Consensus Decision Making

Consensus is an agreement made without voting. It involves everyone clearly understanding the decision being made, analyzing all of the relevant facts together, and then jointly developing solutions representing the group’s best thinking. It is characterized by open and active listening, healthy debate, and testing of options.

The goal of consensus is to reach a decision that everyone can accept. Everyone may not like the solution equally well or will have an equal commitment to it. Consensus generates a decision about which everyone, at a minimum, says “I can live with it and move forward.”

Levels of Consensus
Consensus is achieved if all participants indicate that they are at levels 1 through 4. When a decision is made, all consensus levels will be recorded.

1. I can say an unqualified ‘yes’ to the decision.

2. I find the decision perfectly acceptable. It is the best of the real options we have available to us.

3. I can live with the decision; however, I am not especially enthusiastic about it.

4. I will stand aside and not block the decision. I will support it because I trust the wisdom of the group; however, I do not fully agree with the decision and need to register my views about it.

5. I do not agree with the decision and feel the need to block the decision being accepted as consensus for the following reasons.

Consensus is reached when no one is left in category 5. Consensus is not designed to achieve 100% agreement, rather create an outcome that represents the best feasible course of action, given the circumstances.

This project is funded by the City of Tucson, Pima County and the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), and is part of the voter-approved, $2.1 billion RTA plan that will be implemented through 2026. Details about the plan are available at www.RTAmobility.com.