



# TUCSON REGIONAL TOWN HALL

*realizing the possibilities*

## Summary of Recommendations

Approximately 165 Tucson-area residents, who were genuinely interested in advancing their community, met at the Tucson Regional Town Hall May 6-9, 2007. They were asked to consider ways to realize the possibilities for Tucson's future in 13 important areas, ranging from regional attributes to education to water. Following is a summary of their key recommendations.

### ***Regional Attributes***

- Engage the entire region in comprehensive regional planning that cuts across jurisdictional boundaries.
- Determine which regional attributes are valuable and should be preserved and which should be changed.
- Make hard choices about which costs the region will pay to secure the economic growth and quality of life desired.
- Respect, nurture and promote the Tucson Region's cultural heritage, community identity and historical sense of place to distinguish Tucson from other cities.

### ***Arts, culture and recreation***

- Strive to make the Tucson Region the arts and cultural center of Arizona.
- Value the humanities equally with science and technology.
- Give arts, culture and recreation an even greater presence in the community than currently exists.
- Expand and highlight performance venues to draw more modern musical acts and other entertainment popular with the young in order to attract the young, creative class.
- Consider implementing tax measures dedicated to funding the arts, culture and recreation.
- Governments should consider allocating greater tax resources to arts, culture and recreation because of the scarcity of corporate headquarters and large foundations in the region.
- Plan and coordinate parks and recreation activities regionally in order to share costs and benefits.
- Plan for and implement an enhanced centralized clearinghouse to better coordinate and publicize regional arts, culture and recreation events for the Tucson Region.

### ***The role of downtown Tucson in the region***

- Develop alternative routes between I-10 and Aviation Highway to allow downtown streets to be clean, pedestrian-friendly and better able to move infill traffic.
- Give higher priority to law enforcement, fire protection and public safety downtown. They need more support and funding.
- Provide a mix of housing types downtown for all income levels.
- Support efforts to return water to the Santa Cruz River, creating a true "Rio Nuevo."
- Make downtown a model for the community for innovative simplification of the land-use

- code and streamlining of processing development.
- Enhance and expand the convention center and other public facilities.

### ***Planning and land-use guidelines***

- Make overall land-use planning more regional while respecting local desires.
- Amend the Arizona Constitution to reform the State Land Department and the manner in which state trust lands are managed in order to promote both conservation and more effective development of trust lands.
- Permit the State Land Department to make land available for open space, transportation and utility corridors and other public uses, rather than selling it to the highest bidder.
- Encourage mixed-use development.
- Provide more affordable housing through a cooperative effort between government, the private sector and non-profit organizations.

### ***Water use, reuse and management***

- Undertake a highly public education process to change public attitudes and behaviors toward the use, reuse and management of water and to aid the general public in understanding very complex water issues.
- Actualize cooperation by all water providers in the region to:
  - Complete a full infrastructure map and assessment
  - Form a regional collaborative to secure additional water supplies
  - Initiate a regional long-range planning process.
- Price some amount of water to make it available to all because water is necessary to life. Beyond that level, price water more aggressively to encourage more conservation and to discourage non-critical uses.

### ***Transportation planning***

- Consider numerous additional funding sources for transportation needs, including bonding, federal money, toll roads, raising the gas tax, increasing the vehicle license tax, increasing driver's license fees through reduced renewal periods, parking permit increases, surcharges on moving violations, impact fees, incorporating or annexing unincorporated areas for better access to revenue-sharing funds and keeping a greater percentage of motor vehicle taxes in the county.

- Redefine downtown to include the area from A Mountain and the historical core of downtown to the University of Arizona and perhaps beyond to better integrate downtown into the region.

- Implement a strategy to encourage appropriate infill development.
- Develop quality but affordable housing, workforce housing and price-attainable housing.
- Better align local land-use policies, codes and processes with the region's public-policy objectives.
- Change the public perception about what kinds of development should be acceptable in the region.
- Cause the Development Services Departments of all local governments to place greater emphasis on assisting and streamlining the development process, rather than impeding it.

- Use regulations and tax incentives to encourage the region-wide use of all available sources, such as effluent, surface water, rainwater, storm water and grey water.
- Make full use of the Tucson Region's Central Arizona Project allocation.
- Aggressively involve the region in state water management plans and policies, particularly in pushing for re-examination of the Central Arizona Groundwater Replenishment District process.
- Look beyond the CAP to other sources of water, such as desalination, importing water and advanced technologies for the benefit of future generations.
- Assure that the Tucson Region is on the cutting edge of sustainable water technology.

- Encourage energy conservation measures such as congestion management and more efficient use of land as an alternative to funding more transportation.
- Provide greater public education of gasoline-saving alternatives, such as the use of hybrid vehicles, better use of public transit, incentives to car pool or telecommute, greater use of bike lanes and encouraging video conferencing.

