Date: October 4, 2016

To: The Honorable Chair and Members
    Pima County Board of Supervisors

Re: Pima County’s Major Achievements Over the Past 20 Years

I. INTRODUCTION

The recent primary contests contained much rhetoric about the so-called failure of Pima County government over the past 20 years. While rewriting history may win votes, those who actually lived and worked here over the past 20 years know the true story and the significant accomplishments that resulted from the hard work of our many County employees and leaders who knew how to work effectively with each other and with the community.

II. MAJOR ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FACING PIMA COUNTY 20 YEARS AGO

In 1996, Bill Clinton was President, Fife Symington was Governor, and the Board of Supervisors included Mike Boyd (District 1), Dan Eckstrom (District 2), Ed Moore (District 3), Paul Marsh (District 4), and Raúl Grijalva (District 5). The November 1996 election resulted in Supervisor Sharon Bronson taking over Supervisor Moore’s seat in District 3 and Supervisor John Even taking over Supervisor Marsh’s seat in District 4. Supervisor Even passed away early in his first year, and the Board appointed Supervisor Ray Carroll to fill his seat. I was County Administrator.

At that time, the Board faced a number of issues and challenges. The homicide rate was twice what it is today, violent crime was almost 50 percent higher than it is today, and juvenile crime was at its peak. This strained justice and law enforcement operations, facilities and budgets. The Board allocated funding to numerous youth crime prevention initiatives, including the construction and operation of the Kino Recreation and Community Center. The bond election held in May 1997 included funding for a new jail, new juvenile court detention facilities and many new superior courtrooms, as well as parks and other facility improvements.

Traffic congestion was a pressing concern as many of our roads exceeded capacity. The County led efforts to have the State more equitably distribute State-shared Highway User Revenue Fund (HURF) monies, which made possible the November 1997 HURF/transportation bond election.
The Honorable Chair and Members, Pima County Board of Supervisors
Re: Pima County’s Major Achievements Over the Past 20 Years
October 4, 2016
Page 2

The economy was strong, and home building was booming; but the federal government’s listing of the cactus ferruginous pygmy owl as an endangered species brought chaos and uncertainty to private and public development projects in the Northwest. Wildcat or unregulated development skyrocketed after the State changed the rules to allow five lot splits, up from three, before subdivision regulations applied, resulting in a host of public health and safety issues and fiscally straining County services.

Changes in local governance were at the forefront. Marana was aggressively annexing communities in the Northwest, and a change in State law led to defensive incorporation efforts by those who opposed annexation. Litigation ensued over the law, and the courts eventually declared the new Town of Tortolita and Village of Casas Adobes null and void. Casas Adobes made another attempt in 2001, but the attempt failed at the polls.

Pima County and other border counties were increasingly impacted by the uncompensated costs associated with illegal border crossing and the growing number of deaths in the desert as the United States Border Patrol stepped up enforcement efforts.

Our Department of Environmental Quality was defending its fugitive dust rules and Clean Air Act program from litigation by the Arizona Mining Association.

We built Kino Stadium and negotiated spring training contracts with Major League Baseball teams. Kino Community Hospital was struggling, and transition of operations discussions with The University of Arizona were just beginning.

State legislation resulted in shifting more of the property tax burden to homeowners. I unsuccessfully recommended a half-cent excise tax to reduce reliance on the property tax and to fund transportation improvements.

Between 1996 and 2016, Pima County’s property tax rate stayed the same 10 times, increased 7 times and decreased 5 times. Over this 20-year period, the tax rate increased 14 percent – or 73 cents – from $5.10 to $5.83, an increase of less than 1 percent per year.

III. PIMA COUNTY’S MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS OVER THE PAST 20 YEARS BY FUNCTIONAL AREA

The following are 20-year highlights of the various County service areas. More detailed discussions of each of these areas are included in the attachment to this memorandum.
Health

- Successfully transitioned Pima County’s Kino Hospital to a full-service hospital and medical center now managed by Banner Health, a private nonprofit corporation, providing medical care to a portion of the community previously underserved.

- Built a new Crisis Response Center and Behavioral Health Pavilion with voter-approved County bonds; now serving approximately 15,000 people per month, reducing pressure on crowded emergency rooms and reducing the drop-off time for law enforcement officers to less than 10 minutes per case.

- Built the Abrams Public Health Center with voter-approved County bonds, housing the nationally accredited Pima County Health Department, health and medical clinics, University of Arizona faculty, and a growing medical technology company.

- Transitioned the former Pima Health System program and the former Posada del Sol long-term care facility to community partners and the private sector, recognizing the increasing regulatory complexities and costly operational requirements more readily achieved by the private sector.

Community

- Created a single, regional library system by transferring library operations from the City of Tucson and Oro Valley to Pima County and increased the number of library branches and expanded others with voter-approved County bonds and Library District funding.

- Added a variety of nontraditional library services to better meet the needs of nearly 387,000 library cardholders and other library customers.

- Undertook operational changes at the Pima Animal Care Center that substantially decreased the euthanasia rate and increased adoptions and rescues, and won voter approval for a new bond-funded facility that is ready to break ground.

- Developed over 800 new affordable housing units and the Pima County Housing Center with voter-approved County bonds that leveraged significant other funding.

- Completed park and pedestrian safety reinvestment projects in 89 neighborhoods across the region with voter-approved County bonds and supplemental funds.

- Assisted over 4,000 low-income households through Pima County’s Neighborhood Stabilization and Home Repair programs.
• Selected in 2016 for the first Pay for Success project in Arizona funded by the federal Departments of Housing and Urban Development and Justice to provide $1.3 million as a Pay for Success Permanent Supportive Housing Demonstration project

• Improved public access to geographical information through an award-winning Geographic Information System that has serviced 150 million requests since 1998

Recreation

• Completed almost 130 miles of The Loop, a paved, multi-use trail looping Tucson and connecting our suburban communities

• Partnered with the YMCA to operate three community centers built by Pima County, with a combined membership of over 40,000

• Partnered with Tucson Medical Center and Southern Arizona Community Sports to open the Indoor Sporting Chance Center, attracting over 300,000 participants and spectators annually

• Began supporting and investing in professional soccer at Kino Sports Campus, drawing 20,000 fans annually with an annual economic impact of over $1.5 million

• Expanded recreational facilities across the region, primarily through voter-approved bond funds; including 47 new sports fields, the lighting of 52 sports fields, 6 new pools, 13 new community centers, 15 new basketball courts, significant expansion of The Loop, the acquisition of almost 500 acres for future parks and community facilities development, and increased recreational access to mountain parks via 10 new trailheads and over 100 miles of new trails

• Developed the largest single youth soccer facility in the region at Rillito Park with voter-approved bond funding

• Completed improvements to County-owned facilities operated as the Arizona-Sonora Deseret Museum, Pima Air and Space Museum, County Fairgrounds and Colossal Cave Mountain Park, with visits to all four facilities totaling almost 1 million last year

• Selected a new manager for Colossal Cave Mountain Park, and attendance and revenues more than tripled to 88,000 visitors and $911,000 in revenues in just seven months
Natural and Cultural Environment

- Completed and began implementing the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan, the Maeveen Marie Behan Conservation Lands System and the Multi-Species Conservation Plan, protecting natural and cultural resources, expanding recreational opportunities and providing certainty to private and public developers

- Established an Environmental Education Programing serving over 30,000 participants annually

- Completed the Ed Pastor Kino Environmental Restoration Project, one of the largest water harvesting facilities in the West, providing irrigation for nearby ball fields and landscaping, saving taxpayers over $4 million to date in water purchases, preventing downstream flooding and creating attractive wildlife habitat

- Entered into a unique revenue sharing agreement with the J.W. Marriott Tucson Starr Pass Resort that is projected to generate over $10 million for improvements and expansion of Tucson Mountain Park and has already funded acquisition of 750 acres and two new trailheads

- Rehabilitated 40 historic buildings, constructed 8 new miles of the historic Anza Trail along with 3 new trailheads, and acquired 4 priority archaeological sites with voter-approved County bonds and supplemental funds

Business and Development

- Made strategic investments to protect our existing major employers, Raytheon and Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, including land acquisition, infrastructure relocation and rezoning

