff had allowed that language into the agreement, but nobody had pointed to it in any of our Bond updates. I thought it was important enough to call out publicly, largely because I had been unable to get any movement on it when quietly asking that it be addressed. By August,

solutions had been found.

It's a moot point now that the Bond package has been voted down, but the principles we finally agreed on will serve us well the next time we're considering General Obligation Bonds. Where we landed was that the County could still identify maintenance issues, but the jurisdictions would then be given the opportunity to present a remediation plan, even one that extended into the next budget cycle if necessary. And the useful lives of the assets were to be assessed on a project by project basis. All of that's fair.

There are plenty of areas in which a regional approach to governance would be more efficient than the way we do it currently. But since that's such an unlikely near term change, we've got to mend our relationships and work jointly for the long term health of the region. Otherwise, everybody loses. I wasn't satisfied with how the PACC IGA ended up being drafted, and I voted against it. But the work both sides put forth on fixing the Bond language was a huge step in the right direction. It'll serve us well going forward.

September
Significant Development Progress

We've got a significant budget problem we need to solve. We cannot get our budget to a structurally balanced condition simply by making cuts. Those will translate into reductions in services we provide to the community. That's not a fix. Growing the local economy is key to turning our budget hole into something positive.

In September, my staff and I were directly involved in several new building projects, each of which will play an important role in turning the economy. Some of the projects are residential, some are commercial, two are medical, and some are mixed use. If we could duplicate September more often, we'd be well on our way to recovery.

In September, I attended 2 Zoning Examiner hearings, each related to commercial development. One was the Rosemont shopping area that'll be located on Broadway and Rosemont. It will include grocery, restaurants, plus other tenants on the site that are still TBD. The other ZE hearing was for the Broadway Village. They're going to add grocery and restaurant space, and the rezoning achieved both increased parking to accommodate their future needs, but also designation of the site as a Historic Landmark.

On the residential side we facilitated meetings related to a new B&B that'll go in over on 6th Ave. They needed some assistance in coming up with a creative parking solution – which I was happy to help with. We also approved an incentive package for a new Marriott Residence Inn that'll be located just off campus. It'll complement the University Park Marriott that's already open for business.

Mixed use projects included 1 W. Broadway (kitty-corner across from 1 E. Broadway). It'll be commercial and residential, which will continue the momentum we see in the downtown area. Also downtown will be the Arizona Hotel that will include rooms, commercial and some art space as well. And we received best and final offers related to the Ronstadt Transit Center build-out. A project team was selected, and negotiations are on-going for a development agreement for a project that'll include residential, commercial, public open space and of course the transit functions on the site. As we get the deal terms hammered out, a key piece for me will be looking at how realistic the financing package is, and what sorts of pro-

tections the City will see if milestones aren't met. We've set those before, and have failed to hold builders to what they've said they'd produce.

Another set of meetings I attended during September had to do with plans for building out areas around the downtown cathedral, renovating the Marist College, and putting a much needed senior care facility in what are now Diocese offices. As with Ronstadt, this one's in the early planning stages, and I was pretty direct with the group with respect some of the hurdles they'll have to overcome.

Also in September I was involved with meetings related to the Banner Health, and Main Street transitional care facilities. Banner ended the year with approval for its rezoning, and Main Street has just entered that rezoning process. But both projects will fill important health care niches once they're finally built and operating.

It was a busy development month – hundreds of new residential rooms, a few hundred thousand new square feet of retail/commercial, and the medical component. Each of these represents construction jobs, construction sales tax, new jobs in the local economy, and more positive impact on our General Fund needs. It's good growth, necessary for our recovery.

October
Domestic Abuse Awareness Month

Emerge! Center Against Domestic Abuse

October was Paint Pima Purple / Domestic Abuse awareness month. Each week in the newsletter I was happy to include an update and educational piece on domestic violence. And I reached out to media contacts in order to get the people at Emerge! some much deserved attention during some of their outreach events. This is a fundamentally important topic in our community, and one that we'll keep working on out of the Ward 6 office.

