

# CHAPTER 2

## TUCSON PLANNING CONTEXT

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# TUCSON PLANNING CONTEXT

Tucson is an evolving community. Understanding that evolution is important to addressing the range of topics covered in the City's General Plan. This chapter considers Tucson's context in six parts. The first part highlights Tucson over time, from prehistoric days to 2001, the year the previous General Plan was adopted.

The second part focuses on recent years, 2001–2012, looking first at variables that help define the community, from its natural setting, to its demographics, to land use patterns, and then at City plans, policies, and initiatives undertaken during this period. The third part addresses how values and visions identified through various activities in recent years served as a starting point for Plan Tucson. Building on the values and visions, the fourth part introduces sustainability as integral to the Plan's goals and policies, while the fifth part considers the neighborhood as the foundational unit that sustains a city. The sixth, and concluding part, presents the goals toward which the City will strive

through the implementation of policies presented in Chapter 3.

## Tucson Over Time<sup>1</sup>

Tucson is the oldest permanently settled community in the United States, going back about 4,000 years to the Hohokam Culture. Three hundred years ago, the Franciscan Order arrived in Tucson and established Mission San Xavier del Bac, a mission that has been restored and continues to serve the Tohono O'odham Nation. The Tucson Presido, established in 1775 under Spanish rule, is the official birthplace of the City of Tucson. The territory that would become Arizona was purchased by the United States from Mexico in

<sup>1</sup>A Brief History of Tucson; [http://cms3.tucsonaz.gov/history/tucson\\_history](http://cms3.tucsonaz.gov/history/tucson_history)



**Old Main, University of Arizona, 1889.**

1854. The Southern Pacific Railroad, which reached Tucson in 1880, improved access for new settlers and brought goods from the east. That year the population reached 8,000.

In 1862 the Morrill Act provided federal funds for the establishment of land-grant colleges to focus on agriculture and mining. In 1891, the University of Arizona opened its doors with 32 students and 40 donated acres. The University of Arizona's enrollment grew to 13,058 students in 1960 and 39,000 full and part-time students in 2011.

In 1912, Arizona became the 48th state in the Union and, in 1919, Tucson had the distinction of opening the first municipally owned airport in the nation. The airport was later moved to a larger site which, in 1927, was dedicated by Charles Lindbergh for two Tucsonans who had lost their lives in aviation accidents—Lieutenants Samuel H. Davis and Oscar Monthan. Davis-Monthan Field accommodated both civil and military aircraft and became the largest municipally owned airport in the nation.<sup>2</sup> In 1941, the City purchased the current site of the Tucson International Airport, and the Tucson Airport Authority was established in 1948 to

operate the airport.

Between 1940 and the end of WWII, Tucson grew from about 40,000 to 120,000 due, in large part, to activities associated with Davis-Monthan. Tucson continued to grow rapidly after the war for three key reasons. First, military personnel who had trained at Davis-Monthan returned to Tucson after the war to settle down. Second, the advent of affordable, residential air conditioning made living in a hot climate more appealing to many. Third, the emerging, post-war, automobile-owning middle class sought single family houses on large lots, which were readily available in Tucson. By 1960, Tucson boasted a population of 220,000, and by 2000, a population of 486,699, making Tucson the 30th largest city in the nation.

In the 1950s, the City began an aggressive campaign to annex the subdivisions that had sprung up outside the City limits.<sup>3</sup> Beginning in the 1960s, real estate development sustained local growth, fueled in part by the interest of California investors in “cheap” land and the advent of the “retirement community.” In 1960, the City covered 70 square miles, which more than tripled by 2000 to 227 square miles (*Exhibit T-1*).

The Hughes Aircraft Company, now Raytheon Missile Systems, opened in 1951 to produce missiles and other military equipment. In the 1950s, Hughes employed over 5,000 workers, becoming the largest technology employer in Arizona and spurring growth in the region.

Along with real estate and technology, tourism has been a major contributor to the local economy. The warm, dry climate; unique natural environment;

<sup>2</sup>Davis-Monthan Air Force History; <http://www.dm.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=4318>; Posted 6/2/2009

<sup>3</sup>Tucson Post World War II Residential Subdivision Development, 1945–1973 October 2007, City of Tucson Urban Planning and Design Department, Historic and Cultural Resources; October 2007 [http://cms3.tucsonaz.gov/sites/default/files/imported/resources/publications/wwii\\_102207.pdf](http://cms3.tucsonaz.gov/sites/default/files/imported/resources/publications/wwii_102207.pdf)

**EXHIBIT T-1 Tucson Population & Land Area Change**

| Year | Population | % Change in Population | Land Area (sq. miles) | % Change in Land Area (sq. miles) |
|------|------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1990 | 405,371    |                        | 157.5                 |                                   |
| 2000 | 486,699    | +20.0%                 | 195.5                 | +24.1%                            |
| 2010 | 520,116    | +6.8%                  | 227.7                 | +16.5%                            |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and City of Tucson IT-GIS Section

Hispanic and Native American cultures; and the western ranching lifestyle have lured visitors to Tucson since the 1920s. Tourism dollars rose from \$28.5 million in 1954 to \$900 million in 1959, a thirty-two fold increase in only five years. By 2000 tourism dollars had reached \$1.8 billion.

