CITY OF TUCSON

Regina Romero

MAYOR REGINA ROMERO

Dear Tucsonan,

Everyone deserves to be safe — in your neighborhood, at work, and in our public spaces. We hear your current concerns about safety in our community loud and clear, and we share them. That is why we are launching the Safe City Initiative.

As mayor, I understand that residents need to see real solutions that prevent crime, break its cycle, and improve the quality of life for everyone. Your mayor and Council have aggressively been funding services that are proving to work for our unsheltered community. These include low-barrier shelter with wrap-around services, Violence Interruption Vitalization Action, Community Safety Health and Wellness, Multi-Disciplinary Outreach Teams and a myriad of programs provided by the Tucson Police Department and Housing and Community Development.

While we continue to support enforcement as one of the many tools TPD is utilizing to address community concerns, we must also continue to fund the services and resources that create a safe community.

We also understand that with all the programs and services we have activated there are still gaps in effectively addressing the lack of services and connections for people with serious mental illnesses and substance use disorders.

Although we know arrest is a necessary tool, this alone will not solve the problems we are facing.

We cannot arrest our way out of this public health crisis.

Clearly, the status quo is not sufficient. We must demand that our state and county governments step up to help Tucsonans with this public health crisis.

That is why we are prepared to consider — and, when necessary, undertake — additional actions that keep our community safe while upholding our values.

The city of Tucson has created services and offered tools and resources — and we will keep strengthening them. We will use every point of contact — whether through arrests, street outreach, care coordination, or housing navigation — to connect people with treatment alternatives, options to long term support programs, and other diversion and deflection options that reduce harm and increase safety for the individuals and for our community.

We will also continue to demand accountability, beyond the initial arrest, for people that are breaking the law.

Our Safe City Initiative will include:

Smart Enforcement: The Council and I have directed the city manager to create a Safe City Task Force. The task force will be composed of experts who can guide us on ordinances and policies that can leverage law enforcement action into drug recovery options.

Mayor and Council have also requested a Transit System Safety and Security Action Plan from the Transportation and Mobility Department and Tucson Police Department which includes focused safety operations to protect our bus drivers, bus centers, and community surrounding bus stops.

TPD will use collaborative Safe City Deployments along the Loop and other areas of our community that focus on social service outreach and enforcement. In other areas that are experiencing high levels of crime, enforcement only deployments will be used to disrupt criminal behavior.

Treatment & Partnership: The Pima County Health Department is responsible for providing health-related services, such as mental health care and substance use treatment for people in jail, as well as overall public health services for county residents.

These responsibilities do not fall under the responsibility of the city of Tucson per our Charter. We need to leverage our partnerships with the state and regional providers to expand access to mental and behavioral health care and substance use treatment.

This includes working with the Regional Behavioral Health Authority serving Tucson/Pima County, Arizona Complete Health, the state Medicaid provider AHCCCS, and Pima County, all of whom can deliver critical services before crises escalate into crimes.

To truly make progress, we must address the root causes of what we are seeing on our streets with solutions that can be implemented now.

Prevention & Opportunity: Continue to invest in programs that are proven to reduce crime and create safe communities and opportunities for all: affordable housing, access to transit, youth employment, park and infrastructure investments and after school programming for kids.

Access to Justice: We have directed City Court to expand its Community Court and add additional court sessions.

Community Court is a specialty court program that encourages social service providers to partner with criminal justice professionals to ensure offender accountability through

behavioral health interventions. We are using a market-based approach to TPD salaries to increase recruitment and retention of our officers working in the field.

Pursue Partnerships with Other Jurisdictions: We must utilize opioid settlement funds and work alongside Pima County supervisors to establish a Sobering Alternative Facility for Recovery Center.

We face extraordinary challenges, but this is a shared effort. I am grateful to our community partners, neighborhood leaders, city staff, and my colleagues on the Council who are advancing innovative solutions.

My promise to you is simple: your safety and quality of life will remain at the center of my work as your mayor. I will keep pushing for new programs that are proven to work. I will fight to bring funds and action from our federal, state and county partners that will create a safe city for all.

In community,

Mayor Regina Romero