

First RTA2 Task Force Member's Report on Urban Perspectives

Case Study:

Broadway Blvd, Euclid to Country Club

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Honorable RTA Board Members and Regional Elected Officials:

Thank you for approving my appointment to the newly-formed RTA Task Force on RTA2 authorization. I am honored to serve on this Task Force to recommend a process for determining the elements and timing of a future re-authorization election for extending the RTA beyond 2026.

Given the City of Tucson has only a single member on the RTA Board, I see that my special role on the RTA2 Task Force is to represent urban perspectives and interests and convey those to the Task Force and the regions' diverse elected officials.

Prior to my CART appointment, I was an enthusiastic supporter of the RTA Plan and Tax, writing three affirmative ballot arguments for the successful 2006 election. I have since publicly characterized the RTA as one of the most important regional initiatives in our history and have always taken seriously the CART charge to "directly monitor the operations of the RTA, and to report to the community on the progress being made, or where adjustments or corrections are needed."

This communication is to present you my first report as an RTA2 Task Force member and as a professional planner close to RTA issues. Also consider this report an open letter to all the region's decision-makers, in particular the Tucson Mayor and City Council, providing a community rebuttal to supporters of the Broadway Blvd Project's 30% design proposal. I believe this synthesis of pro and con arguments should prove helpful going forward.

More on my planning background is attached in Appendix A.

Sincerely,
Robert Cook, M.S.

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Executive Summary

RTA Project #17 in the RTA's 35-project roadway element portfolio has been the single most contested alignment design, by far, during the past 10 years of implementing the 2006 Plan. Broadway Blvd, Euclid to Country Club has awaited improvement for more than a quarter century.

Analysis of the Citizens Task Force proceedings and thousands of public comments during the four-year public planning process shows the design debate has been waged between two very different community visions.

Consistently, during this whole long process, citizens have overwhelmingly rejected the unnecessary widening of Historic Broadway and want a smart, affordable solution that brings life and vibrancy back to this treasured area next to Downtown and the University.

These two different community visions are expressed in the corresponding value-based clustering of responses and comments received from many sources. For purposes of illustration, I label these two clusters as if they were truly organized groups. They are not. There may be other value-based visions but they did not clearly appear in the data analysis. While the labels simply reflect two strong tendencies in our regional body politic, they may be a useful basis for understanding how membership in future activism and organized lobbying may play out.

We face clear risks if we choose a design for Broadway that the community widely rejects and significantly, that fails to provide the needed benefits we all want.

The purpose of this report is to clarify the top 12 arguments Pro and Con of the two competing visions, provide an analysis of the risks involved, and in conclusion, suggest recommendations for resolving the situation.

Case Study: Broadway Blvd, Euclid to Country Club

Introduction

As everyone recognizes, RTA Project #17, Broadway Blvd Improvement Euclid to Country Club, has been the most controversial in the 35-roadway project 2006 RTA Plan. The public planning phase has extended to four years of highly visible debate among diverse community interests.

The City's April 5, 2016 Public Hearing was only the tip of the iceberg in airing concerns about the Project's proposed 30% design and implications. In addition, 300+ signers and 50 comments supporting approval of the current design have been registered at one online petition, as of this date. During the same period, 1,600+ signers and 600 comments opposing the current design have been posted on the other competing petition. I authored this second petition to register support for opposition. Throughout the 39 meetings and 6 open houses, the public's response has been overwhelmingly supportive of not widening and then saving the historic landscape for vibrant place-making like Downtown, Fourth Avenue and UA MainGate.

Nuanced analysis of this issue's arguments is critical to your decisions regarding both the outcome of Project #17 and the implications for a proposed RTA2 Plan & Tax election. To assist our communities in developing a deeper understanding of these issues and weighing the risks of your decisions, whatever they come to be, I have completed the following analysis of key arguments based on the full range of debated topics over the past four years. As a strategic planner, I have also included an analysis of short- and long-term risks.

The Report is divided into four parts: Analysis of Arguments, Analysis of Risks, Conclusions and Recommendations, and an Appendix.

Community Visions

Analysis of the public's responses to the Broadway Blvd Improvement Project shows a distinct clustering of value-based views around two what are typically called "community visions." The most important insight into how community visions work, is that people subscribing to one vision often cannot objectively evaluate, let alone hear, what people holding another vision have to say.

Based on the apparent interest of the Tucson City Council to facilitate bridging this divide toward the goal of moving forward together, I am summarizing the 12 key arguments so people can dig deeper and see what is really happening.

As you read these arguments, it will become clear what value-sets are being clustered in these two visions. An additional benefit of this analysis is to see what the two community visions have in common, what values they share.

I will disclose my bias by saying that I have studied, professed, practiced, and advocated "smart design, planning and development" principles for more than 40 years.

I encourage everyone to test their own understanding and values as you visit these arguments. Those supporting the current 30% design, I label the "Suburban Growth Alliance" abbreviated as "SGA." Those opposing the design but also in favor of not wasting this opportunity for a much better solution that is also within reach, I label the "Smart Development Coalition" abbreviated as "SDC."

