

Challenges & Opportunities

Prepared by the Plan Tucson Team, Planning and Community Development Division, City of Tucson Housing and Community Development Department.

Please note: This is a working document that may be further refined as Plan Tucson proceeds and additional information and input is obtained.

Presented below are preliminary Challenges & Opportunities for each of the elements to be addressed in Plan Tucson. The elements are organized by the Plan Tucson Focus Areas (i.e., Socioeconomic Prosperity, Environmental Integrity, and Smart Growth). These Challenges & Opportunities were drafted by the Plan Tucson Team for initial presentation at the Agency and Organization Stakeholder Orientation Meeting on May 20, 2011.

SOCIOECONOMIC PROSPERITY FOCUS AREA

The Socioeconomic Prosperity Focus Area includes the following eight elements in compliance General Plan requirements. Housing, public health, public safety, education, economic development, recreation, cultural heritage & arts, and community participation.

Housing

Challenges: Staff Preliminary

- Aging housing stock (1 in 4 houses over 50 year old)
- Volatile market conditions
- Retirement and congregate care often cost prohibitive
- Growing number of foreclosures
- Impact of inefficient urban form on housing costs

Opportunities: Staff Preliminary

- Increasing markets for students, empty nesters and the elderly (more households are non-family and older)
- Alternative transportation investments and revisions to City's Land Use Code (LUC) to promote infill development
- Environment-friendly green technology increases efficiency and decreases housing costs
- Housing and mixed-use as a revitalization catalyst

Economic Development

Challenges: Staff Preliminary

- Market downturn
- Regional competition to attract business – Tucson doesn't always meet standard business relocation requirements
- Local labor pool skills and abilities do not match employer needs
- Impact of border issues

Opportunities: Staff Preliminary

- New "green" business opportunities
- Continue revisions to City's Land Use Code (LUC) to promote infill development
- Promote partnerships and a network that links a variety of business assistance and workforce programs (e.g., Pima Community College, U of A, TREO, merchants associations, non-profits)

Education

Challenges: Staff Preliminary

- Reduced State investment in pre-K through 12 education
- After school and summer programs not affordable to lower income families
- Only 80% of residents 25 years old or older have a high school education
- College tuition increases
- City has limited role in direct education

Opportunities: Staff Preliminary

- Build on Tucson's existing network of higher learning institutions & technical/trade schools
- Focus on successful programs and partnerships that meet living wage labor pool demands (engineers and aerospace industry)
- Expand City's after school, summer, and early childhood model programs

Cultural Heritage & Arts

Challenges: Staff Preliminary

- Lack of understanding by general public regarding art as an economic engine, instead of being seen as a luxury
- Reduced arts education in school curriculum
- Reduced dedicated funding, need for partnerships
- Limited use of cultural heritage assets for the development of sense of place and social cohesion

Opportunities: Staff Preliminary

- Expand the use of cultural heritage assets in the economic and social fabric of the city, and to progress towards sustainable development
- Mixed-disciplinary approach – urban design, social service, revitalization, cultural tourism
- Partnerships to foster new business opportunities and innovation

Public Health

Challenges: Staff Preliminary

- Aging population
- Impact of City's urban form on healthy lifestyles
- High rates of obesity, diabetes, hypertension, depression, tobacco use, teen pregnancies, asthma, drug and alcohol use
- Costs and cuts in healthcare assistance
- Deficiencies in access to fresh local and healthy foods for various neighborhoods and work sites

Opportunities: Staff Preliminary

- Support City programs and facilities that foster healthy lifestyles and provide access to nutrition and health care
- Increased development of community gardens
- Increased awareness in schools to offer healthy foods and beverage to students

Public Safety

Challenges: Staff Preliminary

- Competing priorities and calls for service (e.g., increase in petty crime uses up resources)
- Reduced investment in crime prevention and public safety services
- Increasing responsibilities, e.g., internet crime and emergency response/homeland security, first responders for health-related calls
- Deficiencies in legal system (not enough follow through / prosecution of criminals)