**Tucson in Recent Years**

**Natural Setting:** Tucson is located in the Sonoran Desert at an approximate elevation of 2,400 feet. The City is surrounded by mountain ranges and federally-protected lands. Tucsonans enjoy 350 days of sunshine per year with an average daytime temperature of 83 degrees. Average annual rainfall in Tucson is 12 inches per year. Precipitation typically falls during two seasons, with half of the rainfall coming during the summer monsoon season and half during the winter months. The Sonoran Desert is home to a diverse array of plants and animals. Some are found nowhere else in the world, including the iconic saguaro cactus and the ironwood tree.

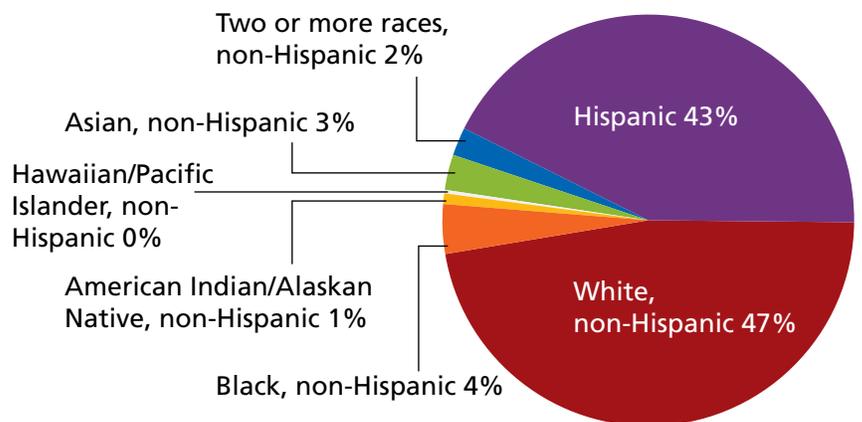
**Population:** In 2011, Tucson had a diverse population of 525,798 people, with 47.1% identifying as White, non-Hispanic and 42.8% identifying as Hispanic (*Exhibit T-2*). The median age of Tucsonans was 33.8 years with children under 18 years representing 22.3% and people over 65 years representing 12.0% of the population.<sup>4</sup>

Tucson’s population increased by 6.9% between 2000 and 2010.

In 2011, the median household income was \$35,362, while the national median income was \$50,502. Median household income increased by 18.2% between 2000 and 2010 and fell 2.9% between 2010 and 2011. *Exhibit T-3* presents income trends.

**Economy:** The University of Arizona plays a prominent role in the local economy and was the largest regional employer in 2012 with 11,604 full-time employees. The University’s economic impact is approximately \$2.1 billion annually. Raytheon Missile Systems, with 11,500 employees, is the region’s second largest employer (*see Exhibit ED-2, Economic Development, Chapter 3*).

**EXHIBIT T-2 Racial/Ethnic Composition of Tucson, 2010**



Data Source: U.S. Census and American Community Survey

<sup>4</sup>Demographic data for 2011 is from the American Community Survey.

Davis-Monthan Air Force Base is another major contributor to the local economy with a workforce of 6,000 military and 1,700 civilian personnel in 2011.

Tucson is a national leader in several fields. In 2011, *Business Facilities* ranked Tucson first in the nation as an Alternative Energy Industry Leader and sixth in Aerospace and Defense manufacturing. Tucson is also recognized as a leader in the optics, astronomy, and medical industries. In 2007, Tucson was designated by the United States Department of Energy as one of 25 Solar America Cities, acknowledging the City's efforts to accelerate the adoption of solar energy technologies for a cleaner, more secure energy future. Tucson Regional Economic Opportunities, Inc. estimates that more than 1,200 high-tech

businesses in the region employ more than 50,000 workers.

Tourism is a large part of Tucson's economy. The Metropolitan Tucson Convention and Visitors Bureau estimates that almost 22,000 jobs were supported by tourism in Tucson and Pima County in 2011 and \$2.4 billion in direct travel spending was generated by visitors in the same year. Events such as the Tucson Gem and Mineral Show and the El Tour de Tucson bicycle race are well known nationally and internationally, bringing visitors and associated revenue from all over the world. A 2007 report conducted for the Metropolitan Tucson Convention and Visitors Bureau estimated more than \$100 million was spent locally during the 2007 Gem Show, with food/lodging/local transportation being the largest category of expenditures. The associated local taxes paid were over \$9 million, constituting about 4% of the City's sales tax receipts that year.

