

## **2040 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Comments Received**

PAG has received the following written comments on the draft 2040 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

Total Comment Forms/Letter Received: 106 comment forms/letters were submitted that covered 136 topics

### **Roadway** (13 comments in six topic areas)

- **Comment:** The Town of Oro Valley submitted a letter requesting that the La Cholla Extension not be included in the RTP.  
**Response:** This roadway project is not in the 2040 RTP.
- **Comment:** Pima County wrote a letter citing Board of Supervisors' Resolution 2007-343 which objects to by-pass routes. A member of the public also submitted a comment that they also oppose a by-pass.  
**Response:** By-pass routes were not included in the RTP.
- **Comment:** The Vail Community Action Board submitted a letter requesting multiple roadway projects for Vail and the southeast area of Tucson/Pima County be added to the 2040 plan.  
**Response:** After consulting with Pima County, it was determined that two of the Vail Community Action Board's requests were already in the plan, three requests were deemed not possible at this time due to environmental or other concerns and a sixth request was added to the 2040 Reserve List.
- **Comment:** A member of the public submitted a comment form stating his opposition to a "Corridor Study for I-10 West". He understood the project to be a study of the I-10 by-pass west of Tucson.  
**Response:** This project was erroneously listed in the RTP as a "Corridor Study for I-10 West". That study has already been completed. The project should have been listed as a "Corridor Study for I-10 East", a study of the existing I-10 corridor from I-19 to the Cochise County line. This is not a by-pass study.
- **Comment:** Eight members of the public submitted comments to express their opposition to widening Broadway Boulevard from Euclid to Wilmot. Reasons for their opposition included negative impacts on businesses on Broadway (property acquisition) and neighborhoods surrounding Country Club (noise, traffic), the traffic projections used to identify the need for the project in the 1987 plan for Broadway are "wildly off" and out of date and therefore a new traffic study should be done, and the business/economic demand for the project is no longer there given the recession. The commenters would like to see the project scaled back or not constructed.  
**Response:** The Broadway Boulevard widening projects is part of the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) Plan approved by the voters in 2006 and therefore the RTA is required to complete the project and thus it must also be included in the 2040 RTP.
- **Comment:** One person inquired about Orange Grove widening. They support the widening of the road and mention several reasons why it is needed. They mention that the

community has been told the project would be done for many, many years.

**Response:** Widening of Orange Grove Road from I-10 to Skyline Blvd is in the 2040 RTP.

**Transit** (10 comments in eight topic areas)

- **Comment:** A member of the public used the comment form to inquire why smaller buses aren't used during low ridership times of day as a way to reduce fuel costs. (5/28/2010)  
**Response:** The RTP does not address this issue; however the following response was provided. At this time, Sun Tran does not use smaller vehicles due to the additional maintenance and operations costs of operating a second, smaller fleet of vehicles. However, performance measures are currently being developed that will set ridership standards for bus routes, and those routes not meeting performance standards may be subject to alternative operating procedures, including smaller buses.
- **Comment:** Two members of the public wrote in and expressed their opposition to the modern streetcar project stating that the money could be better spent on another project.  
**Response:** The modern streetcar is a project of the RTA and therefore must be included in the 2040 RTP. The RTA plan was approved by the public in 2006 and the RTA is legally obligated to build the projects in the RTA plan, including the modern streetcar.
- **Comment:** One person wrote in supporting the initial segment of the street car but suggesting that extensions of the street car should use light rail. They believe that using a combination of light rail and local bus would be more attractive to riders because of the quality and speed than combining streetcars and bus rapid transit, and that the costs to implement those transit combinations would be very similar.  
**Response:** The RTP transit recommendations are based on PAG's adopted High Capacity Transit System Plan near and mid-term recommendations. The costs for the streetcar and bus rapid transit are expected to no more than 1/3 to 2/3 of the costs of light rail transit.
- **Comment:** One person submitted a comment form stating that the streetcar should not go to the west side, but either down Broadway or Stone where more commuters would use the service.  
**Response:** One segment of the streetcar does extend down Broadway Blvd from downtown to Alvernon. The RTP recommendations are based on PAG's adopted High Capacity Transit Plan which included extensive ridership analysis. The initial phase of the streetcar is a part of the voter-approved RTA plan and cannot be changed.
- **Comment:** One person wrote that they like the proposed transit ideas, especially BRT. They wonder if any cross town bus routes (E-W) are feasible.  
**Response:** East-West crosstown bus routes are included in existing bus services and proposed new bus rapid transit service.
- **Comment:** One person wrote in with several transit suggestions including: (1) buses need to be reliable, including having shorter and more direct routes; (2) there needs to be more room to bring bikes on board to finish journey; and (3) buses need to be cleaner and more acceptable to those that now think they are just for the lower economic strata of the community.

