

REGINA ROMERO

Tucson City Council - Ward I

Westside | Southside | Downtown

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Dear Friends and Neighbors:

I'm happy to bring you exciting news on downtown redevelopment. Please mark your calendar for November 19 for an informational meeting where we will have Rio Nuevo staff available to give an update and answer more of your questions. Please email me at ward1@tucsonaz.gov if you would like to become a "friend of Downtown" to hear more about openings and events in the heart of our City. The location of the event will be on our website.

As a City Councilor you have to research many complex issues such as Tucson Water, KIDCO and the City budget. Downtown development is a complex issue not just for our arts, culture and heritage; it's the economic development of more than 50 acres of prime Downtown real estate.

We must remain resolute on commitments already made to the community, but we must also provide the underlying investment necessary to create social and economic opportunities. I wrote a guest opinion for the [Tucson Citizen](#) on June 16 to promote a "Downtown for all of us" and urged our City staff to create a master schedule and financial plan to get Rio Nuevo moving.

On August 6th Mayor and Council approved a Rio Nuevo capital project plan to issue \$454 million in revenue bonds through the TIF district to fund a new arena, a hotel/convention center, a University of Arizona Science Center, museums and the re-creation of Tucson's birthplace, the Mission San Agustín at Tucson Origins Heritage Park.

Good development doesn't happen on its own. I worked with the neighborhood and the developers to make sure the Gadsden Company's plans for West Congress was appropriate for the region and will bring good jobs to the City. The 14 acres will bring shopping, restaurants, a hotel and housing. With construction costs of \$285 million, Gadsden's plan contributes about \$15 million in construction sales taxes and \$2.1 million in sales taxes, generating both short- and long-term revenue within the Tax Increment Financing, or TIF, district which finances our downtown revitalization.

[Gadsden](#) will build 400 homes with 35%, or 140 of them, designated as homes that working families can afford. They will contribute \$250,000 to the city's affordable-housing trust fund to underwrite the first 35 affordable units. They will also voluntarily contribute one percent of their market-rate housing sale proceeds to the housing trust fund, resulting in \$1.3 million on the first sale and bringing millions to the fund over time on subsequent sales.

The \$100 million Mercado at Menlo Park mixed-use District adjacent to the Gadsden development is currently under construction and will create the [Mercado San Agustín](#), Tucson's first public market. They are hoping to be open for holiday shopping and the 2009 Gem show. I hope to see you there. I am excited about the opportunities that lie ahead as we reinvest in our neighborhoods, our downtown and our City. Please keep in touch.

In Community,

Regina Romero

P.S. I hope you can join me on September 4 for dinner with Board of Supervisor's Chairman Richard Elias!

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Goodwill opens in Midvale Park



Tolson Elementary students plant native trees with Councilors Romero and Glassman

San Juan Park: Movement to Create Tohono Chul-type Desert Park on Westside



"A" Mountain Community Association celebrates neighborhood projects

The "A" Mountain Community Association has been working hard to get the last phase of their desert park developed. San Juan Park consists of 40 acres bounded by San Marcos Blvd. on the north, La Cholla Blvd. on the west, and San Juan Trail on the south. The Fred Archer Center's first phase

was completed in the 1970's. The second phase, in 1984, added additional recreational facilities with funding from the bond election that year. Now the neighborhood wants to turn the remaining 30 acres into a desert park similar to Tohono-Chul or Feliz Paseos parks. In 2005 the neighborhood began to hold monthly cleanups to rid the park of trash and non-native plants that had taken over. In 2007 they approached the Drachman Institute at the University of Arizona's College of Architecture with a proposal to have the Institute develop plans for San Juan Park. The Institute came up with four plans designed by graduate students which the neighborhood association then put on display in the Archer Center to

solicit public comments. They also developed a project survey, which was sent out to neighborhood residents,



asking them which features and ideas were most appealing and feasible. The "A" Mountain Community Association is compiling the information for a final plan. The Ward 1 Office is working with Congressman Grijalva's Office and the neighborhood to apply for federal funds for San Juan Park.