The "Smart Development Coalition" (SDC) represents a broad cross-section of the community that is particularly concerned about how our Region and City are being planned - neighbors, businesses, families, social service providers, public interest attorneys, economists, physicians, artists, scientists, students, educators, historic preservationists, climate change activists, transit activists, pedestrian activists, bicycle activists, smart development activists, sustainability activists, current elected officials, former elected officials, as well as many professionals in the development community - architects, planners, engineers, land-use attorneys, developers, real estate sales, and property owners.

The “Suburban Growth Alliance” (SGA) on the other hand, represents a sub-set of professionals, a smaller but influential alliance of engineers, land-use attorneys, planners, developers, real estate sales, and property owners. The SGA also includes other participants in the development industry such as construction companies, material suppliers, and car dealers. The vision and modus operandi of the SGA is to celebrate suburbia and apply the suburban development model to all areas in our region.

While most people in our region would generally agree that smarter growth is good, the clustering analysis leads to very clear defining criteria. Alignment with the Smart Development Coalition appears to require agreement on core design principles. A key design principle says the suburban development model is not only inappropriate for Project #17, but highly threatening. Views that reject this core tenet suggest, by default, a candidate for the Suburban Growth Alliance. As we will see in the arguments, risk analysis, and conclusions, a suburban design approach would preclude many better choices for Broadway and could ultimately lead that area to further decline.

Another factor for this difference in community visions is the demographic composition of our community has also significantly changed. More younger “millennials” are eligible to vote in this year's elections than “baby boomers.” Millennials tend to show greater preference for urban settings over suburbia and alternate modes of mobility over cars. This trend is clear in the development character now visible in the areas of Downtown, UA Main Gate and Fourth Avenue. This demographic shift underscores the importance of designing for our future, not for the past.

Growing evidence shows the SDC represents a much larger coalition demonstrated by the two competing online petitions which measure opposition to the 30% Alignment Design running 5 to 1 against the “just build it now” group. To date, SDC support shows 1,600+ signers while SGA has attracted only 300+.

It's important to note that the SDC is a growing coalition that has been promoting smart urban design and development and appealing to decision-makers to balance our region's suburban character with smart urban places filled with history in our City's central and Downtown areas.

The SGA, on the other hand, has dominated regional politics and decisions regarding transportation and land-use for many decades, but is now shrinking in influence because population growth and suburban development have dramatically declined in the past 10 years.

What is ironic and even baffling about the SGA's resistance to revisiting the original plan is that the contentious issue has never been about whether to improve Broadway, it's about the design and in particular, it's about the excessive width. Members of the SGA will get paid regardless of the final design, because whatever the outcome, the City will have it built. That is, unless adequate funding from all sources would simply dry up.

So next, let's look at the SGA arguments supporting the 30% alignment design coupled with the corresponding SDC arguments and rebuttal, each cluster of arguments reflecting a different community vision.

Analysis of Arguments

1. Build what voters mandated

1. SGA: 2006 voters mandated this road-widening project to eight lanes. Build it now as voted on. Don't waste any more time.

1. SDC: This argument assumes that what voters said YES to ten years ago is what voters would say YES to today.

The region's voters did approve a large portfolio of 35 roadway improvement projects, but they did not approve destruction of a key historic Tucson landscape.

The RTA was originally structured to be flexible, anticipating that changes will occur. This project has already experienced a scope reduction from 8 lanes to 6 lanes based on engineering analysis that shows 6 lanes actually performs better for traffic flow than 8.

What is important to consider is that voters need government to be flexible enough when underlying premises and assumptions change. Also important, the world has changed, demographics have changed, and 2006 voters are not today's voters, neither here nor in the U.S. as a whole.

A good faith regional revisit of the Project's scope and vision is now in order. Misreading this call as a threat, not an opportunity is a big part of our current gridlock.

2. We need a wide roadway for growth

2. SGA: We need this 30% proposed design for growth, especially the rapid eastside growth. If we don't prepare for growth, we will face greater congestion and more complaints from resident and visitor drivers alike.

2. SDC: This argument assumes past growth is going to continue and that growth was the goal of the RTA Plan.

The explicit charge and criteria for deciding which projects would be finally included in the RTA Plan was based not on future growth, but rather on severe deficiencies in the region regarding all aspects of our transportation infrastructure.

While growth continues to be a major goal of the region's jurisdictions, the fact is we have not been growing as in the past:

Pima County Population

1970	352,000	(1970 US Census)
1980	531,000	(1980 US Census)
1990	670,000	(1990 US Census)
1995	760,000	(1995 U.S. Census estimate)
2000	840,000	(2000 US Census)
2006	1,000,000	(2007 PAG (RTA) Annual Report)
2010	980,000	(2010 US Census)
2015	1,010,000	(2015 U.S. Census estimate)

Pima County Growth Rates

1970 – 1980	51%
1980 – 1990	26%
1990 – 2000	25%
2000 – 2010	17%
2010 – 2015	3%
2006 – 2015	1%

Most planning in the region, unfortunately, continues to project unsubstantiated population rates, resulting in obsolete and wasteful plans.

