

**REPORT OF THE**

**TUCSON REGIONAL TOWN HALL**

**“REALIZING THE POSSIBILITIES”**

**May 6 – 9, 2007**

From May 6 through 9, 2007 approximately 165 residents of the Tucson Region, who were genuinely interested in advancing their community, gathered at Loews Ventana Canyon Resort for the Tucson Regional Town Hall. For purposes of the discussion and this report, the “Tucson Region” was defined as eastern Pima County, including the incorporated cities and towns of Tucson, Oro Valley, Marana, South Tucson and Sahuarita, the Tohono O’odham Nation and the Pascua Yaqui Tribe, as well as the unincorporated county lands surrounding these jurisdictions. A stated goal of the Tucson Regional Town Hall was to provide input that will lead to the development of a regional vision. The participants were challenged during the opening dinner to listen to one another, be open to different thoughts and ideas, and work hard to establish a regional vision designed to preserve and improve upon the many attributes that give the Tucson Region its identity and distinctive character. This will become even more challenging as the Region experiences the expected continuing rapid growth of its population through the year 2030. The participants were further encouraged to follow up on their work toward establishing a regional vision with the community stewardship necessary to accomplish their desired common values and goals.

The following is a brief consensus statement based on the discussions held by five panels of participants simultaneously over two very full working days, followed by their review of a draft of this report during a half day plenary session. This report is not intended as a record of everything said during the Town Hall or every opinion offered on the subjects under discussion; its purpose is to represent the consensus of the Town Hall participants on the many topics discussed. While not all Town Hall participants will agree with each of the conclusions and recommendations, this report reflects the consensus achieved at the Tucson Regional Town Hall.

This report is only the beginning. The next steps, and their ultimate success, are in the hands of not only the participants in the Tucson Regional Town Hall, but all who value the unique character and identity of the Tucson Region and want to preserve and improve it for future generations.

**REGIONAL ATTRIBUTES, ARTS AND THE ROLE OF DOWNTOWN TUCSON**

**Regional Attributes**

The Tucson Region has a unique blend of many attributes, both natural and man made, with something for everyone, all contributing to a world class quality of lifestyle and a strong sense of place. These attributes combine to attract and retain a wide variety of people, from visitors and new residents to retirees, young people and others who value the Region’s character as a place of great natural beauty and friendly, diverse peoples as well as a hub for outdoor life, physical activity and cultural and educational opportunities.

Some of the best natural attributes include: the ever present sunshine, and the excellent weather it brings year-round; the natural beauty of the Sonoran Desert ecosystem, with its unique mix of wildlife, vegetation, and beautiful landscapes; mountains such as Mt. Lemmon; canyons such as Madera Canyon and Sabino Canyon; the relative absence of natural disasters; and, the presence of dark skies filled with stars, a phenomenon so vital to the science of astronomy. These many natural features facilitate a large choice of diverse recreational opportunities, from running, hiking and biking to bird watching and exploring the natural beauty of the Arizona Sonora Desert Museum and Saguaro National Park. Geographically, the Tucson Region is a crossroads – a gateway to Mexico. Because of this, the Tucson Region’s sense of place includes both a local and international feel; and the Region’s sphere of influence extends beyond its borders, permeating throughout the state and into Mexico.

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While these natural attributes are significant, the Tucson Region has other characteristics that are of equal or even greater importance. Most significant of these are the people. The Region has a rich cultural history. There is a sense of community and a melding of old and new – from barrios and vibrant arts communities to new enterprises. Our people are known for their sense of volunteerism, working together and welcoming visitors and immigrants of all types.

Although its population is greater than one million people, the Tucson Region still maintains that “small town feel.” Many people visit, choose to live here and stay in the Region because they “love it” here. The presence of the University of Arizona and its impact on the community, culture and the people of the Region is an extremely positive attribute. The community also benefits from military installations such as Davis Monthan Air Force Base.

In spite of the many positive attributes, the Region is not without its problems and challenges. The Tucson Region has not adequately developed its attributes. Historically, the resources necessary to fully enhance the Region’s attributes have not been made available, or have been inequitably distributed. This needs to change. Comprehensive multi-jurisdictional regional planning is vitally necessary to enhance, preserve and improve the character of the Tucson Region as it changes and grows into the future. The entire region must be engaged in this process. The people of the Region need to look internally at its positive attributes and determine what is valuable, what should be preserved and what should be changed. All need to be engaged in the process, and the Region needs to develop a means to ensure that neighborhoods’ voices are

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heard. Citizens are encouraged and enlisted to volunteer so that the regional vision can be realized; they are essential to the process.

Many enhancements may help preserve the Tucson Region’s unique attributes. Presented in no special order, these enhancements include improved public transportation, airline service improvements, and attention to unsightly transportation corridors. The Region’s beauty could be enhanced by overall improvement of roadways and streets that create an unfavorable first impression and by greater investment in public art. Significant improvements in P-12 education also are necessary. Graduation rates must be improved, and more attention should be given to postsecondary education. There should be a concerted effort to retain in the community talented graduates of the University of Arizona (UA) and Pima Community College (PCC). A greater level of collaboration between UA, PCC and the local

community is essential. Drawing the community onto the campus and the campus into the community and better integrating these institutions with the community should have a positive influence on the Region. Economic improvement and education go hand in hand.

It is critical for the Tucson Region to further develop and raise its wage base to provide greater prosperity for everyone. The primary emphasis here must be to raise the standard of living for the

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thousands of regional residents who are economically disadvantaged. The challenge for the Region is to capture dynamic growth without accepting the unpalatable costs and consequences of unfocused and uncontrolled growth.

The Region must come together to

make hard choices about which costs it will pay to secure the economic growth and quality of life desired. Better alignment of existing workforce development efforts may facilitate this. There should be greater efforts to attract new capital investment, and to reduce impediments to that investment, such as high commercial property taxes and slow permitting processes.

While the Tucson Region prides itself on its friendliness, sense of community and its diverse cultures, it has allowed a portion of the population, including the economically disadvantaged and undocumented, to live behind both physical and economic walls that screen them from public view and attention. Economic growth, improved educational opportunities and an emphasis on the creation of affordable housing are essential if the Region is to redress some of these discrepancies. The Region must promote, nurture and respect its cultural heritage and community identity, and its historical “sense of place,” if it is to be distinguished from other global cities with which it competes.

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Other suggested enhancements include the building or re-creating of a vibrant downtown and linking it with surrounding neighborhoods; protecting and encouraging diverse family neighborhoods; achieving a pedestrian-friendly nature for the Region, with ample walkways, bike paths and public spaces; protecting and promoting the cultural diversity of the Region; emphasizing the outdoor environment and ensuring that development and growth are sensitive to the environment; and preserving and maintaining the historic architecture and old world charm for which the Region is known. There must be a concerted effort to overcome the historical reluctance to spend money on public and private projects. While governments should be accountable to spend tax dollars wisely, they also should be prepared to raise and spend taxes where necessary.

Who should be responsible for implementing the recommended enhancements? Everyone. Business and community leaders must share in the responsibility for implementing the recommendations that come from this Town Hall. Individuals must take responsibility for stewardship of the community. Part-time residents and recent arrivals should be educated about and encouraged to invest in the community. Those in the lower income areas must have a voice so that their issues are addressed. Developers must develop within the context of the environmental and cultural uniqueness of the Tucson Region. The media play an important role through the influencing of public attitudes.

The planning should include a broad cross section of the community. It is important to build strong public/private/nonprofit partnerships to create the vision and guiding principles, and to then

implement and fund them. This active working relationship is necessary to ensure that projects are successful in the ways intended.