Tucson experienced the recession of 2007–2009 in much the same way as the rest of the country. Median household income in Tucson was \$35,362 in 2011, which was below the national median household income of \$50,054. While national household income fell 1.5% from 2010 to 2011, household income in Tucson fell 2.9% in the same period (*Exhibit T-3*). The unemployment rate rose from a low of 3.6% in 2007 to a high of 9.4% in 2010 and then dipped to 8.4% in 2011. *Exhibit T-4* presents employment data for Tucson between 2001 and 2011.

**Education:** Seven school districts operate within the City limits, including Amphitheater, Catalina, Flowing Wells, Foothills, Sunnyside, Tucson Unified, and Vail. Elementary, middle, and high school education is provided

### EXHIBIT T-3 Median Household Income in Tucson

| Year | Median Household Income |
|------|-------------------------|
| 2011 | \$35,362                |
| 2010 | \$36,428                |
| 2009 | \$35,565                |
| 2008 | \$36,640                |
| 2007 | \$36,096                |
| 2006 | \$36,095                |
| 2005 | \$34,241                |
| 2000 | \$30,819                |

### EXHIBIT T-4 Employment in Tucson

| Year | Employment | Unemployment Rate |
|------|------------|-------------------|
| 2011 | 426,406    | 8.40%             |
| 2010 | 433,795    | 9.40%             |
| 2009 | 441,966    | 9.00%             |
| 2008 | 446,651    | 5.60%             |
| 2007 | 438,680    | 3.60%             |
| 2006 | 429,323    | 3.90%             |
| 2005 | 418,214    | 4.50%             |
| 2004 | 417,457    | 4.60%             |
| 2003 | 405,584    | 5.30%             |
| 2002 | 399,021    | 5.70%             |
| 2001 | 395,453    | 4.30%             |

Source for Exhibits T3-T4: U.S. Census and American Community Survey

through over 800 public and private schools within the City. The largest post-secondary educational institutions are the University of Arizona, with an enrollment of 39,236 students in 2011, and Pima Community College, with an enrollment of 62,199 students in the same year. Five of six Pima Community College campuses are located within the City.

The City of Tucson supports lifelong learning through a variety of programs for different age groups. In 2011, the Parks and Recreation Department served over 250,000 seniors through its senior center programming, more than 50,000 adults and children through its therapeutic recreation programs, and 4,300 youth through its out-of-school programming.

**Activities:** Recreational activities are varied and the region's mild climate encourages outdoor recreation. As of 2011, the Tucson metropolitan area had more than 27,000 acres of park lands, 732 miles of designated bikeways, and more than 40 public and private golf

courses. In the same year, the City Parks and Recreation Department managed 125 parks, 26 pools plus 1 splash pad, 16 recreation centers, 3 senior centers and 9 senior clubs, 5 golf courses, and 202 ball fields and multipurpose fields. In 2011, well over 1.1 million people attended classes, events, programs, or facilities managed by the Parks and Recreation Department.

Tucson hosts many sporting events. The most prominent of these include the University of Arizona Wildcats football and basketball games; the Tucson Padres baseball team, a Triple-A affiliate of the San Diego Padres; the Fort Lowell Shootout, a youth winter soccer tournament drawing soccer players from across the country and internationally; and El Tour de Tucson, attracting over 9,000 cyclists of all ages and abilities from the United States and many other countries.

#### **Development Patterns &**

**Transportation Networks:** To a large extent, land use patterns in Tucson are a result of the transportation system. The



**Aerial view of Midtown Tucson looking east showing development in response to street grid pattern.**



Walk-in sculpture in Barrio Anita made of bicycle parts.

relatively flat topography has enabled the development of a street grid pattern in which the major roads (arterials) support commercial uses and the smaller streets (collectors and residential) accommodate residential uses. Interstates 10 and 19 are the only major highways that traverse Tucson, making arterials and collectors the primary means of traffic circulation within the city.

Similar to many cities across the nation, Tucson has taken a greater interest in transit in recent years due in part to higher gas prices, increased sensitivity to environmental issues, and a desire for a more walkable, less car-dependent community. The public transit system in Tucson is comprised of bus service operated for the City by Sun Tran. As of 2011, the bus service was made up of 40 fixed routes with 20 million passenger trips, an increase in transit ridership of 36% in ten years. A new addition to the transit system is the Modern Streetcar system currently under construction. The system, designed to connect the University of Arizona, the Fourth Avenue Business District, downtown Tucson, and historic westside

neighborhoods, is anticipated to not only provide an alternative to the automobile, but also to generate more public-private development along the route.

