



# LOOKING FORWARD

A VISION FOR A GREATER TUCSON REGION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With the release of this Vision, Imagine Greater Tucson would like to honor everyone who has made this possible. Imagine Greater Tucson is truly a community-driven effort. Thousands of participants, and hundreds of volunteers and supporters have worked together to make this process a success. Everyone’s contributions, big and small, have played a part. We appreciate those who took the time to fill out a survey, participate in a workshop or conversation, pass on the word to friends and family, or give so generously of your time and energy as a volunteer—we thank you all.

A special thank you to the hundreds of people who have participated as part of a working group:

Community Liaison Forum	Knowledge Exchange	Social Media
Community Research Team	Outreach Working Group	Stakeholder Identification
Core Team	Process Research Team	Steering Committee
Elected Official Engagement	Public Awareness	Technical Committee
Fundraising	Public Engagement	Vision and Values
Hispanic Outreach Team	Scenario Team	Youth Outreach Team
Initiating Team		

Also, a special thank you to the Pima Association of Governments and the Planning Graduate program of the University of Arizona College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture.

ON THE COVER

The artwork featured on the cover of this document comes from the winners of the Imagine Greater Tucson Youth Art Contest. The artwork, by students in grades kindergarten through college, reflects the artists’ interpretation of what makes our region unique.



Cecilia B. from Empire High School



Jessica W. from Thornydale Elementary



Zevi B. from Sunrise Drive Elementary

The Imagine Greater Tucson Youth Art Contest winning video by Tia C. and Gabby M. from Empire High School can be viewed at [ImagineGreaterTucson.org](http://ImagineGreaterTucson.org). Cover photos by Jim Veomett.





# FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## LOOKING FORWARD: VISION FOR A GREATER TUCSON REGION KERI LAZARUS SILVYN, CHAIR OF THE BOARD

How our region grows in the coming decades will affect every aspect of our lives: where we live and work, how much time we spend in a car, where businesses locate and how many jobs are available, the quality of our education system, access to arts and culture, the land that we conserve, and the enjoyment of the outdoors. Armed with this knowledge, we have the power to take action and plan strategically for what lies ahead for our physical, social, and cultural environment. By collaborating on a regional scale, we can help to shape a future consistent with our shared values.

For the past two years, Imagine Greater Tucson has been engaging area residents in a carefully designed visioning process. The objective is to empower people to create a vibrant region for generations to come.

We started by asking residents what they value about our region. The responses led to **60 Shared Regional Values** which we categorized into **9 Principles: Accessibility; Educational Excellence; Environmental Integrity; Good Governance; Healthy Communities; Higher Education; Prosperity; Quality Neighborhoods; and Regional Identity.**

Using these 9 Principles to inform our process, Imagine Greater Tucson held a series of region-wide mapping workshops. More than 600 people worked collaboratively, finding solutions to accommodate growth and another one million residents in ways that align with our Shared Regional Values. After analyzing the data, we returned to the community a third time with a survey that posed for consideration a series of land-use planning scenarios and trade-offs. The survey yielded 6,700 responses from across the region and revealed this: **people want change, and people want choices.**

While some people will always want to drive their cars to work, others have no car, use Sun Van, may walk, or just prefer transit or cycling. There is a large and growing demand for urban life, with townhomes or apartments located within walking distance of the workplace, shopping, and entertainment. Others want homes that enable multiple generations to live under one roof. Of course, there will always be a market for single-family homes on large lots. This is, after all, the American West, and the desire to live in wide open spaces runs deep in our character. But throughout the region, we heard a strong desire to conserve these natural areas and our critical natural resources. We witnessed a clear preference for a future that grows and develops in different ways, offering choices for all.

**IGT's findings show that our market is already shifting,** and we, as a region and individually, need to adjust accordingly. Otherwise, our children will continue to migrate to more urbanized areas to raise our grandchildren. The professionals we require for our local workforce will continue to be recruited away to cities and regions that have more options for living.

**Moving ahead,** Imagine Greater Tucson is committed to working on behalf of our community and in cooperation with individuals, organizations, businesses, and our local jurisdictions as they prepare their general and comprehensive plans. We have already involved more than 10,000 residents and we will seek to engage many more over time. We will continue to provide a space for dialogue and shared learning, gather information, report results, and facilitate collaboration by working with the public, local organizations, elected officials, major employers, neighborhoods, business coalitions, and other regional stakeholders. Lastly, Imagine Greater Tucson is dedicated to ensuring that the community's shared values and vision are placed at the forefront as the region readies itself for what can and should be a prosperous future.



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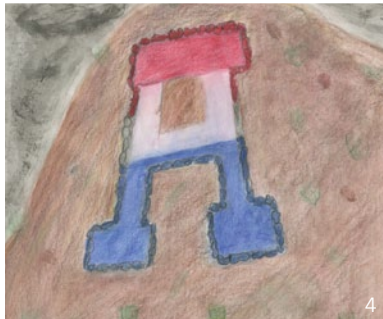
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# PURPOSE



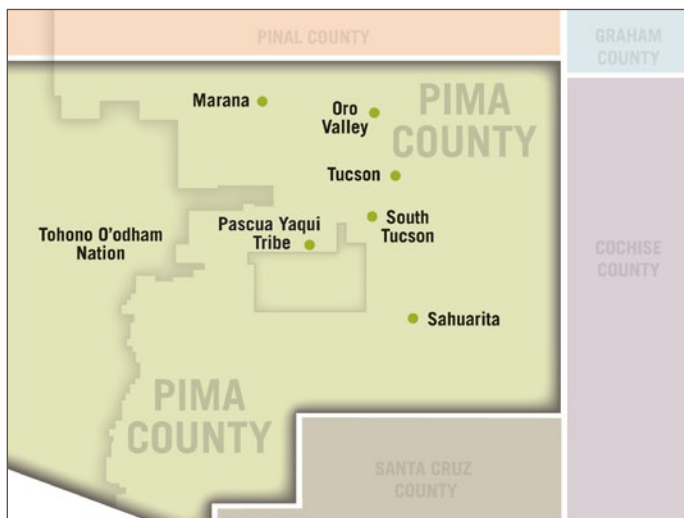
# INTRODUCTION TO THE VISION

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This Vision is a shared idea about what we, as a region, want for our future. It describes new ways of looking at future growth and development, increasing choices in where and how we live, and breaking away from “business as usual.” Our region is who we are, where we live and work—our place.

The Greater Tucson region stands apart—in our country and our world—as an area of great and unique value. We enjoy unrivaled natural beauty, wonderful cities and towns, a friendly, welcoming and diverse community, distinct and blended cultures, and a strong connection between place, people, and history.

Each city, each town, each community, each neighborhood, and each individual offers a distinct contribution to our region. Regardless of where we make our homes, we are all residents of this region—and we are all connected. We travel on the same roads. We drink the same water. We breathe the same air. We depend on the same economic well-being. We all look upon the same desert sunsets. In short, we all rely upon the same, shared resources and so we must begin to think regionally about the impacts of the decisions we make.



The Greater Tucson region refers to Eastern Pima County. This includes all incorporated municipalities (Marana, Oro Valley, Sahuarita, South Tucson, and Tucson), and unincorporated Pima County.

To create this Vision people from across our region participated in conversations, meetings, workshops, and surveys. Together, we challenged ourselves to consider what we truly value and imagine how to put those values into action. Many different pieces are combined into this one vision, deeply rooted in the shared values of our region.

**This Vision describes a region where we want to live, and where our children and our children's children will want to stay.**

The vision is of a community that honors its past, connects with the beauty and fragility of the natural environment, and offers choices and opportunities for all. The Vision reflects who we are.

Importantly, while the regional Vision is inclusive of Native American residents and nations, IGT recognizes the sovereignty of the Tohono O’odham Nation and Pascua Yaqui Tribe, and does not intend the Vision to be applied to tribal lands.

This is not a technical report or policy paper. It is a shared idea about our future that will continue to grow and evolve as we move forward as a community. It is a vision by and for our region, inclusive of diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and interests. It is an expression of who we are and what we wish to become.

## **IMAGINE GREATER TUCSON**

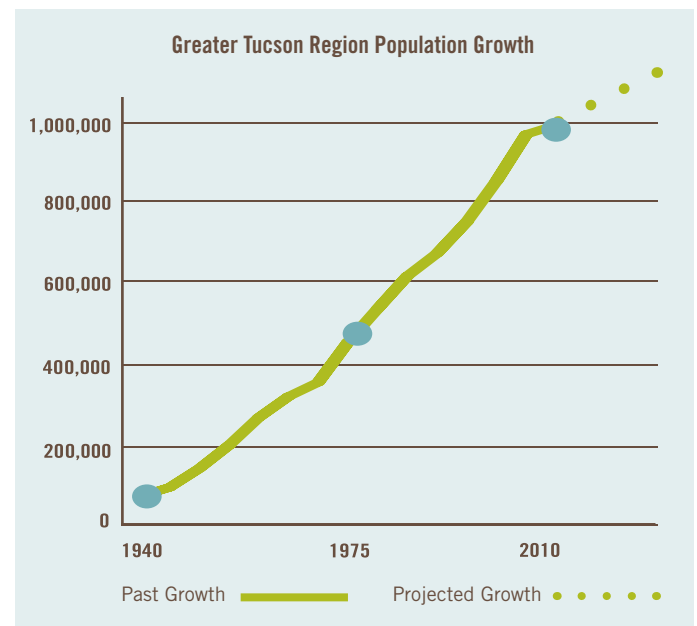
*Imagine Greater Tucson (IGT) is a non-profit organization supporting a community-driven effort to develop and support a vision for the future of the Greater Tucson region. IGT provides a forum where all residents, regardless of ethnicity, age, affiliation, ideology or background, work together to create a better future for our community. IGT supports a model for decision-making that is inclusive, collaborative, creative, and based on the values and vision that are shared across our region.*



People have been drawn to our region's abundant natural beauty, relaxed lifestyle, and multi-cultural environment, resulting in high rates of growth for much of the last 50 years. During this period, the Greater Tucson region has experienced average annual growth rates generally between 2% and 4%. Although population growth has slowed recently due to the sluggish economy's effect on population mobility, it is anticipated that as the economy rebounds, growth will return to around the historical average. If realized, this rate of growth would lead to a doubling of our current population—from one to two million people—sometime after the mid-century mark. Well-managed growth can benefit our region by supporting a diversified economy and providing greater consumer choices, options, and more regional amenities.

For all its strengths and assets, however, our region is not without challenges. If future growth is not managed well, it could strain our resources, congest our roads, and forever alter our region's character and identity. Looking forward, we must guard against losing our young, talented, creative workers to employment and educational opportunities in other places. Many families are struggling through difficult economic times and some of our students are leaving school without the necessary skills to compete in the job market. We sometimes miss opportunities

to collaborate across social, economic, and political boundaries to create regional solutions. We often fail to offer choices that residents seek as generational shifts, economics, and changing lifestyles increase the demand for new types of housing, neighborhoods, employment, and places. Moving forward, we must address each of these challenges in order to strengthen our region and ensure that future growth aligns with our values.

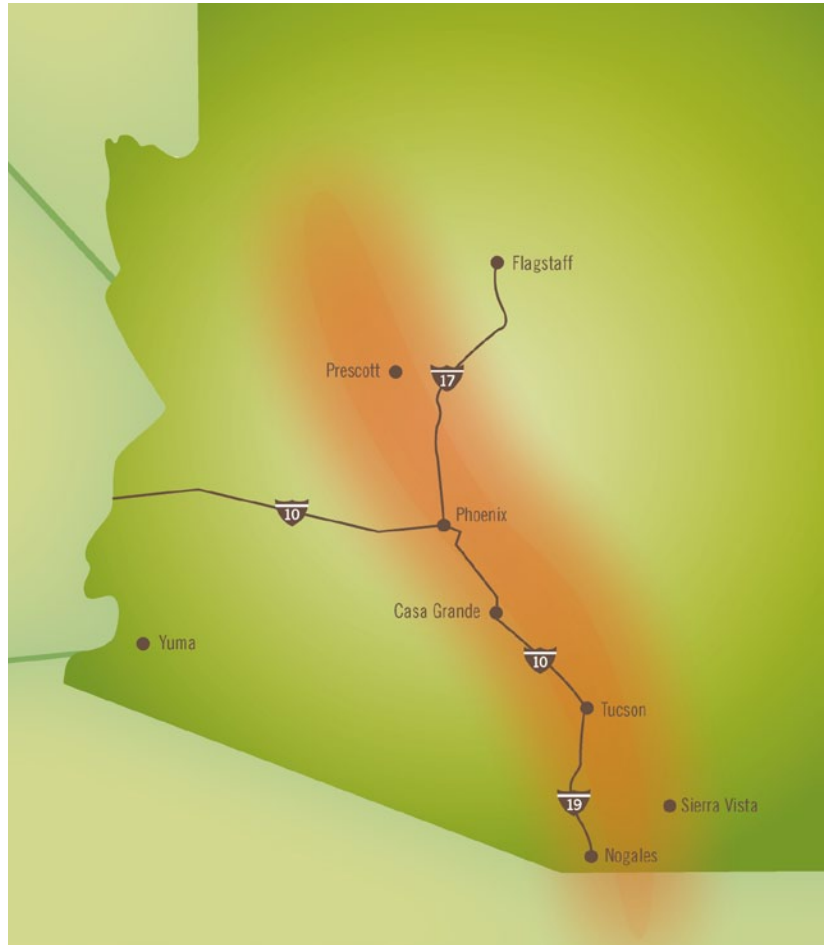






In the coming years, the Greater Tucson region will become more integrated into the emerging Arizona Sun Corridor—one of America’s 11 “megaregions,” or groupings of regions acting as larger economic entities. The corridor follows the north-south spine of Arizona from Prescott to Nogales. The Sun Corridor is expected to grow from 5.5 million people today to roughly 9 million by 2040. This growth will present new opportunities and challenges for our region.

Moving forward, our region needs to cooperate on a large-scale with other Sun Corridor partners including Metro Phoenix and Pinal County to develop stronger economic relationships. It is imperative that we actively define our own distinct role within this larger economic corridor. Otherwise, that role will be defined for us. We must differentiate ourselves by building on the unique character and identity of the Tucson region. This shared vision helps to express a more cohesive identity and direction for our region, strengthening and defining us as a key player within the Sun Corridor.