Opportunities: Staff Preliminary

- Expand crime prevention programs
- Take advantage of technologies and surveillance models
- Involve law enforcement in project/area planning and design for safety

Community Engagement

Challenges: Staff Preliminary

- City planning ;processes do not always yield broad community representation
- Multi-jurisdictional issues are not considered comprehensively
- Community engagement is often reactive to a problem, not proactive

Opportunities: Staff Preliminary

- Learn from community-wide coordination that has been used for housing & transportation efforts
- Build on programs that foster youth engagement

Recreation

Challenges: Staff Preliminary

- Aging facilities
- Per capita open space below national average
- Illegal activity in parks/open space
- Recreation competes for limited funding/resources

Opportunities: Staff Preliminary

- Parks and trails add value to community (tourism), neighborhoods (social/health/connectivity), and site development (amenities)
- Technology can increase marketing, registration, coordinated operations & management, efficiency
- Parks can be used by all citizens

ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRITY FOCUS AREA

The Environmental Integrity Focus Area includes the following five elements: Green Infrastructure, Habitat, Open Space & Landscape, Energy & Climate Change, Environmental Quality, and Water.

Energy & Climate Change

Challenges: Staff Preliminary

- Need for clean energy alternatives
- Financial and educational barriers to wider use of solar energy
- City financial constraints for support of solar

- Meeting the greenhouse gas emission reduction goals in the Mayors Climate Protection Agreement
- Skepticism in the community and within government about climate change

Opportunities: Staff Preliminary

- Potential for significant expansion of solar markets and public/private partnerships
- 800,000 square feet of rooftop on government properties
- Mayor and Council signing of the Mayors Climate Protection Agreement (2006)
- Climate Change Adaptation Committee preparing a plan for review and approval
- New city building requirements for LEED Silver standard

Green Infrastructure, Habitat Open Space & Landscape

Challenges: Staff Preliminary

- Water scarcity and drought can limit planting of trees and other landscape plants
- Existing built environment limits opportunities for parks, wash and open space projects
- Maintenance budget constraints limit planting of new trees and vegetation in public spaces
- Development code doesn't always support habitat preservation
- Non-native species proliferation
- Limited funds to build out regional and urban trails as planned

Opportunities: Staff Preliminary

- Use City-adopted documents such as Urban Landscape Framework, Habitat Conservation Plan, etc. to support additional green infrastructure
- Use recently completed Tree Inventory to meet recommended standards for Southwestern cities
- Provide urban connections that link to trails identified in the Eastern Pima County Regional Trails Master Plan.
- Develop green infrastructure for mitigation of urban heat island effect, as is consistent with the upcoming Climate Change Adaptation Plan
- Promote residential and commercial rainwater and grey water harvesting systems for landscaping.

Water

Challenges: Staff Preliminary

- Population growth increases water demand
- Loss of groundwater reserves
- Persistent drought
- Urban growth form that increases pressure on water resources
- Uncertain future climactic changes and implications for precipitation and temperature
- Balancing human need with environmental need for water

Opportunities: Staff Preliminary

- Completion of Water / Wastewater study
- Integrated land use and water resource planning
- Rainwater harvesting ordinance for new commercial development and grey water ordinance may help reduce demand
- Increase in conservation education programs
- Decrease in water use will reduce energy use helping meet climate change goal

Environmental Quality

Challenges: Staff Preliminary

- Environmental data is expensive to obtain and support
- Implementation of environmental policy requires difficult decisions regarding voluntary vs. mandatory programs
- Communication of environmental messages to the public presents new challenges due to changing media landscape
- Planning decisions frequently don't include total costs of long-term impact to environment
- Limited public and private funds for clean up of contaminated sites
- Risk of region moving into non-compliance for ozone

Opportunities: Staff Preliminary

- Reduction of waste streams and waste diversion to recycling programs
- Develop sustainable City procurement systems for waste reduction
- Develop one-stop shop for customers to process waste and reusables through development of the planned Los Reales landfill project
- Completion of neighborhood-scale brownfield projects to improve neighborhood and economic vitality
- Create a city that has a strong reputation for sustainability and environmental health

SMART GROWTH FOCUS AREA

The Socioeconomic Prosperity Focus Area includes the following eight elements in compliance General Plan requirements. Housing, public health, public safety, education, economic development, recreation, cultural heritage & arts, and community participation.