**Neighborhoods:** Neighborhoods are integral to Tucson's sense of place. The Neighborhood Preservation Ordinance was enacted to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of residents and to protect residents from neighborhood deterioration. As of October 2012, there were 134 neighborhood associations registered with the City.

Housing has historically been affected by market factors including consumer preferences, land availability, and household size. Other factors that influence Tucson's housing stock are demographics; transportation access, including public transit; and economics. In addition to wanting housing that meets family needs, Tucsonans value safe, accessible, and identifiable neighborhoods in which to live.

The character of Tucson's neighborhoods is defined, in large part, by architecture and historic resources. As of 2012, Tucson had 31 National Register Historic Districts, 6 locally-designated Historic Preservation Zones, and 2 Neighborhood Preservation Zones. Architectural styles are diverse and represent many building periods, extending from the mid-to late-1840s through the 1960s. Styles include Sonoran, Territorial, Queen Anne, Mission Revival, Colonial Revival, Art Deco, Craftsman Bungalow, Moderne, International, and post WWII Suburban Ranch.

**Culture:** Tucson's rich culture is founded in its heritage, architecture, demographics, and economy. The Tucson region has over 500 non-profit organizations focused on arts and culture. Cultural events and festivals

## EXHIBIT T-5 Tucson Awards and Recognitions

| Year | Award or Recognition  | Organization recognizing Tucson |
|------|---|---------------------------------|
| 2012 | Fifth highest spending per capita on cyclist/pedestrian amenities | Alliance for Biking and Walking |
| 2011 | One of the "10 Best Places to Retire if You Love the Outdoors"    | AARP                            |
| 2011 | One of the "10 Great Retirement Cities in the U.S."               | Kiplinger                       |
| 2011 | Ranked #9 in "Top 10 Cities for Veterans"                         | Livability.com                  |
| 2011 | Ranked #15 in top "25 Best Places to Retire"                      | CNN Money                       |
| 2011 | Included in Outside Magazine's "Best Towns 2011"                  | Outside Magazine                |
| 2011 | Ranked #6 for Aerospace/Defense Manufacturing                     | Business Facilities             |
| 2011 | One of "10 Great Places for City Cycling"                         | USA Today Travel                |
| 2011 | Ranked #1 "Best Cities for Renters"                               | Forbes                          |
| 2011 | Ranked #4 Best Cities for Public Transportation and Job Access    | Brookings Institution           |
| 2011 | One of the "World's Most Underrated Cities"                       | Yahoo Travel                    |
| 2011 | One of the City's ranked in "Housing Markets: Best Recovery Bets" | CNN Money                       |
| 2010 | Ranked #10 "25 Best Places to Retire"                             | CNN Money                       |
| 2010 | Named Best Town for Road Biking                                   | Outside Magazine                |
| 2010 | Ranked #1 in alternative energy leadership                        | Business Facilities             |
| 2010 | Ranked #19 in "America's Most Innovative Cities"                  | Forbes                          |
| 2010 | Included as one of "20 towns of the future"                       | Sunset                          |
| 2010 | Ranked #8 "best cities for commuters"                             | Forbes                          |
| 2009 | Ranked #1 "Best Affordable Places to Retire."                     | Bloomberg Business Week         |
| 2009 | Included, as one of the "Best Adventure Towns"                    | National Geographic             |
| 2009 | Ranked #1 "Best Places to Live a Simple Life"                     | AARP                            |
| 2009 | Included, "Fast Cities"   | Fast Company                    |
| 2009 | Ranked #13, "Top 25 Fittest Cities"                               | Men's Fitness                   |

are held throughout the year and cater to people of all ages and backgrounds. Well-known events that attract visitors from outside the region include Tucson Meet Yourself, focusing on cultural diversity and food; Dia de Los Muertos All Souls Procession; the Fourth Avenue Street Fair; the Mariachi Conference; the Tucson Rodeo; and the world's largest Gem and Mineral Show.

Music and theater performances are abundant in Tucson, and popular venues include the Temple of Music and Art, the Tucson Music Hall, the Fox Theater, the Rialto Theater, and the University of Arizona Centennial Hall. Prominent museums include the Tucson Museum of Art, the Center for Creative Photography, the Children's Museum,

the Pima Air and Space Museum, the Museum of Contemporary Art, and the University of Arizona Art Museum. Major statewide cultural institutions such as the Arizona Historical Society, Arizona Opera Company, Arizona Theatre Company, and the Tucson Symphony Orchestra were founded in Tucson.

The Tucson Pima Arts Council administers the Percent for Art programs for the City and Pima County. One percent of the construction budget of major public construction projects is put toward the creation and installation of public art pieces. Since 1986, over 200 public art projects have been completed in metropolitan Tucson and Pima County.