### **Arts, Culture and Recreation**

Rich arts, culture and recreation, which initially drew many to this community, are critically important to the Tucson Region's economy and quality of life. They are a unifying force that is integral to our way of life, and they operate together to provide a sense of community. The Tucson Region is one of the few areas of its size in the country hosting all of the major performing arts. The Tucson arts community also supports experimental, culturally diverse, emerging and visual arts. A strong arts and cultural community helps attract young and talented people to the Region, as they prefer to live in vibrant communities. Tucson is a city of festivals and should strive to become the arts and cultural center of Arizona.

The Tucson Region also has great recreational opportunities that are an important contribution to the area's quality of life. Examples of these opportunities include bicycling, golfing, birding, hiking and camping. Collegiate, professional and amateur sporting events also are part of the recreational assets of the region. The Tucson Region has the potential to rank very high among regions of comparable size in attributes that are attractive to the "creative class" of young movers and shakers typically employed in high quality high wage jobs.

The fact that arts, culture and recreation contribute directly to the Region's economy is indisputable. Many job opportunities are provided, and the direct dollars paid are readily discernable. The indirect impacts, while incalculable with precision, arguably are even more important. Development of a "soft infrastructure" – the arts, culture and recreation – is very important in attracting and maintaining a knowledge-based economy. The humanities should be valued equally with science and technology. Tourists and businesses come to the Region in large part because of its artistic, cultural and recreational opportunities. The optimal role for arts, culture and recreation in the future is an even greater presence within the community than what currently exists. In addition to the marketing and entertainment values, it should be recognized that the arts contribute significantly to the region's education and employment opportunities in quantitative and qualitative ways.

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The challenges standing in the way of an optimal role for arts, culture and recreation in the future of the Tucson Region include funding; adequate quality facilities for performances, exhibitions and rehearsals throughout the entire community; preserving the authenticity of the arts and culture; marketing and related communication regarding the opportunities available; and expansion into additional opportunities or special events. In particular, the region has a challenge in attracting the young, creative class. In order to better accommodate this group, we must expand and highlight performance venues to draw more modern musical acts and other entertainment popular with the young. Other challenges include: supporting the enhancement of arts instruction in the public schools; providing more attractions for children; encouraging new and seasonal residents who are supporters of the arts in their "hometowns" to support arts in the Tucson Region; maximizing public resources without prohibitive tax increases; making arts, culture and recreation available to all; facilitating an atmosphere of cooperation and coordination among the different providing organizations to help one another; and avoiding the problems created by nonprofits competing for limited private dollars.

As important as arts, culture and recreation are in the Tucson Region, they are significantly under-funded. As a result, parks and facilities are insufficient in number and many are substandard. As a

region, we fall below the national guidelines for parks and recreation facilities, and now is the time to address this critical need. Having more multi-use venues, such as Reid Park, that will house multiple types of activities and people is not only economically beneficial, but helps to promote a sense of community. Also, schools and other suitable spaces should be used after hours as alternative facilities for the arts and recreation and as practice and performance space.

Typically, arts, culture and recreation funding involves a mix of public and private dollars, with significant private money often coming from large businesses operating in the Tucson Region. This is a particular challenge in the Tucson Region because of the scarcity of corporate headquarters and large foundations that in many other communities provide substantial support. For this reason, taxes and other governmental support is more crucial here than in other communities.

The Tucson Region should consider implementing tax measures dedicated to funding the arts, culture and recreation. The use of voter-approved bonds can accelerate the development of recreational and other publicly-enjoyed facilities and mitigate the impact of rising construction costs. The Maricopa Campaign for Arts and Culture has recently concluded that there needs to be a statewide referendum in 2008 that enables Maricopa County to generate a 1/10 of 1% sales tax as a dedicated revenue source of approximately \$60 million to support arts and cultural activities; Pima County should participate in this sales tax effort. As the Region continues to grow, it also should consider allocating greater tax resources to provide increased support for the arts, culture and recreation. However, we must approach funding issues in a careful and strategic way.

One means of funding that has been successful in other areas and may be considered here involves collaborative public sector efforts throughout the Region to fund venues, with the private sector being responsible for payment of operating costs. Regional parks planning and coordination of recreation activities should be encouraged so that different areas of the Region can share the expenses and benefits of arts, culture and recreation venues. We also need an enhanced centralized conduit or clearinghouse to better coordinate and publicize regional arts, culture and recreation events. Government bears the predominant role in providing the infrastructure, while many programs are led by the nonprofit sector. Another possible source of funding may be tourism dollars. It is essential that we address priorities in funding the arts, culture and recreation and be more creative in public/private resources. More individual investment, both personally and financially, is critical to the future well being of the community.

The Tucson Region should be more inclusive so that all groups, including children, seniors and those who are economically disadvantaged, are better served. By our encouraging arts and recreation in

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the education system, our children will be better rounded, healthier and more successful students who have a greater sense of life skills, stay out of trouble and have greater ties to the community. The responsibility initially lies with individuals, such as the participants of this Town Hall, to set priorities for spending public/private resources but

ultimately rests with the community as a whole. It is necessary to consider what has worked successfully in other communities and choose similar methods that best fit the Tucson Region. This will require coordination among the local jurisdictions, with leadership being a collaborative process between the public and private sectors.

## The Role of Downtown Tucson in the Tucson Region

While its place in history is that of Tucson's birthplace, Downtown Tucson does not yet have a significant role as a destination for residents or visitors. Downtown Tucson should be the energetic, sustainable, vibrant and livable downtown that is essential to economic development, and to the preservation and enhancement of the cultural and artistic heritage of both the City of Tucson and the Tucson Region. A vibrant downtown – one that is the “soul” of the Region – is critical to the health and success of the entire region.

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Downtown Tucson must be able to satisfy a variety of needs, including cultural, residential, commercial and educational; and it should be integrated with other areas. The streets should be clean, pedestrian friendly and be able to adequately move infill traffic. This can be accomplished by developing and encouraging alternative routes between I-10 and Aviation Highway. There should be adequate parking options. There must be activity at all times, and people should feel safe at all hours. Law enforcement, fire protection and public safety in general needs a higher priority than it currently is receiving. We cannot close our eyes to the high impact that crime has on the “negatives” to our Region. More support and funding for public safety are needed. Residents should be living and working downtown in a strong business community with a mix of housing types for all income levels. Such a downtown would serve as a nucleus and catalyst for the Region, offering a high density residential area capable of attracting and retaining young professionals, local artists, business owners and others interested in vibrant and prosperous urban living, now and for future generations.

More residents would be drawn to the downtown by: a broad range of housing options, including student housing; improved livability, such as the presence of grocery stores; a public mass transit hub; and a greater presence by UA and PCC in the form of educational facilities and programs. More visitors would be drawn to the downtown if they “felt safe” and there were more amenities for them, improved hotel and convention facilities and signature attractions, such as regional museums and opportunities for night and weekend activities. There should be efforts to attract and sustain locally-owned businesses in the downtown area, including small businesses that will lend uniqueness to the area, but may not be able to compete with the economies of scale enjoyed by chains and larger businesses. More residents would live downtown, more businesses would locate downtown and more visitors would be drawn downtown if we returned much of the

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historic perennial flow to the Santa Cruz River, thus restoring riparian areas, creating a greenway and a linear pull for miles. Efforts to accomplish this goal are now underway through a project designed by the Army Corps of Engineers (called “Paseo de las Iglesias”). We must become more fully aware of this project and support proper riparian restoration of the Santa Cruz, creating a true “Rio Nuevo.”