Domestic abuse doesn't always involve violence. It's really a whole panoply of controlling behaviors that can include anything from finances, guilt, dress, and of course the violent angle. On October 12th, pulling from information offered by Emerge!, I wrote this:

Most abusive relationships, as you would imagine, don't start out that way. People generally don't get attached to somebody who is abusive. What Emerge! shares is that people who are prone to being abusers often attract their partners in the dating period by displays of extreme kindness and over-the-top gestures of affection. When things go south, the person being taken advantage of remembers how things used to be and often stays in the relationship trying to regain that which was lost.

If you're in an abusive relationship, it's okay to ask for help. If you know of one, it's okay to offer help. And if you're not sure how to go about doing that, call Emerge! at 795-8001. They'll work with you to help find a solution.

Kids who are in abusive relationships are equally the victims of domestic abuse, even if they're not being beaten or otherwise mistreated. Fully 40% of the Emerge! clients are kids. To address their unique needs, Emerge! has an art therapy program called Windows between Worlds.

Over the Christmas break I connected Ed at Emerge! with the guy who's organizing a fund raiser, the proceeds of which will now go directly to the Windows between Worlds program. It's a local event that'll involve the glass-blowing community, a 4th Avenue merchant and our mutual interest in making a dent in the needs local kids from abusive relationships have. More on that to come after the first of the year. It's a continuation of this offices commitment to working with Emerge! and providing resources needed to rehabilitate lives in our community.

November

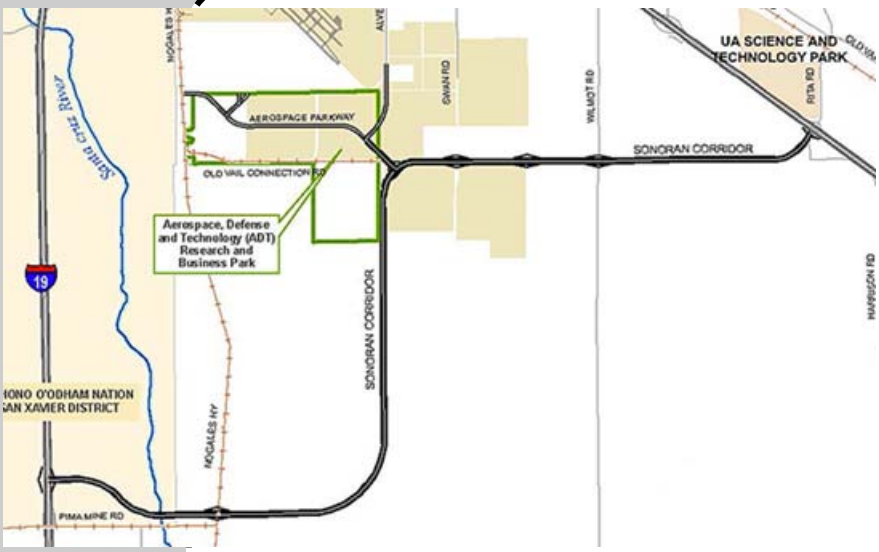
County Bonds / Sonoran Corridor

It'd be easy to camp on the failure of the $815M bond package and call that a memorable event, and it'd be accurate. But this retrospective is focused on issues I and my staff have worked to promote. Coming out of the bond election, what immediately became a focus was how we get a revisit of the single most important project that appeared on the ballot, the Sonoran Corridor.

There's plenty of speculation and theorizing about why the full package failed. It's my belief though that if we can get the Sonoran Corridor back to the voters as a single shot item, an extremely compelling case can be made for its adoption.

In November I began that effort with outreach to the media, a guest piece in the Star, outreach to the County, and placing an agenda item on our study session in which we had both County Board chair Sharon Bronson, and County Administrator Huckelberry seated with us discussing the importance of this project.

