



**SMART GROWTH FOCUS AREA:  
Land Use and Transportation Policy Working Group Meeting  
March 30, 2012**

**Meeting Notes**

**Planning Director's Comments and Observations:**

- Do we have a coordinated approach?
- How do we make sustainable land use and transportation decisions?
- Are current tools/plans helping us make good decisions?
- Think about 10-year timeframe. What's happened in last 10 years? What can we do in a 10 year timeframe to make changes/ make things better?
- Emerging Issues: Think about how we design "things". Median age of community is rising. What are implications?
- How are we going to pay for transportation – when main source is fossil fuels is going down?

**Planning:**

- We need long term policy with a mode shift. (Germany – cost of gas and how they offset rise.) Need to stop assuming/ planning for every family to have two cars.
- The most important two words that affect transportation and land use are rarely spoken: MODE SHIFT. It is the only solution to the problem.
- Interim policies rather than contingency planning.
- Contingency planning is a big deal. – Nice, but wishy washy – elected officials prefer "best guess" planning.
- Plan on uncertainty and need to do things for ourselves. We don't control variables that determine population, but we plan as if we did. Scenario Planning for infrastructure.
- History of all modern western cities is they don't produce anything – will need to in future.
- Develop multiple scenarios around different groups of key variables and analyze results to fund common strategies that work for multiple scenarios.
- Continuing to assume endless automobile based sprawl is a dead-end.
- Tucson's suburban zoning code and development standards are an obstacle to smart growth.
- Must plan for increased number and percent transit dependent populations (senior, mobility impaired and youth).
- We need to realize that one size won't fit all. We need density in some areas, and rural in others. Regional visions must include options – Plan Tucson may allow us to deal with this.
- "Mode Shift" – Fossil fuel disincentives, tax. Improve alternate transit options
- Through 28 years it's been the same issue how to get trans & LU together – Look for focus - maybe corridors. All have land use implications.
- Some mechanism in place related to infill - expand those types of districts
- Overlay transportation plans and see where issues are. Look at vacant properties (e.g. along Speedway.) Emphasize coordination.

## Transportation:

- Bus rider/make one bus on route an express bus
- Bicyclists aren't paying for use of infrastructure
- Congestion mitigation plan may help with more MPO involvement.
- Eventually I-10 and I-19 are going to reach capacity (even with commuter rail fully utilized biggest congestion will be at Pima/Pinal County boundary. Pima County does not allow bypasses (might want to double deck I-10 w/o altering tires)
- Transportation investment encourages quality future jobs – need to focus on this. PAG does good job on looking at current development to protect future growth – that won't change how we grow/ our land use pattern.
- Maybe infrastructure allowances – get infrastructure in place, so when tenant leaves another has reason to come in.
- Who rides light rail? – Who needs it?
- Connect Old Vail as bypass
- Look at SunTran go inside shopping center (SunTran say liability/ private property issues.)
- Make existing infrastructure work better.
- Bike shares
- Let's look carefully at light rail before we spend money on a trolley line in town
- Parking is a key element of transportation planning. The easiest way to encourage more vehicle miles traveled (VMT) is to provide free, easy parking at all locations. We need to charge for parking to influence trip patterns and mode choice.
- How much traffic (fossil fuels) would be eliminated if we (Tucson) did not import 80-90% of our food from other countries or states – wear and tear on highways and streets.
- Traffic movement, also people movement – reconsider major streets. What width?
- Maybe in future shift how we approach – e.g. consider corridors (Flexibility regionally in Pima County)
- Access control (e.g. curb cuts)
- Instead of continuing to accommodate cars, making it easier for people to drive, we could let it become more difficult for people to drive, then offer them an alternative (i.e. transit). This can work on major corridors, such as Broadway, Stone/6<sup>th</sup>, Oracle, Grant, 22<sup>nd</sup>...
- Reduce parking regulations at major facilities encourage street side retail (walk-in not drive-in) and allow incentives (density?) for good urban design.
- Look at parking standards. Many seem underutilized (e.g. shopping centers – densify, water harvest, form, design)
- Revised parking lot standard last year. Could we do more? Probably so. Look at parking lots as redevelopment.

## Urban Design:

- Urban Villages – What's difference between RTP 2030 vs 2040 projections? Big difference. PAG is assuming a shift in jobs – closer to where one leaves. Change trip lengths – Can do in 10 years.
- Tucson needs to rethink standards (garbage truck cannot determine urban form) – low scale development
- Change size of lots/ houses – but still moving. Need to find a way to change land use pattern. Need to figure out where we want to be in 20 years – and start preparing for that in next decade.
- Overlay districts helpful in urban design – strengthen admin policy so doesn't get derailed by NAs.
- Need to revise urban design parameters to encourage more Main Gate projects (expensive) instead of strip retail (cheap) because it creates a lifestyle that is not dependent on autos.