Promotional campaign material for the 2006 RTA Plan claimed that population would increase 54% in twenty years and congestion would increase by 550 %. Population actually increased closer to 1% in the past 10 years and traffic counts have declined not only on Broadway but also on the RTA's other large urban road widening project - Grant Road, Oracle to Swan.

Current mobility trends show a shift in preference for modes other than single driver autos - another positive development for congestion mitigation. This may be another major factor in Broadway Blvd's traffic decline to the same level as 1980.

3. The RTA has already compromised

3) SGA: The RTA and City have already compromised with the SDC. Those opposing the current 30% design are just dragging this process on and will never be satisfied. Just build it now.

3. SDC: This argument assumes the SDC made a compromise, but are now delaying the process endlessly to block the project altogether.

The Citizens' Task Force recommended and the City Council approved the 6-lane alignment with very minimal widening. Again, the 6-lane option was based on engineering simulation, not a compromise.

From the beginning in 2012, CTF members as well as the public voiced overwhelming opposition to unnecessary widening and registered their preference for the 4-travel lane with transit option. There has been no change from that position. The SDC's acceptance of the 6-lane option was not a compromise but was based on striping 6-lanes, center turn lanes with no medians, adding continuous safe bikeways and sidewalks, all within the approximate existing right-of-way (ROW), and committing to expanded transit.

The acceptance of the 6-lane option assumed that the City would acknowledge budget constraints and resist the unnecessary widening as the 2006 ballot language specified.

The SGA claims they have compromised but in fact the 6-lane option still has all the 6 lanes for cars as the original ballot describes. Again, an engineering analysis ruled out the 8-lane ballot specification, not some grand compromise. What is lost in the 30% Alignment Design are the two dedicated lanes for transit. Bus pull-outs favor cars, not buses or bus riders.

4. The small vocal opposition are No-growthers

4. SGA: The opposition to the Broadway widening plan is a small vocal minority of NIMBYs, CAVE people (Citizens Against Virtually Everything) and “no-growthers.” These people are the cause of why we have seen such decline in our economy and why we see such blight all over our community.

4. SDC: This argument assumes that the SDC represents a statistically small Midtown group who cares nothing about the region’s economy and future and is blocking growth and prosperity by “hijacking the process.”

The SDC supports a prosperous future by employing proven design principles which say place and historic location is more important than high throughput of autos requiring wholesale acquisition and demolition, in particular, through a unique, valued, central urban landscape. The Smart Development Coalition also supports public processes based on transparent and accurate data, not inflated projections.

With a clearer lens, we see that the real “no-growthers” seem to be the SGA themselves, the coalition which has resisted smart growth policies for decades.

We have a huge inventory of unmet capital investment needs and an even larger inventory of public roads and other infrastructure that are in severe disrepair condition. We do get external funding for a small and dwindling amount of maintenance costs. But the decades-long efforts to require that growth pay for itself through development impact fees and other cost recovery mechanisms have been vigorously resisted by the Suburban Growth Alliance and resulted in the regional transportation mess that the RTA was supposed to mitigate.

Tucson’s economic decline compared to other regions is more the result of “not-so-smart” development policies, not the other way around.

5. The owners are being held hostage

5. SGA: The property owners and businesses along this corridor segment have been held hostage by the City's delays and inaction for 10 years if not longer. Stop the planning and build it now.

5. SDC: This argument assumes that the only hostages are current business and property owners and that the SDC is working against their interests.

The property owners and businesses HAVE been held hostage and as a result have suffered. The fact is, we have all been held hostage by this project.

The County should have dropped supporting this \$25M 1997 County Bond road widening project when studies showed no increase in traffic counts.

The City's Transportation Department should never have put this project in the 2006 RTA project mix when 2001 City Plans for growth were in the Southeast and Southlands - areas served by arterials other than Broadway. And by 2010 when the U.S. Census showed a regional decline in population, the City should have requested that the RTA modify the original scope accordingly.

It also goes without saying that we are being held hostage by the Arizona Legislature, the U.S. Congress and primarily the Republican Party for ignoring rational arguments and appeals to raise fuel taxes - the fairest user fee - for paying for roads and road maintenance. Every advanced country in the world employs fuels taxes to pay for road infrastructure except here. Gasoline taxes in Arizona and the U.S. have not been appropriately adjusted upward in decades.

6. We want prosperity and we know how to do it

6. SGA: We want a prosperous future with continuing progress. Creating opportunities for successful commercial and residential development on the

Broadway Blvd Corridor like we have done before in so many suburban areas will ensure this prosperity. Build it now. We know how to do it.

6. SDC: This argument assumes that the SDC doesn't want a prosperous future and that the suburban development model is appropriate for every regional location.

The SDC wants a prosperous future guided by smart development principles. The SGA advocates planning for the future by looking at the past and assuming it will just go on forever.

