



Metropolitan Pima Alliance

City of Tucson
City of Tucson Planning Commission
Chairman Ladd Keith
255 W. Alameda Street
Tucson, Arizona 85701

June 5, 2013

Chairman Keith,

Metropolitan Pima Alliance (MPA) continues to work towards finding common ground in the creation of the document known as Plan Tucson. In reviewing the most recent recommendations provided by staff to the Commission last week, MPA, alongside the Arizona Builders' Alliance (ABA), Alliance of Construction Trades (ACT), Southern Arizona Homebuilders Association (SAHBA), Southern Arizona Leadership Council (SALC), Tucson Association of Realtors (TAR), Tucson Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Tucson Metro Chamber and Tucson Utility Contractors Association (TUCA), cannot support the document in its current form. The recently submitted staff changes provided to the Commission last week do not adequately address our substantial issues as related to economic development. In general, our organizations, representing the business community, recognize the positive elements within the Plan Tucson draft; however, due to the significant outstanding issues remaining, it is our concern that this document has been unnecessarily fast-tracked when the State required deadline for completion is 18-months away. It is problematic to think that years of work and effort by staff and stakeholders, in creating beneficial parts could be sacrificed at the ballot as the entire plan is denied by the voters.

This letter is not meant to encompass all of our concerns or issues listed in our recent letters previously submitted. Each of our concerns as outlined in our letters dated May 1 and May 22nd still exist; however, at this time we are working to create a framework that addresses the business community's most critical issue first prior to discussing other items.

After an additional meeting with staff, we offer the following format in an effort to highlight and prioritize economic development and businesses within the City of Tucson. It should be noted that staff indicated that these changes could be accomplished, provided Commission gives them direction to do so.

We continue to collectively work with staff on issues and we strongly make the recommendation to reorganize and strengthen the language as related to economic development. Aside from Plan Tucson acting as a General Plan, it has grown to also reflect a "sustainability" document. For that reason, it is our strong belief that the focus areas should accurately reflect the true meaning of sustainability equally reconciling social, economic and environmental demands. While there is much integration and overlap

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between each of these elements, combining social with economic dilutes both sections and their significance creating a perceptual imbalance between the three elements. Additionally, while the document does largely address neighborhoods as the "Foundational Unit" of the City of Tucson, we argue that this is only in the context of a bottom-up, grassroots perspective. While we do not disagree that neighborhoods are critical to a community, MPA requests a section in Chapter 2 that looks from a top-down perspective of businesses identifying them as foundational units of a community as well. We recommend entitling this additional section as "Economic Drivers" that expands and supports the relationship of businesses within the community.

FOCUS AREAS

- Change Focus areas to mirror the idea of sustainability:
 - ~~1. Social and Economic Environment.~~
 1. Economic Environment
 2. Social Environment
 3. Living Environment
 - a. Natural Environment
 - b. Built Environment

Economic Environment should be a focus area with the following elements.

1. **Workforce Development:** Plan Tucson must articulate that it will support any and all efforts to improve the quality and quantity of our workforce. Poverty is mentioned frequently throughout the document and providing multiple opportunities to create an educated and skilled workforce should be a priority of the City as one tactic to improve this issue. This element should include:
 - i. Higher Education to more expansively include the University of Arizona, Northern Arizona University, Arizona State University, Pima Community College and all other higher education entities and opportunities
 - ii. Skilled labor should also be addressed to include apprenticeships, the role of JTED and how the City should support these efforts
2. **Economic Drivers:** The current Plan Tucson document casually mentions our economic drivers in which a few of our important industries are identified. An element must be included in this document specifically identifying these industries, as well as addressing how these industries will be supported by the City of Tucson. Furthermore, it is important to encourage policies that allow for economic diversity. In addition to listing the industries within the current draft, it should also include:
 - i. The \$1.6 billion economic impact of DMAFB must be listed in this document along with other economic drivers to include, but not be exclusive to, Defense and Aerospace and Hospitality and Tourism.

3. **International Trade:** Our close proximity to Mexico is only one reason to support international trade. We recommend expanding outside of Mexico so to not limit ourselves.
4. **Small Business, locally owned and grown:** While Plan Tucson must address business expansion and encourage new businesses to relocate to Tucson, it is equally important to support our small, local businesses.
5. **Services and Logistics:** The importance of available services, infrastructure and logistics are critical and relevant to the success of economic development. An element must address this issue to include, but not be exclusive to, the following items:
 - i. Water service
 - ii. Roadway transportation
 - iii. Port of Tucson
 - iv. Tucson International Airport
 - v. Union Pacific Railroad
6. **Commercial development revitalization:** While we support efforts to revitalize downtown, we encourage expanding the discussion to include revitalization of all commercial development properties within the City of Tucson.
7. **Entrepreneurship:** The City of Tucson has many programs supporting this concept and we encourage the addition of language reflective and supportive of creating an environment for starting and growing these types of businesses. For example, the spawning of Ventana Medical Systems from the University of Arizona.
8. **Fair and Predictable Regulatory Environment:** In being consistent with the Council's proclamation to create a "business friendly" environment, this section must encourage a streamlined and cost-effective regulatory environment.

The document in its present form, in spite of recent staff recommendations, insufficiently addresses our concerns and comments. While the draft may mention a few of these elements, it does so inadequately and more substance must be added to genuinely support economic development and growth opportunities. As members of the business community, we represent the economic foundation of the City of Tucson. While we have many other outstanding concerns, the issue of economic development is most prominent and we cannot support any version of Plan Tucson that does not prioritize the value of commerce, land and economic development. Once this issue is significantly addressed, we will look forward to working with staff on our additional issues as listed in our prior correspondence.

Sincerely yours,



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CEO and President
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