Arizona's Sun Corridor extends from Prescott to Nogales.



# OUR CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

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## ATTRACTING AND RETAINING OUR YOUTH

*Our community is concerned that young people are leaving our region to find more attractive job and lifestyle options elsewhere. In 2007, only 32% of University of Arizona graduates stayed in the region. The search for better jobs and more vibrant metropolitan areas inspires many of those who leave. To retain and attract these young people, we need to expand economic opportunities and provide the more diverse urban lifestyles that they prefer.*



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Not only has our population been growing, it is also changing. Lifestyle choices and our desires for how and where to live are also in flux. We are becoming more culturally and socially diverse and we are living longer. These changes will have a significant impact on how we grow and develop in the future:

- **Nationally, single-person households will continue to increase, potentially becoming equal to family occupied homes by 2025.**
- **The number of adults 65 and older will increase, and by 2050 the national population that is 85 years of age and older will triple from what it is today.**
- **We will be more diverse, with projections suggesting the U.S. will become a majority-minority nation by 2042, and Pima County will have a Hispanic majority by 2030.**
- **The proportion of single-mother households will grow.**
- **Young adults will marry later in life.**
- **There will be a rise in multi-generational households driven largely by the growing Hispanic community, young adults returning to live with their parents, and the growing senior population.**
- **On average, household size is decreasing. The average American household decreased from 3.38 to 2.58 people between 1950 and 2010. Pima County mirrored this trend.**

These changes suggest that, regardless of how rapidly or how much we grow, our region will need to account for a wider variety of preferences in the types of housing and neighborhoods that we offer. Housing choice is critical to the future of our region. Overall household size will decrease, but some households will remain large, and still others will desire options for more multi-generation housing. Young people spending a greater portion of their lives in single-person households will want interesting and affordable options for doing so. As current residents age through all stages of life, and as future residents locate here, they will seek housing options that are not widely available today. To be a thriving and successful region, we must actively prepare to meet the needs and desires of this changing population.



## THREE DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS ARE DRIVING CHANGES IN HOUSING NEEDS ACROSS THE NATION

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### BABY BOOMERS

*Born in the two decades following World War II, this generation is just entering retirement and will become a senior population of unprecedented size in American history. Evidence suggests that as Baby Boomers age and retire, they will remain active and engaged in their communities. Many will seek the convenience of downsizing their homes and locating closer to urban amenities and services, while others will age in place. This group will need access to goods and services to reduce the difficulties of isolation.*

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### MILLENNIALS

*The largest generation in American history, Millennials are 18-34 year olds who are just coming into their own as innovators, consumers, and influencers of culture. Millennials tend to be attracted to vibrant urban environments and city centers. They are likely to rent longer, are less interested in car ownership than previous generations, are environmentally conscious, and lay greater emphasis on place.*

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### NEW RESIDENTS & THEIR CHILDREN

*From 2000-2010, immigrants accounted for about 33% of U.S. population growth. More than half of foreign-born residents reside in metropolitan suburbs and, if this pattern continues, will be a major driver of suburban growth in the coming years. Since suburbs will be an entry-point for many foreign-born residents, affordability and costs of transportation will be key considerations.*

## WHAT THESE DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES MEAN

*To meet the diverse needs and changing preferences of these key demographic groups, we will need to provide:*

- Diverse housing and neighborhood choices
- High-quality rental housing
- Walkable neighborhoods
- Easy access to transit, services, and amenities
- Affordable housing
- Inclusive communities
- Lively downtowns with arts, culture, and entertainment centers



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# WHY A REGIONAL VISION?

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**This Vision describes a region where we want to live, and where our children and our children's children will want to stay.**

A great region is the deliberate result of an engaged citizenry and reflects the people who live there. By creating this Vision, residents of our region have taken an important step to ensure a future that reflects the best of who we are and what we aspire to be.

**The purpose of a vision is to establish a strong, cohesive identity for our region and an agreed-upon basis for public decision-making and collective action for the future.**

A vision lays out where we want to go, and provides a framework for making decisions based on our shared values and goals. Piecemeal and reactive decision-making will not get us to our desired future; it will merely perpetuate a less efficient model of growth and development that is no longer desirable for many residents.

**A vision is not a plan or a policy document. Rather, it is an expression of a region's core values and desired direction.**

As such, this Vision can be a valuable tool for community leaders and decision-makers by providing context and guidance on policy, planning, and investment decisions. It can also inspire and focus collaborative action in our community. This can only be achieved, however, through the on-going efforts and support of a wide variety of individuals, organizations, businesses, and agencies.

**This report is not the end of the vision process.** Having identified, together, what we want for the future of our region, we now must set to work toward realizing our goals. This Vision is a living document. We will revisit and renew it periodically to ensure it remains current, and to measure our progress on its realization. The Vision will provide important input into the long-range General and Comprehensive Plans and plan amendments that our region's jurisdictions will be revisiting over the next few years. It will be a resource as jurisdictions seek to accurately reflect residents' wishes and incorporate a regional perspective into their plans.

## WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN? A GENERAL PLAN?

*Comprehensive and general plans are long-term planning documents developed by cities, towns, and the county that establish specific goals, policies, strategies, guidelines, and related maps to guide a jurisdiction's current and future development. The State of Arizona requires that each local government update their comprehensive or general plan every 10 years, though the plan can be amended between updates as needed. The plan must typically include a number of elements including land use, water resources, housing, circulation, public facilities, recreation, and more.*



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## OUR PROCESS





In 2008, a group of community members, business and civic leaders, jurisdictional representatives, local organizations, and others came together to discuss the critical needs for our region's future. Ultimately, they wanted to build stronger regional relationships and encourage collaboration to address some of our biggest challenges.

Early in those discussions, the group recognized that before our region could work toward solutions, our community needed a shared vision for what we wanted to become. The basis of this was:

**“How do we shape a future for this region that is founded upon, and aligns with, our community’s shared values?”**

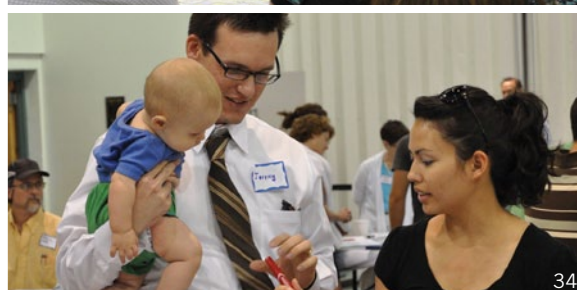
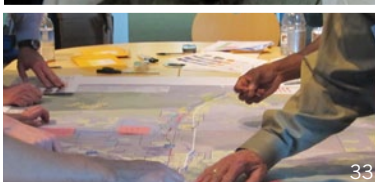
- How do we strengthen and preserve what we love about this community?
- How do we retain our core identity?
- How do we create a place where our children, grandchildren, grandparents and graduates can live and thrive?

Imagine Greater Tucson (IGT) was launched to listen to the community and create this shared Vision based on the values and goals of the residents who live here.

*Imagine Greater Tucson is a community-driven effort that listens, informs, and partners in order to foster collaboration towards the Vision and align our future with our Shared Regional Values.*

## VOLUNTEERS IN THE IGT PROCESS

*The creation of this Vision has been made possible by the dedication of many talented and passionate volunteers. Their experience in the community has been indispensable to the process. Nearly 300 people have volunteered to support Community Conversations, workshops and events, and share their opinions, creativity, and ideas.*





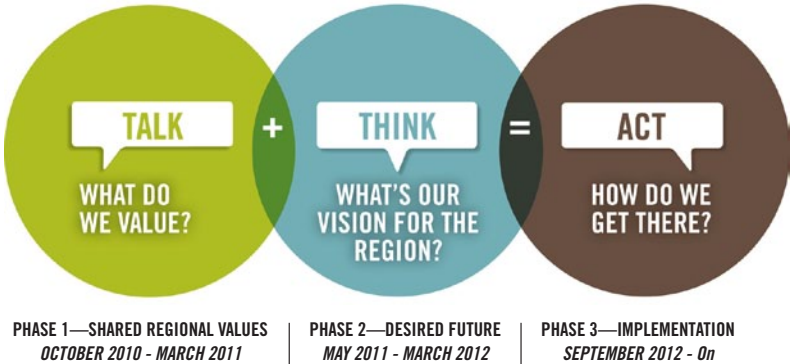


Imagine Greater Tucson is a collaborative, community-driven process. Genuine and inclusive public participation and dialogue are the foundation of how IGT works. Over the past two years IGT has reached out to all corners of our region, listening to people through conversations, meetings, workshops, presentations, and surveys. **Everything in this Vision comes from our region's residents.**



Imagine Greater Tucson has worked in all corners of our region to develop a set of Shared Regional Values and a Vision for our future. The Vision weaves our region together, creating a stronger and more cohesive community prepared to take action toward achieving our shared vision. Graphic created by Kelsie Wiebe—Graphic Designer, Town of Marana.

Imagine Greater Tucson has three main phases. **TALK. THINK. ACT.** The IGT process began in October 2010 by listening to residents through group conversations and surveys to learn what we value as a region. Next, IGT asked people to think about and express how we can accommodate future growth in our region in accordance with our values. **The Action phase begins now**, with the completion of the *Vision for a Greater Tucson Region* and its recommendations for moving our region toward our desired future.



## 10,000+ RESIDENTS HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE CREATION OF THE *VISION FOR A GREATER TUCSON REGION*

- 4,600 participants in Community Conversations and the Value Survey
- 40,000 comments into 60 Shared Regional Values
- 650 participants in Scenario Building Workshops
- 150 collaboratively created maps
- 6,700 “How Should We Grow?” survey participants
- 1 Preferred Future Scenario



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## WHAT RESIDENTS SAID

“I’m excited to join Imagine Greater Tucson because it’s great to be part of something bigger than yourself.”

“IGT is power with and not power over.”

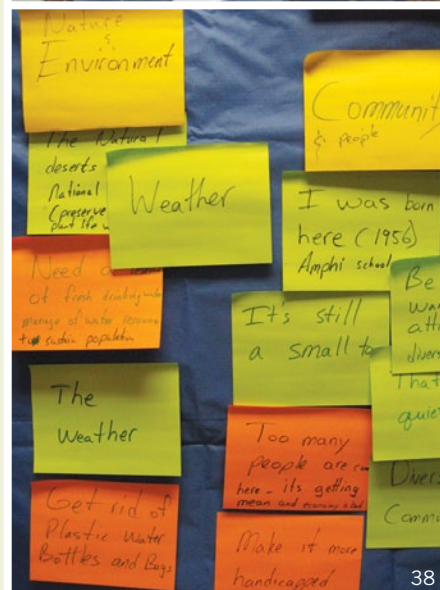
“IGT is creating a reality for community involvement that is appropriate to our times.”

“IGT is an alternative process for formulating public policy, not against, but parallel with traditional structures.”

“I love that Tucson supports over 2,000 non-profits, including everything from radio to museums.”



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## EXPRESSING OUR VALUES TO GUIDE WHERE WE GO (OCTOBER 2010 – MARCH 2011)

In Phase 1, IGT facilitated a six-month long discussion with the community in which residents from across our region shared what is most important to them about living here. The discussion consisted of two simple questions:

1. What do you like about living in this region?
2. What would you change about the region?

Residents participated in one of three ways:

1. By attending a small-group dialogue session known as a Community Conversation.
2. By taking an open-ended online or paper survey.
3. By completing a random-sample survey designed to capture an accurate representation of our region's geographic and demographic diversity.

IGT practiced a “we come to you approach,” in which businesses, community organizations, and other groups of residents hosted teams of IGT volunteers to facilitate the conversations. This method allowed IGT to reach many residents who may not have otherwise participated in this process.



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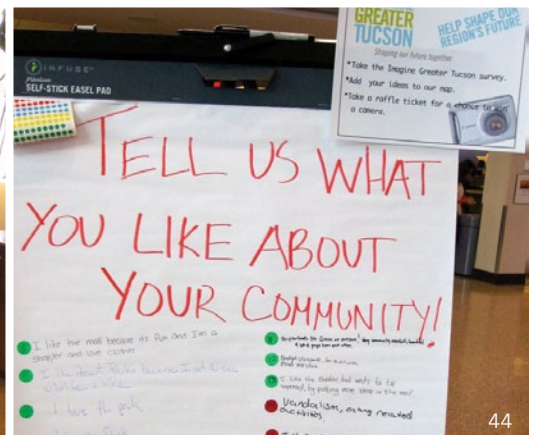
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Over **4,500 people** participated in Phase 1 and contributed over **40,000 statements** to the development of our region's **"Shared Regional Values."** Every statement was thoughtfully read, coded, and analyzed. Through a collaborative effort, the comments were distilled into 60 individual values, and further organized into nine categories.