Land Use & Transportation

Challenges: Staff Preliminary

- Low-density, spread-out metropolitan area impacts the efficiency of transportation, public facilities, & infrastructure
- Limited tools for infill & revitalization projects city wide
- Limited tools for growth management
- Circulation network based primarily only on travel figures, not urban form
- 77 City adopted land use plans; many outdated
- Accommodating population growth and increasing aging population
- Accommodating increasing intercity mobility of freight & people
- Meeting demand for alternative transportation choices
- Significant funding shortfalls for operation & expansion
- Transforming land use patterns to support alternative transportation systems

Opportunities: Staff Preliminary

- Increasing cooperative, regional approach to land use
- Revisions to City's Land Use Code (LUC) promote infill development
- City's Sustainable LUC project underway to align LUC with sustainable land use principles
- Key location in Southern Arizona for international and regional transportation corridors
- Funding sources foster cooperative, regional approach to mobility

- Leverage of programmatic commitments in place
- Increasing awareness of the true cost of mobility by public agencies

Urban Design

Challenges: Staff Preliminary

- Urban form often not sensitive to human and environmental assets
- And to efficient and effective public infrastructure and services
- Lack of public space vitality
- Zoning regulations do not foster the creation of innovative designs for integrated and visually appealing places
- Varying levels of investment and design in difference areas of City
- Building practices and increased density is often a contentious issue within neighborhoods

Opportunities: Staff Preliminary

- Build on community-based design programs that encourage a broad base of community participation and awareness of urban design, such as Tucson Community Design Academy and Building from the Best of Tucson

Redevelopment & Revitalization

Challenges: Staff Preliminary

- Mismanagement and delays of Rio Nuevo's TIF (Tax Increment Finance)
- Developers unwilling to risk money needed for reinvestment
- Limited tools for infill and revitalization projects city wide
- Limited programs and incentives for commercial and industrial districts
- Ineffective marketing and communication for potential investors
- Lack of organizational base with solid economic and human development strategies
- Increasing number of non-residential buildings nearing the end of their economic usefulness
- Deficient neighborhood infrastructure and aging housing stock
- Limited assistance to neighborhoods for streetscape improvements

Opportunities: Staff Preliminary

- Revisions to City's Land Use Code (LUC) promote infill development
- Code enforcement and crime prevention efforts to help combat properties in disrepair and crime
- Public/private partnerships been created for certain areas
- Neighborhood association planning efforts

Historic Preservation

Challenges: Staff Preliminary

- Teardowns & incompatible infill in historic districts
- Deterioration of historic properties through neglect
- Poor public awareness of historic assets in Tucson
- Regulations that hinder or discourage preservation
- Aging historic building stock with poor energy efficiency
- Lack of dedicated funding for maintenance of City-owned historic properties

Opportunities: Staff Preliminary

- Neighborhood Preservation Zone for compatible infill
- Transfers of Development Rights for balanced development
- HUD funding for stabilization of historic properties
- Continue amendments of regulation to allow and incentivize preservation

Public Infrastructure & Facilities

Challenges: Staff Preliminary

- Maintaining aging infrastructure
- Providing underserved areas
- Accommodating growth and demand for capacity increases
- Significant funding shortfalls for operation and expansion
- Complying with regulations at all levels
- Transforming land use patterns to support cost-effective infrastructure systems

Opportunities: Staff Preliminary

- City's infrastructure assessment in progress
- Comprehensive financial policies adopted by the City on 1/4/2011