A great downtown will not develop simply because of government policies and incentives – there must be private investment and the political will to support the necessary growth and development. Changes in the land use code are necessary. The downtown should be a model for the community for innovative simplification of the land use code and streamlining of processing development. The quality of the place must be such that it attracts people to live, work and visit there. It must be a place where

people want to go about their everyday activities. The convention center and other public facilities must be enhanced and expanded. While private investment is critical to the success of Downtown Tucson, public/private partnerships also will be necessary. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funds, as well as a modern streetcar and other systems that will bring UA and other areas into the heart of Downtown, will be vital to the effort.

Community leaders should strongly support downtown improvement efforts that may be politically divisive and difficult. The Tucson City Council should not be expected to single-handedly

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address the issue of downtown development. The leadership and initiative that will be needed to make Downtown Tucson great must emerge from the private sector, which has the development expertise. Government can provide

the incentives to build downtown. Participation in downtown improvements should be regional, so that all areas are supportive of Downtown Tucson as a focal point of the Region.

A firm definition or re-definition of Downtown Tucson will facilitate downtown development and participation by the entire Tucson Region in that process. The area from A Mountain and the historical core of downtown to the University of Arizona and perhaps beyond will have to be viewed as a single economic engine that is the “downtown” for the Region. This area will better fit the definition of Downtown Tucson and cause it to become more integrated and connected with the Region.

The support of those with no direct ties to downtown is essential. Downtown Tucson should serve as an urban core that is the heart and soul of the Region, a destination that gives us our sense of place and is where people want to go. Outlying areas also should be supportive of downtown development because a higher density downtown actually helps to preserve the natural environment and promotes sustainability. Without central energetic facilities, the outlying areas will suffer. It is essential that the Tucson Region have a vibrant and prosperous downtown that is beneficial to the Region as a whole. The possibilities of professional sports in the Downtown area should be broadened to include alternatives other than those that have been currently identified.

## INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

### Planning and Land Use Guidelines

Traditional land use paradigms will have to change if the Tucson Region is to effectively manage future development in the Region, because the current systems of planning and land use guidelines are not effective in managing development.

Land use planning needs to transcend the old, somewhat arbitrary jurisdictional boundary lines. Land use plans must make sense and include fiscal impact analyses as necessary so that the plans have a reasonable chance of being implemented, and trust and confidence in the process are restored. Issues such as transportation, conservation of open space and affordable housing must be addressed at the regional level, recognizing existing efforts like the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) and Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan. Greater coordination and cooperation on a regional basis

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are necessary to maximize the benefits of planning. Such benefits should include greater consistency across jurisdictions and greater coordination in the planning for water use, transportation and environmental issues.

Overall land use planning should become more regional while respecting local desires. Regional planning should happen with other counties and councils of government to plan for the Sun Corridor from Yavapai to Cochise and Santa Cruz counties. The Sun Corridor will receive the bulk of the state's population growth over the next 50 years.

State trust lands are a major component of available land in the Tucson Region. The management and development of these lands also must take place on a regional level, and State Land Department policies must be reformed. State Land Department cooperation, but not control over the process, is a necessary component. In addition, an amendment to the Arizona Constitution to reform the State Land

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Department and the manner in which state lands are managed is necessary to promote both conservation and more effective development of state trust lands. Further, the State Land Department should be more transparent and cooperative in dealing with

regional jurisdictions. The State Land Department should offer incentives and work to build infrastructure. Additionally, the State Land Department should be permitted to make land available for open space, transportation and utility corridors, and other public uses, rather than selling every available acre to the highest bidder.

The Tucson Region has been quite good at setting aside land as open space for conservation, and not as effective at “setting aside” and developing land for dense, mixed use areas. Mixed use development should be encouraged. Whereas it may be impractical to provide amenities, such as open space and affordable housing, in every new development or in every jurisdiction, good regional planning can provide for the location of such needed facilities and amenities on a regional scale. A cooperative effort should take place between the government, nonprofit and for profit sectors in the Region to provide more affordable housing.

Current zoning laws may give disproportionate control to a small group of adjacent landowners who are more likely to resist development they don't prefer than to encourage development that is most beneficial to the Region as a whole. Changes in state laws and local ordinances for the benefit of the Tucson Region may be necessary. The effect of Proposition 207 (addressing eminent domain compensation) has yet to be seen and may have a significant impact on land use development.

A strategy should be put in place to encourage appropriate infill development. Such a strategy could include careful consideration of if and when new impact fees are imposed in order to encourage compatible infill development. Appropriate infill development should be planned in order to recognize where minimum and maximum densities are most desirable.

When increasing density in the urban core, care must be given to preserving the historic and cultural aspects as well as the natural ecological connectivity of the area. There must be quality but affordable housing. Moreover, we need to plan for and build the urban housing that a highly skilled workforce desires.

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Under a regional planning process, tax revenues could be shared to defray the cost of expensive

infrastructure in desired areas. All future planning and land use guidelines must incorporate a financial component so that the plans have a reasonable chance of being effectively implemented.

Another strategy that should be considered to incentivize the concentration of development in particular areas is the planning and financing of infrastructure to encourage densities that meet housing and other uses for markets appropriate to the urban core. This would promote the more efficient use of scarce resources and could lead to the eventual development and use of light rail and other public transit options. Infill projects that run contrary to market desires will not succeed. The development process for infill projects should be structured to incentivize, to save time and money.

Local land use policies, codes and processes should be better aligned with the Region's public policy objectives. For example, if the Region desires to encourage mass transit, or discourage urban sprawl, communities will need to re-examine land use policies and codes that require low density development with significant open space or that prohibit high rise development. An increase in vertical development will decrease horizontal sprawl. The Tucson Region should recognize that conservation should serve greater rather than parochial interests and that it should not be mandated without consideration of the opportunity costs and ongoing maintenance required.

Local land use policies, codes and processes should be better aligned with the Region's public policy objectives.

Many of the current policies and codes are either outdated or too inflexible, forcing development to take the route of least resistance, instead of doing what is right. Where the theoretical commitment to density exists, developers and consumers still may be opposed to higher density development. Efforts should be made to change the public perception about what kinds of development should be acceptable in the Region, and to bring forward positive examples of good urban design that could inform the discussion. A specific plan for Downtown Tucson that includes development exemptions from or waiver of the land use code seriously should be pursued. The Development Services Departments of all jurisdictions and other government planning and approval agencies should implement measures, such as defined turnaround times, that place greater focus on assisting and streamlining, rather than impeding the development process, particularly in the downtown area. Finally, the Tucson Region should learn from other communities that successfully have reformed their land use planning and control processes.

### **Water Use, Reuse and Management**

Water is the Tucson Region's most precious resource and critically important to its future. Efforts should be made to change public attitudes and behaviors toward water issues so that the Region

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realizes the urgency of this very complex issue and immediately works to improve upon the use, reuse and management of its water resources. The keys to this are education and awareness in the community. Water conservation and education processes must become consistent and effective from

childhood through public adult programs. As the water infrastructure is updated, consumers must be educated as to future alternatives. The education programs must be thorough, simple and transparent.

The issue of water use, reuse and management law and policy is very complex. Many in the public lack a general understanding of the issues, such as the relative costs and benefits of water

conservation programs, different treatment methods, and the different sources of water, from groundwater to surface water to treated effluent. The Tucson Region, and the state as a whole, would benefit from a highly public education process, such as the process that recently led to the passage of the RTA.

