

Bonnie Henry: This is all just a really bad dream - isn't it?

Arizona Daily Star, The (Tucson, AZ) - July 24, 2005

- Author/Byline: Bonnie Henry
- Section: TUCSON/REGION
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Maybe it's the heat, but I've been having fitful dreams of late.

First I dreamed that Pima County officials were thinking about tearing down Rillito Racetrack.

The next night I dreamed that more Pima County officials - what, do they clone themselves overnight? - were looking at building an aerial tram to the top of Mount Lemmon.

The following night I dreamed some guy had notified county officials that he was selling his property - along with some historic reminders of old Fort Lowell - to a developer.

Next I'm gonna dream that we finally have a regional transportation plan - one that calls for a trolley but no crosstown freeway.

Pinch me. I wanna wake up.

Actually, that last, um, dream came first, with the unveiling earlier this month of a \$1.9 billion transportation plan.

Among other things, it calls for street widenings of up to eight lanes, an electric streetcar running between University Medical Center and Downtown, and the hookup of the Barraza-Aviation Parkway with Interstate 10.

Good luck getting that last one past Downtown residents and businesses.

Say, maybe we can all just take the trolley instead.

Speaking of alternative modes of transportation, ramming a tram up the backside of the Catalinas has once again reared its hoary head.

Banded about for 40 years, the proposal last got shouted down two years ago.

But as they say in the movies, it's baaack. This time county officials are seeking proposals for a feasibility study on the thing.

Nothing new here either. Two years ago the county got a study for free. Now they want a new one, estimated to cost up to a hundred grand.

That's chicken feed, of course, compared with the cost of the tram itself, estimated at between \$20 million and \$40 million.

Um, excuse me. But didn't we just shell out \$75 million and endure 17 years' worth of detours and jackhammers for the brand new Catalina Highway, now wending its way to a mountaintop near you?

Wanna ride in a gondola? Try Disneyland.

Maybe by whisking that tram idea out of their heads, county officials can then deal with what to do with the old grandstand at historic Rillito Racetrack, which is reported to have serious deficiencies.

Tear it down and put in soccer fields seems to be the county's answer.

I'm sorry, but at the risk of offending every soccer mom in Pima County, let the little darlings play elsewhere.

Yes, we're supposed to be a kid-friendly town. But sometimes history needs to trump kicking a ball around - especially if it's under the lights.

Future historians will thank us. So will future astronomers.

History also needs a helping hand in saving what's left of Fort Lowell's officers' quarters, guardhouse and parade grounds.

Located on private property on the southwest corner of East Fort Lowell and North Craycroft roads, the spot appears to have gone to a higher bidder than Pima County.

And nothing would prevent the new owner, in this case a developer, from razing what's left and erecting new homes.

The city and county have been after this patch of slowly eroding history for years now, but each time their offers - the last one \$2.2 million - have been rejected as too low.

Call me cranky, but condemnation comes to mind here. If not legally, then certainly morally.

A sweet dream, indeed.

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• *Index terms: PIMA COUNTY GOVERNMENT*

• *Record: MERLIN_2983174*

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