

Community Engagement Program

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Purpose of the General Plan and the Community Engagement Program

The General Plan is a policy document that brings together members of our community with diverse experiences and expertise to co-create a vision for the future. This important document establishes the goals and policies to support this shared vision. Resulting from engagement and rounds of feedback, the General Plan presents background information, goals, and policies that intentionally knit together the broad array of interrelated aspirations, experiences, and realities that define and refine the city's character now and into the future.

The General Plan is used by City representatives in a variety of ways. Mayor and Council utilize the General Plan to guide the City's investments, programs, and policies. Staff reference the General Plan's goals and policies when making recommendations to elected officials and rely on these policies when applying for grants and seeking other external funding sources. The City of Tucson's Planning and Development Services Department, Planning Commission, and others involved in the land use process use the General Plan, and other plans like Area and Neighborhood plans, to inform land use decisions such as rezonings. Community members can use the General Plan goals and policies to seek funding for community-based projects and to advocate for City investments and priorities.

In Tucson, the current general plan is called *Plan Tucson: The General and Sustainability Plan.* It was ratified by the voters in 2013. Plan Tucson is divided into four focus areas: the Social Environment, Economic Environment, Natural Environment, and

Built Environment. Within these, there are 20 elements, or topics, addressed in the plan – such as Housing, Jobs & Workforce Development, Water Resources, and Redevelopment & Revitalization. This exceeds the 13 elements required under Arizona Revised Statutes 9-461.05.

The Plan outlines 25 community goals and includes 187 policies to achieve these. A key component of the plan is the Future Growth Scenario Map, which identifies where and how the city intends to grow. More information on Plan Tucson can be found here.

Arizona Revised Statutes 9-461.06 requires that a municipality's plan be readopted, or a new general plan be adopted, every ten years. The City of Tucson's timeline was extended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022, the City of Tucson initiated the process of updating its General Plan. For the purposes of this community engagement program, the working title of the updated document is General Plan Update.

While many of the policies in the 2013 General Plan are still relevant, this update allows the City to address new priorities and emerging issues. A general plan update process provides an opportunity to assess current conditions and needs, examine the community's vision and goals, add new policies, and incorporate recent and ongoing planning initiatives in the current citywide and regional context. Through the plan update process, the elements and policies that are still relevant will be maintained or adjusted and new policy areas may be added to reflect changing local priorities.

For a city of Tucson's size, Arizona Revised Statutes require that the updated general plan be ratified by the voters. The goal is to have an updated general plan, adopted by Mayor and Council, placed on the ballot for the 2025 General Election.

This document presents the recommended Community Engagement Program for the General Plan update. The program has been developed to promote broad reach and participation while ensuring efficient and effective use of staff time and City resources.

State Requirements for General Plan Public Participation

ARS 9-461.06 requires that municipalities' "governing bodies shall adopt written procedures to provide effective, early and continuous public participation in the development and major amendment of general plans from all geographic, ethnic and economic areas of the municipality." The law continues, "the procedures shall provide for:

- (a) The broad dissemination of proposals and alternatives.
- (b) The opportunity for written comments.
- (c) Public hearings after effective notice.
- (d) Open discussions, communications programs, and information service.
- (e) Consideration of public comments."

Additionally, the law requires that the governing body "consult with, advise and provide an opportunity for official comment by public officials and agencies, the county, school districts, associations of governments, public land management agencies, the military airport if the municipality has territory in the vicinity of a military airport or ancillary military facilities as designated in section 28-8461, other appropriate government jurisdictions, public utility companies, civic, educational, professional and other organizations, property owners and citizens generally to secure maximum coordination of plans and to indicate properly located sites for all public purposes in the general plan."

Consistent with the City of Tucson's longstanding practice of public involvement in planning for the City's future, the City of Tucson will meet and exceed the state public participation requirements for the General Plan update.

The Importance of Community Engagement

General plan updates are a unique opportunity for City staff, community members, and stakeholders to come together to develop shared goals and express ideas that address community priorities. The Community Engagement Program is critical to determining that shared vision(s) and the goals and policies needed to achieve that vision(s).