**Exhibit T-5 illustrates the many accolades received by Tucson in recent years.**

**Prior Planning Efforts:** Since adoption of the 2001 Tucson General Plan, the City's Mayor and Council have endorsed or approved a variety of studies, plans, and reports and have adopted policies and directives. A review of these documents was conducted in the preparation of Plan Tucson (*Exhibit T-6, page 2.10*).

## Community Values & Visions

Long-term planning for a community, such as that done for a General Plan, should acknowledge shared values and envision a future built on those values. The 2001 General Plan was informed by the 1997 Livable Tucson Vision Program, which explored Tucsonans' values and visions for the city through a series of forums and workshops and which still has much to contribute to Plan Tucson. Subsequent to that program and the adoption of the 2001 Plan, there were further efforts initiated by both governmental and nongovernmental entities to understand and integrate values and visions into community planning. These efforts included Town

Halls; Community Conversations; and in 2010 the Imagine Greater Tucson Project (IGT), a regional project focused on producing a vision for the Eastern Pima County region.

These visioning efforts provided a starting place for Plan Tucson. Rather than conducting a separate visioning effort, the Plan Tucson approach was to:

- review the values and visions provided through the other efforts to determine if there were any basic inconsistencies
- explore with Plan Tucson participants their aspirations for Tucson's future and to consider those in light of the earlier values and visions
- look carefully at participants' input during Plan Tucson workshops, meetings, and forums for any underlying values that ran counter to those identified through the other efforts

Perhaps not surprisingly, this visioning approach revealed remarkable consistency between values overtly stated in previous efforts and those that were implied in the goal and policy development process for Plan Tucson. In summary those shared values are:

- good jobs
- a strong economy
- quality education
- a clean and safe built environment
- a protected natural environment
- a healthy population
- cohesive and attractive neighborhoods
- access to multiple forms of transportation
- a vibrant and diverse cultural life
- a sustainable development pattern
- a distinctive character for both Tucson and for the region
- an efficient, effective, and transparent government

Community meeting working on smart growth issues.



These shared values together create a vision of a community that will not just survive, but will thrive, for years to come—that is, a sustainable community as discussed in the next section.

## A Sustainable Community

In a very general sense, sustainability refers to a condition in which human activities enhance economic development, social equity, and environmental health while remaining within the carrying capacity of the natural environment. In Tucson this means fully embracing the knowledge that this is a desert community and then applying that knowledge to all aspects of community life to ensure that the city is a place in which future generations can and will want to live.

which the community has said it wishes to go, and will guide the City’s strategic efforts toward a more sustainable future. As such, Plan Tucson also serves as an essential foundation for establishing a community sustainability plan.

To achieve the long-term goals presented at the end of this chapter requires that Tucson continue to be a place where multiple generations of families choose to live because they value the quality of life, and because their children have ample opportunities to find jobs, establish careers, and ultimately provide a good future for their own families. Tucson must also be a place that maintains and supports local businesses while drawing high-tech, high-wage industries to the area. High-tech industries look for locations where

*A modern sustainability vision for Tucson is to be the world’s leader and source of innovation for more efficient, more prosperous, and healthier desert living.*

In April 2012, the Mayor and Council directed staff to update the City’s “Framework for Advancing Sustainability,” adopted by Mayor and Council in 2008. The purpose of the update was to provide a more comprehensive vision for a sustainable future for Tucson. The resulting updated “framework for sustainability” is integrated throughout Plan Tucson.

How a community pursues sustainability is shaped by its particular context and values. The goals and policies in Plan Tucson reflect and support community values and are the catalyst for preserving and improving the community’s quality of life. The goals and policies signal the direction in

the quality of life appeals to the highly-skilled workers who are in demand and, therefore, have more options to choose where they locate. Additionally, Tucson needs to continue providing, along with its weather, the quality of life and venues that attract tourists, winter visitors, and sporting, cultural, and other special events. All of these are essential to the community’s long-term economic prosperity and social continuity, which translates to its sustainability.<sup>5</sup>

While Tucson’s pursuit of sustainability must respond to local factors, the community is part of a larger national and international context, and Tucson must consider its sustainability efforts within this larger context also.

<sup>5</sup>The STAR Rating System: <http://www.starcommunities.org/rating-system>