The SDC sees the future significantly constrained by a number of factors:

- Economic challenges – primarily, an overall deflationary economic pattern exacerbated by high levels of existing debt and financial leverage.
- Global and regional climate change, and
- Mushrooming social and political demands for solutions that have no available funding.

Smart development principles say the general solution is to use our resources very wisely and justly, maintain Tucson's great reputation and branding as a "climate-friendly" city, and take much bigger advantage of proven urban design principles including walkable landscapes, high-frequency public transit, a weaving of smaller and older buildings, and celebrating history by enhancing opportunities for residents and visitors to access and experience it.

The evidence for all to see is that smart urban development is where the smart money is going for good reasons. The cities which cater to the younger generations are seeing economic growth and greater resilience. Those that cater mostly to the "Depression" generation and the suburban Baby Boom generation are seeing more stagnation, decline, and vulnerability.

7. Follow the success of Downtown revitalization

7. SGA: We should follow our success with Downtown revitalization outward down Broadway Blvd becoming a vibrant, commercially active, historically-rich district, of young and old, families with kids, UA students, staff and faculty, and ageing-in-place. Build it now.

7. SDC: This argument assumes that the SDC does not understand the significance of Downtown revitalization. It also assumes that the Suburban Growth Alliance understands the background story of this ten-year renaissance and the pieces that made it possible.

Not only does the SDC believe in following Downtown's successful revitalization, but some of the SDC were the advocates and prime movers who promoted transit-oriented development to stimulate large-scale private investment. The big difference between the two opposing coalitions is that the SDC wants to see employment of the same principles used in this nationally-recognized Downtown revitalization. A "fitting gateway" is not 8 or 6 wide travel lanes as voices from Tucson's leadership push for. The eastside entrance to our transformed Downtown should be reflective of those same smart development principles. This eastern approach should take people in motion through a safe, narrow, visually-rich, dense, people-centered landscape of unique history and vibrant social and economic activity.

Downtown is our own exemplar local model case for how to do Broadway – Use smart development principles such as:

- Minimize taking of property and demolition of buildings;
- Facilitate stunning restoration of historic structures;
- Keep circulation patterns within the existing right-of-way:
- Promote compact, mixed land uses including housing, retail, services, educational, cultural attractions, and entertainment;

- Provide attractive, safe, and compelling means of mobility such as walkability, safe bikeways, high-capacity transit – such as our modern street car which weaves from the northeast side of UA campus to the "high-development potential" Mercado District west of Downtown.

As an RTA project, the City's \$75M investment in the Modern Street Car (combined with a Federal match) stimulated nearly \$1B in private investment in Downtown during the past ten years. No other local public investment comes even close to that level of economic multiplier performance as well as public revenue generator.

8. Successful redevelopment requires widening

8. SGA: We have to widen Broadway for redevelopment that encourages replacing worn-out buildings with shiny new ones and provides adequate safe parking compared to now.

8. SDC: This argument assumes that the best solution for Historic Broadway is to replace it with more of the same type of standard national brand businesses – essentially suburban in character.

Seeing worn-out tired buildings and wanting shiny new ones is in the eye of the beholder. But current research shows that older, walkable, narrower urban arterials have a higher potential for economic development.

A recent national study including three cases in Seattle, Portland, and Tucson, found that a redeveloped mix of denser, smaller, older buildings punctuated by restored historic homes and businesses having shallower setbacks to streets, produces better economic performance and tax revenues in urban districts compared to a city's average of development types.

Two City-paid consultants and presenters during the Citizens Task Force process

stated that the remnant parcels resulting from the road widening would be too shallow and therefore not economically viable for redevelopment consideration by retail businesses. These contrary analyses were eventually downplayed by staff, hidden from the public, and not shared with the Mayor & Council.

The irony of the SGA's argument that widening creates more parking is that much of our current parking challenges was caused by past Broadway widenings, parking was sliced off and access an afterthought. Solving problems caused by widening with more widening does not make sense. What does make sense is a plan within the approximate existing right-of-way that:

- initially provides parking variances to all effected properties,
- promotes cooperation among property owners and the City to find parking solutions, and
- uses City property where possible to expand parking areas.

9. Sidewalks, bikeways, and high capacity transit require widening

9. SGA: No widening means no sidewalks, no bike lanes and no high capacity transit. In order to provide what the community wants - sidewalks, bikeways and high capacity transit we have to widen and demolish buildings.

9. SDC: This argument assumes that supplying the means for these increasingly preferred alternate modes requires significant road widening.

The premise of this SGA argument is simply not true based on studies showing that not widening or even road narrowing results in more walkable, bikeable place-making destinations. It is also untrue that installing a high capacity transit system always requires road widening. . Albuquerque is now planning to build a 10-mile long high capacity Bus Rapid Transit line down its central 4-lane corridor without widening.

The SDC was highly encouraged by Tucson Transportation Planner, Gene Caywood's 4-lane + Transit alignment option which demonstrated that high capacity transit could be

accommodated in the existing ROW just like our modern streetcar was fitted into Downtown.