- Began creating new opportunities for job growth through public infrastructure; County-owned business parks and office facilities, including the Sonoran Corridor, the Aerospace, Defense and Technology Business and Research Park, the Sunset Professional Campus; and economic development agreements with HomeGoods, World View, Accelerate, and Caterpillar

- Developed the comprehensive OneStop workforce training and employer assistance centers, including the opening of the Kino Service Center and Rio Nuevo Center, which serve 14,000 workers and 700 employers annually

- Improved our building and site development permitting process with more effective and efficient reviews
• Improved and adopted new development policies and regulations

• Greatly reduced wildcat subdivisions, from 41 percent to 10 percent of new residential development, and the associated public health and safety issues

• Improved the connection between land-use planning and development and water resources and infrastructure

Water, Wastewater, Flood Control and Transportation

• Completed a massive regulatory-driven upgrade and expansion of the County’s major wastewater reclamation facilities, resulting in effluent of near drinking water quality, expanding reclaimed water opportunities, improving groundwater infiltration rates, and supporting a healthier Lower Santa Cruz River with more diverse aquatic wildlife

• Negotiated an agreement with the City of Tucson that enabled delivery of Pima County’s reclaimed water through the City’s reclaimed system at a fraction of the previous cost and established the conservation effluent pool as an allocation of water to support riparian habitat

• Completed a multiple phase 20-year flood control project along six miles of the Arroyo Chico Wash in central Tucson, which removed over 1,300 residences from the floodplain and included environmental restoration and recreational benefits

• Completed additional flood control improvements with voter-approved bond funding

• Built more than 50 segments of roadway totaling 230 lane miles and completed more than 70 roadway safety projects with voter-approved bond funds that leveraged substantial other funding

Emergency Response

• Built and implemented with voter-approved bonds a new Regional Public Safety Communications System being used by 55 police, fire and other public safety agencies, facilitating real time interoperable communication during emergencies for the first time in Pima County.

• Built new and expanded Emergency Operations Centers funded with voter-approved bonds and other funding
• Led the response to the 2003 Aspen Fire and worked collaboratively with private land owners to create a new development plan for rebuilding the Summerhaven Village

Justice and Law Enforcement

• Reduced the number of juveniles detained by 80 percent and constructed new Juvenile Court Detention and Administration facilities with voter-approved bonds

• Constructed a new Adult Detention Facility, expanded Superior Court by 11 courtrooms, and constructed a new Public Service Center, providing all Justice Court functions at a single location for the first time in 18 years, with voter-approved bonds and other funding

• Was one of only 20 jurisdictions nationally selected in 2015 by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation to participate in the Safety & Justice Challenge to reduce unnecessary jail incarceration

• Created the Justice Coordinating Council

General Government

• Completed over 700 bond projects with over $1.4 billion in voter-approved bond funding, resulting in significant investments in our community’s infrastructure, providing tremendous benefit to the everyday lives of our residents and visitors and creating thousands of construction-related jobs

• Established a model for capital project delivery that has been adopted by other governmental agencies in Pima County, Phoenix and Texas

• Successfully implemented budget strategies and organizational changes to prepare for and weather the Great Recession without increasing the tax burden on the local economy and grew the General Fund Budget Reserve from zero in Fiscal Year 1996/97 to $61 million today

• Implemented cost control of employee medical coverage by moving to self-insurance, transitioning to a High Deductible Health Plan, and promoting an award winning health and wellness program, resulting in the avoidance of over $44 million in premium cost increases in just the first three years

• Developed and implemented the Sustainability Action Plan for Pima County Operations, saving over $7 million in energy costs, significantly reducing energy use, and investing in solar renewable energy, alternative fuel vehicles, water conservation, waste reduction and sustainable building practices
Privatized the County’s landfill operations

Spearheaded successful efforts at the State level that resulted in $15 million more to Pima County in HURF revenues and $10 million in savings for long-term care payments.

Avoided $32 million in State cost transfers for public education through successful litigation

Developed an award winning Procurement Department, placing in the top 1 percent of member agencies

Committed to election integrity through continual review and improvements in election security and transparency

Embraced transparency by becoming one of most transparent governments in the State of Arizona, with a ranking of A-

Raised over $7.8 million in donations from Pima County employees for charitable organizations through the annual Employee Combined Appeal Campaign administered by United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona

IV. SUMMARY

These achievements demonstrate that time and time again over the past 20 years, Pima County has successfully addressed a variety of community issues by working with experts and those impacted to develop solutions and put them in place operationally. In addition, when many of the problems we faced required new or improved facilities, we made our case to the voters and won approval for the sale of bonds that have funded over 700 projects across the region. We faced significant challenges during the Great Recession and weathered that very difficult period through good planning and preparation.

As a county government, we have optimized health and medical services for an underserved community; built a national model for behavioral health; transformed community services beyond the traditional; provided affordable and improved housing for those in need; reinvested in our stressed neighborhoods; preserved our history and culture; improved access to information; expanded recreational opportunities at the youth and professional levels; comprehensively addressed endangered species issues while facilitating development and expanding our natural park system, invested in protecting major employers and growing high-wage jobs; streamlined development permitting and regulations; upgraded and expanded major wastewater infrastructure; reduced flood damage by building multiuse flood control
facilities; reduced traffic congestion by building hundreds of miles of new roadways; improved emergency communication and operational systems; reduced juvenile detention numbers significantly and embarked on a comprehensive effort to do the same for adults; successfully weathered the Great Recession by implementing budget strategies and organizational efficiencies that maintained service levels without increasing taxes; privatized a number of services better addressed by the private sector; reined in health insurance costs for our employees; and integrated sustainable practices throughout our organization.

Our employees and the 12 County Supervisors we have had on the Board over the last 20 years should be commended for these achievements.

CHH/mjk

Attachment

c:  John Bernal, Deputy County Administrator for Public Works
    Tom Burke, Deputy County Administrator for Administration
    Jan Lesher, Deputy County Administrator for Community and Health Services
    Ellen Wheeler, Assistant County Administrator
    Nanette Slusser, Assistant County Administrator for Policy, Public Works
    Nicole Fyffe, Executive Assistant to the County Administrator
Health

Successfully transitioned Pima County’s Kino Hospital to a full service hospital and medical center now managed by Banner Health, a private non-profit corporation, providing medical care to a portion of the community previously underserved.

By 2004, Pima County was losing more than $30 million a year operating a hospital that had been reduced to providing basic psychiatric services and an emergency room. Not only was this an inefficient use of County and taxpayer resources, it also left the south side of town without a full service hospital. This changed in 2004 when Pima County began contracting with The University of Arizona to operate a full-service hospital and medical center at the South Campus. This relationship continued through 2014 when the Arizona Board of Regents approved a merger with Banner Health, and Pima County subsequently approved transfer of the lease of this 245-bed teaching hospital with a Level III trauma Emergency Department, which today is called Banner University Medical Center South. Pima County’s partnership with the University and now Banner has resulted in a substantial increase in the number of patient and clinic visits (94,194 adjusted patient days, 152,491 clinic visits, and 48,837 Emergency Department visits for Fiscal Year (FY) 2015/16), nearly $425 million in new federal funds for the benefit of local hospital and physician practices, the expansion of medical-related workforce training, and quality services and care to a previously underserved portion of the community.

Built a new Crisis Response Center and Behavioral Health Pavilion with voter-approved County bonds; now serving approximately 15,000 people per month, reducing pressure on crowded emergency rooms and reducing the drop-off time for law enforcement officers to less than 10 minutes per case.

In 2005, a young man was killed during a suicide-by-officer shooting; and once again, the community was reminded of our lack of preparedness for managing those experiencing behavioral health crisis. What was different this time was that this man’s father joined with behavioral health providers and Pima County to take to the voters a proposal to fund with County bonds the types of facilities necessary to dramatically improve our capacity in this area. The election succeeded; and by 2011, two behavioral health facilities, including a new emergency department, became part of the unique Pima County, University of Arizona Medical Center partnership located at the Kino Health Campus. The Behavioral Health Pavilion includes an emergency department and both inpatient and outpatient psychiatric services. The Crisis Response Center, operated by our Regional Behavioral Health Authority, provides services to anyone experiencing acute psychiatric crisis or immediate mental health need. Equally as important, law enforcement agencies created Mental Health Support teams and worked with behavioral health to train officers in crisis intervention techniques, which have been successful in diffusing potentially dangerous mental health crisis situations and deflecting individuals from jail to these treatment facilities.
Built the Abrams Public Health Center with voter-approved County bonds, housing the nationally accredited Pima County Health Department, health and medical clinics, University of Arizona faculty, and a growing medical technology company.