Although there may be a perception that regional governments are not cooperating effectively in the management of water and wastewater, some felt they are working closely toward a regional optimization plan. Credible cooperation in the management of the water supply must involve and include agreements for signoff by all of the regional governments and municipal, tribal and private water suppliers. Given the importance of water to the Tucson Region, we absolutely must actualize regional planning and cooperation. Immediate steps toward that end, which must include all water providers, should be:

- 1) The completion of a full infrastructure map and assessment;
- 2) The formation of a formal regional collaborative to pursue and secure additional water sources; and
- 3) The initiation of a long range planning process that is both regional and inclusive.

The long term regional water plan must create a comprehensive, sustainable approach, taking into account the complexity of the issues and existing legal precedent. One outcome of such a plan could be the formation of a regional water authority.

Because water resources are limited, non-critical uses should be discouraged. One method of accomplishing this is to price non-critical water uses more aggressively. A lack of political will to price water appropriately may be responsible for the slow pace of progress in the conservation arena. Per household monthly water bills in the Region are much lower than the national average. Pricing has been set based on the cost of services, rather than to create conservation incentives. Existing tiered water user pricing schedules should be revised and updated to provide greater economic incentives for conservation, recognizing that, as a necessary commodity to sustain life, some amount of water should be priced appropriately and available to all.

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Use of all available sources, such as effluent, surface water, rainwater, storm water and flood control should be examined from a regional perspective. Some water conservation measures could be implemented easily. For example, the use of cisterns and berms designed to save rainwater and retain runoff should be encouraged through tax incentives, provided such actions are within the limits of the law. The Region could require that all landscaping be irrigated with water collected and retained on site. Grey water and reuse of all effluent should be encouraged, and plans should be made now for the future treatment of effluent to the highest standards, understanding the costs likely will be expensive. The Sweetwater Recharge Facility is a good example of current efforts to maximize the use of effluent. These should be continued and expanded.

The Tucson Region must make full use of its Central Arizona Project (CAP) allocation. This is necessary not only to avoid losing it, but also to ensure a balanced water use situation in the future. Arizona's Congressional delegation must work to continue maintaining the Tucson Region's fair share of CAP water. The Tucson Region must have more active representation on the CAP board, and overall water use, reuse and management strategies or plans should be of a long term nature, possibly including

federal involvement. The Region must engage aggressively in the development of future state water management plans and policies, and in particular must push for re-examination of the Central Arizona Groundwater Replenishment District (CAGRD) process. Such strategies should include areas beyond the Tucson Region, including Maricopa County. For the benefit of future generations, the Region also should look beyond the CAP to other resources, such as desalination, imported supplies and advanced technologies designed to provide new sources of water or reduce the cost of using or reusing existing supplies. The Tucson Region should be on the cutting edge of sustainable water technology.

### **Transportation Planning**

There is a serious shortfall in the funding projected to be available to pay for needed Tucson Regional transportation improvements. The Pima Association of Governments' (PAG) estimate of \$6 billion required over the next 20 years already is viewed as inadequate due to the passage of time and increases in construction costs. Having achieved a wonderful victory in getting the RTA approved and partially funded, the Region's next significant step is to fully implement it.

There is a serious shortfall in the funding projected to be available to pay for needed Tucson Regional transportation improvements.

The Town Hall identified a number of additional potential funding sources for transportation needs, including: (1) bonding and other similar borrowing mechanisms secured by future taxes; (2) federal sources of funding, such as appropriations for "corridors of the future" and funds set aside for railroads; (3) toll roads, limited access pricing, and congestion pricing; (4) raising the gas tax, and indexing the tax to inflation; (5) increasing the vehicle license tax; (6) increasing driver's license fees through reduced renewal periods; (7) parking permit increases; (8) municipal surcharges on moving violations; (9) impact fees and construction sales taxes on new development, and a "growth pays for itself policy" that requires new development to pay the full cost of constructing new roads; (10) incorporating or annexing unincorporated areas for better access to revenue sharing funds, or revising the revenue sharing formula to include additional funds for unincorporated county areas; and, (11) keeping a greater percentage of motor vehicle taxes in the county.

Not all of these funding sources are certain. Many would require changes in policy or new laws at the state or federal level. For example, federal funds are increasingly less available. The Greater Tucson Region should actively and aggressively seek federal highway corridor funding to improve the I-10 and I-19 corridors. When seeking funds, it should be remembered that not all of the projects are truly regional. Many are strictly local transportation needs.

Energy conservation, including alternatives such as congestion management techniques and more efficient use of land, is encouraged as an alternative to funding more transportation.

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greater public education of gasoline saving alternatives, such as hybrid vehicles; reduced individual transportation costs through better use of public transit, such as light rail; incentives to car pool or telecommute; greater use of bike lanes, taking into account the safety

issues; and using technology to encourage video conferencing. In many instances, more efficient use of roadways should be encouraged through better regional planning, such as incentives to use other modes of

transportation and improved partnerships with the UA and PCC campuses to better accommodate and encourage students to use the cities' alternative modes of transportation. The media is necessary in this process to increase public awareness of the problems, encourage participation, and to publicize ongoing efforts at improvement.

The Tucson Region may benefit from the implementation of traffic strategies that improve not only local traffic conditions, but also take into consideration the fact that the Region is a transportation hub for goods and services, and not all traffic is local. Specific measures may include the construction of freeway truck bypass routes, construction of a regional railroad interchange or grade separated railroad crossings to expedite the travel of slow moving trains through the Region, and the construction of bus pullouts, smart highway technology and other traffic flow management devices.

The Tucson Region's transportation challenges are significant and far exceed the coverage afforded them in this Town Hall. Further study of the issues is necessary. The Region should explore innovative new solutions and perhaps revisit strategies that were successful in the past.

## **CREATING A VIBRANT ECONOMY, A SKILLED WORKFORCE AND A HEALTHY POPULACE**

### **A High-Wage, Knowledge-Based Economy**

The Tucson Region ranks near the bottom third of American cities in per capita income, and its ranking has declined in the past few years. Economic development is critical to the Region's future. To the greatest extent possible, the Region should leverage its existing attributes to create a more high-wage, knowledge-based economy for the prosperity of the entire community. A high-technology economy is a desirable high-wage economy, requiring workers with high skills and paying high wages. The impact of a high-skills high-wage economy is not isolated. It benefits many other sectors, from farming to construction to the auto industry to nursing. The Tucson Region should grow its awareness of and competency to support a high-tech economy.

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While high-tech is an important goal, it represents but one segment of the Tucson Region's diverse overall economy. Many other non high-tech jobs are knowledge-based, require high levels of skills and pay higher wages than average. The key to growing the Tucson Region's economy is to focus on increasing the average income. The business climate should be as attractive as possible, not only for high-tech or bio-tech businesses, but for high-wage businesses consistent with the Region's environmental objectives. The market operates more effectively when government works cooperatively with the private sector.

The Tucson Region competes globally for high-skilled high-wage businesses, but has not been particularly effective when compared against Texas and other Sunbelt regions and countries, such as India, that act more aggressively to attract new businesses. To compete more effectively, the Region needs to "remove the blinders" that limit focus to a single industry or market niche. There must be community support and awareness of what a high-wage knowledge-based economy involves. We need to increase community awareness of the benefits of such an economy, alert the community that now is the time to focus on this area, and initiate change.

The focus should be on a strategy to expand the economic base. The key business segments have been identified and we now need to work in a community-wide collaborative effort to increase recruitment, retention, expansion and start-ups. Sometimes competition from other cities and regions is so great that it is not economically feasible to attract new business. There is a tendency to overlook opportunities to retain and grow existing businesses. The Tucson Region has companies both large and small: small companies can be very resourceful, and generate 80% of all employment, while large companies may be leaders in their fields and successful in generating spin-offs. It also is critical to help new companies get off the ground.

