



BROADWAY COALITION -- FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Who/what is the Broadway Coalition ?

The Broadway Coalition (BC) is a committed group of some 19 neighborhoods from throughout the City, more than 50 businesses, and hundreds of individuals, all interested in a more livable, thriving Tucson, seeking to make sure that the Broadway Boulevard road improvement project planned by the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) will not result in just another corridor to somewhere else, but will instead retain Broadway as a destination and enhance the livability of the surrounding neighborhoods while improving ease and efficiency of movement of people via all forms of transportation: buses, bikes, walking, and motor vehicles.

2. What are the goals of the BC?

Briefly, these are to:

- 1) Advance the notion of place (quite different from the notion of corridor), including affording residents in the area a range of services and amenities, establish a unique identity, etc.;
- 2) Preserve the businesses and historic, architecturally significant structures that exist along Broadway, and provide safe, easy access to them, in a visually appealing manner;
- 3) Enhance the business climate and business viability;
- 4) Promote, and give particular attention to, pedestrian and bicycle activity and safety, while aiding the movement of people using multiple forms of vehicular traffic;
- 5) Contribute to environmental sustainability and create a fiscally sound, affordable roadway design that is truly an improvement for all stakeholders.

3. How does this differ from what is proposed in the RTA Broadway Corridor Project?

Some of the language in the RTA plan states that the project should result in a roadway that is an eight-lane arterial with a 150 foot right-of-way; there are some proposals that call for taking the increase in the right-of-way entirely from the North side of Broadway, from Euclid to Country Club. However, other language, interpretation and precedent (see Q.6 below) show that there is a requirement to be fiscally prudent, as opposed to following those statements rigidly, when there are better solutions.

This plan would result in a freeway-like situation in that corridor, and destroy some 100 businesses and historic properties currently on that stretch of Broadway. We believe it would also lead to deterioration of the surrounding historic neighborhoods, as often happens near faster, eight-lane roadways.

4. What was the basis for the RTA Broadway Project plan?

The RTA plan was intended to accommodate the increase in traffic demand expected to occur between 1987 and 2005 along Broadway, resulting from an expectation that high-rise, high density business development would occur along Broadway from downtown to Wilmot Road. That development has not occurred; other business nodes have developed

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Continued:

instead, particularly to the NW, and the traffic count on Broadway has remained essentially constant (other than fluctuations) since the late 1990s.

5. What is the current situation for the RTA Broadway Project?

The RTA Project is proceeding, with the City of Tucson as the lead agency; it is now in the 'roadway design' phase, expected to be completed by 2016, with construction expected to begin thereafter. An advisory Citizens' Task Force (CTF) has been appointed and is hard at work, together with City and RTA staff and consultants. The CTF will hold a public Open House on September 26th, to receive comments from the public on various road widths and designs that they are considering, and to allow public input on the concepts being used. This is a very important meeting, because what the CTF hears at this Open House will effect whether Broadway remains a destination, and the surrounding neighborhoods remain livable. Mayor and Council have given explicit directions to the CTF to explore all options, not just the 150 foot, 8 lane option.

6. Can transportation be improved without going to an eight lane, 150 foot right of way?

Yes, and there are many examples of cities across the country that have done this. The Broadway Coalition website has several papers and articles showing how this can be done. See: <https://sites.google.com/site/broadwaycoalition>. The key to doing this is to improve the functionality of the street, so that the transport of people becomes more efficient, without creating a freeway-like environment that is unnecessary and undesirable. We want our city to remain livable as we make improvements. It should be noted that the RTA's lawyer, Thomas Benevides, has provided legal counsel to the RTA and CTF, stating that functionality and fiscal prudence are the key objectives, not lane count or right of way width.

7. I am interested; how can I learn more?

More information is available on the Broadway Coalition website: <https://sites.google.com/site/broadwaycoalition>.

The City/RTA project website: <http://cms3.tucsonaz.gov/broadway>, is the official project website.

8. What can I do about keeping Broadway a livable, thriving part of our community?

1. Attend the Broadway Project CTF Public Meeting on September 26th, 6:00 – 8:30 PM, at the Sabbar Shrine, 450 S. Tucson Blvd, and express your views.
2. Join the Broadway Coalition – see website above – to receive news updates, more information. That website has articles about how other cities have approached traffic and mobility, as well as papers written by the Broadway Coalition's professional planners on various related subjects such as "Functionality", "Land Use and Transportation", "Business Vitality", and "Sense of Place".
3. Patronize Broadway businesses and tell them, "I support a viable, unique, livable Broadway, and I tell my friends and neighbors to help support your specific retail or service enterprise."





Sense of Place

Sense-of-place means an area where people will want to live, shop, and play. It is in the street grid and width, the age and style of buildings, the size and shape of the gardens, whether businesses are local or chains, and where in town the area is located. How a major street like Broadway Boulevard connects with and is supportive to its surround neighborhoods, including downtown, is part of that **sense-of-place**. Implied is that development along Broadway should be human-scaled where people feel comfortable being there.