**EXHIBIT T-6 Plans, Studies, & Other Initiatives Approved by Mayor & Council**

| Plan, Study or Report   | Year        |
|---|-------------|
| Grant Road Improvement Plan   | In progress |
| Silverbell Road Design Concept Study  | In progress |
| Sustainable Land Use Code Integration Project   | In progress |
| Specific Plans (Subregional, Redevelopment, Area and Neighborhood Plans)<br>—years vary, from 1970's to present   | in progress |
| Land Use Code Simplification Project (Uniform Development Code)   | 2012        |
| 5-year Agency Plan—Public Housing   | 2011        |
| El Paso and Southwestern Greenway   | 2011        |
| Historic Landmark Signs Preservation Program  | 2011        |
| Jefferson Park Neighborhood Design Manual   | 2011        |
| Oracle Area Revitalization Project  | 2011        |
| 2040 Regional Transportation Plan   | 2010        |
| Avra Valley Habitat Conservation Plan   | 2010        |
| City of Tucson and Pima County 5-Year HUD Consolidated Plan   | 2010        |
| City of Tucson Strategic Technology Plan  | 2010        |
| Downtown Links Urban Overlay District: Background Study and District Proposal   | 2010        |
| Eastern Pima County Trail System Master Plan  | 2010        |
| Planned Land Use Data Conversion Project  | 2010        |
| Regional Transportation Plan  | 2010        |
| Feldman's Neighborhood Design Manual  | 2009        |
| Greater Tucson Solar Development Plan   | 2009        |
| High Capacity Transit (HCT) System Plan   | 2009        |
| Solar Integration Plan  | 2009        |
| Transit-Oriented Development Handbook   | 2009        |
| Tucson Fire Strategic Plan: 2009-2011   | 2009        |
| Tucson Modern Streetcar Project   | 2009        |
| Tucson Regional Plan for Bicycling  | 2009        |
| Tucson Solar Initiative   | 2009        |
| University of Arizona Comprehensive Campus Plan Update  | 2009        |
| Water and Wastewater Infrastructure, Supply and Planning Study<br>• Phase 1 (2009) & Phase 2 (2009) Final Reports<br>• 2011-2015 Action Plan for Water Sustainability (February 2010) | 2009        |

**EXHIBIT T-6 Plans, Studies, & Other Initiatives Approved by Mayor & Council** (continued)

| Plan, Study or Report   | Year |
|---|------|
| Downtown Urban Design Reference Manual  | 2008 |
| Framework for Advancing Sustainability  | 2008 |
| Greater Southlands Habitat Conservation Plan  | 2008 |
| Pima Cultural Plan: Needs Analysis and Strategies   | 2008 |
| Update to the Water Plan: 2000-2050   | 2008 |
| Urban Landscape Framework   | 2008 |
| Downtown Infrastructure Study   | 2007 |
| Emergency Operations Plan   | 2007 |
| Tucson Post World War II Residential Subdivision Development Report (1945-1973)           | 2007 |
| City of Tucson Parks and Recreation Ten-Year Strategic Service Plan                       | 2006 |
| Drought Response and Preparedness Plan  | 2006 |
| Regional Transportation Authority Plan  | 2006 |
| Stone Avenue Corridor Project   | 2006 |
| Tucson Economic Blueprint, Strategic Analysis Report                                      | 2006 |
| U.S. Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement   | 2006 |
| Water Efficiency: Water Conservation Program<br>Recommendations for Tucson Water's Future | 2006 |
| Greater Tucson Strategic Energy Plan  | 2005 |
| Greyhound Transportation and Feasibility Study  | 2005 |
| Human Services Plan, Fiscal Years 2007 & 2008   | 2005 |
| Ronstadt Transit Center Transportation and Feasibility Study                              | 2005 |
| Urban Environmental Accords   | 2005 |
| Affordable Housing in Downtown Tucson   | 2004 |
| Downtown Parking Master Plan  | 2004 |
| Plan for Annexation   | 2004 |
| Tucson Historic Warehouse Arts District Master Plan                                       | 2004 |
| Transportation Access Management Guidelines for the City of Tucson                        | 2003 |
| Patriot Act's Critical Infrastructure   | 2001 |
| Rio Nuevo Master Plan, 10-Year Development and Long-Range Vision                          | 2001 |
| Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan  | 2001 |

The City’s “framework for sustainability” not only reflects community values and visions, but also aligns with emerging national sustainability guidelines. One framework, the STAR Community Rating System, provides the most comprehensive, quantitative, and vigorously-developed approach to assessing community sustainability. STAR is “the nation’s first voluntary, self-reporting framework for evaluating, quantifying, and improving the livability and sustainability of U.S. communities.”

Together STAR’s guiding principles, goals, and objectives define community-scale sustainability, and present a vision of how communities can become more prosperous, more inclusive, and healthier across the following seven categories:

1. **Built Environment:** Achieve livability, choice, and access for all where people live, work, and play.
2. **Climate & Energy:** Reduce climate impacts through adaptation and mitigation efforts and increase resource efficiency.
3. **Economy & Jobs:** Create equitably shared prosperity and access to quality jobs.
4. **Education, Arts & Community:** Empower vibrant, educated, connected, and diverse communities.
5. **Equity & Empowerment:** Ensure equity, inclusion, and access to opportunity for all residents.
6. **Health & Safety:** Strengthen communities to be healthy, resilient, and safe places for residents and businesses.
7. **Natural Systems:** Protect and restore the natural resource base upon which life depends.