The Arizona Legislature has been unwilling to invest public funds in various activities that attract high-skill high-wage employers. For example, investment in translational research at the state universities not only serves their teaching and research mission, but also returns a profit on every dollar invested. By priming the pump with public funds, the Legislature could help the Tucson Region attract matching grants and other funds for research. The Region also must consider investing in efforts that allow it to compete head to head with other regions for specific business opportunities.

The University of Arizona is an exceptional research university, with world class science and engineering departments – a great asset for the Tucson Region. With limited availability of high-skills, high-wage jobs in the Region, however, graduates leave the area for a wider array of opportunities elsewhere. The Tucson Region lacks a critical mass or nucleus of related employment opportunities that will allow it to attract and retain a highly-skilled workforce. This causes graduates to leave the area. It also affects the recruitment of top research talent, and makes it difficult to retain the talent we have in the community already. Local businesses must be encouraged to bring their peers into this market. Incubators and start-up companies also must be encouraged, so that we can match the needs of high-wage knowledge-based employers with our educated graduates and current high-skilled talent.

Improved cooperation between the UA, businesses and nonprofits in the area of research and technology is necessary. The University’s research capabilities could be better leveraged to improve the Tucson Region’s economy and quality of life. One method of accomplishing this is to improve the process of technology transfer, the transferring of University technology to the business community. It has been difficult for the business community and the University to work together on tech transfers. A streamlined process would be a win/win situation. The Arizona constitution should be amended to facilitate tech transfers by allowing the universities to take equity interests in companies. Other tech transfer activities should be continued; and existing state statutes, rules and regulations that hinder tech transfer activities should be modified. In the Tucson Region, more direct dialogue and cooperation between private industry and the UA would be helpful. There should be a task force created within Tucson Regional Economic Opportunities (TREGO) or through new collaborators that includes researchers, government, private business and nonprofit representatives tasked with the goal of streamlining the tech transfer process.

Improved cooperation between the UA, businesses and nonprofits in the area of research and technology is necessary.

A high-wage, knowledge-based economy produces jobs at every level, and the effects will trickle out to benefit the entire community, including less-skilled workers. The Tucson Region should establish a think tank, clearinghouse or other similar entity that will coordinate ongoing efforts to foster intelligent business growth and attract high-wage, high-skill jobs. TREGO has a good start on this effort. The Region should work to ensure that it has or gains the overall qualities that appeal to the highly skilled, creative class of knowledge-workers.

The regional governments must work harder to help the community move from a resources-based economy to a high-wage, knowledge-based economy through partnerships, venture capital, tax incentives and infrastructure improvements. The Tucson Region could be the next technopolis.

### **Increasing Skilled Workers for High-Wage Jobs**

The number of skilled workers for high-wage jobs in the Tucson Region must be increased. This can be accomplished by retaining the skilled workers already here, by properly educating our children who will be the skilled workers of tomorrow, by lifelong training of workers to update or upgrade job skills, and by drawing skilled workers to the Region from other cities/regions. Each of these has different obstacles to overcome and will require different solutions. We must realize that we can no longer do the same thing and expect different results. The Region needs to have different expectations of the key players and institute accountability. We need collaborative thinking among all involved to develop new and innovative solutions.

Retaining skilled workers will require that we work to attract, retain and expand employers who will create jobs suitable for graduating students of the UA and PCC. These graduates also need a “sense

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of place” to connect to the community. While they are in school, students should be encouraged to develop ties with the community through internship programs offered by regional businesses. The Region should

support and increase workforce internship and mentoring programs on all levels. Businesses should receive incentives for participating in these programs and to encourage them to support further, lifelong education.

Recent college graduates are attracted to a Region not only by jobs, but also by the quality of life. The qualities that appeal to empty-nesters – who are the focus of the Tucson Region’s marketing efforts – are insufficient to attract young, college-educated graduates and other skilled workers who want an urban lifestyle; around the clock activity; and, vibrant and walkable downtowns, high end retail, and clubs, music, movies and pro sports. If it intends to attract and keep skilled workers, the Tucson Region needs to expand its image.

The Region must overcome the inertia of those empty nesters and others who say they want this to be the place where their children want to live, but who prefer the Tucson Region as it is and resist change. We must avoid communicating to visitors and residents alike that this is a Region where the sidewalks roll up at 9:00

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p.m., and low wages are a small price to pay for the privilege of living here. Changing the Region’s image would not only serve to retain graduates of the UA and PCC, but also would help attract skilled workers from other regions.

The education system must play an important role in the training of skilled workers for the labor pool. The Tucson Region should be able to significantly increase the number of skilled workers available by dramatically overhauling the P-12 education system, seamlessly integrating the entire P-20 education system, and increasing the rigor of the curricula. There should be a focus on reaching children to

encourage their talents at a younger age. Employers and schools should collaborate to expose younger students to science and technology-based fields and encourage them to pursue education in these areas. We need to communicate with them early, so they see and understand the opportunities that exist. They need to have a sense of excitement about learning that will encourage them to seek and obtain the training they will need.

Students who may not go directly into postsecondary education, but will proceed into the workforce, need to be better equipped to take entry-level, skilled jobs in the Tucson Region. The entire P-12 education system can facilitate this by: supporting craftsmen and apprenticeships; implementing programs to provide internships and mentoring; providing a high level of reading, writing and language use skills, so employers are not forced to provide on-the-job training in these basic skills; improving the perception of highly-skilled career opportunities that may not be considered academic careers; allowing teachers and school administrators more freedom to run schools and school programs to accomplish these goals; removing the culture of allowing students to fail; explaining the value of the process of learning; and using applied education so students can understand why they are learning what they are being taught. The Joint Technological Education District (JTED) is a critical component of these efforts and needs the active support and involvement of the business community.

Governments must provide the infrastructure; private business must identify the necessary skill sets needed for an employment driven curriculum; and then educators can design the curriculum and train students accordingly. The UA and PCC need to be held accountable for finding ways to meet the needs that exist and train workers for the future. They also should become involved in the education and retraining of workers currently employed in low-skill jobs. It is important that such programs fit a lifestyle requiring steady employment in conjunction with further education.

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A key step in improving the role of educational institutions in creating and maintaining skilled workers should be the funding and staffing of career services centers in high schools and postsecondary institutions. They must act as clearinghouses of information about opportunities for the community, employers and educational institutions to cooperate in providing experiential learning opportunities. The goal is an “inventory of resources, programs and opportunities,” keeping in mind that program eligibility must be expanded to cover more students.

If the Tucson Region is to successfully educate and retrain those currently in low skill jobs and move them into jobs requiring skilled workers, challenges different from the education and training of children will have to be recognized and overcome. The Region needs to take advantage of its several nonprofit organizations that focus on workforce development to assist the underutilized workforce in overcoming barriers such as tuition cost, wage loss, childcare and transportation. Some of these organizations actively reach out to make employees and employers aware of opportunities for workforce development. Postsecondary institutions and some businesses offer internship and apprenticeship

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programs for this purpose. More are needed. There also are effective partnerships in the Region between the business community and education institutions that have been successful in exposing the less privileged members of the community to the professional workplace environment. More of these effective programs are needed, and a greater awareness of these programs would help. Finally, Pima County invests in workforce development programs, although little federal funding is available for that purpose.

### **Accessibility and Quality of Health Care**

The accessibility and quality of health care in the Tucson Region must be improved. Untreated mental illness and substance use disorders have a negative impact on individuals, families and the overall quality of life in our community. Treatment of mental illness and substance use disorders is an essential part of the health care continuum. All strategies to improve our regional health care system must include the treatment of mental illness and substance use disorders as part of overall health care reform.