10. Minimizing first costs is the priority decision criterion

10. SGA: The over-riding decision-making criterion which resulted in the current 30% design is minimizing first costs and saving on City budgets.

10. SDC: This argument assumes that the Project's cost has always been the consistent, over-riding concern during the four-year process.

Minimizing cost and saving on City budgets was a key argument expressed by the SDC and mirrored by overwhelming public sentiment from the beginning in 2012. Had the City responded to the SDC's early signals, millions of public dollars could have been saved by significantly shortening the public planning process and eliminating uncertainty much earlier. This would have enabled property owners desperate to sell and businesses eager to upgrade their facilities to do so much sooner.

Bare-minimum building acquisition also was a SDC cost-saving argument since property acquired by the City would cost the City in lost tax revenues for however long those shallow lots and remnant parcels would stagnate in an over-supplied and under-capitalized redevelopment real estate market. Given that EPS consultants determined that shallow lots of this depth were economically unviable in the Tucson market, the City would be owning these condemned properties indefinitely.

11. It's a good compromise so stop debating and start building

11. SGA: It's not perfect, but it's a good compromise. The perfect is the enemy of the good and therefore it's time to stop debating and build this good solution now.

11. SDC: This argument assumes that “good enough” is worth spending \$75M in taxpayers’ money for and that the community will forget the many negatives of the 30% design as the hoped-for build-out proceeds.

First, the SDC never claimed to advocate perfection but rather a plan that is truly "sensitive to its context" and incorporates "best practices" - in Tucson, and nationally.

How can this be a good compromise when we know that true compromises have a bit of win for all involved and a bit of loss for all involved, in other words there is no "winner" and no "loser?"

This plan is not a good compromise because effectively, everyone loses. The exceptions are the professional consultants, builders and suppliers limited to the period of the Project’s payment cycle. Questioning the motivation of SGA supporters leads to the basic question of who really benefits from this flawed design.

The question of whether the community will forget the negatives is significant because Tucsonans have a long memory of past cases where the City condemned and demolished historic buildings and landscapes – most egregious was the wholesale removal of the old barrios in the heart of the City in the name of “blight.”

The literature is clear, by ghettoizing urban minorities in older, central parts of cities, reinvestment naturally declines and eventually provides city leadership the excuse to declare these conditions “unacceptable” and apply the label “blight.” Political support is often then found to displace populations and bulldoze history and culture in the name of urban renewal. The history of using “blight” as a reason to destroy other peoples’ precious past and legacy is one we don’t want to repeat.

Thus the need for real “context-sensitive design and development.” In the case of the Sunshine Mile and the Mid-Century Modernist examples on display throughout Historic Broadway, the precious past on the chopping block is one that visitors from all over the world come to experience and one which the New York Times featured in a special Sunday edition on great architectural places.

12. Broadway - already too congested - should be widened

12. SGA: Broadway Blvd is already too congested and should be mitigated by road widening.

12.SDC: This argument assumes that most drivers on Broadway feel that way and see road widening as the most obvious solution to this perceived problem.

This clearly is a minority view based on the 600 comments registered on the SDC's online petition. Also, as mentioned above, traffic counts have declined and the City has shown no evidence of such a projected reversal to higher traffic counts except to base their estimates on the typical pattern of new road expansions.

There is a short term effect called "induced demand" that says when roads are widened more drivers anticipate better traffic flow and change their routes to the widened road accordingly. More congestion is the result which leaves drivers with the same dilemma. This dynamic invalidates the basic argument that widening urban arterials will resolve urban congestion. That widening will not solve Broadway congestions for cars, has been known since Parsons-Brinckerhoff's 1987 analysis.

Numerous simulations of Broadway widening scenarios- even scenarios based on inflated projections - show at best, negligible improvements in travel time. This is a key question the SDC is asking: "Why spend \$75M to shave just seconds in travel time?" An even more important question is: "What other uses of \$75M in local taxpayer money could produce significantly more and better benefits for the community?"

The bottom-line: Faulty, unsubstantiated traffic count projections as we have seen the City present for Broadway render invalid any analysis of future traffic flow performance.

Also, as mentioned above, current mobility trends show a shift in preference for modes other than single driver autos. We may see a future with fewer cars, not more, especially in central, urban areas. For suburban and exurban drivers, widely-located

park-and-ride lots can provide transfer points to shuttle into denser urban centers supplied with other mobility options.

Other alternatives to road widening as a traffic flow improvement strategy have been developed including intersection improvements and dedicated high occupancy lanes. Also, signal technology using sensors, wireless transmitters and other components can be incorporated into an arterial management system to reduce wait times and increase traffic flow. These would be particularly applicable for Historic Broadway Blvd which will have a number of signalized intersections and pedestrian crossings, the most of any 2-mile stretch in the City.

Analysis of Risks

There are risks as well as benefits inherent in any plan of action. The benefits of smart urban development are well known and are discussed in the previous arguments. The SDC's position is this: the benefits of the proposed 30% design are net minimal to negative. How negative is debatable. But this is where the risks to all jurisdictional parties of the Project come into focus.