The content of the general plan impacts everyday life in the city. By participating in the General Plan Update process, community members and stakeholder groups can influence the content of the plan to make it more relevant to them. For example, urban agriculture policies were added to the 2013 General Plan because participants felt it was a priority. After voter ratification, City staff implemented programs to achieve the goals and policies in the plan. The Plan Tucson Progress Reports summarize key accomplishments in the implementation of the 2013 General Plan.

Community Engagement Approach

The purpose of this Community Engagement Program is to 1

While the primary focus of the General Plan Update will be to guide decisions within the boundaries of Tucson, it will also consider a regional context with the understanding that decisions made by the City impact the metropolitan area. Public outreach will be sensitive to this regional perspective.

Building on Other Planning Initiatives

At the time of drafting this Community Engagement Program, the City of Tucson has recently completed or is actively completing several plans related to critical components of City services and programming. These-plans include Move Tucson, Housing Affordability Strategy for Tucson, One Water 2100 Master Plan, the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan, the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, the Parks and Recreation System Master Plan and several park plans, corridor plans like Tucson Norte-Sur, neighborhood and area plans, and others. These planning efforts each include significant community participation processes consisting of meetings, surveys, and focus groups concentrated on the topic at hand.

The planning process is an opportunity to integrate these plans in concert with the broad scope of City programs. The outcomes of these specific plans will inform the relevant sections of the General Plan Update.

Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles will inform the public engagement approach:

Everyone is Welcome

The City of Tucson is a diverse community with a history of active participation, and the planning process is an opportunity to celebrate the rich fabric of our city. Every view, voice, and experience of our community is integral to the conversation and will be welcomed with respect. The Planning Team will provide meaningful opportunities for people of diverse backgrounds, incomes, geographic locations, family structures, familiarity with long-range planning, and racial and cultural identities to learn about the General Plan and contribute to the planning process.

Center Equity

The General Plan sets the policy, land use, and growth course for the city. Planning and other governmental processes over the decades have, intentionally and unintentionally, led to the underrepresentation of certain communities. Thus, some communities have not had an adequate influence on the policy decisions that impact them directly and as a result, they carry a disproportionate burden of those decisions. The Planning Team's role is to purposefully and respectfully seek, value, and uplift these voices. Examples of this include reducing barriers to participation by providing resources for childcare and transportation. By centering equity, the vision and policies set in the General Plan can honestly reflect the fullness of the Tucson community.

Build Up and Collaborate

This planning process has a head start. Recent planning efforts and many parts of the 2013 General Plan will be anchoring points for the update because they reflect current community values. The General Plan Update process will affirm, integrate, and synthesize this information to provide continuity, incorporate new priorities, and reduce duplication of efforts.

Foster Authentic Participation

Planning for our city's future takes time and energy. The multi-year plan update process will respect community members' prior, current, and new investments in this effort. Community members will have ample opportunities to be involved through various methods, tools, and resources that aid short or long-term meaningful participation. The Planning Team will maintain transparency in how feedback is used in the planning process by providing regular updates, including prior feedback at public events, and sharing edits on the project website.

Prioritize Safety and Accessibility for Participants

The City will monitor public health guidance and offer virtual and outdoor meetings when appropriate. Meetings will be scheduled in accessible locations in different parts of the city and at a variety of times. Bilingual materials, translation services, and additional accessibility services will be provided for all major events.

Program Development

Before launching the Community Engagement Program, the City of Tucson took the following actions to ensure that the outreach activities would meet our goals:

- Conducted best practices research, including surveying City staff on recent outreach efforts and reviewing public engagement plans from noteworthy general plans, including the 2013 General Plan and in other jurisdictions across the state and the country
- Set guiding principles and program evaluation metrics
- Coordinated with other departments and their planning initiatives
- Drafted the Community Engagement Program with input from the City Manager's Office, department leads, and professional public relations groups, and
- Sought official approval from the City of Tucson Mayor and Council.

Throughout this document, the program references the widely-used International Association for Public Participation's Spectrum of Public Participation, which organizes engagement methods into five categories based on the role of the public in each method and how much influence particular methods have on outcomes. The five categories and how they relate to this planning effort are:

- Inform: to provide information to assist in understanding the process and plan content.
- Consult: to obtain input from community members on their vision, goals, and priorities.
- Involve: to work directly with participants to consider and prioritize the input received.
- Collaborate: to partner with participants in developing the final plan by weighing tradeoffs, selecting a future growth scenario, and choosing which goals and policies will be included.
- Empower: to place the final decision-making power to adopt the plan in the hands of participants.