## Sustainability:

- Urban agriculture – what is going on with the Land Use Code? Farming has changed – bring jobs (expanding what a community garden is – redefining what urban agriculture is.
- What’s the state’s opinion on climate change and sustainability?
- How can we mitigate climate change?
- Larger urban agriculture – 1 acre farming
- Stop importing 80-90% of our food – hire local people
- Glad to know urban agriculture discussions will take place soon.

## Financing:

- We do not look enough at budgeting for maintenance
- Impact fee issues need to be talked about more broadly
- Get Feds to pay for the bypass
- No pay-ahead (i.e. bonds) for infrastructure expansion 80% to 90% is paid by current residents, not ones the infrastructure was expanded
- No more tax or rate increases to pay for expansion.
- Regard to future transportation funding: Recommend moving away from gas tax to congestion pricing. Thru a GPS vehicle mounted device charge-based on miles, time of day of travel, and location. Pros: Fail tax, lessen congestion during (?) hours, lower congestion on the busiest corridors (by charging a premium) Cons: equipment for all vehicles, evasion potential, and the need for coordination at national level.
- Bid approach – Bond – if road enhances dev./ developer should pay. Roads in past wore better than current. LA did study that showed people who rode rail transit were former bus riders.

## Tools:

- MS&R should be repealed. Then put back pieces that make sense.
- Nothing says you can’t redo plan
- On the cusp of big technological changes – forecast/ will be 50% more capacity on roads?
- Plan needs to be updated every 3 years
- Long term processes (bond projects) need to be redesigned so there are “exits” or “trip wires” to allow change in direction when planning assumptions are undermined.
- The MS&R is the single most irrational document in the City of Tucson. It needs to be repealed and returned in parts that make sense.
- We need to discuss the new impact fee legislation and also how it affects Transportation + Land Use decisions.
- COT and PAG need to revisit and rethink MS&R, Development Standards and the assumption of 100 future R.O.W., predicted on 6-lane road ways everywhere, is excessive and makes many lots next to impossible to develop: to encourage higher density infill development, we should reduce these future “Takes” with higher density, public transit can work and streets won’t need to be so wide.
- Last COT Bond year 200 – Traffic signal – Road drainage – Traffic signal
- Controversial MS&R Plan
- Land use code: Reformat excuses, clarity, redundancy
- Unified development code, subdivision and zone
- MS&R plan dinosaur – Scrap and rebuild

### **Timeframe:**

- General Plan is longest Planning timeframe doc we have. Should look out even further with climate change in mind (e.g. 50 years)
- Can't overlook nuts & bolts. Lots of processes take almost 10 years to get shovel in ground – Have to make sure we are encouraging ec. dev./ activity.
- RTA - There are 4 five year periods with projects
- Have to respond quicker than a 10 year process
- COT Transportation needs over years - \$2B
- 10 year time frame – Life cycle, replacement costs?

### **Jobs:**

- High Quality jobs required planning. IGT looks as if it focuses on service. Honeywell, Raytheon, etc – people aren't likely to walk to these jobs. Need planning in TIA area where there's lots of space. Proactive w/ transit investment.
- Need to develop plans to encourage non service-based high paying jobs, preferably manufacturing or R/D which require large capital investments which provide reasonable security of future jobs. Creation of large employment centers with adequate infrastructure (i.e. lightrail?) will begin to allow us to compete with other regions.

### **Stakeholders:**

- Think PAG should get more in land use planning. Particularly at boundaries.
- Local jurisdictions aren't interested in giving up land use code.
- Fear is that jurisdictions don't want to be pegged as area of particular use.
- Planning is a continuous process – Private sector builds community – Government/citizens helping guide.
- Huge gap between what people see as benefits and what they fear
- Have to address change brings emotion. Don't lose sight of people and needs.
- Better stakeholder input in building consensus of land use/transportation planning, plan must be dynamic organism being able to be relevant and responsive current conditions.
- We need to roll back current regulations (to an extent) and allow more private sector input into land use and individual project development.
- Community Values – “Loss,” “Scarcity,” “Hope,” “Abundance”
- Human element - needs in neighborhoods
- Community does well in integrating when there is conflict
- We need a community – based Com. Dev. Corporation to connect neighborhood associations w/ business communities and developers – particularly to serve low-med income areas of city.