The bottom-line is that if the City proceeds with the current 30% alignment design, very little redevelopment activity is expected if any, the kind which fosters the community's vision and goals of enhancing the historic landscape of the Sunshine Mile at the same time promoting the vibrant, people-centered mix of social and economic activities we see Downtown, Fourth Avenue, and UA MainGate.

A worse scenario is contemplated that sees our regional tax base declining further. Such a trend would have negative effects on all jurisdictional budgets including the RTA. Making up RTA budget shortfalls has fallen on the "client" jurisdictions receiving RTA money to complete projects. These "make-up" funds often deprive other jurisdictional budget needs. The City of Tucson could be required to give up funds for Project completion which robs us the opportunity to invest in more sustainable solutions. And this at a time when City budgets otherwise are also declining. And social emergency and public safety demands on City government only increase.

Economy

Drilling down into how such a worse scenario could take place, let's look at our recent experience here in Pima County. Analysis of property value declines and regional sales taxes received by jurisdictions in recent months and years shows that we are not "recovering" as normally we would. Nationally, a recent Gallup poll found that 60% of Americans say the economy is bad and getting worse.

Clearly, there is mounting uncertainty about the future strength of our economy at all levels and how we should respond to conflicting signals. Increasing evidence from economic and financial research shows that deflationary winds have already started to blow around the global economy.

Similar to the effect the U.S. financial meltdown in 2008 had on the global economy, we could be heavily impacted by contraction in China. History could repeat itself, but this time we would be on the receiving end, not the generating end. The Chinese decision to cut imports of copper and unload part of its huge inventory on the world market has already caused large contractions in our regional mining sector and virtually ends the possibility that Rosemont Mine will be built anytime in the foreseeable future.

Worse yet, recent close watching of China has shown that China's financial sector is vulnerable to also flipping into runaway spasms of cascading defaults. Like the U.S. and Japanese central banks, the Chinese Central Reserve Bank has been relatively powerless to stimulate economic growth with zero interest rates. After the 2008 meltdown, U.S. banks profited by zero rates as many recapitalized their balance sheets and dumped their toxic assets at the U.S. Federal Reserve – actually on our whole monetary economy, basically affecting us all.

I have now come to believe, we're facing a "Black Swan" in the financial world again and that may lead many more of us to the truly conservative position of preservation rather than speculation. The leadership of both the Republican and Democratic Parties totally missed the signals and were blind-sighted by both the Trump and Sanders phenomena. Business as usual is no longer popular. This will play into how any future tax election is presented and decided.

But wait, there are more big questions ahead that may seem tangential at first, but are really heading toward center stage.

Climate

Tucson is located in ground zero of some of the most severe heating impacts of projected climate change in the US. The recent Paris Climate Change Summit calls for dramatic reductions in carbon emissions from both power plants and transportation systems starting now. While the Tucson City Council has already adopted a resolution to support 80% reduction of carbon emissions by 2050, no other regional jurisdiction has followed suit. And no such significant goal is yet present in PAG's 2045 Transportation Plan.

Tucson's arterial roads are already a landscape of too many empty buildings and undeveloped lots. The troubled national and world economies are seriously trending to less real estate development, not more. This certainly is the case in Tucson.

We have limited opportunities in Tucson to help shape decisions about public infrastructure which affects the way we live and has a direct effect on generating climate-changing greenhouse gas emissions.

This is one of those opportunities.

We are going to either retain our world status as a climate-friendly city or we will lose it as the Tucson brand falls with our failure to adequately mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Leadership in Greater Tucson has not acknowledged the significant changes in our economy, demographics, and now, denial that our climate-friendly status is threatened. From the NYU School of Law's Institute for Policy Integrity, a recent survey of national economists says climate change will have severe consequences for almost every sector of our local economy.

In a telling case of things to come, the federal government and big energy companies recently lost an important round in federal court in their effort to block a climate change lawsuit by young plaintiffs aged 8 – 19 who contend the U.S. is failing to protect them from the harmful effects of greenhouse gas emissions. “The future of our generation is at stake,” said one of the young plaintiffs. “People label our generation as dreamers, but hope is not the only tool we have.”

Future Structure of City of Tucson Elections

If these large challenges we face are not enough, throw in next November’s City election for preferred options in a court-mandated change for how city officials are elected.

A city-wide election system for both primary and general elections is the default choice if a clear mandate is not registered for any of the other options to restore the one-person-one-vote principle required by federal election law.

The SGA coalition will likely support the ward-only election option for both primary and general ballots because that would likely break the majority Democrats have had in Tucson City elections. Candidates are currently elected to office by winning in ward-only primary elections and then winning in the city-wide general. Last November’s election would have resulted in Republican victories in Ward 2 and Ward 4 City Council seats if the general election was ward-only. A prominent member of the SGA filed this lawsuit in federal court.