The outreach phases and methods of engagement use all five categories on the spectrum of public participation. The use of this terminology helps establish participant expectations for the process.

Participants: The People Shaping the Plan

Planning Team

The Planning Team is composed of City of Tucson Planning and Development staff, leads from additional city departments, and their consultants. This team will lead the plan update process and the associated community engagement events.

Community Members

The term "community" can be ambiguous in a large city like Tucson. To add clarity, the table on page eight explains the different types of community groups, their roles in the planning process, and some ways they'll be reached through the Community Engagement Program. The Outreach Phases and Methods of Engagement sections elaborate on the engagement methods.

General Public

A broad spectrum of individuals or families interested in and affected by the General Plan Individuals whose participation represents themselves and their personal interests, though they may identify with particular demographics and may be affiliated with a stakeholder group.

- Working groups
- Community Workshops
- Open Houses
- Pop-ups at community events
- Ambassadors
- Website, online surveys/tools, social and print media, emails

Associations and Organizations

Entities that organize groups of people representing a common interest or identity, such as neighborhood associations, churches, schools, cultural groups, business associations, major employers, youth organizations, and community service providers Community-based associations and organizations support the General Plan Update process by coordinating staff presentations, hosting activities, and sharing information with their members. These groups may act as conveners for the general public to facilitate engagement with the planning process or they may engage as one stakeholder entity. These organizations may engage across all topics in the General Plan Update or may choose to focus on one or a few subjects.

- Working groups
- Community Workshops
- Open Houses
- Pop-ups at community events
- Website, online surveys/tools, social media, emails
- Ambassador presentations

Stakeholders and Subject Matter Experts

A variety of individuals or organizational representatives with expertise, both lived and academic, in subjects that are important to the plan update Stakeholders and subject matter experts could be industry professionals or academics, advocates for a particular interest, or individuals with experiences to share. They may participate in working groups or be sought out for consultation on specific content.

- Working groups
- Technical interviews
- Community Workshops
- Open Houses
- Website, online surveys/tools, social media, emails

City and Regional Partners

City department leaders and operational staff, Pima County, City of South Tucson, Tohono O'odham Nation, Pascua Yaqui Tribe, Davis Monthan Air Force Base, and Pima Association of Governments

These partners will be invited to provide technical input on their departmental needs and help successfully integrate the outcomes of recent plans into the General Plan update. Additionally, employees with experience in City operations will provide input on operational implications of existing and draft goals and policies.

- Working groups
- Technical interviews
- Community workshops
- Website, online surveys/tools, social media, emails

City of Tucson Leadership

Mayor and Council, Boards and Commissions

Elected leaders and their appointed representatives will contribute perspectives from their constituencies and experiences, provide feedback on the progress and direction of the General Plan Update.

- Regular updates and feedback at key milestones and decision points
- Public Hearings
- Formal recommendations and adoption

The Outreach Phases

The community engagement program timeline is broken into four phases, each with corresponding outreach goals, activities, and outcomes. Plan development will occur in phases 1, 2, and 3 leading toward the adoption of the updated general plan by Mayor and Council. These phases include many opportunities for community involvement and collaboration. Phase 4 starts after Mayor and Council adopt the updated plan and culminates with the November 2025 election.

Phase 1
JanuaryJune 2023

Phase 2
July 2023 June 2024

Phase 3 July 2024 -February 2025 Phase 4 March -November 2025

Listen,
Discover
and Reflect

Define and Plan our Future

Review and Refine

Inform and Educate

- Broad community engagement to gather key priorities and reflect on recent plans
- Begin to develop vision
- Identify plan elements

- Develop goals and policies
- Consider
 various growth
 scenarios and
 weigh tradeoffs
- Put the pieces together in a complete draft plan
- Share draft plan with public for comment
- Planning
 Commission
 Public Hearings at multiple locations
- Mayor and Council Public Hearings and adoption
- Education and awareness campaign
- Seek voter ratification of General Plan Update in local election

Phase 1: Listen, Discover, Reflect January – June 2023

The Planning Team will provide background information about the 2013 General Plan, recent plans, key trends, explain the General Plan Update process to community members, and collect ideas on community values, challenges, and priorities. Working groups will support the Planning Team in synthesizing the information gathered into a vision, or visions, and a list of community priorities. The Planning Team will use outcomes from this phase to hone in on plan elements and begin identifying policies to retain, modify, or add to the General Plan Update.