Join Chairman Richard Elias and City Councilor Romero for Dinner!

Thursday, September 4, 5:30 to 7 p.m.

The theme is strengthening partnerships and strengthening neighborhoods. Please join us at the City of Tucson Community Resource building located at 310 N. Commerce Park Loop, Sentinel Building (on the West side of 1-10, off Bonita Ave, between St. Mary's and Congress Streets). Delicious refreshments will be served. Please RSVP to ward1@tucsonaz.gov or call 791-4040.



81-acre Natural Open Space at 36th and La Cholla:

Romero applauds partnership between City, County and Tucson Water Check-Off Box

In May the City Mayor and Council and the Pima County Board of Supervisors approved the purchase of an 81-acre site of land at the northeast corner of La Cholla and 36th St. for the price of \$1.1 million from Habitat for Humanity. The land is to be kept as natural open space with no development. The City of Tucson contributed \$100,000 to the purchase and the county contributed \$1 million through voter-approved bonds.

Seventy-six thousand dollars of the city's contributions came from donations collected from the open space check-off box on residents' water bills. The remaining \$24,000 came from City Parks & Recreation. The check-off box on water bills started in 1985 and originally was for customers to contribute to the city's public funding election campaign account. In 2001 the Mayor and Council switched the

check-off box to open space contributions. Since then the city has steadily collected the contributions and we are pleased to announce to the residents what our magnificent giving has purchased.

Please make sure you check the box on your Tucson water bill! Every little bit helps, and will lead to much more open space conservation of our beautiful Sonoran Desert. A movement has begun among the neighborhoods near the 36th St. and La Cholla area to name the open space after longtime environmental and community activist and former Enchanted Hills Neighborhood Association President Connie Harris, who passed away in June. County Parks & Recreation and the neighbors have begun meeting to discuss the process of naming the land. Councilor Romero is in full support of their efforts.

Are You Raising Your Grandchildren?

Westside grandparents who have taken on the responsibility of raising their grandchildren now have the opportunity to share their experiences with others in the same situation. With the help of the KARE Family Center, a grandparent's support group has been formed at the El Rio Neighborhood Center, 1390 W. Speedway.

Meetings are held the last Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m.

To get involved, please call Gloria Manzanedo at 409-1257.



Ward I will host a Street Smarts workshop on **Thursday, October 2, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at the El Rio Neighborhood Center, 1390 W. Speedway.**

Staying safe in our homes and neighborhoods is a top priority. With narcotics playing an integral role in many burglaries, domestic violence cases, auto thefts, homicides and larcenies, an unfortunate result for residents is the fear of becoming a victim of crime. In response to this factor, the Meth Free Alliance has created "**Street Smarts**", a 90-minute interactive workshop designed for the public to increase awareness of personal safety strategies for individuals and neighborhoods,

promote a community-wide message of security and awareness, and share practical steps that residents can take to promote public safety and prevent crime! Boomer Bear from *Bear Essential News for Kids* will be on hand to meet and greet children and their parents.

All ages are welcome. Call 388-4711 to R.S.V.P. for the workshop; seating is limited, so don't delay – call today.

Ward 1 Youth Invest \$25,000 in Art and Culture

While young people all over the country were spending their summer at part-time jobs or by the pool, youth in Tucson were telling the government how to spend its money. Councilor Romero partnered with the [Every Voice in Action Foundation](#) to empower youth, ages 14 – 21, to decide how to spend \$25,000 in City of Tucson Youth Services funding. "The Youth Funders really saw themselves as a collective entrusted with city money and they took this responsibility very seriously," says Romero. Twelve youth met for several weeks to learn about each other and Ward 1's focus on implementing the Tucson Art Community's Cultural



Marysol Gallego and teacher Miriam Gomez at Youth Funders Meeting

Plan. The youth chose the theme of Empowering Youth & Exploring Culture through the Arts, sifting through more than 20 proposals totaling more than \$100,000.