A comparison of the STAR categories with the shared values and visions and the goals identified in Plan Tucson underscores the consistency with

which sustainability is viewed across communities. This comparison also underscores the value of and rationale for combining the City’s “framework for sustainability” with the City’s General Plan to enable Plan Tucson to serve as the City’s General and Sustainability Plan.

The STAR rating system was used to build a comprehensive sustainability framework for Tucson in several ways as follows:

- The STAR system includes a broad array of local actions that can be taken by government, community groups, businesses, and residents to meet the sustainability goals identified in the rating system. This list of potential actions was compared against the policies in Plan Tucson to ensure there was adequate policy guidance to support, in a broad sense, the full range of sustainability elements captured in STAR.
- The STAR objectives were integrated with local community values to describe a long-term vision of a resilient community based on a vibrant economy, social equity, and a healthy environment. This vision is expressed in 37 “principles of sustainability,” which are intended to clearly articulate the elements of that long-term community vision within a framework that also reflects national priorities
- The STAR system includes a set of desired community outcomes that provide a mechanism for quantitatively assessing community sustainability by establishing indicators of success. These indicators and outcomes comprise the City’s sustainability framework that is now integrated into Plan Tucson.

The success of both a General Plan and a Sustainability Plan is determined by on-the-ground results. Details about how success may be measured

for Tucson is presented in Chapter 4, which addresses the implementation of Plan Tucson goals and policies. Included in Chapter 4 as *Exhibit IA-2* is the Sustainability Indicators Matrix. In addition, STAR indicators are shown as a starting point for assessing progress in the implementation of Plan Tucson, and will be supplemented with locally-derived indicators as these are developed.

## Neighborhoods: The Foundational Unit

At a fundamental level, the sustainability of a community is interwoven with the sustainability of its neighborhoods. Neighborhoods are the smaller systems that are part of the larger system that is the community. These systems need each other; the community needs the neighborhoods to establish its identity and basic quality of life, and the neighborhoods need the larger community, which provides infrastructure, services, and facilities, all of which cannot be located in any one neighborhood. Addressing this interconnectedness in a way that

recognizes the importance of the neighborhood both as an individual entity and as a part of the greater community is one purpose of a General Plan.

Once upon a time a neighborhood might literally have been a resident's world; today physical and virtual modes of transport allow many residents to go far beyond the boundaries of their neighborhoods on a daily basis. Despite this ability, however, it is generally the neighborhood through which a resident establishes his or her initial relationship with the larger community.

Neighborhoods may be formally or informally defined. In Tucson, there are 134 Neighborhood Associations, registered with the City. These associations function with all-volunteer groups of neighbors that work with the City to keep the residents and businesses within the Association boundaries informed about activities, public meetings, and events that may be of interest to the neighborhood. In addition to the neighborhood associations, there are other neighborhood scaled units in the form of Homeowner Associations

The iconic Paul Bunyan figure (below left) at Stone and Glenn has become a gateway feature announcing arrival into the Coronado Neighborhood.

Historic home with recent renovations (below right).



and subdivisions that residents may perceive as neighborhoods. It is worth noting that many of Tucson's current neighborhood associations were originally subdivisions.

The major land use in most neighborhoods is housing, ranging from single family, to multifamily, to townhomes. A resident's house is often his/her largest asset, and the quality of the neighborhood can impact the value of that asset. Therefore, better neighborhood conditions are often equated with more owner-occupied housing because owner occupants have a particular vested interest in the condition of their property. However, Tucson has a high rental rate in many of its neighborhoods. Some of these renters are college students; others are members of the "baby boomer" or "Y" generations, who prefer not to have the responsibilities of property maintenance, and many are individuals or families without the income to afford a house. More affordable housing would benefit the latter individuals and families, and the neighborhoods would benefit

from the pride and care that often accompanies homeownership.

In many neighborhoods, businesses are located along the periphery or along traversing collector or arterial streets. While Tucson's neighborhoods have traditionally been focused on residential issues, services provided by many local businesses help make a neighborhood an even more desirable place to live as the emphasis on sustainable lifestyles, including the option of walking to daily services, is increasing. Businesses also often provide a regular presence and daytime activity that can be helpful in deterring neighborhood crime. Additionally businesses, such as restaurants, may become informal, gathering places for neighbors. Residents, local businesses, and institutions working together can strengthen a neighborhood.

Other vital components of a neighborhood are the public infrastructure and facilities that allow a neighborhood to stay connected internally and externally, provide services such as electricity and water, offer gathering spaces, and often create

**A traffic calming circle in the Miles Neighborhood was the outcome of neighbors' proactive response to safety concerns.**



a first impression through landscaping, signage, and other features. The pursuit of projects to enhance the public realm is often what brings neighbors together. Examples of common projects are traffic calming improvements, gateway features, and planting trees for shade to encourage pedestrian activity and to beautify streetscapes.