Goal: Learn community members' top priorities for Tucson and begin to create a shared vision(s) for the future.

What participants can expect:

- Opportunities to share their vision for the future of Tucson
- Information about how the 2013 General Plan is currently used and the update process
- Information about existing plans, and how they'll be incorporated into the updated general plan
- Consultation on existing plans' goals and policies during open houses, public events, surveys, and other methods listed below
- Collaboration in identifying the plan elements and key focus areas
- Collaboration in identifying the common themes and priorities

Key questions:

- What do we love about our city? What are our values?
- What are some of our biggest challenges -- now? In the next ten years? 40 years?
- What is your vision for Tucson in ten years? 40 years?
- Over the last ten years, what has changed? What are the benefits and challenges of these changes?
- What questions do you have about the plan and planning process?
- How are recent plans' vision, goals, and policies resonating?
- Whose voices are missing?

Outcomes:

- Vision(s) organized into common themes
- Community priorities
- Clarity on plan elements to be included in the General Plan Update

Phase 2: Define and Plan our Future July 2023 – June 2024

Starting from the shared vision(s) and community-identified priorities developed through Phase One outreach, community members suggest and refine goals and policy language and develop potential growth scenarios. Through community dialogue in a variety of formats, participants will have a chance to consider options for our future and weigh tradeoffs. Working groups will support the Planning Team in drafting policies, using the information collected from phases one and two.

Goal: Develop policies to support our community vision(s), explore different growth scenarios, and consider tradeoffs.

What participants can expect:

- Information about the general plan and how the policies, including the future growth scenario, are used, the plan update process, and how existing plans and previously collected input are informing this update
- Consultation on the outcomes of the previous phase
- Involvement in goal development and policy solutions, including the Future Growth Scenario Map, at public events and online
- Collaboration through dialogue in working groups and community workshops about trade-offs, policy solutions, and goal development

Key questions:

- What are the key goals for Tucson? Are there missing or misrepresented priorities or goals?
- What policies will support the community's vision and goals for the future?
- Where and how is our city developing today? What is driving that growth? What major issues may be affecting community goals and equity? Where are the opportunities?
- How and where should the city grow and develop in the future to meet our community goals, i.e. which is your preferred Future Growth Scenario? What barriers, current or anticipated, are preventing us from achieving your preferred scenario?

Outcomes:

- Goals and policies for each plan element
- A preferred growth scenario
- A preliminary draft of the General Plan Update

Phase 3: Review and Refine July 2024 – February 2025

The Planning Team will compile a preliminary draft of the General Plan Update that will be presented to community members and transmitted to specified public agencies as required by state law. The public will be able to share feedback on the document as a whole. Working groups will support the Planning Team in incorporating comments into a revised final draft of the General Plan Update. The Planning Team will present the final draft of the General Plan Update to the Planning Commission and hold multiple public hearings in different parts of the City. The Planning Commission will make a recommendation to Mayor and Council. Next Mayor and Council will also hold a public hearing and consider adoption. After plan adoption, the General Plan Update will be noticed for election and phase four begins.

Goal: Share the preliminary draft General Plan Update, provide opportunities for comment, and refine it based on community feedback into a final draft for adoption.

What participants can expect:

- Information about the planning process and content of the General Plan Update
- Consultation on the outcomes of the previous phase(s)
- Involvement through the opportunity to share comments on the draft plan at community events and online
- Collaboration through working groups in fine-tuning the plan content
- Consultation through the opportunity to comment during public hearings with City Leadership

Key questions:

- Does the draft General Plan Update adequately reflect the input collected throughout this process and our community's vision(s) for the future?
- Do the goals and policies align with other recent plans, investments, and city initiatives?

Outcome:

• Final draft of the General Plan Update reviewed by community members and approved by Planning Commission and Mayor and Council, ready for voter consideration

Phase 4: Inform and Educate March 2025 - November 2025

While elected officials and non-governmental entities can endorse or advocate for the General Plan Update, per Arizona Revised Statutes, City staff may only share information related to the content of the plan and the plan update process. Once Mayor and Council adopt the updated General Plan, it will be placed on the ballot for City of Tucson to vote on whether to ratify it.