Projects funded were:

1. Tucson High MEChA (Unity Festival) - \$6,000
2. The Dambe Project (West African Drum at City High School) - \$6,000
3. Art in Reality Program (Aerosol Art Mural Class) - \$8,000
4. AZ Blind and Deaf Children's Foundation (Art for Life Heritage Program) - \$5,000

Special thanks to the youth who participated, the two facilitators, Miriam Gomez and Julie Kasper, and to the artists who took the time to apply. We'll do another round of youth funding next summer!

News Briefs

Sunnyside Neighborhood gets safety improvements

Councilor Romero worked with concerned parents to get Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) funds for a hawk light at 12th Ave & Alvord to help pedestrians crossing to and from Mission Manor Park and School. Romero also worked with the neighborhood to secure \$45,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds to fence Airport Wash to prevent illegal dumping that has been an issue for the past 15 years. The residents are thrilled to have

a safer and healthier community for their families.

Sunset Villa projects are underway

Councilor Romero's previous job was with Pima County Neighborhood Reinvestment, where she worked with residents and Supervisor Richard Elias to apply for a county grant for new sidewalks, speed humps, traffic circles, and monument walls at key locations throughout the Sunset Villa Neighborhood. The projects are finally underway to make a huge difference for families!

Park(ing) Day is September 19: Join us!

Councilor Romero and staff will work from a park on Friday, September 19 to participate in PARK(ing) Day.

Park(ing) Day was started several years ago by REBAR, an artist collective in San Francisco, and has grown into a one-day, global event where people transform public parking spots into temporary public parks. The national average for parks is 10 acres per 1000 population. Tucson has 6 acres per 1000. Our park land mass should be 10 percent for Tucson and we only have 2 percent. Councilor Romero is committed to creating more parks.

We have reserved a parking space in front of City Hall on Alameda and we will be turning it into a park. If you would like to have a "park" either downtown or at Main Gate near the university, please call MaryLou at Parkwise at

791-5071 with the parking meter number to reserve your space. The deadline for reserving spaces is Sept. 1st if you would like to be on the Park(ing) Day map for Tucson. This map will also be available online on both [Trust for Public Land](#) and [ParkWise's](#) websites.

The cost is \$4.50/day downtown and \$9/day near campus. A barrier will be required around the space so ParkWise will sign out orange safety cones for free.

For parking spaces at the University of Arizona please call Carmen at 621-3710. The cost for these spaces is \$10/day. Barriers will be required around these spaces as well so you may sign out barricades from the university if needed.

St. Mary's Road Area Revitalization and Visioning

The Westside of St. Mary's Road has seen better days and could use some investment to enhance the streetscape, beautification, signage, road paving, and general infrastructure. Residents would like to see banks, credit unions, dry cleaners, and mortgage lenders in the area, as well as more restaurants. Weed and Seed Coalition facilitator Marcia Roberts has begun efforts to take a comprehensive look at the area. In April the Westside Weed and Seed

Coalition had its first visioning session to begin discussion and planning for the revitalization of St. Mary's Road. Councilor Romero is in full support and salutes them for their efforts to begin the community dialogue. Rebecca Ruopp is the lead planner from the city's Urban Planning Department working on this project; she will be a great resource to the committee with her past experience on the Stone Avenue Corridor project.

Everyone in the community is invited to the revitalization meetings, please join us and give your input on St Mary's Road!

The next meeting will be on September 16, 2008 at the El Rio Neighborhood Center, 1390 W. Speedway. Please join us and give your input on St Mary's Road!

City Spotlight: Police Lt. Ramon Batista

Our 2nd City Spotlight to highlight hard-working public employees is Ramon Batista. Lt. Batista has been serving citizens as a police officer for over 22 years. He was born in Los Angeles, California and moved to Tucson at the age of 10. He grew up on the Southwest side and attended St. Johns Catholic Middle School and graduated from Salpointe Catholic High School. Lt. Batista is dedicated to improving the quality of life for Tucsonans. "It is important that we train the younger generation of police officers to feel the same way about our community," he says.