## ***A high-wage, knowledge-based economy***

- Leverage the region's existing attributes to the greatest extent possible to create a higher-wage, knowledge-based economy.
- Focus on increasing the average income as the key to growing the Tucson Region's economy.
- Work in a community-wide collaborative effort to increase recruitment, retention, expansion and start-ups in the Tucson Region.
- Encourage local businesses to bring their peers into this market. Also encourage incubators and start-up companies.
- Streamline the process of technology transfer, the transferring of university technology to the business community, through a TREO task force or new collaborators that include researchers, government, private business and nonprofit representatives.
- Amend the Arizona Constitution to facilitate tech transfers by allowing the universities to take equity interests in companies.
- Establish a think tank, clearinghouse or other similar entity to coordinate ongoing efforts to foster intelligent business growth and attract high-wage, high-skill jobs.
- Move the community from a resource-based economy to a high-wage, knowledge-based economy through partnerships, venture capital, tax incentives and infrastructure improvements. Regional governments must work harder to help the region's transition.

## ***Increasing skilled workers for high-wage jobs***

- Increase workforce internship and mentoring programs on all levels.
- Expand the region's image and avoid communicating that sidewalks roll up at 9 p.m. and low wages are a small price to pay for the privilege of living here.
- 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.
- Better equip students who will go directly into the workforce, rather than into postsecondary education, to take entry-level, skilled jobs.
- Hold the UA and PCC accountable for finding ways to meet the needs that exist and to train workers for the future.
- Create career service centers in high schools and postsecondary institutions to act as clearinghouses of information about experiential learning opportunities.
- Help workers to engage in training through nonprofit organizations assisting them to overcome barriers such as tuition cost, wage loss, childcare and transportation.

## ***Accessibility and quality of healthcare***

- Make health information exchange or electronic health records available to providers to improve the quality of care and limit costs.
- Increase the number of physicians, nurses and other healthcare providers.
- Advance workforce development in the healthcare professions.
- Pay more attention to preventive health measures and healthy behavior to improve the overall health of the region's population.
- Give employers greater freedom to form insurance-buying groups and eliminate the six-month "go bare" period for providing insurance through the state health care group in order to combat rising insurance premiums.
- Assure funding support of the Level I Trauma Center to make certain this vital resource is sustainable and available to all.
- Form a coalition of employers, the public, healthcare providers and governments to address the accessibility and quality of health care in the region.

## ***A culture of literacy***

- Adopt the goal of making everyone literate regardless of immigration status.
- Intercede and help children when their parents are illiterate through home-based intervention programs.
- Step in to help children when parents are functionally absent through nonprofits, government or schools.
- Use media and marketing to reduce the negative effects of peer pressure. Change the

- way society perceives and idolizes sports figures and celebrities.
- Improve our culture of literacy through the involvement of business and community leaders.
- Empower and fund adult remedial education programs.
- Restore rigor to the educational process, expand literacy programs already in place and better utilize our library system.
- Insist that educational expectations are met before students move on to the next level.
- Explore local funding mechanisms to generate additional money for early childhood education.
- Better train early care teachers as the most critical step in ensuring children are prepared for school success.

### ***Tucson region's education promise to its children***

- Promise that each person who wants an education can obtain it.
- Provide for the basic needs of all children, including health and education, without regard to their citizenship or legal status.
- Expand schooling with an extended school day and year and expansion of after school programs.
- Ensure effective teachers are kept, developing teachers are supported in their growth and ineffective teachers are removed.
- Attract and retain the best teachers and pay them accordingly.
- Assure equity, not equality. Provide children the resources they need, not just their “fair share” on a per-capita basis.
- Fund and build quality schools, with fewer students per teacher and adequate supplies.
- Consider seeking authority from the Legislature to create a regional taxing authority to provide additional funding to education.
- Provide additional school resources through state trust land reform.

### ***Postsecondary education***

- Strongly and effectively advocate for funding by the state Legislature as the most important thing the Tucson region can do to support postsecondary institutions.
- More effectively market the universities.
- Create a development authority to locate additional resources for PCC.
- Provide increased access to 4-year degrees in areas of unmet needs through greater cooperation among degree-granting institutions.
- Investigate ways to pay students' tuition in return for commitments by the students to stay in the region after graduation.

### ***Making the Town Hall recommendations become reality***

- Follow through via a broad coalition of organizations and individuals. This should involve engagement of an advisory group, publicizing the recommendations, meeting with those who could not attend the Town Hall, developing a vision statement, offering a community voices process, providing opportunities to re-engage all stakeholders, and reconnecting this group of stakeholders in the future.
- Convene ad hoc groups that represent business, neighborhoods and other relevant groups to develop specific action steps, advocate for agreed-upon changes and assume primary accountability.
- Give education top priority among the issues addressed at the Town Hall.

#### **For more information:**

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