## ACCESSIBILITY

*"Roads are always congested; it's very difficult to get around the city—Tucson's population is expanding and we need better ways to get around."*

## EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

*"Although individual schools are working hard, there needs to be a more equitable way to provide excellent education for all of Arizona's children if we are to continue to thrive as a state."*

## ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRITY

*"I love to hike and get out into nature. I feel more calm and at peace when I am hiking. Having nearby trails that are easily accessible is important to me."*

## GOOD GOVERNANCE

*"... If we are to expect to have strong leadership, we will need to get involved. It takes an engaged citizenry to elect and support strong leadership. Without strong leadership and an engaged citizenry, we will never accomplish our goals."*

## HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

*"I would like every person in the city to feel safe and cared for: every child should get a good education, and every person should have access to affordable, quality health care and a safe place to live..."*

## HIGHER EDUCATION

*"I cannot imagine Tucson without the U of A. The University brings so much to the area in the way of arts, culture, education, and interesting people who come here to work at or attend the University."*

## PROSPERITY

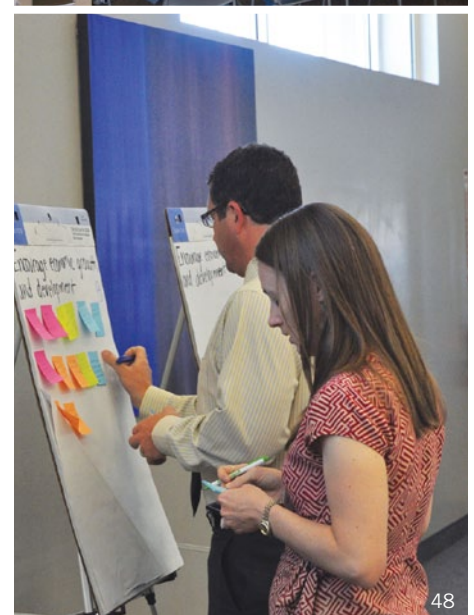
*"With job growth, especially at higher salary levels, Tucson will have the ability to offer more to its residents—culturally and educationally."*

## QUALITY NEIGHBORHOODS

*"More density and walkability in certain places near retail and other neighborhood services would connect me to my neighborhood and reduce the amount of time I spend in the car."*

## REGIONAL IDENTITY

*"Tucsonans are welcoming, giving, thoughtful, and just a little weird. I love the small things about Tucson that make it slightly quirky and just fun..."*





# SHARED REGIONAL VALUES

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**The Shared Regional Values are the heart of the Imagine Greater Tucson process.** They express what is most important to the residents of our region and are the foundation on which decisions about our future should be made. They come directly from the people who live here. **The vision for our future is built upon these principles and the values they represent:**

## ***ACCESSIBILITY***

We will have many choices for traveling to destinations throughout our region in a safe, pleasant, and efficient manner. We value:

- A variety of convenient transportation options for everyone, including an expanded regional mass transit system
- Accessibility to desired destinations
- Ease of cross-town and regional traffic movement
- A walkable community
- A safe and extensive bicycle network for all populations
- Less travel time
- Safe and well-maintained roads and paths

## ***EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE***

All residents of our region will be able to attend high-quality schools from pre-K through college and beyond. We value:

- Quality education and high performing schools in the region
- Sufficient Federal, State, and local funding for education and schools
- Hiring, supporting, and retaining high-quality teachers
- School curricula that foster and develop skilled and well-rounded citizens and future workers
- Family, community, and governmental support for schools and education
- Administrative effectiveness in local public education

## ***ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRITY***

Clean air, natural lands, the unique plant and animal life, and beauty of the Sonoran Desert will be preserved for current and future generations. Our region will continue to recognize and respect the limitations of water and other natural resources that make life in the desert southwest possible. We value:

- The region's unique and beautiful weather and natural environment
- Accessibility to nature and outdoor recreational opportunities for everyone
- The region's natural parks and preserves
- Clean and sustainable water resources
- Clean air
- Our renewable energy potential
- Our beautiful views of the desert, mountains, skies, and native animal and plant life

## ***GOOD GOVERNANCE***

The region's jurisdictions, institutions, and leadership will be responsive, efficient, transparent, and work cooperatively to effectively address our region's challenges. We value:

- Effective, efficient, and accountable local governments and other public institutions
- Dynamic, effective, visionary leaders
- Collaborative intergovernmental relationships
- A positive relationship between the government and the private sector
- A fair and stable tax rate and structure that adequately pays for necessary services
- The role non-profits and social service providers play in our community
- A reduced influence of special interest groups and balanced participation across the community

## **HEALTHY COMMUNITIES**

Neighborhoods across our region will be safe and foster healthy lifestyles through accessible and affordable housing choices, excellent hospitals and clinics, nearby parks, pedestrian and bike amenities, and connections to trails and other natural recreation spaces. We value:

- A community where our children will choose to live
- Less crime and a sense of personal safety
- Access to quality, affordable, health care
- Safe, affordable housing for all segments of the population
- Adequate social services

## **PROSPERITY**

Our region will have a robust local economy in which businesses of many sizes and types can thrive and provide job opportunities for the entire population. We value:

- Growth of well-paid, high-quality jobs
- New business development and expansion
- A thriving local, small business environment
- A strong green business sector
- A business friendly environment with sufficiently streamlined regulation
- Well-educated workforce
- A diversified economy that attracts and supports major businesses and sectors
- Expanded tourism

## **REGIONAL IDENTITY**

Residents will continue to promote and celebrate the diversity, history, acceptance, friendliness, arts, and “small town feel” that are integral to the unique culture of our region. We value:

- Our strong sense of community and a relaxed, friendly, small town feel
- Our unique identity and diverse cultural, ethnic, geographical, and historical influences
- Our creativity and accessible local arts and music
- Diverse cultural events in the region
- Tolerance and respect
- Our culture of volunteerism
- A variety of affordable and accessible youth activities and opportunities
- Professional and semi-professional sports teams and sporting events

## **HIGHER EDUCATION**

Our universities and colleges will continue to be centers of innovation, job creation, education, entertainment, and cultural leadership. They are central to our region's identity. We value:

- The University of Arizona for the quality of education it provides
- University of Arizona athletics for their impact on the region's sense of community, identity, and entertainment value
- Higher education's role as a cultural resource and economic engine
- A positive relationship between the University and the community and surrounding neighborhoods

## **QUALITY NEIGHBORHOODS**

From vibrant city and town centers, and walkable mixed-use and mixed-housing neighborhoods, to single-family subdivisions and rural communities, residents of our region will have a variety of high-quality options for living and working. We value:

- Strong sense of community and a relaxed, small town feel
- Easy connections between neighborhoods, and vibrant and diverse activity centers
- Appropriate infill development or redevelopment that is sensitive to protecting existing neighborhoods
- Reduced sprawl and increased mixed-use, compact development in many key areas
- A vibrant day-night downtown Tucson that attracts a diverse population
- An attractive, clean and aesthetically interesting physical environment
- Local access to parks and other recreational opportunities for everyone
- Well-planned and managed land use and growth







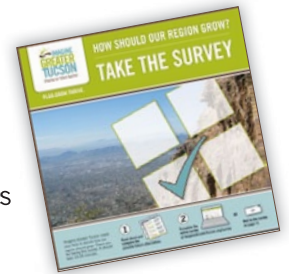
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## USING OUR VALUES TO DECIDE HOW WE WILL GROW (MAY 2011-MARCH 2012)

Building on the identification of our region's shared values, 650 residents participated in region-wide Scenario Building Workshops. At these map-based workshops, residents shared their ideas for how our region should grow and develop into the future. Participants worked together in small groups to decide where and how to locate 1 million new residents and 500,000 new jobs, as well as consider existing development, transportation needs, and protection of natural areas.

Eight workshops produced over 100 collaboratively developed maps. After the workshops, IGT identified the maps' dominant themes and distilled them into three distinct scenarios for future growth. These three scenarios were compared with the Trend Scenario, which predicts what our region might look like if we grow and develop much as we have in the past, to see how they performed in a variety of areas.

Following the creation of the four scenarios, IGT conducted a survey program asking the public to evaluate them. Survey respondents chose from among the four scenarios (see images below), weighed the choices and trade-offs that each represented, and answered questions about preferences for future development in our region. The survey revealed a strong preference across our region for the Urban Centers Scenario, while less than 7% of respondents preferred the Trend Scenario. The best elements of each option, weighed against survey responses, and combined with input from all earlier phases of the process, helped to create a Preferred Future Scenario (see page 24). Over 6,700 people participated in the survey, either online, through a mail-in survey distributed through the Arizona Daily Star, or by attending one of over 60 interactive presentations led by IGT volunteers.



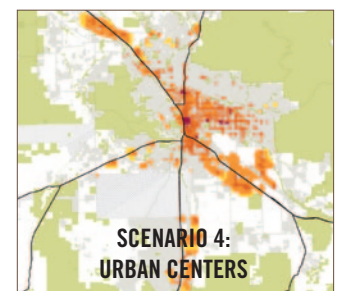
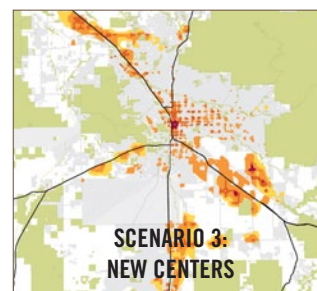
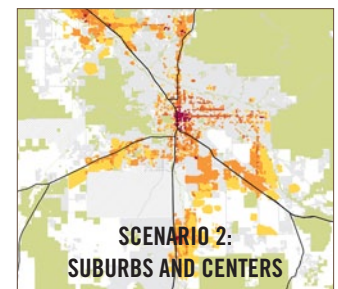
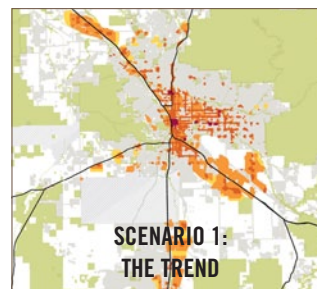
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Each scenario depicts a different approach for how our region could grow into the future, based on input from Scenario Building Workshop participants.



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## THE VISION





# SHARED REGIONAL VISION

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The Vision describes a region where we want to live, and where our children and our children's children will want to stay.

As residents of the Greater Tucson region, we want to hold on to those characteristic assets of our region that are fundamental to our identity and sense of place. We have profound respect and appreciation for the beautiful, natural setting that makes this region unique in the world. The mountain ranges, brilliant sunsets, clean air, plant and animal life of the Sonoran Desert, and the weather are core to our sense of place. They are the defining features of our home.

Through festivals, special events, and in our daily interactions, we proudly celebrate the long history of diverse people and individuals who have made this valley their home. We value the warm, friendly, accepting nature of our community and our small town feel.

Local art, music, and cultural amenities rival and surpass those of much larger regions, and we continue to support and appreciate our small and local business community. We are proud of the University of Arizona as a world-class institution that offers education, cultural opportunities, jobs, and entertainment for all of Southern Arizona.

Now and into the future, we must build upon our unique identity and Shared Regional Values to create a prosperous and vibrant place that provides accessibility, choices, and opportunity for all our region's diverse residents. By working together, we will realize our full potential as a region and ensure we are able to offer the jobs and quality of life that will keep our children, grandchildren, and graduates right here in the Greater Tucson region.

Opportunity begins with **education**. Children and adults alike will have access to great schools and other educational, training, and support resources. From pre-school to the highest levels of education offered at the University, Pima College, and other institutions, and through other community and business organizations, we will all have the opportunity to engage in lifelong learning. An educated and skilled population is key to attracting new jobs and industries, establishing a strong foundation from which local entrepreneurs can create homegrown businesses, and for ensuring that we remain informed, active, and engaged citizens and leaders.

The foundation of a great region is a strong **economy**. Our region will be a place where businesses of all sizes and types can thrive. The wealth creation, innovation, and employment opportunities that result from a strong economy will spur improvements in the entire region. We will build on our existing strengths in the areas of bioscience, health care, aerospace and defense, transportation and logistics, tourism, higher education, and through our numerous small and local businesses. We will take advantage of our location to maximize the development of our solar and wind energy industries, and our role in the Arizona Sun Corridor.

Our most distinctive and fragile asset—that which distinguishes us from all other places—is the **Sonoran Desert**. We will ensure that our region's natural heritage, ecology, air quality, and water resources are sustainably managed and passed down to future





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generations. Lands identified as essential to maintaining healthy ecosystems and the biodiversity of our region, such as riparian habitats and wildlife corridors, will be protected. All residents will be able to enjoy access to natural recreation areas and an extensive trail network for hiking, biking, horseback riding, or simply appreciating the beauty of the local environment.

The building blocks of our region are our **cities, towns, and neighborhoods**. These are the places where daily life occurs, where residents and visitors alike can truly experience the Greater Tucson community. These places will honor the best of our cultural and natural heritage, while at the same time, offering choices for the variety of lifestyle options that we desire. Traditional single-family neighborhoods will be maintained in many areas, while a vibrant central city and new regional town and neighborhood centers, and mixed-use corridors will provide living, entertainment, employment, and shopping opportunities in safe, compact, walkable, accessible, and enjoyable environments. Business expansion and investment will be focused into downtowns and town centers, at specialized employment parks, and by redeveloping, repurposing, and re-energizing many of the region's commercial centers and retail strips.

A first-rate **transportation** network will connect our region's centers and neighborhoods. Whether by driving on improved or expanded roads, taking a rapid transit bus, riding a local or regional rail, biking, or walking, residents of all ages will be able to access the things we want and need in a safe and efficient manner. A high-quality transportation network will contribute to the creation of a strong and cohesive region, provide easy access to a variety of lifestyle and employment options, and stimulate economic development.

By identifying these things we value most as a region, we can ensure that they remain the most important aspects of our future, not just fondly remembered elements of our past. Working together toward this Shared Regional Vision, based on those things we value most, we can create the future we imagined.