The goal of the facilities constructed on the Kino Health Campus, made possible by voter-approved bonds in 2004 and 2006, is to offer a fully integrated delivery system providing the necessary and vital link between medical and behavioral healthcare and wellness for optimal patient care at a single campus. Pima County’s Kino Health Campus provides a unique opportunity to put clinicians and scientists, public and private sector, teachers and students, patients and families, and individuals needing medical and behavioral health services or a pathway to wellness, together in close proximity to clinics and a hospital. The Herbert K. Abrams Public Health Center, in particular, houses the nationally accredited Pima County Health Department and its public health clinics and services; physician clinic space for the Family and Community Medical Center; the Diabetes Center; The University of Arizona Collaboratory for Metabolic Disease Prevention and Treatment, which co-locates faculty from the Colleges of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Public Health and Medicine; and Accelerate, a privately owned biotechnology corporation that develops instruments used for the detection of pathogenic microorganisms.

Transitioned the former Pima Health System program and the former Posada del Sol Long-term Care Facility to community partners and the private sector recognizing the increasing regulatory complexities and costly operational requirements more readily achieved by the private sector.

Following transition of Kino Community Hospital, the County successfully transitioned other medical and health-related operations to community partners in recognition of the increasing regulatory complexities and costly operational requirements more readily achieved by the private sector. Twenty years ago, the County’s Pima Health System (PHS) served individuals with limited resources and complex health conditions. This was paid for with public monies through Arizona’s Medicaid program known as AHCCCS (Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System). PHS operated both an acute and long-term care health plan through its contracts with AHCCCS. In 2008, PHS was unsuccessful in retaining the existing acute contract with AHCCCS; and as a result, no further members were permitted to enter the PHS plan. PHS had to transition an estimated 30,000 members to other health plans, decreasing membership from nearly 33,000 to 2,760. Membership continued to decline over time, which made the financial viability of maintaining the acute plan questionable. On March 12, 2013, the two and one half year process to transition PHS operations, while preserving jobs and services, was completed. As part of its enterprise, PHS operated several licensed providers including a 149-bed skilled nursing facility known as Posada del Sol Health Care Center. Posada del Sol, which Pima County owned and operated since 1971, provided specialized, long-term care. The County sold Posada del Sol on December 31, 2011 as a component of Pima County’s efforts to transition some healthcare services from the direct operation of the County.
**Community**

Created a single, regional library system by transferring library operations from the City of Tucson and Oro Valley to Pima County and increased the number of library branches and expanded others with voter-approved County bonds and library district funding

In 2006, the City of Tucson struggled with financial issues. As Pima County already had a Countywide taxing district for libraries, and the need for additional library services grew outside the City limits, the County agreed to embark on a complex transfer of operations, employees and financial obligations to the County Library District. The City made decreasing payments to the County for a number of years after the transfer in order to support the orderly transition. In the transition agreement, the City and County agreed that library facilities not yet owned by the County would be transferred in title to the County after the County invests 50 percent or more in the buildings. The Sahuarita, Flowing Wells and Wheeler-Taft Abbett Sr. libraries have opened since the transition; and the Murphy-Wilmot, Miller-Golf Links, Martha Cooper, Eckstrom-Columbus and Dusenberry-River Center libraries have also seen improvements. Between 2012 and 2013, the Oro Valley Library operations transitioned to Pima County. Pima County already owned the building, as it was built and expanded with voter-approved County bond funds, similar to many of the libraries in the region. The Pima County Public Library now includes 27 libraries and a staff of 500.

Added a variety of non-traditional library services to better meet the needs of nearly 387,000 library cardholders and other library customers

The vision of the Pima County Public Library is an educated, connected community of readers, learners, doers, and dreamers. In addition to more traditional library services, the Library is committed to being a center of opportunity for our community, providing a variety of services centered on education, employment and community engagement. The Library provides opportunities for residents of all ages, including early literacy, connected learning and 21st Century skills, workforce development, small business training, and visits by the library’s public health nurse. The library provides open access to information and celebrates the diverse and cultural heritage of the region. Pima County Public Library transforms lives by educating, inspiring and connecting people.

Undertook operational changes at the Pima Animal Care Center that substantially decreased the euthanasia rate and increased adoptions and rescues, and won voter approval for a new bond-funded facility that has recently broken ground

Transformation of the Pima Animal Care Center (PACC) began about a decade ago. Confronted with soaring numbers of animals being dropped off at the facility, combined with high euthanasia rates, a change on many fronts was long overdue. PACC took in a high of 30,000 animals in 2010; and at its worst, PACC was euthanizing more than 60 percent of its animals. Today, intake of animals has dropped to about 20,000 a year due in part to aggressive investments in spay and neuter programs. More importantly, euthanasia rates
are now less than 10 percent, directly due to a cultural change in the organizational structure that now invests heavily in medical and behavioral care of the animals, adoption, foster and rescue. The next step in this transformation will be moving from the 1960s-era outdated and undersized facility to a new modern facility that is on schedule to open to the public by the end of 2017.

Developed over 800 new affordable housing units and the Pima County Housing Center with voter-approved County bonds that leveraged significant other funding

In 1997 and 2004, Pima County voters approved $5 million and $10 million in bonds respectively for the development of affordable housing. This funding, combined with another $129 million in non-County funding, has resulted in the completion of 623 units, with another 204 units underway. This is one of Pima County’s many initiatives to reduce poverty. Safe and affordable housing has proven to be a stabilizing force for families, neighborhoods and communities, as well as creating local jobs and raising property and sales tax revenue. Typically, it takes a variety of funding sources and tax credits to make affordable housing projects viable, and lenders traditionally see Pima County’s bond funds as one of the most reliable of those sources. Pima County’s commitment to housing services is also evident to those who seek assistance at the Pima County Housing Center. The Center is designed to provide residents with one convenient location to obtain resources and information on sustainable and affordable housing. Today, families can visit the housing center for guidance and support on purchasing a home, finding affordable rentals and many other housing-related services.

Completed park and pedestrian safety reinvestment projects in 89 neighborhoods across the region with voter-approved County bonds and supplemental funds

Many of our older neighborhoods were built before sidewalks and other pedestrian safety infrastructure became a standard requirement of new development. In addition, while many of these neighborhoods do have some type of park, these smaller parks are often overlooked when it comes to upgrades and expansions. In 1997 and 2004, voters approved $5 million and $10 million in bonds, respectively, to revitalize neighborhoods in stressed areas of the community with small, community-based capital improvement projects such as sidewalks, park improvements and street lighting. In total, the County completed 96 projects in 89 different neighborhoods, with 10 additional projects underway. The application process for funding required that projects originate with neighbors, and County staff assisted with the application process and project development. These types of neighborhood scale projects are often the most visible to residents and leverage additional improvements.

Assisted over 4,000 low-income households through Pima County’s Neighborhood Stabilization and Home Repair programs

The purpose of the Neighborhood Stabilization 2 Program, funded by The US Department of Housing and Urban Development, was to stabilize some of the neighborhoods most severely
impacted by high foreclosure rates during the Great Recession. The program provided 141 families with down payment assistance; the County acquired and rehabilitated 107 rental homes for low and moderate households; 97 new units were constructed for low and moderate income households; and 46 lots were placed in a land bank for future development. Through the Home Repair Program, Pima County and our partners (Community Home Repair Program, Tucson Urban League, Direct Center for Independence) provided direct assistance to 3,728 families to stabilize their homes, improve the quality of their living environment, reduce safety hazards, eliminate restrictive barriers to individuals with disabilities and “green up” the homes to better environmental quality standards.