Although enormous efforts are being undertaken by the UA, local hospitals, community health centers, clinics and private practice providers, more must be done to equitably serve this community's health care needs. Personal responsibility for preventive health care and good health awareness cannot be over-emphasized. The Region must determine whether there is sufficient health care coverage in each area; ensure there is more coverage or more providers, as needed; produce the necessary workforce to provide that coverage; and more efficiently use available resources.

The ability of health care providers to share information relevant to patient care at a moment's notice would significantly improve the quality of health care at every level. Information technology has great promise in lowering the costs of medical services delivery and improving access to health care in remote areas. The Tucson Region has been a leader in telemedicine. Health information exchange or electronic health records available to providers throughout the Region would improve the quality of care and limit costs by reducing the fragmentation and duplication of services and permitting greater continuity of care. Such systems also would assist in directing patients to the appropriate providers, would improve the treatment of the chronically ill, the uninsured and underinsured segment of the population, and would assist in determining eligibility for existing programs.

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Health care accessibility is a particularly acute problem for the working poor, and for those living in outlying and tribal areas. Native Americans rely on the Indian Health Care Service and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which are not fully serving their needs. Patients throughout the Region cannot readily gain access to primary care providers or specialists, which increases the problem of overcrowded local emergency departments. Information technology has helped to better serve the rural areas with the use of telemedicine.

Although it would not necessarily solve the problem of inadequate record keeping, full adoption of integrated electronic records can improve the health care process. However, security, privacy and data integrity issues must be addressed. Patients also must be assured of ownership of their records, and a transportable miniaturized patient-owned record, such as an electronic smart card, should be developed and expanded to facilitate patient care. While health care providers and insurance companies are the

immediate beneficiaries of electronic records, the hoped for benefits of improved quality of care and limited costs accruing to consumers holds promise for contributing to better care overall.

Unfunded mandates to the use of electronic records should be funded. The benefits of integrated electronic health care records should be extended. Since you cannot manage or improve what you cannot measure, information technology is critical to allowing us to appropriately analyze what is working and what needs improvement. This analysis should help to better manage future health care.

The number of physicians, nurses and other health care providers must be increased in the Tucson Region. The ratio of doctors and nurses in relation to the population is far too low in the Region and in the rest of the state. The regional workforce shortage in the health care industry impacts access and quality of care. Current efforts that target workforce development in the health professions must be advanced. We support PCC's plan to build health professions education facilities and to expand workforce opportunities.

Educational capacity and investment should be mapped to high growth, high wage occupations such as nursing in order to increase the Region's supply of health care professionals to meet local demand. There has been a "brain drain," with a number of doctors, including highly-trained specialists, leaving their practices and the Region. Doctors also have been severely restricted in their ability to band together to negotiate with health insurance providers. Meaningful Medicare reform that allows for higher levels of reimbursement should be pursued. Attention should be paid to making the Region friendlier to doctors. Tort reform also should be considered. However, there is uncertainty over whether tort reform beneficially affects malpractice rates, and there are constitutional impediments to limiting recovery by injured persons.

The health care system will benefit if the overall health of the Region's population is improved. There should be more attention to preventive health measures and healthy behavior, such as diet and exercise, and to the management of disease. Education is a key component, including in the areas of mental health, substance abuse, long-term care, and the actual costs of health care. We also should focus on a wellness approach to save spending on chronic diseases, such as diabetes.

We are greatly concerned with burgeoning health care costs. End of life issues and an aging population are expected to further stress the system. There is a growing understanding that funding rapidly rising health care insurance premiums is a common problem facing employers. The cost of employer-provided coverage is so large, and increasing at such a high rate, that even very large companies are beginning to seriously discuss the desirability of universal health care coverage. The effects on smaller companies are even greater. The ability to pay more is reaching a breaking point. Employers must have greater freedom to form insurance buying groups for the purpose of limiting employee group premiums. The Legislature must be convinced to eliminate the six month "go bare" period for small employers to provide health care insurance through the state health care group.

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Employees often do not understand or appreciate the cost to their employers of their benefits package. Not only does this create a disincentive for employers to provide such benefits, but it also leads to over-utilization of health care services and system-wide increases in costs. Employers may benefit from a shift to self-insurance, greater cost-sharing with employees, and more extensive use of medical savings accounts.

Approximately twenty percent of the Region’s population is uninsured. As the number of people with insurance shrinks, those who can pay for medical services end up paying more. People are becoming more reliant on government-funded programs like the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS). While the notion of universal health care coverage is appealing, it is not a panacea. The Tucson Region should have a baseline minimum of health care available to all regardless of resources.

Tying the number of hospitals and community-based health centers to our growth is important to ensure health care accessibility and affordability. In a region that exceeds one million people, it is critical to support growth in trauma services. Trauma affects everyone in the Tucson Region, and services must

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be more widely available. It is critical to assure funding support of the Level I Trauma Center to assure this vital resource is sustainable and readily available to all. The

Region’s health care leaders also should look to national best practices related to the distribution of services and funding.

A coalition of employers, the public, health care providers, and governments should be formed to collaboratively address the accessibility and quality of health care in the Tucson Region. This coalition should consider, recommend and implement measures necessary to improve health care delivery in the Region and to reduce health care costs.

## LITERACY AND EDUCATION

### A Culture of Literacy

It should be a goal of the Tucson Region to make everyone in the community literate regardless of immigration status. Developing a greater culture of literacy is essential to improving the Tucson Region and should be expeditiously addressed. The United States, once the most literate nation in the world, now ranks somewhere between 13th and 17th. We no longer have the time to discuss the issue of literacy. We must act. Creating a

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culture of literacy is a “cradle to the grave” proposition, one that includes, but is not limited to formal educational experiences. Literacy, which encompasses not only the

ability to read, but also the ability to understand, is the key to nearly every job. An ability to read is important to financial literacy. If people cannot read, they most likely will have difficulty managing their money. Functional literacy requires being able to participate in society, and therefore must be updated as knowledge changes society.

Literacy begins at home. Unfortunately, the sizable segment of our population that does not complete high school, or go on to college, falls off the radar screen insofar as literacy and lifelong learning are concerned. The community must set high expectations, and it should not provide excuses for a lack of learning. All children will learn. The challenge is to identify how each child best learns. Teachers must be equipped to identify and reach students who learn in different manners. Parents want their children to succeed but may not know how to assist them. Parental illiteracy limits them from providing assistance. When this situation exists, other strategies must be utilized – for example: home-based intervention programs, extended day opportunities, and evening and family programs. The stigma

and shame of illiteracy deters some parents from seeking assistance or obtaining remedial education. When the parents are illiterate themselves, home-based intervention programs for the children must intercede and render assistance. When parents are functionally absent, the regional society must step in to assist the children, whether through nonprofits, government programs or the educational system.

Peer pressure exists among students fostered by the conflict of values between some of the pop culture and student success. This must be recognized and remediated. All forms of media and marketing should be used to influence peer pressure. We must also change the way our society perceives and idolizes sports figures and celebrities and shift our focus to enhancing the elevation and celebration of literacy and learning.

Business and community leaders must become involved in improving our culture of literacy. They can publicize the extent and significance of the problem, serve as literacy volunteers, encourage the development of workplace literacy

Adult remedial education programs should be empowered and funded.

programs, support public funding for literacy and adult education programs, and provide direct financial support to such programs.

Adult remedial education programs should be empowered and funded. The media should make free public service announcements to inform and educate the larger community about literacy issues and programs.