NOISY

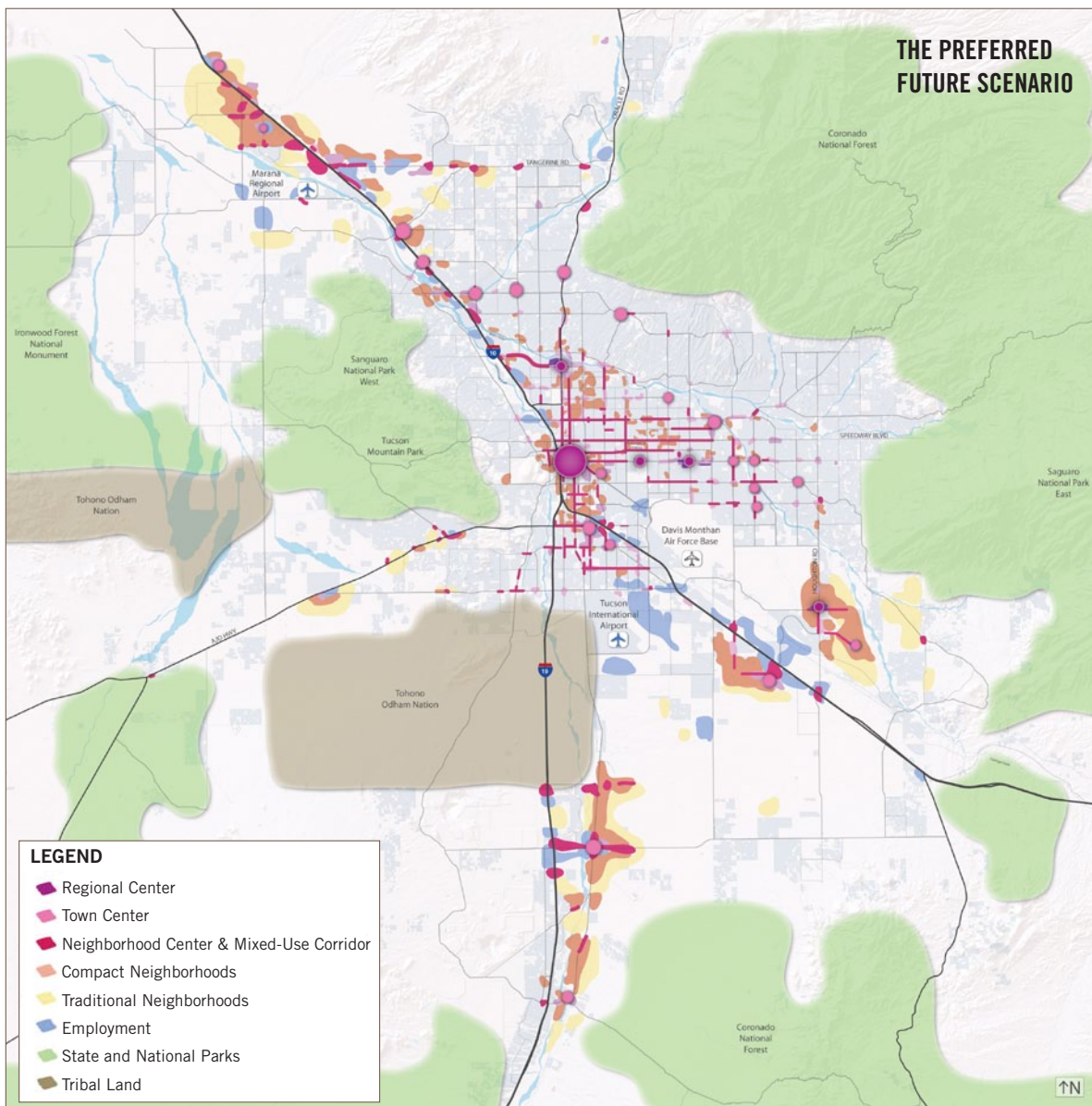
*The "Vision for a Greater Tucson Region" marks a key milestone in the ongoing IGT process. Undertaken during challenging economic times, this process has demonstrated residents' enthusiasm for and knowledge of our region, and their strong connection to this community. Far from despairing over the unfortunate circumstances of the times, or focusing solely on our challenges, residents came together to express what they value about the Greater Tucson region. Again and again, at workshops and in presentations, in conversations, and through surveys, thousands of residents spoke passionately about their love for the area and their hopes for our region's future.*

# OUR PREFERRED FUTURE

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IGT has built upon the input received throughout the process—Shared Regional Values, Scenario Building Workshops, and survey—to develop the **Preferred Future Scenario** (see below). The scenario represents a growth and development pattern that allows the region to achieve its vision.

**The Preferred Future Scenario depicts a region that is more compact, efficient, walkable, bikeable, greener, and transit-oriented than it would be if we were to continue with a business-as-usual approach to growth.**



*The Preferred Future Scenario is a conceptual illustration, built on a generalized land use model; it is not a land use map. It has no force of law or regulatory function. Its intent is to provide context, direction, and focus for crafting our region's physical form and to show how the different land use and transportation elements interconnect and relate. It should be used with the entire Vision document as a guide for policy makers when making local decisions, and a tool for understanding the desires and vision of our region. It is based on the Shared Regional Values, the major themes and areas identified in the Scenario Building Workshops, and the results from the "How Should Our Region Grow?" survey.*



Through this process, residents overwhelmingly expressed a strong desire to conserve and protect our water, land, and our air. We also want greater choices in how we travel around our region, the kinds of neighborhoods and homes we live in, our job opportunities, and the look and feel of our region. This is not the future we are currently heading toward.

**If we continue to grow and develop as we have in the past, we are faced with a future that is inconsistent with our Shared Regional Values.**

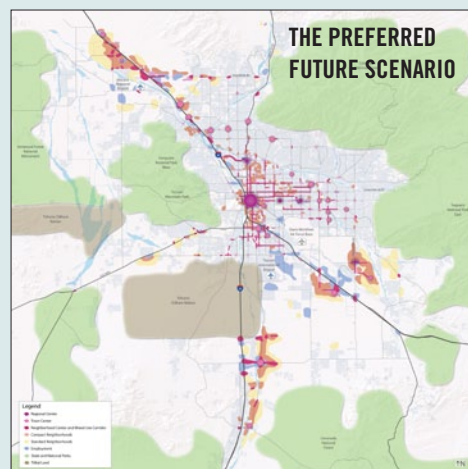
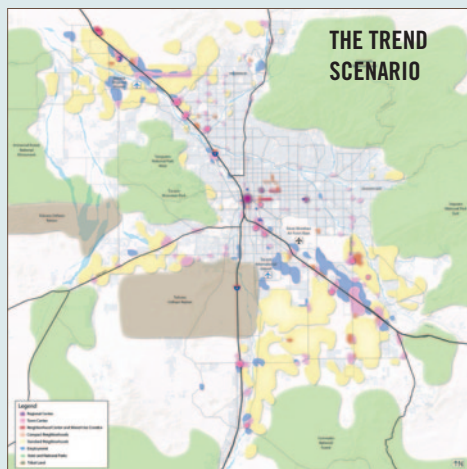
A continuation of current trends will perpetuate a development pattern that extends into undeveloped desert, gives us little opportunity other than to stay in our cars on our increasingly congested roads, threatens our water and air quality, and fails to build a strong and resilient economy. It does not provide the choices people across the country are now demanding to which young creative workers are drawn. It is built on a model that the recent housing crisis demonstrates is no longer acceptable and increases the cost of providing infrastructure. **If we continue making the same decisions, we are heading toward a future that is unsustainable economically, environmentally, and socially.**

The good news is there is incredible agreement about what kind of future we, as a community, do want. The Preferred Future Scenario helps us to think about how we align our actions to achieve that future. We want to create a region with high-quality and diverse places, neighborhoods, and destinations that reflect residents' values and that are accessible to all age groups, income levels, and tastes. This future emphasizes creating areas with increased density and a greater mix of land uses as a way to help achieve many of the things residents desire. However, it does not preclude lower-to-medium-density, single-family residential neighborhoods that some individuals and most families prefer, and will continue to prefer. Choice is important.

**This Vision is long term.** The desired changes for our region will not happen overnight. The Preferred Future Scenario represents a future that may be upwards of 50 or as many as 100 years away. However, to get there, we must start work immediately. If we build on the policy changes, bold investments, and small-scale actions undertaken today, together we will demonstrate successes and build the necessary momentum necessary to create the region we want.

## WHERE ARE WE HEADED?

*The Preferred Future Scenario and the Trend Scenario represent very different directions for the future of our region. The Preferred Future Scenario is the region people want. The Trend Scenario is what our region will look like if we continue to grow and develop as we have been. Though they both depict a doubling of our region's pop-*



*ulation, the Preferred Future Scenario accommodates this growth by **consuming about one third the amount of land** as the Trend Scenario. The Preferred Future Scenario is nearly **four times more compact** than the Trend, and it contains a much greater variety and mixing of housing types and land uses. In the Preferred Future Scenario, jobs, and housing are located in much closer proximity, development is clustered close to areas served by existing infrastructure to maximize efficiency, and expansion onto undeveloped land outside of our existing cities and towns is greatly reduced. The Preferred Future Scenario reflects the desired significant change from current development policy indicated by the public, recognizing that bold action is required to make that change possible.*





# THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF OUR PREFERRED FUTURE

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The building blocks of the future region described here are conceptual tools that help us understand how to begin shaping our region to align with our vision. They are based on a land model that was used extensively in the Scenario Building Workshops to help understand the results of locating additional population and jobs under various urban forms. They are not blueprints or rigid prescriptions. The intent is not that all areas of our region must follow one of these descriptions. Their purpose is to help us set long-term goals and work toward eventually transforming parts of our region to resemble these concepts. Some of these land types are familiar to us, while some are new to our region; they are concepts that will help us understand and achieve our long-term vision.

Developing mixed-use centers around our region, ranging in scale from large regional centers down to much smaller neighborhood centers, is a key component of our preferred future development pattern. The centers will be tied together by mixed-use corridors and main roads. They will be safely and easily accessible to all, including cyclists and pedestrians. Compact mixed-housing residential neighborhoods will be located near or adjacent to the various centers and transit stops, while existing and new lower-density neighborhoods composed primarily of single-family homes will still have easy access to key destinations. Many of our region's jobs will be found in our downtowns and centers, along mixed-use corridors, and at larger specialized employment centers located near our airports and interstates.

## ***CENTERS***

*Pages 27-32*

## ***NEIGHBORHOODS***

*Pages 33-35*

## ***TRANSPORTATION CORRIDORS***

*Pages 36-37*

## ***EMPLOYMENT AREAS***

*Page 38*

# CENTERS

Centers are live-work-play environments and destinations featuring a mix of housing, offices, public space, retail, institutions, and services. They will be lively places with abundant street life and a variety of activities for residents and visitors. The centers range in scale and intensity from large **regional centers** to smaller **town centers**, and still smaller **neighborhood centers**.

In all of our centers, sizes and design of structures will be sensitive to their context and relate to surrounding neighborhoods. In older parts of our region this will mean building to complement historic neighborhoods and re-use of historic structures, while in the newer developing areas, it will mean designing centers to incorporate and respect natural features.

## REGIONAL CENTERS

Our regional centers will be the social, cultural, civic, and economic cores of our region. By car, transit, and bike, many residents will commute into our downtowns for work and entertainment. For those residents who prefer to live in a more vibrant urban environment, our regional centers will offer plenty of opportunities to find affordable high-quality residences within walking distance of jobs, cultural amenities, shopping, transit, and entertainment.

In the evening hours and on weekends, regional centers will be the places to take in the best of our region's nightlife, dine in a variety of restaurants, experience the arts, or just sit on a shaded bench to absorb it all. Thriving regional centers will help us attract and retain young people and higher-end employers seeking creative workers, which will help strengthen our economy. ►



Regional mixed-use center noting gathering opportunities. Rendering by The Planning Center.



# CENTERS

While they will share many characteristics and common elements, our regional centers will not be identical. Each will contribute to the region in its own way by retaining the attributes specific to its local context. The largest, densest, and most urban center will be downtown Tucson, connected to the University of Arizona through the Sun Link Modern Street Car. Other regional centers will be

located around our region in Marana, Sahuarita, near South Houghton Road, and elsewhere.

Regional centers will be the most intensely developed and have the largest diversity of buildings and uses in the region. ►



Future potential downtown or regional center. Rendering by The Planning Center.



# CENTERS

## TOWN CENTERS

Town centers will offer many of the benefits of increased density and a mix of uses without the high intensity and scale of our downtowns. They will be located throughout the region and will serve as destinations for shopping, dining, working, and satisfying other daily needs closer to home. Individual buildings within town centers may contain a mix of office space, hotels, apartments, and street-level commercial store fronts, allowing residents to enjoy the activities and goods they want, just outside their front doors.

Town centers will be more dense and taller than we are familiar with now, but they will still reflect and contribute to our region's character. They will contain both single-use and mixed-use, low-to-midrise buildings. There will be considerable variation between the form and function of different centers, depending on local context. Some will emphasize residential development, while others will be more commercially oriented. All will contain some mix of both elements.

Greatest accessibility by all modes can be achieved by developing town centers where transit, streets, bikeways, and pedestrian paths come together. Co-locating town centers and major transit stops will make the centers easy to get to for all our region's residents, and help support a robust transit system. ►



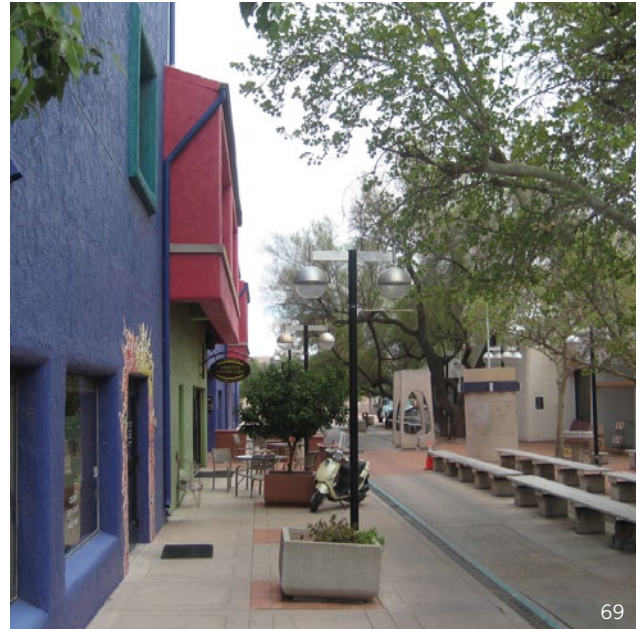
Town center scale at two arterial roadways. Rendering by Hillary Turby.

# CENTERS

## NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS

Neighborhood centers are smaller-scale and oriented more toward their immediately adjacent neighborhoods than either the regional or town centers. They will also be composed of retail, offices, and a mix of residential types. Residents will have a choice of living in lower profile apartments and condos in mixed-use buildings, townhomes, or smaller-lot, single-family homes. To successfully integrate neighborhood centers into new and existing neighborhoods, their design will complement their surroundings and building heights will be lower than in other types of centers.

Neighborhood centers will provide public spaces, pedestrian amenities, and shopping. As local destinations and pedestrian environments, neighborhood centers will foster the incidental sidewalk meetings and courtyard interactions that are essential for building stronger more intimate communities. ■



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Low-density scale neighborhood center. Rendering by Hillary Turby.

# CENTERS

## CENTERS AT-A-GLANCE

The chart gives a brief illustrative summary of the relative differences between the three types of centers described in the Vision.