Selected in 2016 for the first Pay for Success project in Arizona funded by the federal departments of Housing and Urban Development and Justice to provide $1.3 million as a Pay for Success Permanent Supportive Housing Demonstration project

In 2016, the federal government selected Pima County for the first Pay for Success project in the State of Arizona. The University of Utah’s Sorenson Impact Center received $1.3 million grant through the Departments of Housing and Urban Development and Justice (HUD/DOJ) and will work with the County to launch a demonstration project for homeless individuals who have a high utilization rate with jails, health and behavioral health systems, and other community/crisis services. HUD’s Pay for Success Permanent Supportive Housing Demonstration tests cost effective ways to help persons cycling between the criminal justice and homeless service systems. Funded by DOJ and implemented through a HUD/DOJ partnership, this demonstration advances a model that offers a new source of financing to expand permanent supportive housing for this population.

Improved public access to geographical information through an award-winning Geographic Information System that has serviced 150 million requests since 1998

Pima County started its award winning Geographic Information System (GIS in the late 1980s, and it is considered one of the early pioneers in using GIS Technology in a government organization, as well as being a leader in providing GIS data, information and services to the general public. GIS is used by several County departments as part of their regular business operations, which include asset management and maintenance, environmental sustainability and monitoring, urban and regional planning, economic development, public safety and health, among others. Pima County makes its GIS information and data available to the general public for download and also provides access to this information through several interactive maps. Aside from the general public’s use of the County’s GIS, there are numerous users from engineering firms, the real estate industry, educational institutions, public safety organizations and other local and nonlocal governmental organizations. Pima County started collecting web statistics in 1998. Since that time, there have been over 730,000 unique visitors to the County’s GIS website, which has serviced close to 150 million requests for information.
Recreation

Completed almost 130 miles of The Loop, a paved multiuse trail looping Tucson and connecting our suburban communities

The great floods of 1983 devastated the community. Despite the loss of life and property, the flood gave birth to what is now the region’s most celebrated and used park: The Loop. Over more than two decades, The Loop has grown from just a dozen miles of isolated and disconnected paths along the Rillito and Santa Cruz Rivers to almost 130 miles that connect with every part of the metropolitan region. The Loop has helped attract and retain high-wage employers, improves the value of adjacent lands, enhances the quality of life and health for our community and generates revenue and improves the tax base, providing a growing source of income for the entire region. For every $1 invested in The Loop, the community receives more than $9 in benefits. The Loop connects residents of Pima County to the places we live, work, shop, learn and play.

Partnered with the YMCA to operate three community centers built by Pima County, with a combined membership of over 40,000

Pima County owns three community centers that are operated by the YMCA. These include the Northwest YMCA, the Mulcahy YMCA at the Kino Community Center and the Lohse Family YMCA downtown. These partnerships have enabled the County to offer community center services in areas of need around the County without taxing taxpayers for the operational costs. From the YMCA’s perspective, it is able to operate these facilities without the debt typically associated with the purchase or construction of the facilities.

Partnered with Tucson Medical Center and Southern Arizona Community Sport to open the indoor Sporting Chance Center, attracting over 300,000 participants and spectators annually

The new, state-of-the-art Sporting Chance Center opened in 2013, allowing year-round play for youth and adults in Southern Arizona’s largest indoor sports facility. The $6 million facility is located adjacent to Pima County’s Curtis Park in the Flowing Wells neighborhood. Nearly 40,000 square feet of indoor space can accommodate up to five basketball courts or eight volleyball courts, as well as any other activity that utilizes a wood floor, such as badminton or dodgeball. The complex came to fruition through a unique partnership between Tucson Medical Center, Pima County and Southern Arizona Community Sports. Pima County owns the facility and covers a portion of the operating costs. The Sporting Chance Center attracts nearly 300,000 visitors a year, including participants and spectators for a variety of youth and adult sports activities. Entering its fourth year, the Center features sports (basketball, volleyball, dodgeball, futsal/indoor soccer) played by boys, girls, men and women of all ages. Weekday activity is typically youth team practices and league games for schools, youth and adults. Weekends are dominated by major basketball and volleyball tournaments, as well as special events such as USA Volleyball, USA Gymnastics, and Special Olympics competitions. The facility hosts over 26 major events annually.
Began supporting and investing in professional soccer at Kino Sports Campus, drawing 20,000 fans annually with an economic impact of over $1.5 million

Pima County’s relationship with Major League Soccer (MLS) began in 2012 when FC Tucson Soccer, Tucson’s top-level semiprofessional soccer team, introduced MLS spring training and the Desert Diamond Cup to Kino Sports Complex for the first time. In addition to constructing a 2,900-seat North Stadium for soccer, Pima County has provided an annual incentive since 2014 through Visit Tucson to Major League Soccer teams that conduct preseason games at Kino Sports Complex during January and February. Hotel stays associated with the MLS preseason events at area resorts and hotels have increased over the past few years, with 4,661 total room-night stays. This annual competition draws over 20,000 fans and has an estimated economic impact of over $1.5 million each year. A recent study conducted by Gilt Edge Marketing shows Tucson now ranks No. 25 among top U.S. markets for soccer. In addition to hosting MLS soccer and other professional, semiprofessional, and amateur sporting events, Kino Sports Complex provides a year-round, multipurpose venue for other types of community-related events, including concerts and the Tucson Gem, Mineral & Fossil Showcase. Such versatility has allowed the Kino Sports Complex to continue generating as much revenue as when Major League Baseball used the facility for Spring Training. The County built Kino Veterans Memorial Stadium in 1997.

Expanded recreational facilities across the region, primarily through voter-approved bond funds, including 47 new sports fields, the lighting of 52 sports fields, 6 new pools, 13 new community centers, 15 new basketball courts, significant expansion of The Loop, the acquisition of almost 500 acres for future parks and community facilities development, and increased recreational access to mountain parks via 10 new trailheads and over 100 miles of new trails.

Voter-approved bonds from the 1997 and 2004 elections resulted in a significant investment in this region’s public recreational facilities. From ballfields to trailheads, County bonds have been a major source of funding for recreational facilities within cities and towns, as well as in unincorporated Pima County.

Developed the largest single youth soccer facility in the region at Rillito Park with voter-approved bond funding

Pima County increased the number of soccer fields at Rillito Park from 2 to 11, which is the largest number of fields at a single facility in the region. In addition, 9 of the 11 fields have lighting, extending available play time into the evening.

Completed improvements to County-owned facilities operated as the Arizona-Sonora Deseret Museum, Pima Air and Space Museum, County Fairgrounds, and Colossal Cave Mountain Park, with visits to all four facilities totaling almost 1 million last year
Pima County owns many well-known facilities that attract tourists from across the United States and the world, as well as our own residents. These facilities are leased to organizations that have the special expertise to manage them. Pima County taxpayers do not support the operational costs of these facilities, but the County has continued to invest bonds in improvements owned by the County. These public investments are more than matched by the fundraising efforts of these organizations. Last year, there were nearly a million visits to all four facilities in total. In 2014, visitors to the Tucson/Pima County region spent $2.2 billion, generating $185 million in tax revenue and supporting 23,000 jobs.

**Selected a new manager for Colossal Cave Mountain Park, and attendance and revenues more than tripled to 88,000 visitors and $911,000 in revenues in just seven months**

In August 2015, after a detailed audit and thorough request for proposals process, Pima County entered into an agreement with a new operator for Colossal Cave Mountain Park. The most visible changes include a renovated gift shop and cafe at the cave entrance, initial cleanup of the property, and new and improved cave tours. Visitors to the park no longer pay an entrance fee. Attendance and revenues from cave tours, retail and food sales, and camping have more than tripled. During the first seven months of 2016, almost 88,000 visitors generated $911,000 in revenue. The new manager is working diligently in partnership with County departments to plan and undertake numerous additional improvements to make this incredible natural resource park more accessible and attractive for both residents and out of town visitors.

**Natural and Cultural Environment**

**Completed and began implementing the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan, the Maeveen Marie Behan Conservation Lands System and the Multi-Species Conservation Plan, protecting natural and cultural resources, expanding recreational opportunities and providing certainty to private and public developers**

After the Federal government listed the Cactus ferruginous pygmy owl as endangered in the late 1990s, the future of Pima County’s development of roads and other public facilities, as well as private development projects, became uncertain. The County and the community responded by embarking on what would become a new trajectory for both conservation and development. Through the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan (SDCP), the 2004 bond election and the County’s recently issued Federal permit for the Multi-Species Conservation Plan, Pima County was able to put programs, policies and funding in place to preserve the very best of Pima County while steering development to more suitable areas and streamlining endangered species compliance. Today, Pima County owns and manages over 230,000 acres of important natural and culturally significant areas, achieving multiple conservation goals, providing a wide range of outdoor recreational experiences, and ensuring our community and economy will continue to grow responsibly. The SDCP also contributed to the creation of the Bureau of Land Management’s Ironwood National Monument and Las Cienegas Conservation Area; the County’s Environmentally Sensitive Roadway Design
Guidelines; the County’s Native Plant Nursery; the recently completed wildlife bridge across Oracle Road protecting animals and motorists; the conservation of thousands of acres through the private development set aside; and much more.