This understanding or definition of **sense-of-place** can be used to evaluate how well a particular cross-section option creates and maintains a **sense-of-place** for Broadway Boulevard (Euclid to Country Club).

The goals for the Broadway Boulevard corridor envision creating a **series of places** that include a mix of uses and which support, recognize and enhance the existing character and context of the corridor and its surrounding neighborhoods. (See the Broadway Coalition's paper on Destination.) The goals also recognize the importance of preserving both the historic buildings and significant places along the corridor, as well as supporting locally owned businesses.

Goals (CTF June 10, 2013) include:

- Recognize and support distinct character of Broadway as a series of places, defined by their historic and significant structures, signage, landscape, and uses.
- Recognize and reinforce existing areas with distinct character and support the creation of complementary, locally-owned new places so that Broadway is a linked series of places, defined by their historic and significant structures, signage, landscape, and uses.
- Encourage a mix of neighborhood and regional serving businesses to support vibrant mixed-use districts along Broadway.
- Recognize value of historic buildings and sites
- Recognize value of significant buildings and sites
- Encourage preservation, remodeling, and new development that is scaled to existing context while allowing for a mix and intensity of use to support walking, bicycling, and transit use.
- Respect the aesthetic character of Broadway and the destinations along it while encouraging maintenance and reinvestment to improve aesthetic appearance of existing development. Also, encourage new development that complements today's aesthetic character.
- Design the roadway, its streetscape, wayfinding signage, and the uses along it to give identity to the several gateways along Broadway - to neighborhoods, to Downtown, to the University, and others.
- Encourage the creation of public gathering places and provide for public places as feasible through design of the boulevard.
- Create an inviting pedestrian environment that encourages walking along Broadway and for crossing the Boulevard, and that links Broadway with the adjacent neighborhoods.

Evaluating the various cross-width options should focus on how each option provides opportunities for urban place making within the context of the current character of Broadway and the surrounding neighborhoods as well as downtown. It is important to retain and enhance a **sense-of-place** so that this portion of Broadway is a viable part of a sustainable, livable, vibrant Tucson.

July 3, 2013



Destination - Broadway

The discussion of improving Broadway Boulevard from Euclid to Country Club as contemplated in the RTA's Broadway Boulevard project involves a definition of the goals of the project, which include retaining or enhancing Broadway as a **destination** with a sense-of-place, not just a roadway. If these terms remain undefined, they can mean many things to different people, resulting in their losing any specificity that can be used in the process of roadway design. It is thus not enough to assume that everyone knows what they mean. In this statement we hope to elucidate what is meant by these terms and what that implies in terms of assessment of performance measures and design of the roadway improvements.

A sense-of-place has meaning if enough people think of that area as one in which they would like to spend some time, conduct business, find services, do shopping, find something to eat and meet friends. (See the Broadway Coalition's paper on Sense of Place). It connotes some historical context as to why it is a 'place' for them; it implies a welcoming physical environment. This sense-of-place changes that portion of a street from 'just a roadway to somewhere else' into a **destination**. Thus, sense-of-place and **destination** are tightly coupled.

This has strong implications for how one would rate performance measures used to assess the various alternatives available in a roadway improvement project. In particular, retaining and enhancing Broadway Boulevard as a **destination** influences how improving vehicular, bicycle, pedestrian, and public transit happens. It becomes necessary to take a block-by-block approach, rather than treating the entire two miles in the same manner throughout. This is necessary to respond to the *context* along the street and to avoid the widespread destruction of existing businesses and structures that create this **destination**. This also implies that street cross-section designs that make it harder for pedestrians to cross Broadway are less acceptable. There is already a sense-of-place in this portion of Broadway Boulevard; the goal of the roadway improvement project should be to enhance that aspect while improving traffic flow, so that it can remain a **destination**. Thus, improving vehicular flow cannot be the prime consideration; it is just one of several important considerations.

Essentially every performance measure used to assess roadway design concepts will be affected by making a sense-of-place a priority so that this section of Broadway Boulevard can remain a **destination**.

Questions that need to be asked about each design concept:

- How will pedestrians rate their experience of being there shopping, or dining, or..., on Broadway, if this design is implemented?
- How many of the businesses that make this area unique would be destroyed to implement this design?
- Is vehicular traffic moving so fast under this design that stopping at this area is difficult?
- Can pedestrians access businesses on both sides of Broadway relatively easily with this design?
- Do the transit improvements in this design also enable people to make this area their **destination**?
- Is the design pedestrian-, bicycle- and wheelchair-friendly, compared to current conditions?
- Does this design improve vehicular traffic flow in a way that makes Broadway as a **destination** likely?
- Is Broadway's sense-of-place enhanced or diminished by this design?

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