# CENTERS

## WALKABILITY

*Walkability is the one characteristic that all great urban places and memorable small towns have in common. While sidewalks are a very important element, walkability is more than just infrastructure. A truly walkable environment is:*

- **Comfortable**—*In Southern Arizona this means shade. Shade can be provided through street trees, shade structures, and the buildings themselves. A comfortable environment should provide pedestrian amenities, such as benches and plantings, and be buffered from wider roads with fast moving traffic.*
- **Human-scaled**—*Low-to-midrise buildings located close to sidewalks with minimal gaps between them creates a street wall. This stands in sharp contrast with auto-scaled development, which is dominated by parking lots with buildings set far back from the street.*
- **Visually appealing**—*A walkable place should have interesting things to look at, such as a variety of architecture (perhaps with unifying elements), public art, large store-front window displays, and people.*
- **Connected**—*A walkable environment needs an interconnected network of streets and paths, typically with more than one route to a destination. A grid or variation of a grid pattern functions well, while cul-de-sacs and dead-ends hinder walkability.*
- **Proximate**—*Residences should be close to shops and services and shops and services should be close to each other. A person will typically walk 5-10 minutes to any destination, so  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile distances are a good guideline, though if a place is human-scaled, vibrant, and visually appealing, people are often willing to walk farther.*
- **Safe**—*People will not walk in a place that is or gives the impression of being unsafe.*
- **Vibrant**—*A vibrant place is one that is full of street life. People want to be where other people are.*



# NEIGHBORHOODS

Taken as a whole, our region will be oriented around our variously sized and spaced centers as key locations for jobs, shopping, services, entertainment, and housing. However, most residents will likely choose to live in primarily residential neighborhoods. These residential neighborhoods fall into 3 broad types: **compact neighborhoods**, **standard neighborhoods** and **rural areas**.

People in our region live in all kinds of neighborhoods, and the values and affinity many people feel for their neighborhood are often very strong. Neighborhoods reflect home for people, and have traditionally been the way people see themselves in the greater community. The Shared Regional Values, especially those highlighted under Healthy Communities and Quality Neighborhoods, are indicative of our desire for safety, sense of community, attractive and interesting spaces, access to recreation, and connectedness.

Whether owners or renters, people live on many different sized lots, in all kinds of housing, in urban spaces, suburban tracts, or rural parts of the region. Some people live with extended families, some alone, some with friends, some in care facilities, and some are, sadly, without housing. Most live in what this report refers to as traditional neighborhood (described on page 35) which, based on our current land use pattern, are often separated by driving distances from basic services. Both some of the newest and oldest areas of the urban area and close-in suburbs tend to have a mix of housing styles and are denser than other areas. Rural residents may still have close neighborhoods, and others select rural areas to be much further removed from others.

While many residents and newcomers will desire to live in new centers (described in the previous section), the region's existing and new neighborhoods, both transit-accessible near these centers and auto-dominated in rural and some suburban areas, will remain the choice of most people. The vision recognizes this. Neighborhoods have been, and will continue to be, the prime building block in our community and in our family lives. ►



Compact neighborhood showing mixed housing types. Rendering by Hillary Turby.



# NEIGHBORHOODS

## COMPACT NEIGHBORHOODS

Compact neighborhoods are the densest neighborhoods. They contain a mix of housing types, including low and mid-rise apartments and condos, duplexes, townhomes, small-lot single-family homes, and some single-family homes on slightly larger lots.

In established neighborhoods, elements of compact neighborhoods can be integrated into the community by maximizing the use of vacant lots, adapting existing buildings to new and flexible uses, and by creating a redevelopment strategy that is sensitive to neighborhood context and character.

In newer developing parts of our region, higher-density areas should be designed to address the principles of sustainable development, make for livable communities, and complement the beauty of the natural environment. ►



## WHAT IS LIVABILITY?

*"Livability means being able to take your kids to school, go to work, see a doctor, drop by the grocery or post office, go out to dinner and a movie, and play with your kids at the park, all without having to get into your car. Livability means building the communities that help Americans live the lives they want to live, whether those communities are urban centers, small towns, or rural areas."*

*—Ray LaHood, U.S. Secretary of Transportation*



# NEIGHBORHOODS

## TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOODS

Traditional neighborhoods are the single-family neighborhoods so familiar and attractive to many of us in the region. They will continue to be a dominant neighborhood type and will include both established neighborhoods and newer subdivisions. Many traditional neighborhoods will be in close proximity or adjacent to neighborhood centers and retail, allowing residents to access these areas quickly and conveniently by walking, biking, transit, or through a short car trip. In other suburban parts of our region, traditional neighborhoods will continue to offer residents larger lots in a lower-density setting.



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## RURAL AREAS

Rural areas will house a smaller share of the region's population on relatively more land per person than other development types. Some residents will choose to live in more remote and rural settings, so we must ensure that rural living options continue to be available. Rural properties will typically consist of single-family homes on large lots, most often on one to five acres, automobile and truck-based with limited and greater distance to services. These neighborhoods will be appropriate for those wishing to keep horses, live closer to and amongst nature, or have more privacy and space, but they will often be outside areas generally providing urban services and amenities. ■



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# TRANSPORTATION CORRIDORS

Combining land use and transportation elements, corridors are the threads that stitch our region together. They connect jobs to neighborhoods, people to services, and goods to markets. In addition to moving people and goods, our corridors will also be destinations in and of themselves by providing attractive environments for jobs, housing, and shopping. An upcoming phase of IGT's outreach will seek input on transportation choices and alternatives needed to support the regional vision. That vision suggests we redefine our roadways from being largely oriented towards automobiles, to embracing forms that enable the variety of transportation choices that we want.

The two primary types of corridors are arterial, or main roadways, and mixed-use corridors. Main roads as they exist today will certainly continue to be an important part of our transportation system. Over the long term, however, we may look for opportunities to transform our roadways into places that share more characteristics with mixed-use corridors.

## MAIN ROADWAYS

Arterials, or main roads, are designed to move goods and people safely and efficiently. Examples of current arterials include Oracle Road, Tangerine Road, Valencia Road, Speedway Boulevard, 22nd Street, and Houghton Road. Larger retail and office complexes will line some of the arterials, while in other places, they will be punctuated by strategically located mixed-use town and neighborhood centers and corridors at major transit stops.

Most residents will use arterial roads for car and bus travel, but many will also want to have other choices in how they get around. In some of the more compact parts of our region, or between larger centers, arterial roads will support dedicated bus or bus rapid transit lanes and light rail

where appropriate. Facilities for pedestrians, recreational cyclists, and bike commuters along all of our arterials will need to be safe, modern, and inviting.

Our arterials are our primary means of travel, by all modes, and must be kept safe, clean, well-maintained, and useable for all residents. Their design must account for all users including motorists, trucks, transit riders, cyclists and pedestrians of differing abilities. Wide sidewalks built closer to buildings, adequate shade, appropriately-spaced crosswalks, innovative parking configurations, neighborhood access, and street buffering can make these pleasant environments for everyone, while still allowing the movement of a large volume of traffic. ►



Pedestrian environment in a mixed-use corridor. Rendering by Hillary Turby.



# TRANSPORTATION CORRIDORS



Higher intensity mixed-use corridor. Rendering by The Planning Center.

## MIXED-USE CORRIDORS

Although traffic will move through our mixed-use corridors, these will really be places designed with livability, not drivability, as the overriding consideration. They provide a pleasant environment where all of us can walk between restaurants, shops, cafes, and cultural venues, and meet with family, friends and neighbors. Office space and residences will be located on the upper floors, above street-level store fronts, or in separate buildings that contribute to the overall character of the block or corridor. These areas can function as traditional “main streets” for our neighborhoods and communities.

Design that allows for a pleasant pedestrian environment will enhance our enjoyment of these areas. Barriers that might detract from that experience include large surface parking lots, wide roads with intermittent pedestrian crossings, unattractive or poorly maintained spaces, and hostile un-shaded expanses. Buildings along mixed-use corridors will be a combination of closely spaced, low-to-midrise structures, built close to the sidewalk. ■

## WHAT IS MIXED-USE?

*Mixed-use refers to locating different but compatible land uses, such as office, residential, and retail, together in the same building or development. Proximity of residences to shops and services, human-scale design, and orientation to the street make for a walkable environment. The benefit of mixed-use is that, when located correctly, it can move residences away from auto-dependency by refocusing on the needs of the pedestrian. Living near shops, cafes, and restaurants will give residents easier access to community gathering places. Businesses will benefit by having a base of reliable customers nearby.*



# EMPLOYMENT AREAS

Employment will be integrated throughout our mixed-use centers and corridors. However, **retail and commercial areas**, as well as dedicated **employment centers**, will remain important aspects of our region.

## RETAIL AND COMMERCIAL AREAS

Retail areas will continue to resemble many of our familiar shopping centers and commercial strips. They will typically be located at major intersections and along arterial roads. Parking will be appropriately sized around shopping centers, and the centers will be easily accessible by automobile and transit.

Retail and commercial areas will accommodate all modes of transportation, and they should seek to incorporate landscaping and design elements that make them enjoyable environments to for all visitors. Pedestrian access and paths will encourage walking to and through the centers, adequate shade can make the parking lots more comfortable, and landscaping will be designed to capture storm water on-site and utilize runoff for irrigation.



## EMPLOYMENT CENTERS

Employment centers will be business districts where many of our region's larger primary employers, and those needing more space for their operations, will locate. They will contain a mix of offices, industrial flex space, and research and development. Our biggest employment centers will be located along arterials near I-10 and I-19, the railroad, and clustered around our airports. Employment centers need to be conveniently connected to transit and other modes of transportation, otherwise we risk adding to traffic congestion.

We will build on our strengths by supporting existing industries and attracting complimentary businesses and related services. The area around Tucson International Airport will be a focus for the aerospace and defense sector; research and development campuses in the pharmaceuticals, biosciences, and technology will locate in the areas in and around Innovation Park in Oro Valley, The University of Arizona Bioscience Park at the Bridges, The Tucson Tech Corridor southeast of Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, along Tangerine Road in Marana, and near Interstate 19 in Sahuarita. Larger employers will also be able to locate in our town centers and regional centers. ■





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# LOOKING FORWARD



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# HOW DO WE GET THERE?

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## MAKING THE VISION A REALITY

Through the IGT process, the people of our region have clearly expressed a desire for a community that is unique, prosperous, vibrant, affordable, and accessible. It must be a community that honors its past, celebrates the beauty and fragility of the natural environment, offers choices and opportunity for all of us, and authentically reflects our cultural diversity and who we are as Southern Arizonans. As preferences and priorities change and our population grows, we will continue to make this a great place to live for current and future generations.

### To get there, we will:

- Create more residential choices and appealing places, especially for younger and older people throughout the region.
- Diversify and strengthen our economy.
- Continue to make our environment and conservation of key areas of our undeveloped desert a priority in regional and personal decisions.
- Improve access to goods, services, and destinations for all residents.
- Increase regulatory certainty, regional collaboration, and meaningful public participation.
- Make our region more compact by focusing on design, increasing density, and encouraging infill development where appropriate.
- Maximize investments in infrastructure through efficient use of land.

These overarching concepts are **interconnected** and run through everything we want to achieve. Each depends on and is strengthened by the others.

We cannot create the quality places we want without a strong economy to bring jobs and business resources to our region. Our economy, in turn, is supported by the health of our environment, the availability of water and clean air, and the creation of high-quality, accessible places that excite younger generations. Our ability to achieve all of these things is underpinned by the extent to which we can work together through collaborative, open, and transparent processes. By integrating all of these, we can build a community that provides the choices and opportunities our residents want, and one that is economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable.

The specific strategies, policies, and actions needed to implement these concepts will vary by place, jurisdiction, local context, and available opportunities. A “one size fits all” approach will not be appropriate, or particularly effective, for achieving our region’s vision. All of us, in our homes, neighborhoods, businesses, and organizations, will have a role in working together to move our region forward.

The following pages outline some key actions residents have said we must take in order to realize the *Vision for a Greater Tucson Region*. The work described here focuses primarily on the physical environment. But this is just the beginning. The Vision is a living document and IGT is a continuing process. Moving forward, additional opportunities and priorities will emerge as our region and our needs evolve. Over time, IGT will work to move beyond these initial steps and address other community priorities, focusing on how we work together as a region.



*Throughout this process, Imagine Greater Tucson reached out to many residents, including those who may not ordinarily participate in these kind of exercises. Public input has directly contributed to the development of the following ideas and actions. The Shared Regional Values formed the foundation and helped guide the creation of the different scenarios for our region's future. Feedback from our community during the "How Should Our Region Grow" survey evaluated these scenarios and provided key insights into people's priorities and desires. Survey results, paired with the values themselves, led to the development of our Shared Regional Vision. Finally, stakeholders and partners shared the challenges to and opportunities for getting there. These efforts are the basis for the following recommendations.*



# QUALITY PLACES AND NEIGHBORHOOD CHOICES

## WHAT IT IS

In a regional sense, creating quality places means ensuring that we provide a full range of live-work-play options so residents have the choices available to determine their own best place. This includes having a mix of vibrant downtowns and centers, new walkable mixed-use districts, traditional single-family neighborhoods, and maintaining surrounding rural options. All neighborhoods must be safe and accessible, with affordable choices for all residents. Quality places need to reflect our diverse cultures as well as our desert environment.

## WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

Generational changes are shifting the demand about where people want to live. Many younger people appear to be driving less, but still need access to daily needs. This group, especially young professionals, wants lively downtowns and appealing town centers that provide desired lifestyle and entertainment options. Some families with children may desire more space and the quiet streets that single-family neighborhoods can offer. Some older residents may downsize and trade in their larger-lot residence for a more walkable, accessible environment. Still, other families may want to keep multiple generations together. To accommodate these preferences, we will have a mix of single-family neighborhoods, compact mixed-use districts, and vibrant downtowns in our region. Regardless of where we live, and in what stage of life we find ourselves, we all benefit from having choice and a variety of neighborhoods and destinations available to us.

Providing choices of high-quality places can attract and retain talented workers, support economic growth, give our community multi-generational appeal, and offer all residents options in where and how they would like to live in the region. Strengthening our urban core, town centers, and neighborhoods will, to some extent, lessen our car dependency in urban parts of the region and create more connected communities.

## WHERE WE ARE NOW

**We are not providing many of the choices that current and future residents will want.**

We sometimes take for granted our many historic landmarks and local architecture, an increasingly vibrant downtown Tucson, some strong residential neighborhoods, and thriving commercial centers. Our current regional footprint of developed land is an estimated 420 square miles, composed primarily of lower-density single-use residential neighborhoods, retail strips, power centers, and office or industrial parks. For the past 20 years, over 90% of new residential development has been in the form of single-family detached homes. Much of our multi-family housing is older and outdated and may be in need of improvements, and housing in some of our neighborhoods is distressed. We have very few examples of mixed-use development or walkable neighborhoods.