**Established Environmental Education Programming serving over 30,000 participants annually**

Part of implementing the SDCP included the establishment of environmental education programming, with the principle goal of providing meaningful experiences to promote Sonoran Desert conservation, elevate environmental and cultural resource literacy, and encourage use of the County’s natural resource parks and conservation areas. Today, a skilled team of educators and dedicated volunteers provide a wide range of educational and interpretive opportunities to reach the broadest possible audience. The programming elements are divided into areas of interest that include: Park Interpretive Programs, School Programs, Youth and Family Programs, Adult and Volunteer Programs and Community Outreach. These Pima County programs reached 30,000 participants during Fiscal Year 2015/16, providing a variety of experiences for residents of all ages to enjoy and learn about the Sonoran Desert.

**Completed the Ed Pastor Kino Environmental Restoration Project, one of the largest water harvesting facilities in the West, providing irrigation for nearby ball fields and landscaping, saving taxpayers over $4 million to date in water purchases, preventing downstream flooding, and creating attractive wildlife habitat**

Pima County’s Kino Environmental Restoration Project (KERP), completed in 2001, addresses the water supply “feast or famine” dilemma that sometimes occurs in the desert. Originally a bare, flat bottomed pit, Congressionally-authorized funds, combined with funding from the Pima County Regional Flood Control District and Sewer Revenue Bonds, were spent to construct a multipurpose storm water retention system north of Pima County’s Kino Sports Complex. KERP covers 141 acres and includes constructed stream courses, five vegetation-lined ponds, flood control structures, and a section of The Loop. Not only does this innovative project prevent flooding downstream, it also harvests millions of gallons of stormwater each year, supporting dense riparian habitat and wildlife, and providing a source of water for irrigating the adjacent Kino Sports Complex ball fields and landscaping of public buildings and parks. In fact, without this source of water for irrigation, it is estimated Pima County would have to spend on average $350,000 per year on water; meaning that over the life of the facility, KERP has provided taxpayers a cumulative savings of over $4 million.

**Entered into a unique revenue sharing agreement with the J.W. Marriott Tucson Starr Pass Resort that is projected to generate over $10 million for improvements and expansion of Tucson Mountain Park, and has already funded acquisition of 750 acres and two new trailheads**

In 1998, plans to develop a world class resort on the eastern slopes of the Tucson Mountains threatened to further isolate native plants and wildlife in the 20,000-acre Tucson Mountain
Park from Tumamoc Hill, one of the longest studied ecological research sites in the world. Rather than reject this opportunity, Pima County and the developer entered into an innovative development agreement setting new standards for environmentally sensitive site development, as well as creating a long-term funding source to enhance the environment for the future. The result was development of the J.W. Marriott Tucson Starr Pass Resort in such a way that it complements the park. The developer dedicated 223 acres to expand the park and conserve biological corridors and committed to a 20-year cash flow to Pima County based on a percentage of resort revenues for the study of wildlife and expansion and enhancement of the park. These revenues began to flow in 2005 and will continue until 2025. To date, they have been used to acquire 750 acres of iconic saguaro-studded slopes and scenic vistas containing a myriad Sonoran Desert plants and wildlife, all of which are easily accessible from downtown Tucson. These revenues also have been used for a variety of projects, including two new trailheads, trails that connect the resort to the park’s more than 60-mile trail system, invasive species management, mountain lion surveys (at least six adult mountain lions use the park), interpretive signage and much more. This partnership demonstrates that unique opportunities can be developed through public-private cooperation and innovation.

Rehabilitated 40 historic buildings, built eight new miles of the historic Anza Trail along with three new trailheads, and acquired four priority archaeological sites with voter-approved County bonds and supplemental funds

We are well known as a region that celebrates our diverse cultural backgrounds and values our connections to the indigenous people who lived and farmed here over 2,000 years ago. Pima County as a governmental agency is no different. In fact, we have made it a priority to preserve and rehabilitate buildings that serve as outstanding examples of their historical era, as well as to protect and interpret archaeological sites that contain stories of the many ancestral groups that have called our region home. Largely with voter-approved bond funding from the 1997 and 2004 elections, Pima County has preserved and protected a wide range of buildings and cultural landscapes inside and outside of our cities and towns. Residents of Oro Valley are the beneficiaries of the County’s investment in acquiring and preserving Steam Pump Ranch – an original homestead in the area. Residents of Green Valley can now tour the historic Canoa Ranch headquarters, which is part of the remaining block of lands from the San Ignacio de la Canoa Spanish and Mexican land grant. Residents of north central Tucson have voters to thank for the preservation and rehabilitation of the Old Fort Lowell Officer Quarters and the San Pedro Chapel. Residents in Robles Junction now use the rehabilitated historic 1883 Robles Ranch House as a community center. These are only a few of Pima County’s investments in preserving and celebrating our region’s cultural heritage. The identification and incorporation of specific Priority Cultural Resources into the County’s comprehensive land use plan also has expanded opportunities for preservation as development of our community continues, respectful of those who came before us.
Business and Development

Made strategic investments to protect our existing major employers, Raytheon and Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, including land acquisition, infrastructure relocation and rezoning. Raytheon and Davis-Monthan Air Force Base (DMAFB) each have almost 10,000 employees in Pima County. It is critical for the economy of our region that these jobs remain here. As part of the effort to protect jobs at Raytheon, Pima County has been actively working to remove barriers to expansion. The County acquired 382 acres of property along its southern boundary, removing the threat of urban encroachment. The County then relocated Hughes Access Road to further buffer Raytheon’s production facilities. Regarding DMAFB, urban encroachment is a primary reason for base closures. In 2004, voters approved $10 million in County bonds to purchase land within the approach and departure corridors to prevent encroachment and incompatible land uses. As a result, the County acquired 18 parcels totaling over 460 acres. Also, Pima County, in partnership with the Arizona State Land Department, rezoned to compatible land uses all of the State Trust land in unincorporated Pima County within the approach and departure corridors, totaling 170 acres, as well as an additional 75 acres of private property.

Began building new opportunities for job growth through public infrastructure, County-owned business parks and tailor made office space, including the Sonoran Corridor, the Aerospace/Defense Research and Business Park, the Sunset Road Business Park, and economic development agreements with World View, Accelerate, and Caterpillar. Pima County is making available shovel-ready primary employment sites and underused County office space for sale or lease. The Sonoran Corridor is a multiyear initiative to improve air, rail and highway infrastructure around Tucson International Airport. The County’s Aerospace, Defense and Technology Business and Research Park is part of the Sonoran Corridor and includes 500 acres of available lots to address the increasing need for supply chain locations for the aerospace industry and other key sector industries. World View is a locally grown space technology company that is providing over 400 high-wage jobs in exchange for a lease-sale manufacturing headquarters building and construction of a County-owned space port, at the County’s Aerospace, Defense and Technology Business and Research Park. The Sunset Professional Campus is a Class A County-owned business park to be built adjacent to Interstate 10 to accommodate up to 1 million square feet of office space. Pima County made available wet-lab space at reduced lease rates within the County’s Abrams Health Center to attract Accelerate here from Denver in 2012. The company has since exceeded its job growth targets by 300 percent and now pays the County market lease rates for its space at Abrams. Pima County improved, and made available, a downtown County building as part of a larger incentive package to attract Caterpillar to locate its consolidated national and international locations of its Surface Mining and Technology Division here in 2016, bringing over 600 high-wage jobs to this community.
Developed the comprehensive OneStop workforce training and employer assistance centers, including the opening of the Kino Service Center and Rio Nuevo Center, which serve 14,000 workers and 700 employers annually

A skilled workforce is an essential component of business retention and expansion, and is a valuable incentive in attracting new companies to our region. Whether an individual is looking for work, changing careers, or exploring new career options, the Pima County One-Stop System connects job seekers – youth, adults, veterans and dislocated workers – to a network of employment, training and educational programs in Pima County. By offering high-quality services, referrals and training, One-Stop bridges the gap between employer and job seeker by connecting qualified applicants with job openings. Services are offered at three locations; the Kino One-Stop Center has been designated to assist workers who have been laid off (dislocated workers), the Rio Nuevo One-Stop Center serves adult job seekers, and the Youth Employment One-Stop Center assists youth.