If the city-wide election for both primary and general races is the outcome in November, we may see the Mayor and Council composition swing dramatically to a more progressive stance. Imagine seven variations of Steve Kozachik working together guiding the City through these challenging times. It’s possible because seven compelling progressive candidates could emerge out of Ward 6 and win city-wide.

This is where the City, County, and RTA need to pay close attention and consider how the outcome of RTA Project #17 could effect future tax and bond elections.

Prospects for Successful Future Tax and Bond Elections in the Region

Judging from various election results across our region over the past 10 years, it becomes clear that mid-town City voters have consistently voted to raise taxes for smart development projects. This is true of the successful \$100M City bond ballot to repave existing City streets and roads and the unsuccessful 2015 County bond election to fund a variety of important community-vetted projects, many promising significant economic development benefits.

It is unfortunate that one of the projects in the County bond package, the Sonoran Corridor Project, cannot be funded right now because it could have set in motion large economic multiplier effects similar to the \$75M Modern Street Car. Developing further trade and business relationships with Sonora and Mexico is vital to Tucson's economic future. City voters supported this bond package but voters in the outlying areas and surrounding towns did not.

Such a pattern of recent election results leads to the conclusion that City voter support is necessary for any future election offering smart development projects. If the City, County, and RTA do not work together to produce a satisfactory result on the Broadway Blvd. Improvement Project, I fear this Broadway episode could lead City voters and elected officials to abandon the RTA promise of regional cooperation and opt out of an RTA2.

While the City of Tucson, occupying the role of central municipality in the region, is especially challenged by growing needs and declining budgets, it is also able to address its own problems because City voters are not averse to paying for projects that make sense. Right now the four issues on many City voters' minds are: fix the streets, keep us safe, expand public transit, and support sustainable job creation and economic vitality. If the City opts out of an RTA2 scheme for re-authorization, that would effectively terminate the RTA in 2026.

The City Council itself is not immune to voter discontent. If the perception remains that the City continues to ignore the community's overwhelming opposition to spending \$75M on an urban corridor widening that makes no sense, then the City faces a big risk

when it approaches voters for a sales tax increase to support General Fund adequacy for City needs.

On the other hand, remember that the Modern Street Car got in the 2006 RTA Plan because a majority of mid-town voters showed a preference for expanding public transit and starting an urban rail project as expressed in the results of the City's 2003 Citizens' Transportation ballot election. This measure did fail at the polls due to heavy negative campaigning by the Suburban Growth Alliance.

My professional opinion is that ignoring the smart development movement invites exposure to the risk that voters will reject any future proposition that smacks of the status quo. And if this pattern of local jurisdictions resisting the call to adapt to the new realities continues, I fear that good and valued people, people who have worked over the years in our community for progressive policies and projects, will simply give up and leave Tucson. That means saying goodbye to our friends and neighbors. Many of us know this has already started to happen. And this is why your decision regarding the Broadway Boulevard project is so important.

Conclusions

Ultimately, RTA Project #17 is really not about transportation, it's about sustainability and whether this community we love and invest our lives in, is going to abandon its old notions about development and adopt smarter principles for regional and jurisdictional decisions. This is not theoretical. The world has fundamentally changed. 2016 is a very different era than 2006.

Facing a decade ahead of huge economic and climate challenges, we can no longer afford to carry out obsolete designs handed down from the past. The bottom-line is that we will never be able to adequately invest in a resilient, sustainable and prosperous future if we keep wasting our precious resources on designs that do little or no good.

Forget about building an effective high capacity transit system serving the metropolitan area if we don't get it that success in the 21st Century is built on different assumptions and principles. We need to accept the imperative of reducing the resource-intensiveness

of our activities, operations, technologies, and urban form. We are not alone in this challenge. Every region in the U.S. is facing this, and the ones that get it are moving ahead, attracting resources in the form of capital and people to further the effort to build smarter, more diverse economies.

What Broadway needs now is expanded sidewalks, safe bikeways, more public transit, repaving of the existing roadway like we've done on Grant Road, and features that attract people-centered places like Downtown, UA Main Gate, and Fourth Avenue. Vibrant re-development will come naturally if we do the right thing, just like we've seen with the Modern Street Car.

Recommendations

My recommendations are simple:

The Tucson Mayor and City Council should extend this 30% alignment design period until at least September during which City staff and technically competent consultants including people with relevant experience like award-winning transportation planner Gene Caywood and other urban designers, work with the Citizens Task Force and the Smart Development Coalition to design the narrowest possible alignment that supports the community's vision while conforming to minimum safety and access standards and higher where possible.

The Pima County Board of Supervisors should cooperate with the City of Tucson as a real partner and drop all design requirements for releasing the \$25M promised in the 1997 bond election. The SDC will not except the excuse that bond restrictions prohibit this transfer. The County should just contribute \$25M for the Broadway Blvd Improvement Project.

The Regional Transportation Authority should declare that the City of Tucson is authorized to define functionality in whatever way that corresponds to the community's vision for mobility on Broadway. Further, the RTA should make a good faith effort to fully cooperate with both the City and the County to support this narrowed vision for Broadway and release project funds without unnecessary resistance or claims on design parameters.