I've shared maps of the SC in previous newsletters. Here's yet another visual that displays the significance of this area for development:



We're talking air cargo, rail cargo, over the road cargo, international trade, preservation and expansion of Raytheon, research and manufacturing opportunities out at the UA Tech Park, and the millions of dollars of private sector investment that'll come with each of those components. We didn't give you the chance to say "yes" to that one project when the bond package came to you in November. It's my goal to get it back as a stand-alone item. It's of critical regional economic development importance.

Earlier I said that we are not going to cut our way out of the budget problems we're facing. The manufacturing, logistics, transportation, international trade and research jobs this project will catalyze are what we need if we're going to turn our economic ship around. The Feds also understand that to be true. They've included the full build out of the SC in the Federal Transportation budget as a high priority item. That's in the $500M-$600M funding range coming from D.C. If they're ready to do that, we simply have to demonstrate our willingness to put some local skin in that game.

I understand the arguments people made about the original bond package. I was surprised all 7 questions failed, and I think much of the opposition was overstated. That's a discussion for another day. Of immediate concern is working inter-jurisdictionally, and on a bipartisan basis, public and private sector all coming together to make the case that the Sonoran Corridor needs to, and deserves to be a "single shot" question for the voters as early as next year. Getting our oar in the water will show the Feds we're players, will help their work back in D.C., and we can move ahead with the environmental work that'll precede more economic development along the aerospace parkway. I began that conversation in a very high profile manner in November. Plenty of others are in agreement as to it's importance.

December

Homeless Ord / Urban Ag

I opened this look-back with a big policy item, and we closed out the year with a couple, too. As was true with the IID, our work on putting policies in place related to the homeless, and with forming a set urban agriculture standards found people on all sides of the issues with lines drawn in the sand. Often, and in these cases, public policy blurs those lines and we're left to watch and see how our attempts at balancing interests plays out over time.

The challenge we faced with our homeless ordinance was crafting a set of policies that would fairly apply to all, regardless of whether or not you have a roof over your head. HUD has issued guidelines that make clear that its illegal for jurisdictions to

adopt ordinances that target a person's status of being homeless. Our ordinance had a few different parts, most of which were fine, but there's one element I believe leaves us exposed to losing litigation.

In the ordinance we set consistent rules as to times of day people can hang out in parks, set consistent rules for when belongings can be placed on sidewalks, and how much room must be left for others to pass by. Also included in our ordinance was a provision mandating people get a permit if they're going to distribute food to the homeless. The permits are free, and they're renewable for up to 6 months as long as no public health or safety issues are developing in the areas where the food's being handed out. I had no problem with any of those parts of what we adopted.

We also put in place a restriction that nobody can have over 4 cubic feet of belongings on a sidewalk, regardless of whether or not the person is leaving the required amount of room for others to pass. I believe that in realistic application, that standard can arguably only apply to the homeless. I voted against the ordinance because of what I believe is our exposure to Federal review on that piece. The court has already told us we don't need to allow pods, couches, tents and the like to be placed on sidewalks. I favored a more open-ended set of rules that we'd rely on prior court rulings to manage if things got out of control. Others felt differently, and the ordinance passed 5-2.

We also closed out the year passing a set of standards by which people may raise some food -producing animals (fowl) and grow urban gardens.

In reality, much of this is already going on around town. What we did was tweak the standards for quantities of animals, set-backs and how community gardens and the sale of products are managed. Prior to our passing this, we haven't gotten any complaints about how people are handling backyard chickens and their gardens. We haven't since passing it, either. I don't expect that we opened some floodgate that'll turn midtown Tucson into farmland.

I had concerns over whether allowing front-yard composting would attract urban critters such as javelina, bobcats and coyotes. And I'd have preferred to set a shorter sunset period than we ended up putting into the ordinance. But this really went through an extensive, if sometimes heated public process and I was willing to go with it, watch how it's impacting the residential areas that are largely in midtown, and revisit it after the 2 year sunset period has run its course.