Improved our building and site development permitting process with more effective and efficient reviews

For Fiscal Year 2015/16, 99 percent of building permit reviews were completed within 5 days, with an average review timeframe of 2 days per review. During this same period, 83 percent of site reviews were completed within 5 days, with an average review timeframe of 7 days. The County currently manages all planning and permitting records electronically and is in the process of making more development information available to the public via both our website and GIS tools.

Improved and adopted new development policies and regulations

New and improved development policies and regulations were adopted to promote design flexibility, support demands for multigenerational living, encourage the redevelopment of parking lot land, accommodate aging in place, spur adaptive reuse of commercial properties and simplify setback modifications.

Greatly reduced wildcat subdivisions, from 41 percent to 10 percent of new residential development, and the associated public health and safety issues

In the late 1990s, there was a significant increase in wildcat subdivisions, which are defined as lot splits and development occurring outside of the regulated subdivision process. This was directly in response to a change by the State Legislature that increased the number of legally allowable lot splits from three to five. This exacerbated not only legal lot splitting but also illegal lot splitting, occurring by those acting in concert with family and friends to circumvent subdivision laws. Development occurring in this unregulated fashion was not required to provide public infrastructure or comply with the public review process. Unregulated development occurring at this scale caused public health and safety issues for property owners, as well as emergency service providers. Elected officials were often
contacted by these property owners with requests to provide roads, drainage improvements and other public infrastructure, which would have been too costly to undertake after the fact. In addition, studies showed the types of communities made up of these wildcat subdivisions did not pay enough taxes to cover even one County service – Sheriff patrol services. In 1997, 41 percent of residential development was occurring outside of the regulated subdivision process. In 2005, the Board adopted the Minor Land Division review and permitting process, which enables the County to review lot splits before they are recorded to ensure they have legal and physical access, warn of flood issues and evaluate whether people are acting in concert to circumvent subdivision laws. This, as well as improvements to the entitlement and subdivision platting process, slowed to almost a stop the rampant lot-splitting industry. Today, 10 percent of residential development is occurring outside of the regulated subdivision process, down significantly from 1997.

**Improved the connection between land-use planning and development, and water resources and infrastructure**

In 2008, Pima County amended the Water Resources Element of the Comprehensive Plan to better measure and mitigate the impacts of proposed new development on water resources. This connection, and level of information, was then taken to a new level with completion of the City of Tucson/Pima County Water and Wastewater Infrastructure, Supply and Planning Study (WISP) and integration of its action items into the County’s Pima Prospers comprehensive plan and the City of Tucson’s Plan Tucson. Land use planning and development decision makers now have much more information provided to them to inform decisions on where and to what intensity future growth and development should occur considering the availability of renewable water resources and infrastructure.

**Water, Wastewater, Flood Control and Transportation**

**Completed a massive regulatory-driven upgrade and expansion of the County’s major wastewater reclamation facilities, resulting in effluent of near drinking water quality, expanding reclaimed water opportunities, improving groundwater infiltration rates, and supporting a healthier Lower Santa Cruz River with more diverse aquatic wildlife**

Pima County’s Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department (RWRD) completed implementation of the Regional Optimization Master Plan in 2014 under budget and ahead of schedule, with a total investment of $605 million. The County initiated this award-winning infrastructure project as a result of State and federal regulatory requirements and mandates to reduce nutrient pollutants in treated water discharged to the Santa Cruz River and used as a water source to irrigate numerous community parks and riparian areas. The County’s production of this valuable, high-quality water is vital to our community’s long-range water planning as we maximize existing supplies. This project also created a visibly different river, providing clearer and healthier water that is now beginning to support a variety of fish and other aquatic life not previously able to survive.
Negotiated an agreement with the City of Tucson that enabled delivery of Pima County’s reclaimed water through the City’s reclaimed system at a fraction of the previous cost and established the conservation effluent pool as an allocation of water to support riparian habitat.

As part of the 2000 Supplemental IGA between Pima County and the City of Tucson, the County’s reclaimed water is delivered to County facilities through the City of Tucson reclaimed water system. Twenty-three parks and 30 miles of river parks are irrigated with reclaimed water at one-third the standard reclaimed water rate charged by Tucson Water. The conservation effluent pool, yet to be allocated, ensures a reliable supply of renewable water to sustain riparian habitats in qualifying projects.

Completed a multiple phase, 20-year flood control project along six miles of the Arroyo Chico Wash in central Tucson that removed over 1,300 residences from the floodplain and included environmental restoration and recreational benefits.

Between 1996 and 2015, the Pima County Regional Flood Control District and the City of Tucson, in cooperation with the US Army Corps of Engineers, jointly undertook a multiphase flood control, environmental restoration and recreation project called the Tucson Drainage Area/Arroyo Chico Multiuse Project. The project area encompasses approximately six miles of the Arroyo Chico Wash from Alvernon Way to its confluence with the Santa Cruz River near St. Mary’s Road and included a total investment of over $72 million. Construction of a series of detention basins was designed in such a way to also serve as a topographically diverse public golf course, athletic fields, neighborhood scale recreational improvements and environmental restoration of degraded riparian ecosystem. On August 9, 2016, much of the Tucson metro area experienced intense rainfall, but, because of these detention basins, essentially no flood damage occurred within this area.

Completed additional flood control improvements with voter-approved bond funding.

Voter-approved bond funding also enabled construction of the Lower Santa Cruz Flood Control Levee along a 7.4-mile reach of the northern bank of the Santa Cruz River from Avra Valley Road to Sanders Road, removing a significant portion of the Town of Marana from the regulatory FEMA floodplain; construction of a regional retention/detention basin southwest of Kino and 36th Street facilitating future economic development at the UA Tech Park – The Bridges; construction of the Columbus Wash storm drain, removing 235 properties from the floodplain; as well as construction of bank protection along the Santa Cruz River in Continental Ranch, protecting the Wheeler Taft Abbett Sr. Library and Silverbell Park. Since the destructive floods of 1983, 1993, 2003 and 2006, the Regional Flood Control District and taxpayers have invested heavily in infrastructure improvements and land purchases to remove properties from flood prone areas.

Built more than 50 segments of roadway totaling 230 lane miles and completed more than 70 roadway safety projects with voter-approved bond funds that leveraged substantial other funding.
In 1997, Pima County voters approved $350 million in HURF bonds to be repaid with a portion of the County’s share of HURF revenues from the State, to widen and rebuild roadways throughout Pima County and within cities and towns. This funding has since leveraged more than $340 million in federal, state and local transportation funding; built more than 50 segments of roadway totaling over 230 lane miles; and completed more than 70 safety projects. These efforts have greatly relieved congestion that resulted from decades of rapid growth across eastern Pima County. Construction projects that have had a substantial effect on reducing traffic congestion include the completion of the River Road, Sunrise/Skyline, La Canada and La Cholla corridors.

**Emergency Response**

**Built and implemented with voter-approved bonds a new Regional Public Safety Communications System being used by 55 police, fire and other public safety agencies, facilitating real time interoperable communication during emergencies for the first time in Pima County**

In 2008, a 25-year-old man led police and Sheriff’s deputies on a car chase that began on the northwest side of Tucson and ended on the Mount Lemmon Highway, with one Tucson Police officer fatally wounded and two Pima County Sheriff’s deputies injured. Throughout that deadly chase, police and deputies were not able to communicate with each other on the same radio frequency. This incident highlighted a serious flaw in emergency communications that has now been corrected. The new Pima County Wireless Integrated Network (PCWIN) system enables 55 Public Safety and Public Service agencies from Tucson to Ajo, from Sahuarita to Mount Lemmon, and from the Rincon Valley to Avra Valley, to communicate by radio in real time on a single system, regardless of their jurisdictional boundaries. Funding for the system, which included new communication towers and radios, was approved by voters as part of the 2004 Pima County Bond Election.

