



March 26, 2012

CITY OF
TUCSON
STEVE KOZACHIK
COUNCIL MEMBER

To the Citizens Accountability for Regional Transportation Committee:

This election cycle, road reconstruction will be the defining issue in our region. Each jurisdiction is struggling with how to identify a dedicated funding source to address the problem, and to do so without increasing the financial burden our residents are already suffering in this challenging economy.

In the City of Tucson alone, 52% of our arterial, collector and intersection roadways are categorized as failed, poor or fair. That number rises to 86% when considering residential streets. Clearly this is an issue that can no longer be dismissed by those of us serving either as elected officials, or as public servants in non-elected positions. The taxpayers deserve to see this addressed now.

In 2006 the voters approved a sales tax that was tied to specific road projects, the intent of which was to increase road capacity. While the drafters of the language were appropriately careful to ensure the Plan would be carried out, they allowed for changes in scope if the alterations were not "substantial", and they allowed for the option of taking "substantial changes" back to the voters for reconsideration.

What I am proposing includes both of those options.

First, and most importantly, I am asking the RTA recommend to the Board of Supervisors to place on the November 2012 ballot the following simple question: "Would you approve reallocating 20% of the existing RTA sales tax from building road capacity and instead earmark it for road repair?" If the answer to that is in the affirmative, each jurisdiction would be allocated its projected share of RTA revenues based on population. For the City of Tucson, that means 52% of the anticipated \$2B or \$208M over the 20 year life of the Plan.

If the voters approve the earmarking, that will force a community by community conversation aimed at how to re-scope their respective projects.

If the voters disapprove the earmarking, there still remains an obligation that we not blindly move ahead with projects that do not reflect the underlying assumptions that appeared on the 2006 ballot, either from the standpoint of cost projections, or from the standpoint of a needs assessment based on traffic volumes.

Take the expansion of Broadway Blvd. for example. Traffic volumes have not grown to anything near the projections anticipated at the time of the vote. In fact, they were based on 1987 studies which have not developed. In addition, funding for the project is subject to a not-yet adopted Bond package. As with the first portion of my proposal, that will be subject to the will of the voters. Better to discuss re-scoping now than to begin a project that was based on flawed traffic projections, the funding for which is in question, and the net result of the eventual build out will be the elimination of numerous small businesses along the corridor. We are spending money we have not identified, for a project that is not justified, and in the process eliminating a tax base that is necessary for the health of our local economy.

This Committee's name includes the word "accountability." Words have meaning. We are each accountable to the people in this community who are funding the various RTA road projects. My proposal simply draws their voice back into the conversation. Place the earmark proposal on the ballot, and take a second look at some of the projects that deserve to be reconsidered based on present day realities.

Thank you for your time. And thank you for serving the community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Kozachik". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and a distinct "K".

Council Member, Steve Kozachik