

# Tucson Citizen

## 159 weigh Tucson's future as Town Hall opens

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Published: 05.07.2007

*Editor's note: Tucson Citizen Editor and Publisher Michael A. Chihak is a participant in the Tucson Regional Town Hall and will file reports from there.*

Participants in the Tucson Regional Town Hall wrestled with issues of downtown revitalization, land-use planning and preservation, water and transportation in starting their discussions Sunday.

The 159 handpicked delegates to the first-ever Town Hall, held at Loews Ventana Canyon Resort, opened the four days of meetings with dinner and remarks from organizers.

"This is an experiment," Town Hall chairman and former University of Arizona President Peter Likins told the delegates. "And as with all experiments, we don't know the outcome. Success - or failure - is up to you."

He and others stressed the need for finding consensus and establishing regional cooperation and action on a long list of issues.

The delegation is divided into five groups, each discussing the same topics. Written consensus statements from each group will be combined into a draft report for the entire delegation to review and adopt at a closing session scheduled for Wednesday.

The final draft will include an implementation plan.

"This Town Hall is just the beginning," Likins said. "If we do it right, it will take us on a long journey together."

Besides Sunday's topics, the delegates will try to reach consensus on issues of economic development and job growth, access to and quality of health care, creating a culture of literacy and improving education.

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