**Constructed new and expanded Emergency Operations Centers with voter-approved bonds and other funds**

The new Pima Emergency Communications and Operations Center (PECOC) became operational in 2012. This facility houses the Pima County Emergency Operations Center, the Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, Pima County Sheriff’s dispatch and fire districts dispatch and serves as backup to the City of Tucson’s 911 operations. In 2014, renovations and upgrades to the City of Tucson’s Thomas Price Service Center were completed to meet current needs, as well as to serve as a backup for the County facility. These improvements were funded as part of the voter-approved 2004 bond program.

**Led the response to the 2003 Aspen Fire and worked collaboratively with private land owners to create a new development plan for rebuilding Summerhaven Village on Mount Lemmon**
In June 2003, the Aspen Fire on Mount Lemmon destroyed 324 homes and businesses. The coordinated response involved the following County departments: Assessor, Community Services, County Administration, Department of Environmental Quality, Development Services, Facilities Management, Finance and Risk Management, Regional Flood Control District, Information Technology, Office of Emergency Management, Public Works Administration, Sheriff, Transportation and Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department. Pima County’s response was commended in a letter from the Arizona Department of Emergency and Military Affairs:

“The State of Arizona…would like to compliment Pima County for pulling together their many departments and working together as a team to assist in the multiple recovery efforts. Pima County was very cooperative in coordinating their efforts with State and Federal Emergency Management personnel. This collaborative endeavor has been a very positive experience for all parties involved. Never before have we had an applicant so willing to participate in the full recovery process, from the Disaster Field Office and its many meetings to now, and truly be concerned for the welfare of their citizens.”

Justice and Law Enforcement

Reduced the number of juveniles detained by 80 percent and constructed new Juvenile Court Detention and Administration facilities with voter-approved bonds

The peak of juvenile crime occurred in the early to mid-1990s; and as a result, Pima County sought and received voter approval of bonds to fund a larger and more modern detention facility, which was completed between 1998 and 2000. Since then, the Juvenile Court has dramatically reduced detention of juveniles over the past 20 years without compromising the safety of the community. The Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) has used alternatives to detention for low-and-medium risk youth, resulting in a decrease in the number of juveniles held in detention from 3,599 in 2004 to 656 in 2015, and a reduction in the average daily population in detention from 173 in 2004 to 43 in 2015. Crime by juveniles (as measured by arrests) also declined during the same period. Alternatives to detention included the Domestic Violence Alternative Center (DVAC), which diverted 750 misdemeanor DV youth from detention in 2015, with most of those youth also diverted from the court process; and Supervised Diversion, through which youth are diverted from delinquency proceedings and placed on supervised diversion for 90 days with a contract ensuring consequences for their actions, school attendance, drug tests and home visits. About 120 youth are typically on supervised diversion on any given day. This and other work by the Juvenile Court keeps juveniles from penetrating deeper into the system, avoiding detention and ultimately avoiding future contact with the criminal justice system.

Constructed a new Adult Detention Facility, expanded Superior Court by 11 courtrooms, and constructed a new Public Service Center providing all Justice Court functions at one location for the first time in 18 years with voter-approved bonds and other funding
As juvenile crime peaked in the mid-1990s, the homicide rate was double what it is today; and violent crime in total was almost 50 percent higher than today. Additional arrests impacted not only the Pima County Jail, but the entire criminal justice system. In addition to the approval of significant bond funding for a new and expanded Juvenile detention facility and court complex, voters in 1997 also approved bonds for a new, much larger adult detention facility, additional courtrooms at Superior Court and additional Sheriff substations and facility improvements. In 2004, voters approved bonds for a new joint justice/municipal courts center downtown. Although the City of Tucson ultimately chose not to participate, the completed facility now houses all of the Justice Court functions at one location, as well as the Pima County Assessor, Recorder and Treasurer offices.

One of only 20 jurisdictions nationally selected in 2015 by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation to participate in the Safety & Justice Challenge to reduce unnecessary jail incarceration

In Phase I of the Safety & Justice Challenge, Pima County received a planning grant that supported a significant collaborative effort among all the participating agencies in the criminal justice system to develop a plan to reduce the average daily population of the jail to the lowest point in 20 years. With strong support from the Sheriff, who manages the jail, and the courts, the County’s plan is expected to reduce its jail population by the year 2019 by 26 percent from the 2014 baseline numbers. The strategies being implemented will 1) divert individuals with mental health and substance abuse problems to treatment instead of jail, 2) prevent and resolve arrest warrants for individuals who fail to appear for court hearings, and 3) use home detention with electronic/GPS monitoring for appropriate nonviolent, low-risk felony offenders who have been sentenced to jail as a condition of probation (many of whom are already eligible for work release each day). The County is one of only 11 jurisdictions selected for the Phase II implementation funding by MacArthur, receiving $1.5 million over the next two years.

Created the Justice Coordinating Council

The Justice Coordinating Council (JCC) is a 24-member multi-jurisdictional group that works to improve the system of justice throughout the County by providing a forum for coordination and information sharing among the various justice system agencies. The JCC also regularly reviews implementation activities and progress of the jail reduction strategies associated with the Safety & Justice Challenge.

General Government

Completed over 700 bond projects with over $1.4 billion in voter-approved bond funding, resulting in significant investments in this community’s infrastructure, providing tremendous benefit to the everyday lives of our residents and visitors, and creating thousands of construction-related jobs.
Four voter-approved bond programs in 1997, 2004 and 2006 resulted in the completion of over 700 capital improvement projects located throughout Pima County, including within cities and towns. As highlighted under other achievements, these projects included new and improved libraries, community centers, parks and trails, health and medical facilities, affordable housing, justice and law enforcement facilities, historic preservation, roads, wastewater facilities, flood control improvements and much more. The County’s share of HURF monies are used to repay the transportation bond debt, sewer fees are used to repay the sewer debt, and property taxes are used to repay the general obligation bonds used to fund the remainder of the projects. A 2013 audit of the County’s general obligation bond programs by the State Auditor General’s office found that the County’s bond programs were a unique collaborative effort between the County and its cities, towns and tribes; bond proceeds were used for the purposes authorized by voters; and the projects benefited citizens throughout Pima County. Pima County’s conservative approach to debt management is reflected in its superior credit ratings and low interest rates. Our bonds are sold with no more than a 15-year payback, with 90 percent repaid within 10 years. Oversight of the bond program includes an active 25-member citizen’s committee appointed by each city and town, the two Native American tribal governments, the Board and the County Administrator.

Established a model for capital project delivery that has been adopted by other governmental agencies in Pima County, Phoenix and Texas

With voter-approval of bond programs in 1997, Pima County was faced with a massive influx of capital dollars and the need for tight project delivery timeframes, improved financial controls and transparent reporting. A 2002 audit of our 1997 transportation program highlighted the challenges we had been facing. Since then, Pima County has established a project delivery process and manual that provides structure and guidance to project delivery staff. Key elements in the process include Gate meetings to monitor project progress and improved reporting tools to better track project performance. The County established the Capital Improvement Project Advisory Council, made up of project delivery staff and staff with procurement and financial expertise, as a self-directed work team to train and mentor project managers at no additional cost to the County. The end result is improved project delivery and performance. Pima County’s results and rigor in applying the process have not gone unnoticed. The Regional Transportation Authority now uses the same process for delivering its voter-approved projects. Other jurisdictions as near as Queen Creek and the City of Phoenix, and as far away as cities in Texas, have also adopted the Pima County model for their capital program delivery.

Successfully implemented budget strategies and organizational changes to prepare for and weather the Great Recession without increasing the tax burden on the local economy and grew the General Fund Budget Reserve from zero in FY1996/97 to $61 million today

While the Great Recession immediately affected sales tax revenues in 2008, Pima County’s main source of revenue is the property tax, and it was not until 2010 the property tax base
shrank dramatically. During this two-year preparation period, Pima County increased the County fund balance, providing a sufficient revenue base to weather the recession without increasing the tax burden on the local economy. This deliberate budget strategy avoided significant fluctuations in County services while the tax base shrank by more than 16 percent and tax revenues by 7 percent. At the same time, the County developed and implemented numerous initiatives to address redundancy and improve efficiency. We centralized internal services to increase efficiency and reduce cost. We reduced the workforce, primarily through normal attrition. We re-evaluated priorities and nearly eliminated items of discretionary spending, such as travel. We incrementally reduced department and agency budgets over time through a managed, thoughtful process. The cumulative effect of these departmental budget reductions was substantial. General Fund-supported departments were reduced 11.5 percent, except the Sheriff’s Department, which was reduced only 2.5 percent. For the first time in several years, the primary property tax base in Pima County increased in Fiscal Year 2015/16 by 1.36 percent and is expected to see modest increases for the next few years.