## THE WAY FORWARD

Our residents have expressed a strong desire for more choices in our cities and towns and a development pattern that is compact, efficient, and integrates our natural environment, wherever possible.

**In order to create the quality places that residents demand, we must:**

- Create complete, integrated, multi-generational communities by focusing on the idea of placemaking.
- Expand our developed park system and create plazas, civic spaces, and other public gathering places.
- Provide a wide range of neighborhoods with safe, affordable housing options.
- Develop regional town centers.
- Build on recent successes in downtown Tucson.

# QUALITY PLACES AND NEIGHBORHOOD CHOICES



## CREATE COMPLETE, INTEGRATED, MULTI-GENERATIONAL COMMUNITIES BY FOCUSING ON PLACEMAKING

Placemaking means creating spaces, neighborhoods, and communities that excite and draw people, and will endure over time. Placemaking adds value and builds pride. The results of placemaking are safe, unique and memorable places, often including active street life, walkable design, interesting architecture and landscape, a mix of uses, and gathering places. To be authentic and contribute to our region's character, our new and revitalized places need to incorporate a sense of our history and cultural diversity, our natural setting, local architectural style, and the arts. Placemaking is also a strategy that communities around the country have successfully used to support economic growth. Many companies locate where talented employees want to live, and talented, creative employees want to live in great places.

Placemaking will vary by context and location, but, in general, to create great places, we need to support strategies that focus first on bold design and vision, including: reducing regulatory barriers that prevent or inhibit the development of mixed-use areas and innovative design that respond to residents' evolving preferences; increasing density where appropriate; prioritizing and sensitively implementing infill and redevelopment; building to human-scale and emphasizing the needs of pedestrians; creating a connected street pattern with fewer dead-ends or cul-de-sacs; and designing to local context.

## EXPAND OUR DEVELOPED PARK SYSTEM AND CREATE PLAZAS, CIVIC SPACES, AND OTHER PUBLIC GATHERING PLACES

Parks, plazas, and public spaces serve a number of functions in our cities and towns. They are public gathering places where friends and family can meet and play. They foster the incidental interactions necessary for creating a strong sense of community, they provide space for outdoor civic events, recreation and exercise, and they make the community more attractive and livable. ►



# QUALITY PLACES AND NEIGHBORHOOD CHOICES

Whether they are neighborhood or regional parks, public plazas, community gardens, or temporary gathering spots, these public spaces are essential for creating quality places across our region. This is particularly true as we look to increase density in some areas of our community.

To provide more public space in our region we will need to: identify areas that are under-served by parks and explore funding options to build and maintain parks and plazas in those areas; pursue leasing options on vacant land for parks and community gardens; and forge strong partnerships among builders, neighborhoods, and governments to get parks built.

People need to feel ownership of these public spaces, and therefore must be involved in their design and upkeep. We cannot expect to be successful if we rely on local government alone. ►



## INFILL, REPURPOSING, AND REDEVELOPMENT

*To meet the changing needs and desires of our region's residents, we will need to transform our built environment in significant ways, particularly in or near some of our already developed areas. Doing so will not always be easy, but we can make progress by taking advantage of opportunities for infill, repurposing existing structures, and if appropriate, demolition and redevelopment of obsolete buildings.*

**Infill**—Infill is building on the vacant land within already developed areas. When done correctly, infill development can strengthen existing neighborhoods, create the higher density necessary to support desirable services, increase the tax base, and make our communities more efficient without being disruptive to existing neighborhoods.

**Repurposing**—Repurposing, also known as adaptive reuse, means adapting a structure for a new use. Repurposing existing buildings requires fewer resources than new construction and is an effective way to maintain the character of areas while allowing them to respond to changing circumstances. Repurposing is best known for saving and reusing historic or otherwise unique or significant buildings; however, in recent years, there have been numerous successes in repurposing defunct commercial and industrial projects.

**Redevelopment**—Redevelopment often involves the demolition of some or all of an existing structure in order to replace it with something that is deemed more desirable. This form of redevelopment must be used judiciously and strategically; once a building is torn down, it is gone forever. It must be done through an open process that respects residents, businesses, and our cultural heritage. Examples of properties appropriate for redevelopment might include storage yards within densifying neighborhoods, vacant or non-performing shopping centers, and blighted or unsafe housing.



# QUALITY PLACES AND NEIGHBORHOOD CHOICES

## PROVIDE A WIDE RANGE OF SAFE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPTIONS

To ensure that we offer choices and economic accessibility for all residents, we will need to diversify our housing stock and promote affordability. In the last decade, we have built an oversupply of single-family homes. Going forward, we will certainly need to build single family housing as the current oversupply is absorbed, but we also need to provide a broad range of both affordable and higher-end apartments, condos, townhomes, duplexes, accessory units, co-housing, and live-work units. We need to create communities that support multi-generational family living, and neighborhoods that offer the ability to age in place.

Our communities, regardless of type, must be designed so that, first and foremost, people feel safe and comfortable. Some of the things we can do to increase housing options and affordability are to: zone properties to allow more multi-family housing, especially in areas served by transit; address barriers to rehabilitating existing multi-family residences; expand affordable housing programs; develop a wide range of incentives for building affordable units; and continue to support the creation of higher paying jobs in building small businesses and recruiting new companies. It is all interrelated.

## DEVELOP REGIONAL TOWN CENTERS

As a way for our communities to distinguish themselves within our region and to provide more choices for residents, we should work to develop a variety of unique town and neighborhood centers. In downtowns and centers of the towns of Marana, Sahuarita, Oro Valley, South Tucson, and the unincorporated county, development of live-work-play communities can be expanded to meet the needs of local residents and benefit the entire region. The centers will vary widely by the cultural diversity of the community and by the space available, but generally these areas should provide a variety of housing options, jobs, and entertainment in more walkable environments. These centers can strengthen the unique identity of each area, and support economic development in both the surrounding communities and region as a whole.

To support the development of regional town centers, we need to: use design-based regulations, such as form-based development codes, to create unique community character; permit a mix of uses and increased density in appropriate areas; and make the centers accessible through a wide range of transportation options. ►



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# QUALITY PLACES AND NEIGHBORHOOD CHOICES

## BUILD ON RECENT SUCCESSSES IN DOWNTOWN TUCSON

Great regions have great downtowns. A great downtown attracts large employers, small businesses, and young, creative workers; it supports the arts, provides an entertainment destination, and strengthens a region's identity. In the past few years, downtown Tucson has undergone a renaissance and is on the verge of becoming just such a downtown. After years of decline, it is once again emerging as a major destination for work, shopping, and entertainment. Thanks to the commitment of large and small businesses, public support, the growing presence of the University of Arizona, and residents' desire for a revitalized core, Tucson's downtown saw well over \$300 million in investment during the recent economic recession—and there is more on the way. This has transformed the area from a nine-to-five employment district to a vibrant 24-hour regional center. In the next year, downtown will unveil Sun Link Modern Streetcar, add over 2,000 additional student-housing units, and see the establishment of many new businesses.

To build on the momentum of the recent successes in downtown Tucson, while respecting its history and diversity, we should continue to bring more residential options and businesses into downtown by: working to make regulations clearer and the approval process more efficient and predictable; revise building codes to further encourage adaptive re-use; and continue to improve streetscapes, infrastructure, and public spaces. ■



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## AFFORDABILITY

*Affordability is more than just the cost of housing. In Pima County, many households spent 30% or more of their household income on transportation. If we were to continue to sprawl as gas prices rise, transportation costs would become a larger share of household expenses. These costs can be controlled through better transit options and more compact development patterns. "Drive 'til you qualify" may lower housing costs for some families in the short-term, but it can lead to long-term financial burdens, one of many trade-offs we must consider.*

# *A STRONG AND DIVERSE ECONOMY*

## WHAT IT IS

Job creation and a strong, diverse economy depends on an educated workforce, supporting our existing businesses, developing home grown businesses, and attracting new employers to the region.

## WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

More and better jobs in diverse industries means that our region can offer a variety of economic opportunities to everyone, leading to more money in residents' pockets, and more revenue to make investments to improve our community. In essence, many of the other elements of this Vision will be difficult to achieve without solid economic development. Larger, primary employers bring money into the region and support complementary businesses. Small and local businesses often do this as well, but also keep more money in the region and contribute to our character and sense of place.

A strong and diverse economy, with a mix of high-quality employers, will give us access to a variety of employment opportunities in different companies, businesses, and sectors. This will support more flexibility and advancement in numerous careers. Such an economy attracts talented workers, retains young people, and provides implicit insurance against the potential failure of start-ups creating an environment that fosters entrepreneurship and risk taking. This will improve the overall quality of life in the region and make us more resilient, competitive, and better able to weather future economic downturns. We want a region that grows because the economy is strong, not a region whose economy depends on growth for its own sake.

## WHERE WE ARE NOW

Currently, Pima County ranks 198th among the country's 322 largest counties for average weekly wages. The \$794.00 earned by our average worker is below that earned in Maricopa County, the State of Arizona, and the nation as a whole. However, from 2000 to 2010, the average wage in Pima County grew by 12.5%, outpacing both Arizona and the United States.

A quarter of all jobs in Pima County are in the education, health care, and the social assistance sectors. We have industry strengths and opportunities in aerospace and defense, bioscience, solar, transportation and logistics, tourism, and in education and health care. Our strongest cluster of businesses exists in the aerospace and defense industry.

There are a number of organizations and communities working collaboratively on economic development, and Tucson Regional Economic Opportunities Inc. (TREO) serves as the marketer for the region, as a whole. The TREO Blueprint is a regionally focused economic development vision, and this Shared Regional Vision is consistent with the Blueprint.

## THE WAY FORWARD

Residents want to see increased wages, a diversified and resilient economy, and more economic activity and opportunity in the region.

**In order to strengthen and diversify our economy, we must:**

- Promote and leverage our region's economic strengths and emerging clusters.
- Develop a well-educated and skilled workforce.
- Support small and local businesses.



# *A STRONG AND DIVERSE ECONOMY*

## **PROMOTE AND LEVERAGE OUR REGION'S ECONOMIC STRENGTHS AND EMERGING CLUSTERS**

As we grow and become more integrated into the emerging Arizona Sun Corridor, we will need to leverage our existing economic strengths to expand employment and increase wages in our region. We have strong assets in the University of Arizona, an aerospace and defense cluster, large medical and health service employers, tourism, a growing presence of logistics and transportation, tech, and pharmaceutical firms, and an expanding green jobs sector. These industries provide high-quality jobs, spur development of complementary businesses, and may attract the large primary employers who infuse our local economy with wealth from external sources.

To build on these economic strengths, we need to: provide a physical and cultural environment that is attractive and appealing to high-skilled employees; make the infrastructure investments necessary to support desirable industries; continue to implement existing regional plans for attracting key employers; capitalize on our natural climate to expand solar and wind energy; and take action to improve our reputation as a business-friendly community. Additionally, we need to align our approach to business recruitment with our educational and training resources. State and local government, the business community, and higher education and K-12 school districts need to present a united front in recruitment. Potential employers need to know we are of one voice, proud of our region, and able to provide an educated workforce to meet employer's needs.

## **DEVELOP A WELL-EDUCATED AND SKILLED WORKFORCE**

An educated and skilled workforce is vital to attracting new businesses and spurring growth of our own existing companies. Rising educational attainment directly contributes to an increase in productivity and standard of living. More than buildings and physical infrastructure, regions that invest in human capital are strongest in our

country. According to the Brookings Institution, Greater Tucson is currently ranked 41st out of the nation's 100 largest metro areas for the percentage of our population (30%) with a college education, slightly higher than Phoenix or Albuquerque. Pima Community College and the University of Arizona have a combined annual enrollment of over 110,000 students. Our region features 2 of the top 10 high schools in the nation, and Vail is one of the state's highest rated school districts.

Ultimately, companies want to be in communities where education is a priority, because it provides access to a skilled workforce and it allows employees to have good schools available for their children. This last school year saw an improvement in many of our districts, but some of our primary and secondary schools are still struggling or under-performing. As a state, we are at or near the bottom, nationally, in per student funding for public education.

In order to develop a well-educated and skilled workforce we need to: forge expanded partnerships between schools and employers; increase funding for schools; make educational excellence a very high priority for individuals, families, businesses, and the community as a whole; provide greater skills-based and career training such as the programs offered at the Pima County Joint Technical Education District (JTED); and increase accountability in school administration. ►



# A STRONG AND DIVERSE ECONOMY



## SUPPORT SMALL AND LOCAL BUSINESSES

In 2010, small businesses in Pima County accounted for 99.8% of all employer firms, about the same as the nation as a whole, and 86% of our firms employ fewer than 20 employees. Nationally, small businesses are a major jobs provider, employing roughly half of all private sector employees.

Local business typically refers to those small businesses that are locally owned. Local businesses employ large numbers of workers, keep money re-circulating in the region, diversify our economy, and contribute to the character, sense of place, and friendly small town feel of our community.

In order to continue supporting small and local businesses, we need to create physical and regulatory environments wherein all manner of small businesses can thrive. To do this, we should establish vibrant and attractive destinations throughout our region for retail businesses, clarify and simplify regulations to make approval processes quicker and more predictable, and provide programs to help small business owners through approval processes. Finally, we need to find ways to make it easier for businesses to locally source goods and services from local suppliers, and, as individuals, make a concerted effort to buy locally whenever possible. ■

## THE CHANGING MARKET: THE DEMAND FOR WALKABILITY

- *The National Association of Realtors 2011 Community Preference Survey indicated that there is demand for walkable communities. While the preference is not universal, walkable, smarter growth communities are generally favored, amongst other socio-economic groups, by younger unmarried respondents, a group our region is losing to other regions.*
- *In the past year, U.S. cities grew faster than their suburbs for the first time since the 1920's, demonstrating an increase in demand by some populations for more urban environments and the lingering impacts of the suburban housing crash*
- *In a national survey from the Robert Charles Lesser Company, 66% of 18-34 year olds say living in a walkable community is important, and a third say they would pay more for greater walkability.*





# RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

## WHAT IT IS

Resource conservation refers to using and managing our natural resources in a responsible way so that future generations will not be limited in pursuing their own opportunities for a high quality of life.

## WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

We live in one of the most beautiful natural settings in the country. Vast desert open spaces and the rugged Sonoran landscape define our region. Our lives are enhanced by our ability to access these beautiful places for recreation, exercise and quiet reflection. Visitors from across the globe come to our region to experience our desert environment, bringing money to our local economy. If we are to continue to thrive as a region, we need to ensure that we do not overburden our critical natural resources. Without sufficient clean water and air, rich biodiversity, and significant areas of unspoiled desert, we cannot protect the Sonoran Desert and provide the lifestyle that residents and visitors so value. Being responsible stewards of our environment not only conserves these irreplaceable resources for future generations, it strengthens our economy by attracting quality businesses and providing a place where workers want to live and tourists want to visit.

## WHERE WE ARE NOW

Our region continues to have a strong conservation ethic. We make a concerted effort to save water in our homes and businesses, and many organizations in our community work tirelessly to protect our natural resources and educate our public. Local jurisdictions and our region's utilities have a number of educational resources, services, ordinances, and incentives for saving energy and water. In the last decade, we have reduced per capita water consumption by over 12%. The voters of Pima County in 1974, 1986, 1997, and 2004 approved over \$230 million in bonds for the purchase of critical, unique, and sensitive lands. Since 1997, these bonds have led to



the purchase of more than 50,000 acres of land, most of which borders and extends public preserves and parks.

The County's Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan, primarily in the unincorporated area, enables conservation of a significant portion of the region's biodiversity while creating somewhat more certainty for both the development and conservation communities. In the years since the development of the Conservation Plan, multiple habitat conservation plans are being pursued by local jurisdictions. As of 2009, we had over an estimated 830,000 acres of permanently protected lands with another 125,000 acres conditionally protected. Wildlife linkages have been incorporated into road improvements and our local cities and towns have ordinances and plans protecting habitat, riparian areas, and other critical lands. ►

# RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

## THE WAY FORWARD

Protecting the quality of our water and air, and conserving biologically sensitive lands are very high priorities for residents. This has always been one of our region's great strengths, but population growth will likely strain our resources unless we accommodate it wisely and increase our commitment to conservation.

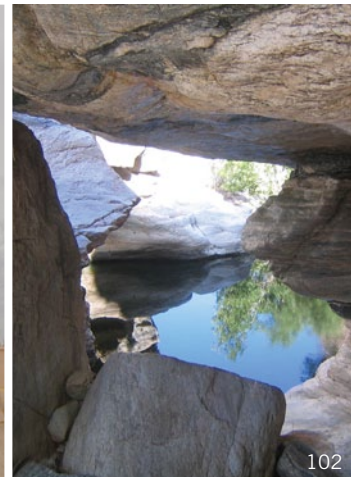
**In order to conserve our resources and honor and protect our natural environment, our region should build on this strength and:**

- Continue to improve water conservation in our region.
- Increase regional energy efficiency in our region's buildings.
- Maintain the quality of our air.
- Protect and conserve unique and biologically sensitive lands.
- Expand natural outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Increase the value of developable private and state trust lands.

## CONTINUE TO IMPROVE WATER CONSERVATION IN OUR REGION

Water is our most vital resource. If water is not managed well, future population growth could overburden available resources, stifling our economy and threatening our ecosystem and our communities. Going forward in our communities, in our businesses, and in our homes, we all must continue to make water conservation a priority.

Pursuing a more compact development pattern that promotes growth near areas served by existing water infrastructure is important not only because per household water use declines with density, it is also more energy efficient. We also should continue to take a variety of actions, some regulatory and some voluntary, such as higher efficiency standards, conservation pricing adjustments, desert landscaping, effluent re-use and water harvesting, as well as continued water saving education especially for new residents. ►





# RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT



## INCREASE REGIONAL ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN OUR REGION'S BUILDINGS

Our region could be a national leader in energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy. Taking steps to increase energy efficiency will reduce carbon emissions, save residents money, protect our precious non-renewable resources, and solidify our identity as a leading conservation community. Already, the Arizona Corporation Commission has mandated that by 2025, 15% of retail electric utility sales must come from renewable sources, including through Distributed Energy, such as rooftop solar.

To truly be a national leader in this area, we need to continue to increase the use of renewable energy sources ensuring reliability of power for business and households and reduce our per capita demand for power. We should encourage adaptive re-use of buildings, revise regulations to encourage the use of solar in commercial and residential building, and encourage strategic siting of buildings and appropriate landscaping to decrease their energy requirements. We should also encourage businesses involved in renewable energy research and manufacturing to locate in the region.



## MAINTAIN OUR AIR QUALITY

Our air quality directly affects the health of our residents, our desert views, and our climate. The three pollutants of greatest concern locally are carbon monoxide, ground-level ozone, and particulate matter. Car exhaust, blowing dust, and industrial activities all contribute to air pollution. At present, the Greater Tucson region meets all Federal Air Quality Standards. In fact, the American Lung Association rates Tucson as the fourth cleanest U.S. city for year-round particulate pollution. Perhaps our biggest challenge will be remaining in compliance with ozone standards. We occasionally experience levels close to the EPA's 8-hour standard limit, and the American Lung Association gave us only a 'C' rating for high-ozone days.

We must make every effort to maintain and improve our air quality. As our region grows, we run the risk of falling ►



# RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

out of federal air quality compliance and diminishing the overall quality of our air. Specifically we need to provide more quality transportation choices and a more compact future development pattern. This will allow us to reduce auto emissions, the primary contributor to high-ozone levels, by decreasing the total number of auto trips and maximize efficiency. How we collectively plan our future land use patterns, because of its relationship to transportation planning, directly contributes to regional air quality.

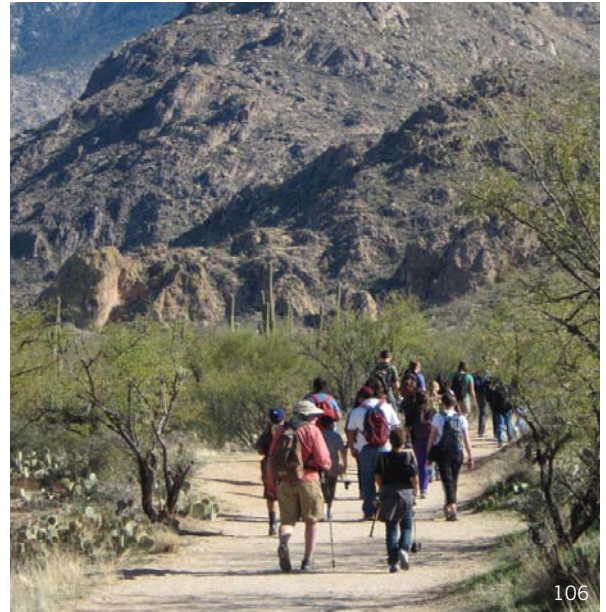
## PROTECT AND CONSERVE UNIQUE AND BIOLOGICALLY SENSITIVE LANDS

The Tucson region is one of the oldest continually inhabited sites in North America, endowed with an abundance of uniquely beautiful lands, and plants and animals that are found nowhere else in the world. We have a responsibility as stewards of these lands to ensure that future generations can enjoy them as we have. During peak growth, we were converting an average of 10 square miles per year of desert to development. A growing population, continuing to sprawl outward, risks disturbing and disrupting our critical habitat and cultural sites. Going forward, we need to continue to identify and protect important habitat, cultural sites, and critical or significant landscapes.

As population growth occurs, we will necessarily increase our development footprint. However, by refining regulations to allow for well-designed development in or near already developed areas, we can reduce pressures on critical natural areas. This higher-intensity style of development supports a more efficient use of infrastructure, and will also allow us to respond to the changes in housing market demand that have been expressed both locally and nationally, strengthening our overall regional economy.

## EXPAND NATURAL OUTDOOR RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

Our region is a world-class destination for hiking, mountain and road biking, horseback riding, and birding. Our natural recreation areas and trails are assets for each of us, bring tourism to our area, and provide healthy recreation opportunities. We were named the number one recreational bicycling town for 2012 by Outside magazine, and competitive riders from around the world are increasingly training in our region in the winter months. We must continue our commitment to keeping trails and recreation areas



well maintained and accessible for everyone.

So that everyone can enjoy our region's natural amenities, we should: increase cooperation between federal land managers and transit providers in order to improve access to parks wherever possible; make an individual effort to ensure trails remain clean and beautiful when we use them; look for opportunities to expand or connect the trail network; and promote the beauty of our region for locals and visitors alike.

## INCREASE THE VALUE OF DEVELOPABLE PRIVATE AND STATE TRUST LANDS

In order to afford to conserve our most critical lands, we need to ensure we use our developable lands efficiently, and where possible, establish high-value uses. Increasing intensity of land use, again where possible, serving those land uses with cost effective infrastructure, ensuring conservation of energy and water, and using high-quality design will in turn give us high quality development and highest value conservation. ■



# AN ACCESSIBLE REGION

## WHAT IT IS

Residents of all ages and abilities should be able to access jobs, destinations, and amenities across our region in a safe and efficient manner. Accessibility is the ultimate goal of any transportation system, and that means providing choices for people to get around by car, mass transit, biking, or walking, and providing efficient options for transporting goods. How we access the things we want depends on the quality and capacity of our roads, road network design, transit systems, safe bicycle routes, urban design, land use patterns, and wherever possible, increasing the proximity of residents to goods, services, and jobs.

## WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

A high-quality, well-maintained, safe, and diverse transportation system ties our region together, gets goods to markets, and provides access for residents and visitors to the things they need and want. Accessibility is fundamental to economic growth and makes it easier for people across our region to pursue a high quality of life.

Our transportation network directly affects public health and environmental quality through production of noise, vehicular emissions, and the degree to which it may encourage or discourage physical activity.

The decisions we make about our transportation system today will shape communities by affecting where future development will be located. These decisions will also affect long-term maintenance and operating costs.

## WHERE WE ARE NOW

Our region is primarily automobile-oriented. According to the 5-year estimates from the American Community Survey, 75.7% of Pima County's workers commute to work alone. 11% of people carpool, 8.5% of workers take public transportation, walk, or use other means, such as bikes, and 4.8% work from home. We have over 1,700



miles of major roadways and more than 6,700 miles of neighborhood streets across our region. In many areas, these roads and streets are in poor or failing condition, which will require major investments to prevent further deterioration and higher long-term repair costs.

Although we are largely automobile-oriented, we have made advances in providing other transportation choices. Sun Tran, the regional transit system, has seen a marked increase in ridership in the last decade from around 13.6 million passenger trips in 2001-2002 to 19.7 million passenger trips in 2010-2011. Our region ranked 4th nationally in a recent study conducted by the Brookings Institution comparing workplace access by transit in the country's 100 largest metropolitan areas. This puts us ahead of other western metropolitan areas including Albuquerque, Phoenix, and Las Vegas. We are also widely recognized as a bike-friendly region, and achieved a gold designation for Bicycle Friendly Communities from the League of American Bicyclists.

In spite of these successes, however, only about 2% of commuters do so by bike, and concerns about safety, comfort, and convenience discourage more residents from using alternative modes. ►



# AN ACCESSIBLE REGION

## THE WAY FORWARD

Throughout the IGT process, residents have expressed a desire for safe and well-maintained roads, availability of more high-quality transportation choices, and a shift away from sole dependence on the automobile. If we do not improve transportation options, we will likely see a future that is more congested, more polluted, and burdened by the demands for ever-expanding road capacity, all of which will stretch our already limited financial resources.

**In order to increase accessibility for all people in our region, we should:**

- Enhance and diversify our transit system.
- Maintain and improve our roads and roadway network.
- Promote walking and biking by making these choices more comfortable, convenient, and safe.
- Develop a regional strategy that coordinates transportation and land use planning.

## ENHANCE AND DIVERSIFY OUR TRANSIT SYSTEM

Residents want more transportation choices, such as expanded bus service, bus rapid transit, and regional and interregional rail. Making transportation options more available, comfortable, and convenient will allow all residents that choice. This will improve air quality, ease congestion, stimulate economic activity near transit stops, improve public health, and reduce household transportation costs, especially for those on fixed or smaller incomes.

We will need to make a commitment to invest in transit, coordinate and connect the various modes for efficiency and convenience, increase development density in targeted areas, and make it easier to change our personal behavior to use these enhanced transit options more frequently. This includes ensuring safe and convenient access to transit stops by providing sidewalks and appropriate street crossings, and making the stops themselves comfortable and safe with well-shaded seating areas. ►



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Modern streetcar. Artistic rendering courtesy of SunLink.

# AN ACCESSIBLE REGION

## MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE OUR ROADS AND ROADWAY NETWORK

Even as we begin to diversify our region's transportation system, most residents will continue to commute by private vehicles, or drive for most daily trips. Therefore, whether for cars, trucks, bikes or motorcycles, it is vital that we keep our roadways well-maintained. Pot-holes and poor overall condition of our roads can pose safety hazards for motorists and cyclists, give a bad impression of our community, and ultimately affect long-term economic prospects in our region.

Population growth will require that we expand our roads. We can do so by strategically increasing our road capacity through widening and redesigning some existing roads and building new roads where required. However, we must carefully balance road capacity expansion, the environment, changing demand brought about by higher-intensity development types and transit oriented development, and the region's sense of place to maintain a high quality of life.

## PROMOTE WALKING AND BIKING BY MAKING THESE CHOICES MORE COMFORTABLE, CONVENIENT, AND SAFE

Promoting opportunities to walk and bike will benefit the health of residents, improve the quality of our air, and contribute to the vitality of the region. To get more people walking and biking, the biggest challenge is making sure that these are safe and comfortable options. Walking or biking along our region's main roads is not currently seen as particularly pleasant or safe.

To increase walking and biking we need to: improve safety and comfort through investments in bike and pedestrian infrastructure and amenities, such as shade and access to water; increase connectivity and continuity of bike paths and sidewalks, including designing for the disabled; and make safe and respectful decisions as drivers, bikers, and pedestrians. We should also create areas with a variety of amenities and destinations in close proximity, encouraging



walking and biking by giving people a place to which they can walk or bike.

## DEVELOP A REGIONAL STRATEGY THAT COORDINATES TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE PLANNING

According to a recent study by the Arizona Department of Transportation, 73% of daily household vehicle miles travelled, and 80% of all household trips, are for non-work purposes. Many of these trips are for shopping and other family business. Non-work trips have increased significantly in the last 30 years, owing largely to an expansion of residential subdivisions, suburban land use patterns, and auto-oriented design and development. If we want to reduce household automobile trips, support other modes of transportation, and minimize congestion, campaigns to change travel behavior will not go far enough. As we grow, we need to better coordinate land use planning, zoning, and transportation investments across jurisdictions and change our built environment to make other modes of travel more convenient and viable.

