

Requester: City of Tucson
Revised: February 19, 2014

Future Pima County Bond Election Proposed Project

Project Name: Historic Miracle Mile/Oracle Revitalization Corridor

Location: The proposed project is located along the historic Miracle Mile within an area of the Oracle Road Corridor designated for revitalization. The area, which is bounded by Miracle Mile to the north, Speedway Blvd. to the south, Stone Avenue to the east, and Fairview Ave. to the west, is located within Pima County (Districts 3 and 5) and within the City of Tucson (Ward 3).

Scope: This is an historic preservation project that would provide facade and historic resource rehabilitation matching funds to help restore distinctive mid-twentieth century buildings that line the historic Miracle Mile and provide a distinct sense of place upon which to build the area's future. This project would help to realize goals and recommendations identified in the Oracle Area Revitalization Area Project (OARP) report endorsed by Tucson's Mayor and Council on September 13, 2011 (Resolution #21798). The bonds would be used for public/private partnerships to rehabilitate historic buildings and neon signs with a focus on cultivating heritage tourism and economic reinvestment in an area that has been in decline since construction of Interstate 10.

Within the last five years, several public/private restoration projects have been undertaken that demonstrate the contribution that historic preservation can make. Among these are the historic preservation/development of the *Old Pascua Museum and Yaqui Culture Center*; renovation and installation of *six neon signs*; adaptive reuse of several historic motor courts, including the *Monterey Courts*, a venue for performers and artists; the *Wayward Winds*, temporary housing for women and children; and the *Ghost Ranch Lodge*, housing for low-income seniors. This is a beginning, but the window of opportunity to reap the benefits of the area's historic resources in achieving a revitalized corridor is limited and funding to help continue this effort is critical.

Benefits: Once the active northern entrance to Tucson, historic Miracle Mile faced significant economic disinvestment by the 1970s and has been an ongoing concern of residents, property owners, businesses, institutions, and others. Initially citizen efforts took the form of a partnership of area stakeholders seeking to combat crime and urban decay and to create a better quality of life; this effort was known as The Oracle Project (TOP). The Oracle Area Revitalization Project (OARP) grew out of the TOP as stakeholders recognized the need for a separate effort to establish a longer term vision for the area's revitalization.

The OARP was initiated in late 2007 by the City of Tucson to explore what might be done to help encourage the development of employment opportunities, services to meet surrounding needs, social and recreational opportunities, a variety of housing options, sensitivity to the area's historic character, and overall improvement of the built environment. The City team worked with neighborhoods, businesses, institutions, historic preservationists, and others to develop the revitalization concept documented in the OARP report. A Citizens Steering Committee (CSC) was established and held 21 meetings to discuss and share ideas regarding the future of the area and to assist in the development of principles, goals, and recommendations. A variety of public outreach activities complemented the CSC meetings, including nine workshops-- one with each of the area neighborhoods, one with businesses, and one with social service agencies and institutions.

The area's rich history and historic resources resonated with diverse stakeholders. That theme identified as "Americana" in the OARP report celebrates America's fascination with the automobile as symbolized by the neon signs, the motor courts, and the divided roadway, dubbed "Miracle Mile" in honor of the cutting edge engineering that divided the highway to reduce accidents. The interest in the area's history as a foundation on which to build was further emphasized when the CSC initiated the annual Historic Miracle Mile Open House and Tour to showcase and educate people about the corridor's rich history. This annual event has been held for the past five years and drawn people from all over Tucson and beyond.

Cost: \$2,000,000

Bond Funding: \$2,000,000

Other Funding: The historic facade funding is conceived as 2 to 1 (public-private) matching grants for businesses and property owners along the historic Miracle Mile. A similar approach for historic facade rehabilitation has been used successfully in downtown Tucson. The 2M bond dollars would leverage an additional 1M. Collectively the 3M would leverage 20% federal historic tax credits for rehabilitation and state tax credits. This would increase the overall investment to a total of 3.6M. To insure the longevity of public funding value in historic resources, facade easements and local historic designation would be conveyed in exchange for the matching grants. Additionally, the City has committed \$150,000 of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for historic signage renovation in FY 2014.

Fiscal Year Project Start and Finish Date: TBD

Project Management Jurisdiction: The City of Tucson will have project management jurisdiction of this project.

Future Operating and Maintenance Costs: No Operating and Maintenance Costs are associated with this project.

Regional Benefits: The historic facade funding is conceived as 2 to 1 (public-private) matching grants for businesses and property owners along the historic Miracle Mile. A similar approach for historic facade rehabilitation has been used successfully in downtown Tucson. The 2M bond dollars would leverage an additional 1M. Collectively the 3M would leverage 20% federal historic tax credits for rehabilitation and state tax credits. This would increase the overall investment to a total of 3.6M. To insure the longevity of public funding value in historic resources, facade easements and local historic designation would be conveyed in exchange for the matching grants. Additionally, the City has committed \$150,000 of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for historic signage renovation in FY 2014.

Supervisor District of Project Location: Districts 3 and 5: Sharon Bronson and Richard Elias