The government and community must play a role by establishing policies to promote literacy. We need to restore rigor to the educational process, expand the literacy programs that already are in place, and better utilize our library system. To assist in communities where reading has not been a historical priority, individual or group volunteers must serve as mentors and role models for parents. Greater expansion of family literacy volunteer programs must be encouraged. The Title I program is one example of how reading can be better promoted. Additionally, English as a second language programs should be expanded so that parents learn to read along with their children. Multi-language teaching is critical due to our proximity to the Mexican border and our large Hispanic population. Those proficient in another language, who are English language learners, should be viewed as an asset, not a deficiency.

Government entities can further promote literacy by continuing to fully fund libraries, and by making book ownership available to all children, such as through the Governor's recent One Book Program. Arts programs help to build culture and awareness of a larger world, and should therefore be promoted as literacy enhancements. Civic organizations must form inter-governmental partnerships to pursue this goal. Community based literacy programs should be promoted and can be based in neighborhood schools, faith based organizations and other facilities. In addition, there should be a pooling of resources between businesses and the community. Businesses that depend on a pool of employees who are able to read should reach out to their employees and the families of employees by providing or actively supporting literacy programs. They should support on-site day care facilities that promote literacy. Access to literacy programs should be improved by utilizing technologies such as software programs, television and other media.

Community based literacy programs should be promoted and can be based in neighborhood schools, faith based organizations and other facilities.

Factors inherent in the education system contribute to the literacy problem. Some students fall behind one or more grade levels in early elementary school and never catch up. An educational model that emphasizes rote memorization over critical thinking skills results in a group of students who do not

understand what they read and are equipped to become consumers rather than producers. We need to insist that education expectations are met before students move on to the next level. This forces everyone – students, teachers and parents – to evaluate priorities and to make success the goal.

Early childhood programs are critical to developing children ready to learn and for meeting our educational expectations. Recent research on infant brain development reinforces the belief that learning in years 0-6 is the foundation for academic success in later years. Early childhood education also ensures the development of a quality workforce. Early childhood programs must be comprehensive and address all early childhood issues, including instructing parents on how they can participate in the literacy process. The benefit of early childhood teaching is a good subject for a media public relations campaign.

Adequate funding for early childhood education is sorely lacking. It is imperative that Pima County continue to champion efforts to improve quality standards for childcare centers, including teacher certification and compensation. We also need better coordination of existing effective early childhood education programs within Pima County. Lastly, funding is needed to increase accessibility to high quality childcare. In particular, we should explore local funding mechanisms (such as the Children’s Trust Initiative in Miami, Florida) to generate additional revenue for early childhood education.

The training of early care teachers is the most critical action to ensure quality preparation for school success. There should be greater focus on our need for quality early education teachers. People need to be encouraged to go into teaching, and scholarship and wage supplements must be used to encourage this. Programs such as early childhood education offered through PCC should be encouraged and expanded. We need to change the perception of Arizona’s education system through strong funding and engage the media to publicize the achievements of our educational programs. Funds should be distributed among all stakeholders in a way that supports our needs at a local level.

The training of early care teachers is the most critical action to ensure quality preparation for school success.

In order to be successful, literacy programs need to be available to everyone, including documented and undocumented immigrants. A community culture of literacy is needed. By investing in literacy programs now, the children and adults of our less financially successful sector can be better off tomorrow. An investment in literacy today will lead to an increase in the future productivity of the Tucson Region.

### **Tucson Region’s Education Promise to its Children**

The Tucson Region’s education promise to its children should be to provide each child with the lifelong opportunity to become a literate, functioning member of the local community, as well as society at large, and to ensure that our children all have an opportunity to obtain the academic, cultural and social skills that will allow their desired achievement and encourage them to become good citizens who are engaged in their communities and who fully participate in voting and other civic duties. The promise of education must include a promise that each person who wants an education can obtain it. There will be access to a superlative education where all students are taught how to learn. The community as a whole will commit to education as a priority. We will strive to inspire, reach and teach each child. They will be prepared to participate in the global community.

There are unique pressures on the Tucson Region due to the lack of comprehensive immigration reform. We will continually strive to provide for the basic needs of all children, including health and education for all children regardless of their citizenship or legal status. The realities of the current

environment are that our children are the key to the future success of the Region. Every student who graduates from high school must be ready to transition into postsecondary opportunities, such as higher education, technical and vocational education, or work as they choose, and be fully prepared to participate as a member of society. We must teach the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to fully function in society. This will require identifying any current problems, addressing them to improve the transition from high school into college, and aligning the high school graduation requirements with state university entrance requirements to ensue that students have as many choices as possible.

Education will be transformed to meet 21<sup>st</sup> Century productivity and leadership needs. Concurrently, our community must become more informed, knowledgeable and engaged in how that delivery system looks. Education will be made tougher and more robust. The curriculum will improve, and testing will be more meaningful. For example, the AIMS test is not required for college, does not measure many proficiencies required for college, and does not preclude the attainment of a general education diploma (GED). Testing must truly measure competency so that we can accurately rate and improve the education being provided. Students' educational opportunities, especially at the secondary level (grades 6-12), must include more relevance to real-world connections. This necessitates closer collaboration between businesses and schools and support for programs such as junior achievement, job shadowing, internships and the newly formed JTED. Successes with current innovative secondary education programs need to be more widely disseminated to spark further innovation and increased academic success for all students.

It also is critical to make funding available to encourage education, staying in school, and taking advantage of higher education opportunities. Students should be given assistance in obtaining funds to go to college. Schooling should be expanded with an extended school day and year and expansion of after school programs. This expanded schooling would provide for increased curriculum that can be taught to students and development of additional learning opportunities. It also will allow students to be exposed to a more diverse set of experiences, including "soft skills" (community service, arts and music).

Schooling should be expanded with an extended school day and year and expansion of after school programs.

We need to change the perception of the system. Many successes do exist and should be showcased. Still, there is room for improvement. We should have high expectations and should not underestimate the power of having such expectations, work to change perceptions regarding learning, and market education as something in which students will want to participate. Students should have a model of success (and failure) to help them engage.

We need to require student accountability. Access to education is a right. Achievement is a responsibility. Students and families must take personal responsibility for individual success. In turn, we will address teacher quality issues to ensure that effective teachers are kept, developing teachers are supported in their growth and ineffective teachers are removed. We will strive to attract and retain the best teachers and pay them accordingly. The teacher shortage in the Tucson Region will be cured.

We will work toward greater parental participation in the education system and hold parents more accountable in the success of their children's education. We will create opportunities for children to get involved and empowered to make community change, and encourage participation in the arts and humanities as part of the curriculum to improve student creativity and the overall learning experience.

As a region, we need to assure equity, not equality. Children should get what they need, not just their "fair share" on a per capita basis, of the resources available for education. Providing children with

an opportunity to become engaged in creative endeavors and a curriculum-based study of the arts will enhance their educational experience across the curriculum by building cognitive function. Everyone can and should assist community investment in education through funding, advocacy, volunteerism, service, business-education partnerships, mentoring, and a variety of other programs and activities, including arts and cultural activities. We will fund and build quality schools, with fewer students per teacher and adequate supplies.

The Tucson Region will pay attention to the conditions and activities affecting students after school and outside of school. Creative energy shall be dedicated to the development and funding of after school and extra-curricular programs, such as nonprofit athletic and other after school clubs, that contribute to student success inside and outside the classroom. The Region shall become aware of the social problems that affect student performance in the classroom, and attention also shall be devoted to supporting teachers and creating classroom conditions that are conducive to learning.

