

# Arizona Daily Star

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## **Trust-building, visioning process needed**

*ANN BROWN, ARIZONA DAILY STAR*

Lack of trust - of elected officials, bureaucrats, economic forecasts, business, special interest groups - is a major impediment to our community's progress.

Our region's trust issues emerged Wednesday at "Crafting Tomorrow's Built Environment: A Community Conversation on Regional Land Use."

The session also brought into clarity that smaller jurisdictions in our region will not settle for being primarily "bedroom communities," from which most residents commute to their jobs.

Marana Mayor Ed Honea, Sahuarita Mayor Lynn Skelton and Oro Valley Mayor Paul Loomis presented to the 400 gathered at the Tucson Convention Center aggressive growth and annexation plans for their jurisdictions, which include commercial and employment centers. The meeting was a follow-up conversation to the Tucson Regional Town Hall held in May 2007 and the Star-sponsored "Tucson Growth: Decision at the Crossroads" forum held in March.

While these jurisdictions plan their evolution, their economies are projected to merge into a "megapolis" along the "Sun Corridor" that will eventually stretch from Prescott Valley into Cochise and Santa Cruz counties.

Despite the economy's unpredictability, our region is destined to grow according to Grady Gammage Jr., a land-use attorney and senior fellow at the Morrison Institute for Public Policy at Arizona State University, source of the Sun Corridor theory.

Our region will remain a desirable, attractive place to live, according to Gammage. It needs to get its planning act together, however. The risk of default is a series of sprawling beige-stucco, red-roof houses.

To stop growth would be to make our region an undesirable place to live - no one, even current residents, would want to live here, said attorney Robert Grow, co-founder of Envision Utah.

As we've said before, the jurisdictions' and other community plans are scattered puzzle pieces that must be fit together. But before we can start putting the puzzle together, we need the picture on the box: a vision.

The economic slowdown, a pause in our population growth, is an opportunity to catch our collective breath and realistically decide what our future will be.

A panel that included Mayors Honea, Skelton and Loomis, Pima County Board of Supervisors Chairman Richard Elías and Tucson Mayor Bob Walkup espoused a "we're all in this together" attitude. Most also were fairly candid about the lack of trust among community members, special interest groups and, frankly, one another.

A process similar to Grow's Envision Utah should be adapted here. It is not a plan that said what should go where. Rather, it establishes an overarching, values-based framework. Examples of values: personal satisfaction, security and trust. From these values, scenarios for the future are created and strategies and goals are established.

The Envision Utah process demands involvement from the full scope of the community: business, developers, conservation groups, utilities, educators, religious groups, social services, state and local governments.

What also became clear Wednesday: The community is tired of talking and is ready for action. Yet, no group has the credibility to initiate and fully implement such a process.

The Pima Association of Governments and the Tucson Regional Town Hall were cited as possibilities, but they carry too much baggage to be accepted - trusted - by all.

Envision Utah, a private-public partnership formed in 1997, is a project of the nonpartisan Coalition for Utah's Future. Its initial \$1.5 million effort was funded by government, foundations and business each contributing a third, some of which was in-kind, according to Grow.

PAG and Tucson Regional Town Hall could be the catalyst to get an Envision Utah-like process started, but to bring such a process to fruition probably would require creation of a neutral, inclusive entity. Not another level of bureaucracy, but a single-focused network of people.

Our region needs this type of value-based planning, which would create an overarching vision and help build much needed trust.

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On StarNet: Find the presentations from "Tucson Growth: Decision at the Crossroads," the master plans for Southern Arizona's communities and other growth-related reports at [azstar.net.com/special/growthresources](http://azstar.net.com/special/growthresources)

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