**Response:** Expanded funding for transit is provided in the RTP to address these types of issues and there will be a focus on attracting new riders that choose to ride rather than need to use the transit.

- **Comment:** Two people expressed support for the region to add an extensive amount of rail transportation, including the passenger rail to Phoenix.

**Response:** The regional component of the passenger rail system between Tucson and Phoenix is included in the plan.

- **Comment:** A member of the public wrote in stating the need for more transportation services for elderly in Green Valley and suggested coordination of transportation among various assisted living facilities, nursing homes and apartment complexes for older adults to maximize the benefit of transportation services they provide. (12/29/08)

**Response:** The 2040 RTP set aside almost \$250 million for transportation services for elderly and persons with disabilities, including funds for mobility management (to help coordinate transportation services provided by non-profit organizations) and paratransit service expansion. PAG also facilitates coordination among non-profit organizations and organizations that participate in the Federal Transit Administration's 5310, 5316 and 5317 programs through coordination meetings and updates to the Public Transit Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan.

### **Bicycle and Pedestrian** (105 comment in 13 topic areas)

- **Comment:** The most commented item was bicycle boulevards with 78 comments in this issue. PAG received a letter from the City of Tucson that supports the inclusion of bicycle boulevards and requests that no additional restrictions should be placed on funding of bike boulevards as part of the 2040 plan. (6/24/10) There was also one comment form that generally supported bicycle boulevards but would like to see more boulevards proposed for the southern part of Tucson to connect to downtown. The rest of the bike boulevard comments were more general in nature and reasons cited for the inclusion in the plan include:

- Improve safety for kids and all users. (46)
- Make neighborhoods more liveable and safer for children, bike riders and other roadway users. (34)
- Reduces congestion and encourages alternative modes (31)
- Increase ridership and help commuters. (29)
- Increase property value (17)
- Improve air quality (12)
- Encourage a healthy and active lifestyle (8)
- Make Tucson more Bicycle Friendly (8)
- Urban connectivity (7)

**Response:** Bicycle boulevards are one of many bicycle components in the 2040 RTP and are listed as project ID 193.08. The bicycle facilities map has been modified to add locations that show more regional distribution and reduce the focus in the central core as well as indicate bike boulevard projects on the map are illustrative and that funding is subject to approved in the TIP process.

- **Comment:** 12 people also wrote in that they support the addition of more bicycle lanes and shared-use paths.

- Response:** The 2040 RTP has significantly increased funding for these types of bicycle facilities and would add nearly 700 additional bikeway miles throughout all areas of the region.
- **Comment:** One person wrote that they opposed the addition of bicycle lanes in the RTP. They believe that the poor lighting at night, heavy traffic, and sunshine in Tucson jeopardize the health and safety of cyclists.
 

**Response:** This position is not supported by overall public input. Additionally, federal requirements for transportation planning require that all modes are provided in the long-range plan.
  - **Comment:** Two people commented that they support the urban loop.
 

**Response:** Full funding for completing the urban loop is included in the RTP. This includes both construction of the path and bridges/underpasses to prevent conflicts with vehicular traffic. (RTP ID #195.08)
  - **Comment:** Three people commented that bicycling downtown and in particular underneath I-10 in the underpasses is unsafe and should be addressed in the RTP.
 

**Response:** Several safety bicycle programs and strategies are included in the RTP which may address these issues. The Tucson-Pima County Bicycle Advisory Committee downtown subcommittee is working to improve facilities downtown and membership on that committee is open to anyone.
  - **Comment:** One comment asked that the pavement condition on N. 4<sup>th</sup> Ave be improved before the Bike Boulevard is completed.
 