Key provisions of this process include:

- A general description of the adopted General Plan Update and its elements will be included in the municipal election pamphlet.
- Copies of the adopted updated plan will be provided in at least two physical locations and posted online.
- The majority of qualified voters voting to approve the Plan to become effective.

The goal is to submit the General Plan Update to the voters for consideration at the November 2025 general election. To be listed on the ballot, an initiative must meet the submission requirements of the Arizona Secretary of State. This deadline is typically six months before election day.

Goal: Educate voters and general public about the ballot proposition to ratify General Plan Update ahead of the election.

What participants can expect:

- Information about the planning process, the General Plan Update content and how the General Plan is used
- Empowerment of voters through the ability to decide on the ratification of the General Plan Update

Key question:

• What questions do you have about the plan, the process, and how the General Plan is used?

Outcomes:

- Broad awareness of General Plan purpose and goals
- Voter ratification of the General Plan Update

Methods of Engagement

The City of Tucson will use a variety of tools to reach community members across the city and across demographics for a representative set of input and engagement. Each method is explained further in the table below. Though most methods will be used throughout the planning process, the specifics of each activity will be tailored according to the needs of each phase. As the process progresses, some methods may be added or updated based on the program evaluation metrics.

Method and Level of Engagement	Description
Project Website • Inform	Serves as a centralized, ongoing resource for information on the planning process, including status updates, FAQs, presentations, event calendars, links to online surveys, ambassador training materials, a contact form, results of outreach, and newsletter sign up.
Email and Print Materials • Inform	This includes postcards mailed to city residents, emails to stakeholder groups, digital newsletters to subscribers, and printed materials, such as flyers, fact sheets, handouts, et cetera. These materials raise awareness of the planning process, announce upcoming events and opportunities to give input online like surveys and the interactive online tools, celebrate milestones, and refer readers to the website for more information.
Media • Inform	Press releases will be sent to various media platforms of various audiences to share updates and promote opportunities to get involved.
Social MediaInformConsult	Various social media platforms will be used to promote the project overall, announce upcoming events, celebrate milestones, provide opportunities to give input through online tools, encourage engagement through polls and comments, and share outcomes of input throughout the process.
Video Shorts • Inform	Short videos to summarize what has been accomplished, what input is needed, and the next steps of the planning process. Videos will complement many other methods.
Interactive Online ToolsInformConsultInvolve	Using interactive online maps or games, users can share feedback on particular locations and areas in the city, share their priorities for the future, and see how different policy scenarios impact their goals.









Clockwise from the upper left are from: a neighborhood planning meeting, Climate Action and Adaptation Plan Town Hall, a neighborhood meeting, and Tucson Norte-Sur Pop-Up.

Photos: City of Tucson



Continued

Method and

Level of Engagement

Description

Online Survey and Comment Cards

- Inform
- Consult
- Involve

Surveys will be tailored to each phase, seeking input and feedback on the city's big-picture values, challenges, priorities and potential policy or program solutions. Comment cards will be used to gather general comments about the General Plan Update and the planning process. All surveys will be published in English and Spanish and other languages available as requested.

Open House

- Inform
- Consult
- Involve

Large events, both in-person and virtual, that are designed to mark milestone achievements and transition into new phases of outreach. These events could include presentations, Q&A, break out groups, activities, and panels. These events are geared towards all audiences and have city-wide reach.

Pop-ups and Public Events

- Inform
- Consult
- Involve

The Planning Team, other city staff, ambassadors, and volunteers will staff a booth or table at community events, such as the Festival of Books, 4th Ave Street Fair, and others, as well as city-sponsored events. These will be opportunities to get input on surveys, conduct quick activities to involve members of the public in the planning process, and raise awareness of the General Plan Update.

Ambassadors/Street team

- Inform
- Consult
- Involve
- Collaborate

Individuals from the community, both volunteer and short-term employees, will represent the City of Tucson and answer questions about the General Plan Update and lead interactive activities that are tailored to the planning phases.