Post script:
We had plenty to keep us occupied in-between those primary topics. We hosted a forum on how to apply for historic tax credits on your home, conducted two Project RAISE events, helped to facilitate the retirement roast for Sheriff Dupnik, participated in a student safety meeting at Catalina High School, took part in multiple forums related to the homeless, and human trafficking. We hosted Charter Review meetings, a dog licensing/vaccination event, and a free flu shot/public health forum.

I was pleased to move forward with a Memorial called Principles of Compassion (see April 8 newsletter,) one in support of the Brady Code of Conduct (gun safety – background checks), and Death with Dignity. And the year was full of exposing Tucson Greyhound Park for numerous continuing violations of animal welfare. Those included the death of a dog in May, two kennels convicted of doping animals, unaccounted for injured dogs, TOTE boards malfunctioning, pay offs so low that nobody can care appropriately for their animals, kennels leaving TGP, and airlines refusing to ship greyhounds as cargo any longer. The year ends as it began; a trainer busted for doping the dogs under his care is going to appeal, despite performance enhancing drugs being found in the dog's system. The place needs to go.

We at the Ward 6 office are grateful for the opportunity to serve. Tucson's a wonderful place to live, and working to make it even better is why we do this job. And we look forward to more during 2016.

Sincerely,

Steve Kozachik
Council Member, Ward 6
Ward6@tucsonaz.gov

Events and Entertainment
Ongoing . . . .

Mission Garden, 929 W Mission Ln
Saturdays 8 am – 12 pm, April to November; 12 pm – 4 pm, December to March
A re-creation of the Spanish Colonial walled garden that was part of Tucson's historic San Agustin Mission. Features Sonoran Desert-adapted heritage fruit-trees, traditional local heirloom crops and edible native plants. *For guided tours call 520-777-9270 and leave message.*

Children's Museum Tucson, 200 S 6th Ave
Tuesday - Friday: 9:00am - 5:00pm; Saturday & Sunday: 10:00am - 5:00pm
www.childernsmuseumtucson.org

Tucson Botanical Gardens, 2150 N Alvernon Way
"Summer Oasis Series" June through August features special hours, early bird weekends and dog admission. http://www.tucsonbotanical.org

Jewish History Museum, 564 S Stone Ave
www.jewishhistorymuseum.org

Fox Theatre, 17 W Congress St
www.FoxTucsonTheatre.org

Hotel Congress, 311 E Congress St
http://hotelcongress.com

Loft Cinema, 3233 E Speedway Blvd
www.loftcinema.com

Rialto Theatre, 318 E Congress St
http://www.rialtotheatre.com/

The Rogue Theatre at The Historic Y, 300 E University Blvd
http://www.theroguetheatre.org/main.htm

Arizona State Museum, 1013 E University Blvd
November 9, 2013, through July 2015, "Curtis Reframed: The Arizona Portfolios."
www.statemuseum.arizona.edu

Arizona Theater Company, 330 S Scott Ave
http://www.arizonatheatre.org/

Tucson Museum of Art, 140 N Main Ave
May 25, 2015 - September 7, 2015: FREE Admission for Military Families.
www.TucsonMusuemofArt.org

Meet Me at Maynards, 311 E Congress St (north entrance on Toole)
A social walk/run through the Downtown area. Every Monday, rain or shine, holidays too! Hotel Congress Check-in begins at 5:15pm.
www.MeetMeatMaynards.com

UA Mineral Museum, 1601 E University Blvd
February 7, 2015– February 7, 2016, 10:00 am – 5:00 pm
"Meet the Trilobites – Arizona's First Inhabitants," the new exhibit at the Flandrau Science Center and Planetarium, features world-class trilobite fossils from around the globe. http://
www.uamineralmuseum.org/

Southern Arizona Transportation Museum, 414 N Toole Ave.
Tuesday – Thursday, Sunday: 11:00am - 3:00pm; Friday & Saturday: 10:00am - 4:00pm
http://www.tucsonhistoricdepot.org