Creative energy shall be dedicated to the development and funding of after school and extra curricular programs...

While some are more directly involved than others, the ultimate responsibility for implementing the promises identified above rests with all of the Tucson Region. Entire communities must be involved in the formal process of education. The Legislature must be lobbied to provide more funding. As a region, we should consider seeking authority from the state legislature to establish a Tucson Regional Taxing Authority that could provide the additional funding necessary to support the educational enhancements and betterments identified and adopted by the Tucson Region. Citizens have a responsibility for communicating their priorities to the Legislature. We need to be prepared to either raise taxes or restructure our priorities to meet education funding.

There is a large market of investors looking for municipal bonds. School construction should be debt financed, rather than paid from cash generated from annual tax revenues. Another potential source of school funding is public/private partnerships. Additional school resources should be provided through state trust land reform.

### Postsecondary Education

Many opportunities exist for the Tucson Region to better utilize and support postsecondary institutions. In a state that undervalues and underfunds education, the most important thing the Tucson Region can do to support postsecondary institutions is to strongly and effectively advocate for the funding of those institutions by the State Legislature. The Legislature and the community at large need to be better informed about the importance to Arizona of having excellent public postsecondary institutions in general and having a Research One level university in particular. The community of university supporters should focus on more effectively marketing the universities, getting the word out about their valuable contributions to the state and the many positive things that are happening at the universities.

In a state that undervalues and underfunds education, the most important thing the Tucson Region can do to support postsecondary institutions is to strongly and effectively advocate for the funding of those institutions by the State Legislature.

The Tucson Region's support requires more collaboration and expanded roles by public and private groups, businesses, and individuals, including individual students. PCC serves the community well by providing flexible education opportunities to students who work during the day. It also partners with other public and private entities to fund its programs. PCC should seriously consider, however, creating a development authority to locate additional resources, particularly funding resources. Given the high cost of infrastructure, the facilities of both UA and PCC should be better utilized for enhanced community living. Public facilities need to meet the public's needs.

Given regional growth projections, a large influx of students is expected in the near future. The Tucson Region needs to consider development of the UA and PCC together. The UA and PCC should

Given regional growth projections, a large influx of students is expected in the near future.

continue to work together to address needs and anticipated growth. In this process, the effects of other universities, such as Arizona State University and the University of

Phoenix, also need to be addressed. As a land grant university, the UA must increase efforts to be more accessible and provide the public with the postsecondary instruction required under the Arizona Constitution.

Degree granting institutions must cooperate to provide increased access to 4-year degrees in areas of unmet needs. Special attention must be paid to the needs of non-traditional students. The UA mission should allow access and affordability for all students prepared to succeed, importantly including those transitioning from PCC. The UA should continue to develop 2+2 and 3+2 programs.

Both institutions can work more effectively and seamlessly together to provide educational opportunities to the Tucson Region. They should become more fully engaged in the community, perhaps through internships and externships. Further, the student bodies can be leveraged as community assets to provide volunteer hours in programs meaningful to the community, such as tutoring and mentoring. Although this currently occurs, the programs should be expanded. The postsecondary institutions also can partner with after school programs to provide exposure to technology and other university programs that youth might not otherwise encounter.

The private sector should be tapped as a source for funding student tuition reimbursement. Employers can offer incentives in this area. The Tucson Region also should investigate ways to fund UA and PCC students' tuition in exchange for commitments by the students to stay and become employed in the community after graduation.

As individuals and constituents, we can let our own legislators know that we value the contributions of the UA and PCC, and encourage friends and family members in other parts of the state, particularly in Maricopa County, to communicate the same message to their legislators and across party lines. Business/university linkages must be approved, the tech transfer limitations must be addressed, and the community needs to be convinced of the benefits of supporting education to encourage funding.

## **TAKING THE NEXT STEP**

### **Making the Recommendations of the Tucson Regional Town Hall Become Reality**

The work of this Tucson Regional Town Hall can become reality only if the participants of the Town Hall coalesce to drive and to periodically review the changes that have been recommended. There must be coordination and inclusion among a wide variety of community groups with a similar vision to

ensure that there is no competition or duplication. The Tucson Region needs to look first at what can be done locally to achieve all goals, including necessary funding.

While the implementation of the recommendations of the Town Hall will be the work of many in the region, a Town Hall coordinating committee should take the “lead” in coordinating and

convening these activities. Leaders across the Region will step forward to define and implement key goals during the first year following this Report, and then during the next few years and long-term. The specific actions recommended to ensure the process moves forward include the following:

The work of this Tucson Regional Town Hall can become reality only if the participants of the Town Hall coalesce to drive and to periodically review the changes that have been recommended.

- The recommendations will be ranked in order of priority, and broken down into bite sized pieces to assure that forward momentum is not stopped by the sheer magnitude of the issues, or a lack of focus;
- Among the important issues addressed in the Town Hall, education needs to receive top priority.
- The recommendations will be reviewed, assessed, and prioritized for action and attention;
- A clearinghouse will be identified and created for various issues;
- An inventory will be prepared of current “great” programs to determine what assistance can be offered to or gained from the best practices and to offer assistance to coordinate with existing programs;
- A coalition will follow through with the recommendations of the Town Hall. This should involve engagement of an advisory group, publicizing the recommendations, meeting with those who could not be in attendance at this Town Hall, developing a vision statement, a community voices process, and opportunities to re-engage all stakeholders and reconnecting this group of stakeholders in the future. Members of this coalition will be seen as spokes in the wheel of communication to disseminate the recommendations and encourage action to implement them. Resources – time, talent and money – will be needed to assist this effort;
- Participants who are so inclined will broadcast information about the recommendations through the means available to them, including their individual constituencies, and to engage in public outreach through op-ed pieces, letters to the editor and the like;
- The media will be involved through a comprehensive communications strategy to conduct campaigns to inform, educate and energize the general community as to challenges and potential solutions and likely costs;

- We will educate, educate, educate the community regarding what exists, what needs to be done, how best to get there, receive the necessary feedback, overcome the obstacles, and solicit help to accomplish goals;
- Each participant will identify one or two issues that can be implemented individually, which will then be used as examples of what is possible;
- Participants can take on one issue of particular importance to them and advocate the recommendations relating to that issue through the means available to them;
- Participants can agree to serve on a speaker's bureau, similar to the one that was established to advocate for the JTED;
- Other participants will be recruited to gain wider participation;
- We will use the unique attributes of the Regional Town Hall to bridge existing gaps and add legitimacy to the Regional Town Hall proposals;
- A primary task force will be assigned responsibility to identify action items and track progress, and report back to participants, adjusting goals as needed. We will create and maintain a structure, or develop a means of measuring the outcomes;
- Subgroups should be formed to devote attention and effort to each of the subtopics, and to bring forward for action recommendations relating to the subtopics;
- The Legislature must be actively lobbied on issues for which state assistance or approval is required;
- Legislative components, including outreach and training (i.e. legislative academy), will be addressed at a future meeting;
- All segments of the community, including elected officials, will be held responsible for their role in implementing policies necessary to achieve the recommended goals; and
- Organizations responsible for implementation will be identified within each relevant section. Following the RTA model, these entities will be responsible for convening ad hoc groups that represent business, neighborhoods and other relevant interest groups, to develop specific action steps, advocate for agreed-upon changes and assume primary accountability for their issue area.

These next steps should be initiated rapidly and without delay. There is not one single organization that can be responsible for implementing all of these recommendations, but individual action items should be taken up and owned by the organizations responsible for them. There will be a meeting in June to include those people who would like to participate in the process. It is time for the Tucson Region to take the next bold steps forward.