**Response:** Pavement preservation falls under operations and maintenance (O&M) funding. There is twice as much funding recommended for O&M funding in the 2040 RTP. Contact the local jurisdiction to add this request to their list of needed repavements. As part of the bike blvd project being installed later this year, there will be some sections that get a strip of repavement for cyclists. Contact the City of Tucson to find out more information.
  - **Comment:** One member of the public wrote in saying that it is important for the City of Tucson to keep a strong bike/ped planning program
 

**Response:** The region continues to support bicycle and pedestrian programs and there are several projects that exemplify that in the RTP.
  - **Comment:** There was a comment that there needs to be better bike connectivity to the airport.
 

**Response:** There are some projects to improve facilities to the airport including bike lanes on Hughes Access Road, Alvernon Way, Park Ave and Liberty Bicycle Boulevard.
  - **Comment:** One member of the public wrote that the plan is insufficiently bike friendly – the focus on the exurbs, at the extent of bike/ped friendly thoroughfares in the inner city, can only lead to a further degradation of inner city neighborhoods.
 

**Response:** The 2040 RTP has significantly increased funding for these types of bicycle facilities and would add nearly 700 additional bikeway miles throughout all areas of the region.
  - **Comment:** One comment asked that the Sabino/Tanque Verde intersection be improved for cyclists.

**Response:** There will be changes to this intersection as a result of the RTA Corridor Project: Kolb Rd Connection with Sabino Canyon Road. Attend a public meeting to provide input.

- **Comment:** One person wrote that they support Bike lanes on Pontatoc Road.

**Response:** Bike lanes on Pontatoc Road are included in the RTP.

- **Comment:** Two people commented on the need for better pedestrian facilities, especially near bus routes to help those using public transportation.

**Response:** The RTP includes additional funding for many miles of sidewalks, shared-use paths, ADA improvements and safe pedestrian crossings. The City of Tucson has developed an inventory of bus stops and what pedestrian facilities are near them.

This will be used to identify the locations needing improvements.

- **Comment:** One person wrote that they believe there would be private individuals (like myself) who would be willing to personally contribute funding or volunteer time directly to bike-related projects.

**Response:** The RTP does not identify specific funding sources for specific projects and does not identify volunteer contributions. However, volunteer efforts are appreciated. The regional Bicycle Advisory Committee who advises jurisdictions on bicycle issues is always looking for support on their subcommittees.

#### **Environment/Land Use** (5 comments in four topic areas)

- **Comment:** A member of the public submitted a comment form stating that while the RTP acknowledges the issue of climate change and increasing greenhouse gases, it doesn't propose a solution to this problem.

**Response:** The RTP includes projects, programs and implementation strategies that will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions such as constructing passenger rail from Tucson to Phoenix, increased alternate mode funding and funding for the Travel Demand Management program.

- **Comment:** Two people wrote about how there needs to be more of an emphasis given to the link between land use and transportation investment. They both encourage the region to stop the growth of sprawl and instead reinvest in the urban core.

**Response:** Many of the implementation strategies are designed to facilitate this linkage. There is growing recognition regionally of the important link between land use and transportation. Land use planning, however remains under the purview of local jurisdictions.

- **Comment:** A member of the public submitted a comment stating there was insufficient consideration given to landscape and mitigation of urban heat islands.

**Response:** The RTP includes funding for environmental mitigation strategies.

- **Comment:** One member of the public suggested that some roads (like Congress) should be closed off to auto traffic entirely so as to get people to walk, ride bikes and rail to shop and see downtown.

**Response:** The RTP does not preclude innovative strategies should they be identified as viable by an implementing agency.

**Aviation** (1 comment in one topic area)

- **Comment:** The Military Community Relations Committee (MCRC) submitted a letter saying that they reviewed the airport projects and requested that PAG take any opportunity it can to help mitigate any negative impacts associated with being a host city to a military airbase. (6/22/10)  
**Response:** PAG has noted this request and will monitor this issue. If the Committee has specific concerns that they have identified and would like to share, PAG would be happy to discuss them further.

**Other** (2 comments in two topic areas)

- **Comment:** One person wrote that they were in favor of Regional Council having a weighted voting provision like MAG  
**Response:** This is not a provision that can be addressed through the 2040 RTP.
- **Comment:** One member of the public suggested that a add a gas tax to pay for road upgrades  
**Response:** The 2040 RTP Financial Plan has identified the need for additional transportation revenue sources, including the possibility of an additional gas tax.