Lt. Batista is a Lieutenant for Operations Division West where he oversees patrol squads and the Special Enforcement units. He attends various neighborhood meetings to keep them

informed on crime levels around their area. "I do a lot of public speaking on



community issues that affect neighborhood residents."

Lt. Batista's advice: Drivers give yourself enough time to get to your destination and watch out for road-rage. If a driver is taunting you do not reciprocate the attention as this can lead them to follow you and cause

harm to yourself and others. Awareness is key. Be well aware of your surroundings and let other people know where you're at, carry your cell phone, and if you have one, make sure to have your GPS signal turned on. Finally, always call 911 to report suspicious activity. We need more people to come forward and report when they have been a victim or witness to a crime.

Ramon Batista would like to encourage the community to be involved in proactive programs to combat crime. "Community policing is effective and helps engage the community in a positive partnership with law-enforcement. TPD cannot do it alone." To contact Operations Division West call, 791-4467. Thank you, Ramon Batista!!



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A Tumamoc Hill-walker, Councilor Romero respects the research on the Hill and joined University of Arizona leaders Dr. Michael Rosenzweig and [President Robert Shelton](#) to craft a historic partnership with El Paso Natural Gas to perform desert-sensitive maintenance work on the gasline that runs through property on the Hill and across the City.

Sign up for our Green Building Workshop!
Tuesday, September 30 at 6:30 p.m. at Ward1
Email ward1@tucsonaz.gov and rsvp Green!

Thank you Amy Hooton
for being a great intern for our
Ward 1 office.
Good luck at SEIU!



News Briefs

New leadership in Barrio Anita

Barrio Anita's new president, David Valenzuela, is working with Councilor Romero and the City's historic preservation officer Jonathan Mabry to inform the neighborhood about the benefits of getting listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and to get input from property owners about whether to seek this type of designation. This type of designation does not regulate property uses, and owners of contributing historic structures are eligible for a tax credit that reduces their property taxes by 40 percent. The neighborhood is also working with the City to get needed streetscape and safety improvements along St. Mary's Rd. near Davis Bilingual School. Construction will start in 2009 with funds coming from the RTA's [Downtown Links](#) project.

Dunbar Spring residents lead the city in tree planting

Join residents on *Sunday, October 5* at 7am at 828 N. Queen Ave to plant native shade trees within water-harvesting earthworks in neighbors' yards and along the neighborhood

streets. This annual event has resulted in over 1,100 trees being planted. Call Nicole Koch 792-6229 or email nicole@tfssolar.com for more info.

Don't miss the **Dunbar Spring Block Party** with Friendship Missionary Baptist Church **October 18 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.** at 11th Ave and 2nd St. For more information contact Cheryl Bassey at 798-0548.

Barrio Kroeger Lane to improve Verdugo Park

Councilor Romero worked with the neighborhood and Bd. Of Supervisor's Chairman Richard Elias to finalize a neighborhood reinvestment grant to improve Verdugo Park, including a basketball court, a ramada, rainwater harvesting and native tree planting.

Tucson Mountains party at Columbus Park October 26

Westside residents will work with the City and County to celebrate the new trailhead at Sweetwater preserve and the new Little League fields at Columbus Park in a groundbreaking

concert and party from 1:30 to 5 p.m. The event is free and open to the public.

Historic Warehouse Arts District

The Mayor and Council-approved Warehouse Arts Management Plan for artist live/work space, restaurants and business revitalization is on the move. A partnership with the City of Tucson, State of Arizona, a development team and the Warehouse Arts Management Organization is formalizing a destination arts district Downtown. Councilor Romero is pushing for long-term affordability for artists.

Barrio Hollywood's grand plans for Grande move forward

Councilor Romero contributed \$52,000 of Back to Basics funds to help jump-start Hollywood's long-planned improvements to Grande Avenue. Parking improvements, safety crossings, Hollywood stars, trees and art are just a few of the plans to be paid for by a federal transportation enhancement grant and Pima County Neighborhood Reinvestment Grant.