Meeting Toolkit

- Inform
- Consult
- Involve
- Collaborate

A "Meeting in a Box" will be provided for organizations wishing to independently lead workshops. The "Meeting in a Box" will include (1) a small menu of activities tailored to the objectives of each phase, such as identifying shared values and associated policy suggestions, (2) information on the General Plan and the planning process, and (3) instructions on how to send the outcomes of their meetings to the Planning Team.

Community Workshops

- Inform
- Consult
- Involve
- Collaborate

Workshops, meetings, and events with community members, varying in length, location, and scope according to the needs of each phase and audience. Events may be convened by the Planning Team or community groups, associations, and stakeholders. City staff may present material or lead discussions on topics related to the objectives of each phase of the planning process.











A variety of outreach methods are the foundation of inclusive and productive community engagement.

Clockwise from the upper left are from: 9th St Bicycle Blvd Pop-up, Tucson Norte-Sur Pop-Up, a neighborhood planning meeting, Climate Action and Adaptation Plan Town Hall, and One Water 2100 Master Plan Town Hall

Photos: City of Tucson

Continued

Method and

Level of Engagement

Description

Working Group Meetings

- Inform
- Consult
- Involve
- Collaborate

Facilitated discussions at key points of the planning process to complement input from the general public to understand our challenges and identify potential policy solutions. Working groups will be organized around a particular topic area of the plan. They will meet regularly to help synthesize information from other engagement methods and inform key outcomes of each phase. The groups will be composed of subject matter experts, including members from city boards and commissions, community stakeholders, and interested individuals. Working group membership is flexible, and members can attend according to their schedules and interests. Participation by members of Boards and Commissions will help maintain consistent communication, information-sharing, and implementation.

Interdepartmental and Intergovernmental Coordination Meetings

- Inform
- Consult
- Involve
- Collaborate

Meetings, polls, and conversations with City of Tucson staff, regional governments, and quasi-governmental entities to inform, coordinate, and seek input on the planning process and the content of the General Plan Update.

Updates to Mayor and Council and City Boards and Commissions

- Inform
- Consult
- Involve

The Planning Team will share outcomes of each phase, including the community priorities, and proposed plan elements, and receive additional direction with Mayor and Council and City Boards and Commissions.

Public Hearings

- Inform
- Consult
- Involve

Planning Commission and Mayor and Council will hold formal public hearings to collect public comments on the draft plan. Planning Commission is required to have at least two public hearings in different locations. Mayor and Council must adopt a draft plan prior to voter ratification.

General Election

Empower

The General Plan Update will be placed on the 2025 ballot for registered voters to have an opportunity to ratify the plan and adopt it as Tucson's General Plan for the next 10 years.

Ongoing Engagement and Plan Implementation

The updating the General Plan is a rare opportunity for the broad City of Tucson community to participate in setting the goals and vision for the community. This process will illuminate emerging needs, but more importantly, it will celebrate our community's diversity, accomplishments, and vision for the future.

Once ratified, the General Plan becomes a roadmap for the future, and the implementation phase begins. The City of Tucson will collect information on how the plan is implemented and communicate the key milestones achieved through the regular release of General Plan Progress Reports.

Through the General Plan Update, community members will have invested in their city and the community's future. All community members are encouraged to stay involved and help the City manifest the shared community vision established in the General Plan by participating in future planning projects and giving feedback to City representatives.

Program Evaluation

The Planning Team will collect information to help track the level of participation across the city and across demographics, inform adjustments to engagement strategies, measure consistency with the Guiding Principles, and evaluate the overall success of the Community Engagement Program. Data related to the following will be collected throughout the program's implementation.

Leading Indicators

- Total number of participants engaged in public meetings, online surveys and websites, social media, and online surveys
- Demographic and geographic data of participants, including a range of cultural and other identities if participants self-identify
- Number and substance of comments received through each method of engagement
- Level of satisfaction surveys and feedback related to the location, promotion, and structure of the engagement methods

Lagging Indicators

- Media coverage.
- Planning Team debriefs and checkins with the steering advisory committee at key intervals.
- Feedback received from Mayor and Council and Boards and Commissions.
- Range of meeting locations, the timing of events, and communication methods used to promote opportunities.
- Diversity of associations and advocacy groups that share information and promote participation opportunities, and "How you heard about us" responses.