To better coordinate land use and transportation planning we can: integrate Transit Oriented Development principles of designing for higher density and a mix of uses at and around major transit stops; identify corridors where building setbacks, a mix of uses, sidewalk widths, parking design, and building heights make for a more human-scaled environment; and incorporate the 4D's of transportation planning into land use planning as a strategy for managing roadway demand. ■

# AN ACCESSIBLE REGION

*The increased density illustrated in the Preferred Future Scenario (see page 24), coupled with our projected population growth, both supports and demands that we expand transit choices. Higher residential and job densities located in appropriate areas will support more frequent and convenient bus service and can make other transit options, such as bus rapid transit and light rail, financially feasible. Compact areas also increase walking and biking opportunities, so tying these areas together with transit will permit residents to access many of the region's primary destinations without ever needing to get behind the wheel.*

## THE 4D'S

*The 4D's show how land use and transportation systems planning are interrelated, with decisions in one area affecting the other. When fully integrated into land use and transportation decisions, consideration of the 4D's can reduce car dependency, support other transportation options, and make more walkable, livable communities. The 4D's are:*

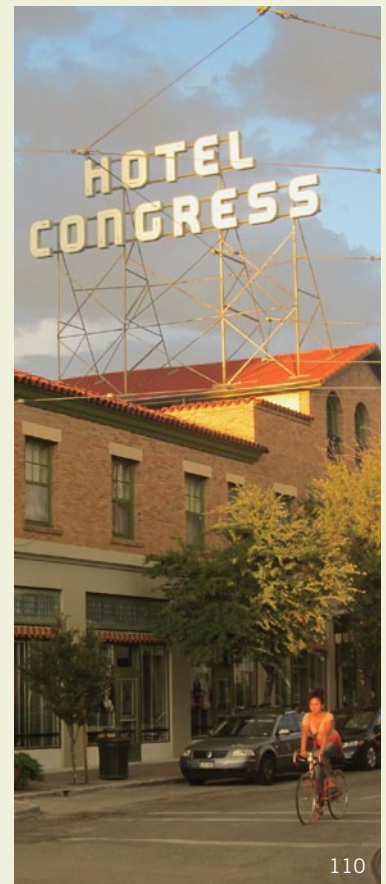
**Density**—Density refers to the compactness of residences and employment measured in residences per acre or jobs per acre. Increasing density in both origins and destinations can provide the critical mass necessary to decrease automobile trips, sustain different modes of transportation, and support nearby businesses.

**Diversity**—Diversity is the variety and mix of land uses within a given area. Having a mix of housing, jobs, retail, and services in an area puts people closer to the things they want and need, and lets them cluster their trips more effectively. Increasing land use diversity and density tends to encourage increased transportation diversity.

**Design**—Design means creating environments that provide pedestrian amenities and a connected network of roads and paths to allow for more direct routes for walkers and cyclists. Designing at a human-scale with the pedestrian in mind will make for an improved built environment and encourage walking.

**Destinations**—Destinations refers to locating housing closer to employment, recreation, and retail areas, providing easily accessible centers for many of the region's residents. This requires developing key destinations in areas that are widely accessible by a variety of transportation types and can encourage a shift away from the automobile.

*Research has shown that communities that successfully integrate the 4D's into their planning can see a reduction in vehicle miles traveled by 20-40% in some areas, thus maximizing investment in roadway improvements, improving air quality, and making for a more efficient and financially sustainable region.*



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# DECISION-MAKING AND REGIONAL COLLABORATION

## WHAT IT IS

Effective regional collaboration means that our region's jurisdictions and leaders place local decision-making within the larger framework of the regional vision. Regulatory and discretionary decision-making procedures should be effective and transparent, and include genuine and robust public participation. Whether we are working individually in our own jurisdictions, or collaborating across town boundaries or economic sectors, our actions and decisions should consciously move our region toward our desired future.

## WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

Many of the challenges we face are regional in nature, and must be solved regionally. Working together across jurisdictions, organizations, and localities will strengthen our ability to confidently address our challenges and improve our region. Whether spurring economic development, creating quality communities, providing inspiration, or making the hard decisions necessary for progress, our region's governments and leaders are pivotal in enabling a thriving region. Strengthening regulatory certainty across the region, with standards consistent with our values and developed through an inclusive process, will make us a more business-friendly community and give companies the confidence to invest here. It will also allow us to use our limited financial resources wisely, providing for the common good in an effective and efficient manner. Regional collaboration and open decision-making creates a political and social climate where all residents are included in the process, processes are transparent, and all residents have a stake in outcomes.

## WHERE WE ARE NOW

The Greater Tucson region is made up of one county, two cities, three towns, a tribe, a nation, and a number of unincorporated communities. In addition, federal and

state trust lands, 17 school districts and more than 30 special taxing districts add to the regulatory complexity of our region. However, we can, and already do, work together on a number of tasks. Across our jurisdictions and through entities including the Pima Association of Governments, Tucson Regional Economic Opportunities, the Coalition for Sonoran Desert Conservation, and our Chambers of Commerce among others, cooperation is often a valued approach. Better and consistent coordination and problem-solving remains a challenge, but working together offers us a real opportunity to strengthen our regional identity, strengthen our economy, and ensure we are all invested in our region's success.

## THE WAY FORWARD

As our population grows, so too will our challenges. Strong regional leadership and cooperation, as well as transparent and responsive decision-making procedures, are critical in helping us reach our desired future. Residents want our governing bodies to do a better job of coordinating their efforts, work together and be more responsive to the needs of residents and businesses. This also extends to leadership from all manner of non-governmental bodies, and how they work and communicate regionally, with one another and with government bodies.

**In order to improve decision-making and regional collaboration, we should:**

- Institute and support a regional decision-making process based on this Vision for our future.
- Increase inter-jurisdictional cooperation and collaboration.
- Establish more regulatory certainty in the development process.
- Promote inclusive and transparent public processes as an integral part of decision-making.

# DECISION-MAKING AND REGIONAL COLLABORATION

## INSTITUTE AND SUPPORT A REGIONAL DECISION-MAKING PROCESS BASED ON THIS VISION FOR OUR FUTURE

When we make decisions that are of regional significance, we should consider how those decisions affect our ability to achieve this shared vision for our future. As individuals, organizations, and governments, when considering action, we should ask ourselves:

- Does this action contribute to authentic placemaking?
- Does this prioritize the health of our environment?
- Does it help to strengthen our economy?
- Does it contribute to improved access for all residents across our region?
- Does it recognize the cultural diversity of the Greater Tucson region and enhance the ability of our people to succeed?

Not every project or proposal can, nor should be expected to, contribute to all these areas. Trade-offs are inevitable and realistic parts of our decision-making. But the questions should be asked, and the impact of the decision on our future should always be considered. Naturally, each of our jurisdictions must be allowed to execute these goals in their own way—a solution that makes sense for Tucson may not make sense for Marana, and that is okay. Ultimately, authentic placemaking means that all of our areas are unique and genuine, not carbon copies of one another. Actions of regional significance should increase, not decrease, our overall ability to realize our vision.

Above all, our decision-making processes must be open and transparent, and strive for genuine inclusion of all affected groups and interests. Meaningful public participation must be seen as a valued part of these decision-making processes, not merely an afterthought. In turn, a participating and informed public will help foster creative solutions and build a better region.



## INCREASE INTER-JURISDICTIONAL COLLABORATION

Our ability to achieve this *Vision for a Greater Tucson Region* depends enormously on our ability to work together. Creative partnerships across jurisdictions, businesses, and local organizations will increase our ability to meet our coming challenges. Collaboration does not mean we must do everything the same way. It means we capitalize on each other's strengths, and coordinate our efforts to move in the same overall direction—toward the future our community wants. We have many opportunities to work together, particularly around regional-scale plans and projects such as habitat conservation, transportation, watershed management, and regional economic development. Additionally, this means recognizing that leadership in our region is not just the purview of government but includes community leaders of all walks of life and interests. ►

# DECISION-MAKING AND REGIONAL COLLABORATION

## ESTABLISH MORE REGULATORY CERTAINTY IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Navigating a regulatory approval process can be a burdensome proposition and a barrier to desirable development in the region. In particular, the difficulty of developing near already established areas often contributes to urban sprawl. In order to encourage the types of projects that this Vision anticipates, we need more regulatory certainty in our region. This means having rules and regulations that are rational and clearly understandable, faster permitting approvals for projects that move the Vision forward, and public processes that are inclusive where expectations are established at the outset and stakeholder participation begins early on.

Creating more regulatory certainty will allow developers and businesses to make meaningful assessments of the risks of potential projects and establish agreed-upon guidelines for public participation. It solidifies neighborhood and community expectations, establishes a reasonable playing field for discussion, and allows all to think at the neighborhood, community, and regional level. Ideally, this will make us a more business-friendly community. And even if disagreements remain, it establishes a commonality of understanding for all.

## PROMOTE INCLUSIVE AND TRANSPARENT PUBLIC PROCESSES AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF DECISION-MAKING

The Imagine Greater Tucson process has demonstrated the value and importance of inclusive public engagement, and open and transparent public processes. Our ability as a region to achieve this Vision is critically dependent upon successfully integrating public participation and decision-making. Genuine public engagement will help to create meaningful collaboration, strengthen relationships across our region, improve the decision-making process and increase support for the outcomes of those decisions. In particular, processes that occur early and are geared toward finding commonality of interest rather than creating conflict need to be identified and employed as the expected standard.

The value of public process is not in conflict with increasing regulatory certainty as described above. To have both, however, means working together early and developing shared trust in order to succeed. ■



Pima Association of Governments Regional Council, 2011.



Sahuarita Town Hall



# WHAT'S NEXT FOR IGT?

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Although the process for arriving at a set of Shared Regional Values and an initial Vision for our region is coming to an end, the work is far from over. In fact, now the real work must begin. IGT is committed to this Vision for the future of our region and will **advocate** for, **educate** about, and **monitor** progress towards the realization of this *Vision for a Greater Tucson Region*.

Moving forward, IGT will support this regional vision by:

- Working with local governments and community leaders to integrate the Vision into policies, plans and projects.
- Forming partnerships and building a network around our Shared Regional Values.
- Continuing to provide a space for genuine dialogue and public discourse.
- Informing our community about opportunities to take action on issues affecting our regional values.
- Focusing action by monitoring our region's progress.
- Engaging with residents, businesses, and many others with knowledge and interest, to look more closely at transportation opportunities and challenges, and developing more detailed transportation recommendations in support of this Vision.

Above all, Imagine Greater Tucson will continue to foster collaboration and public participation. The voices of our region must form the basis for actions and decisions, large and small. The strength of this process is the coming together of individuals and organizations across our region to express our hopes and desires. Building networks and supporting new and innovative partnerships will be a critical piece of shaping the future of our region.

This Vision is part of a continuing process; it is not an end in itself. It can and should grow and evolve with our region. As IGT and the community make progress, we must constantly assess and continue to check in with the community to ensure that the values and the vision remain meaningful and relevant. Additionally, the success that IGT has experienced thus far will allow us to move beyond these initial steps, which focus primarily on the physical environment, and expand to address other community priorities and enhance our ability to work together regionally.

Looking forward, IGT will be guided by the Shared Regional Values and this *Vision for a Greater Tucson Region*, which will continue to be the foundation of everything we do.



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This Vision is the creation of the people of our region—it is what we, as a community, envision for our future. We want our community to be prosperous, sustainable, healthy, vibrant, authentic, and safe. Many of these are aspirations that long-time residents have heard before; through this process the people have reaffirmed their importance to our region.

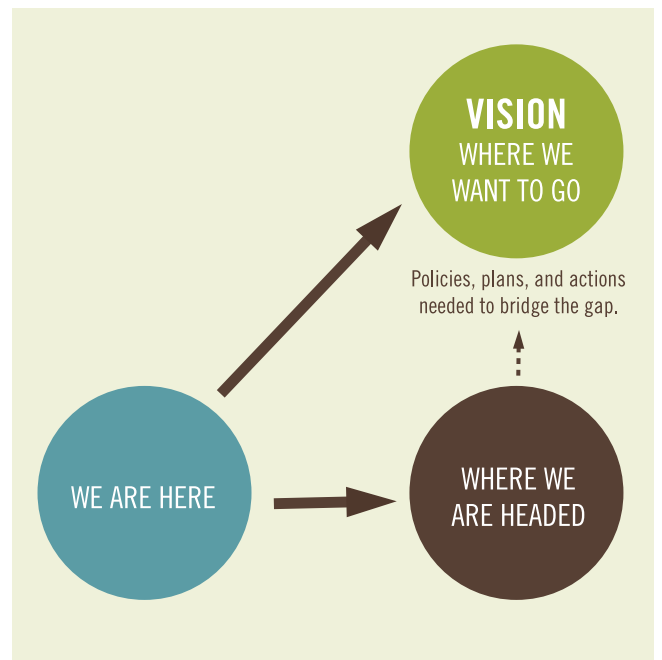
Achieving our desired future will require big changes. Our community cannot get there if we continue making the same kinds of decisions we have in the past. Accommodating a growing population by perpetuating the existing growth model will strain our financial and environmental resources, and will not provide the opportunity, accessibility, or choices that our region desires.

The people of our region have a different vision for the future—a vision built on hope. The IGT process has demonstrated that we, as residents, actually have more similarities than differences. With the foundation of our Shared Regional Values to guide us, we can take deliberate steps today to change where we are headed. The opportunity is ours for the taking.

The biggest threat to achieving this Vision is not merely doing nothing, it is doing nothing different. We must change course. To do so, action is needed from everyone on many fronts. Individuals, organizations, businesses, and governments must all play a role, and we must work together in new and creative ways.

This will not be easy. There is not one simple solution, megaproject, or “silver bullet.” The process of change will be incremental, organic, and small-scale. But success will breed success. The momentum resulting from our actions, and interactions, will build on itself and eventually we will arrive at the place we want to be.

Now is the time to take action and begin to craft the policies, make the plans, and set the agenda for making our Vision our Reality. The work that lies ahead may be difficult, but it is critical. And the reward will be great. Future generations of our beautiful valley will thank this generation.



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