Appendix A

Background

Robert Cook has wide-ranging planning experience working in the public, private, and non-profit sectors.

He is President of NEST, Inc, a non-profit community development organization operating in Tucson since 1989. After his strategic planning role at Pima Community College during the College's rapid growth in the 1990s, Robert became a full-time smart design, planning, and development advocate: he served on the Cost of Growth Task Force as part of the City of Tucson's 2001 General Plan 10-year update, contributed to the City's Development Impact Fee system, and actively participated in the regional sustainable building movement.

As past-chair of the Tucson-Pima Metropolitan Energy Commission, he contributed to the early development of Civano - Tucson's Solar Village and promoted energy efficiency in buildings and electrification of transportation. As Treasurer of the City's 2003 Citizens Transportation Initiative ballot measure, he promoted multi-modal transportation and transit-oriented development. Robert co-founded Sustainable Tucson in 2006 and with the local Sierra Club, he led the 2009 Metro Tucson Climate Change Starter Plan.

He also served on the 2008-10 Tucson-Pima Regional Water and Wastewater Study Committee; the Regional Transportation Authority's Citizens Accountability for Regional Transportation (CART) Committee (2006-2016); and currently is a two-term member of the Pima County Planning & Zoning Commission.

Robert co-authored two books in 1975 on 1) environmental design and planning and 2) large-scale renewable energy development based on research conducted at the University of Pennsylvania in collaboration with American visionary, R. Buckminster Fuller. **Energy, Earth and Everyone** (2nd edition: DoubleDay, New York 1980) was one of the very first global macro strategies for transitioning from fossil fuels to an entirely renewable, regenerative planetary energy system.

He graduated with distinction in economics from the University of Arizona and received an M.S. in Systems Planning under a Dean's Fellowship from the Wharton School of Business, University of Pennsylvania. His master's thesis was titled, "Employment Impact Analysis and the Creation of Work: Toward a Reformulation of Economic Development." He was granted two U.S. Patents on building structures and has been an active resident of Tucson since 1960.

Robert was born in Bogota, Colombia, the city which invented the community bicycling event adopted the world over including Tucson - "Cyclovia" and which boasts a world-class transit system - the "TransMillennio."

Develop Historic Broadway NOT wastefully widen the roadway



Say YES to smart development and NO to another bad alignment plan for Broadway. Why would we spend \$75 million for no appreciable improvement in traffic?

On April 19th, the City of Tucson will vote whether to:

- 1) Widen Historic Broadway even though traffic hasn't increased for 20 years,
- 2) Demolish 30+ buildings and businesses, and
- 3) Ignore the community's overwhelming plea to design a vibrant, history and place-preserving, climate-friendly future where local businesses thrive and more people prefer to safely walk, bike, and use public transit.

The City's alignment plan would set a horrible precedent for our economic future!

Stop wasteful public spending on unnecessary widening of roads when we need to revitalize our historic places leading into Downtown Tucson and invest in alternatives to more cars.

I agree we should not widen Historic Broadway.

Appendix C

Urgent Appeal to All Citizens and Elected Officials in eastern Pima County

Tuesday, April 19th, the Tucson Mayor and City Council will decide on the 30% Alignment Design for widening Broadway Blvd - between Country Club and Euclid near Downtown. If the Council decides to “build it now,” that would finalize the Right-of-Way lines and **start the process of City acquisition and demolition.**

The community has shown overwhelming opposition to the proposed design because it is:

- Unnecessarily expensive.
- Excessively wide for an urban setting,
- Interferes with providing attractive, effective, expanded transit services on one of the regions’ heavy transit corridors. Bus pull-outs hurt buses and riders. Just when we want more of them.

And if those objections are not enough, the 30% alignment will set in motion, according to experts, many negative consequences. It:

- Results in decimating a unique historic landscape along the 2-mile area near the eastern entrance to our newly revitalized Downtown.
- Destroys successful businesses while making vibrant business attraction more difficult.
- Attracts more cars to the Downtown Gateway creating unnecessary choke points and gridlock.
- Increases voter frustration with local and regional government.
- Bottom-line: unnecessary and bad design, period. Traffic counts have declined in 20 years, not increased.

The City can respond to this significant opposition and decide on directing the Design Team to work with Community Designers producing a far better Plan before next September. What is four extra months compared to living with this seriously flawed precedent forever?

Please, please do the following:

- Tell the City to do the right thing and give it four more months.
- Tell the County Board of Supervisors to appropriate the promised \$25M with no claims on the community’s preferred design and no excuses about restricted bond money. Just contribute \$25M to this regional project, period!
- Tell the Regional Transportation Authority that you expect better and want them to be flexible and follow their own stated guiding documents. “Functionality” or how a multimodal corridor works should be defined by the jurisdictions not by regional politicians and lobbyists.
- Tell the RTA to release the budgeted funds for this project when it’s time, so we can move on!