While the physical make-up of neighborhoods is important, it's the people who reside in those neighborhoods that make them come to life. The more vested residents are in their neighborhoods, the more stable those neighborhoods will be. Tucsonans' investments in their neighborhoods come in many forms beyond purchasing

or renting a home or purchasing goods or services at a local store. All of these investments contribute to strengthening not only the neighborhood, but the community as a whole. *Exhibit T-7* provides examples of ways in which neighborhoods participate regularly as community builders.

While residents of many neighborhoods invest time and energy in addressing neighborhood issues, it is important to recognize the type and extent of those issues vary greatly. The City's 2012 Poverty and Urban Stress report identifies indicators of neighborhood stress, including crime, income, poverty, education, and housing. Working to address disparities

#### EXHIBIT T-7 **Neighborhoods as Community Builders**

##### **Some ways Tucson Neighborhoods have contributed to building community**

**By volunteering** to eradicate graffiti through timely painting over or cleaning up graffitied areas to reduce the spread

**By starting** One-Can-a-Week programs to assist the Community Food Bank to address hunger in the community

**By fostering** community spirit through architectural & garden tours, historic & cultural events, potlucks, clean-ups & more

**By organizing** Neighborhood Watch programs, creating email & phone message trees & working with local businesses to combat crime

**By initiating** tree planting & stormwater harvesting projects, lessening heat island effect, providing shade, & reducing flooding

**By partnering** with Tucson Clean & Beautiful to adopt local parks and roadways to keep them clean

**By joining** forces with Pima Council on Aging to form Neighborhood Care Alliances & Lend-a-Hand programs to assist with aging in place

among neighborhoods, so that more neighborhoods become and stay stable, is critical to the overall health of the community and its residents.

Stable neighborhoods strengthen the city socially, economically, and physically in a variety of ways. Some key ways include:

- providing a safe and pleasant places for residents to live
- maintaining property values
- preventing deterioration and blight
- maintaining the tax base
- providing affordable housing options to promote homeownership
- support local business and area employment
- providing conditions that support aging in place
- creating a sense of community

All of the elements included in Plan Tucson, which apply to the community as a whole, also apply to neighborhoods. To emphasize the integrative nature of these elements, the policies relevant to neighborhoods are included across the

elements presented in Chapter 3. While there is one goal and twenty-one policies that include the word “neighborhood,” the majority of Plan Tucson’s 21 goals and 163 policies are important to enhancing, maintaining and creating stable neighborhoods. Following the argument that the neighborhood is the foundational unit of the city, then what affects the neighborhood will affect the city as a whole and vice versa.

## Goals

All of the Plan Tucson goals are presented below and repeated as applicable in Chapter 3 at the beginning of each focus area: (1) The Social & Economic Environment, (2) The Natural Environment, and (3) The Built Environment.

Together the goals speak to a sustainable community that embraces prosperity, equity, and a healthy environment.

Each goal below is a desired outcome for Tucson’s future, completing the sentence that begins “The City strives for...”

# GOALS

## The City strives for:

### THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

- 1** A mix of well-maintained, energy-efficient housing options with multi-modal access to basic goods & services.
- 2** A stabilized local economy with opportunities for diversified economic growth supported by high-level, high-quality public infrastructure, facilities, and services.
- 3** A community where no one lives in poverty.
- 4** A safe community and secure neighborhoods.
- 5** A community whose economic stability and sense of place reflects its commitment to arts and culture and its care for the natural environment.
- 6** A community that is healthy physically, mentally, economically, and environmentally.
- 7** A sustainable urban food system.
- 8** An educated citizenry.
- 9** Timely, accessible, and inclusive processes to actively engage a diverse community in City policy, program, and project planning.

### THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- 10** A reputation as a national leader in the development and use of locally renewable energy technologies, water conservation, waste diversion and recovery, and other emerging environmentally-sensitive industries.
- 11** A reduction in the community's carbon footprint and greater energy independence.
- 12** A community that is resilient and adaptive to climate change.
- 13** Abundant and appropriate use of native plants and trees.
- 14** A network of healthy, natural open space managed for multiple benefits.
- 15** A secure, high quality, reliable, long-term supply of water for humans and the natural environment.
- 16** A comfortable, attractive, and pollution-free environment
- 17** Sound, efficient, ecological policies and practices in government and in the private sector.



## THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- 18** Well-maintained public facilities and infrastructure that support coordinated cost-effective service delivery for current and future residents.
- 19** A community that respects and integrates historic resources into the built environment and uses them for the advancement of multiple community goals.
- 20** Strategic public and private investments for long-term economic, social, and environmental sustainability.
- 21** An urban form that conserves natural resources, improves and builds on existing public infrastructure and facilities, and provides an interconnected multi-modal transportation system to enhance the mobility of people and goods.