Pima County’s long-range budget strategy going forward is to grow the tax base through economic development activities.

**Implemented cost control of employee medical coverage by moving to self-insurance, transitioning to a High Deductible Health Plan, and promoting an award winning health and wellness program, resulting in the avoidance of over $44 million in premium cost increases in just the first three years**

Starting in 2013, Pima County initiated a three-pronged effort to take control of soaring employee healthcare costs. This included moving to self-insurance, transitioning to a High Deductible Health Plan with health savings accounts, and promoting health and wellness through employee incentives and programs. Two years’ prior, County employees and, ultimately, taxpayers had to pay 18 and 19 percent increases in healthcare premiums. The changes put in place instead led to more manageable and predictable healthcare costs and made our employees better consumers, which ultimately led to lower medical costs for themselves, as well as the taxpayers that support these benefit costs. The County also succeeded in building a healthy trust fund reserve of over $21 million to manage the risk associated with self-insurance. In 2015, Pima County received the highest honor of recognition from the Wellness Council of Arizona and National Partnership for Wellness for our ongoing Employee Wellness Program: The Official Gold Seal of Good Health Keeping Award.

**Developed and implemented the Sustainability Action Plan for Pima County Operations, saving over $7 million in energy costs, significantly reducing energy use, and investing in solar renewable energy, alternative fuel vehicles, water conservation, waste reduction and sustainable building practices**

On May 1, 2007, the Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution 2007-84, establishing a far-reaching set of sustainability initiatives, paving the way for the development and adoption of the 5-Year Sustainable Action Plan for County Operations in August 2008 and the next
edition in 2014. These plans represent a systematic approach to integrating the goals of sustainability into virtually all facets of the way Pima County government operates—from the cars we drive, to the energy and water we consume, to the construction of our buildings, to the products we purchase, to the way in which we view and handle our “used” materials. Through the implementation of these plans, as well as others undertaken as a result of the Board resolution, Pima County strives to set an example for other communities desiring to achieve a high quality of life for their residents, protect their natural and cultural heritage and provide meaningful economic opportunities. By the end of the first 5-year plan, the County had saved $7 million in energy costs; brought 7 megawatts of renewable energy online; increased the number of alternative fuel vehicles in the Sheriff’s Department’s fleet by 51 percent; installed 16 electric vehicle charging stations at 8 key locations within the community for the public; acquired 27,000 acres of land for open space conservation; restored almost 500 acres of riparian habitat throughout Pima County using renewable, drought-proof water resources; increased the number of County parks served by reclaimed water by 120 percent; increased the purchase of recycled paper to 70 percent of all paper purchases; and increased the proportion of office supply dollars spent on ecofriendly products by 276 percent over the baseline. More than 200 employee volunteers have participated in the development and implementation of the plan.

Privatized the County’s landfill operations

Effective June 1, 2013, Pima County entered into a contract with Tucson Recycling & Waste Services (TRWS) to operate the County’s landfills and transfer stations. Over the five years’ prior, a number of factors, including new private landfill development, resulted in the County’s solid waste operations requiring subsidies that were nearing $2 million annually. Prior to that, fees fully covered the cost of services. In addition, the County’s landfills at Tangerine and Sahuarita were nearing available capacity. Faced with this reality, the County instead chose to privatize solid waste operations. Privatization has allowed the County to continue to provide solid waste disposal and recycling services to area residents. The Sahuarita Landfill was replaced with a transfer station at no cost to the County; the Tangerine Landfill is undergoing closure at a cost 50 percent less than originally estimated due to free cover material from TRWS. Recycling was added at the Ajo Landfill; and hours of operations either stayed the same or expanded at all facilities (except the closed Tangerine Landfill). All solid waste staff were either hired by TRWS or were offered positions elsewhere within the County.

Spearheaded successful efforts at the State level that resulted in $15 million more to Pima County in HURF revenues and $10 million in savings for long-term care payments.

In 1996, Pima County spearheaded the effort to more equitably distribute gas tax to Arizona counties. An increased percentage of vehicle license tax added to the county distribution base resulted in $15 million more to Pima County and increases to the majority of other counties as well. Pima County’s 2017 legislative agenda includes additional equity-based reforms to further increase county shares of HURF revenues. In 1997, Pima County led the
effort to equitably distribute the cost of the county long-term care payments. This resulted in an almost $10 million per year savings to Pima County taxpayers.

**Avoided $32 million in state cost transfers for public education, through successful litigation**

In 2015, the State Legislature ended a 35-year practice of the State paying what was known as Additional Aid to Education to school districts. This Additional Aid was paid to school districts located in geographic areas where the combined property taxes of all taxing entities exceeded a constitutional cap of one percent of the taxable value of a property. For Pima County, this largely impacted Pima County and Tucson Unified School District (TUSD), and meant Pima County would have to levy property taxes on homeowners outside of TUSD to pay TUSD’s public education expenses previously funded by the State. Pima County challenged the law in Maricopa Superior Court; and in 2016, the Court found the law that required this property tax transfer from the State to the counties to be unconstitutional.

**Developed an award-winning Procurement Department placing in the top 1 percent of member agencies**

Pima County’s Procurement Department has received the annual Achievement of Excellence in Procurement and the triennial Outstanding Agency Accreditation Achievement Award every year since 2005. The Outstanding Agency Award is given to less than 1 percent of the 2,600 member agencies. These recognitions are earned by demonstrating a strong foundation in procurement principles, while utilizing best practices and implementing technology solutions. In 2002, the County revamped procurement processes, which included a rewrite of code, policies and procedures. This effort was followed by an upgrade of staff competency, process mapping, development of templates and standard forms, training of County staff and metrics implementation. The Department transformed from a complete paper process to an electronic process. Today, with a Countywide web-based system, the entire process is visible to Procurement staff and County employees. Solicitation notices are emailed to vendors who register electronically. Solicitations and results are posted on the Internet, resulting in reduced costs and improved efficiencies.

**Committed to election integrity through continual review and improvements in election security and transparency**

During this time period, Pima County has gone beyond what is required to provide political parties the ability to confirm election outcomes and to provide interested members of the public the ability to review and recommend improvements to ballot counting processes and security. Before State law required hand count audits, political parties were already conducting their own random sample hand counts to ensure that electronic tabulation equipment operated effectively. Now, the County’s procedure includes the hand counting of twice as many ballots as required by State law; no other Arizona county hand counts as many ballots. Electronic election databases continue to be provided after each election to political parties to confirm the integrity of the vote counts. Vote tabulation hardware and
ballot processing is housed in a locked room and is conducted under live video surveillance streamed live on the internet. The tabulation system is not connected to the internet, nor is there wireless internet access from the tabulation room. The Elections Department has implemented additional facility and process modifications, electronic counter measures, and training and staffing improvements to improve election security and transparency. Finally, no other Arizona county has an Election Integrity Commission (EIC). The EIC, which first met in 2008, advises the Board of Supervisors on matters regarding Pima County elections, continually reviews election procedures, and its members have participated in procuring elections equipment.

**Embraced transparency by becoming one of most transparent governments in the State of Arizona with a ranking of A-**

Sunshine Review, a government openness watchdog now part of Ballotpedia.org, rated Pima County an A- for transparency in 2013. For comparison purposes, the Arizona State Government received a C. When the County updated its website in 2011, we fully embraced making as many records as possible accessible to the public online. Among the items the public can find on the County website: Board agendas and meeting minutes dating back to 1940; 121 financial-related reports describing in various levels of detail the County’s financial position and its financial activities for the previous 18 years; County Administrator memoranda and correspondence dating to 2013; County rules, procedures and policies; new development applications and inspection reports; and health and safety inspection reports. There are literally tens of thousands of pages of information about County government available online. Additionally, the County uploads all of its financial transactions to the State’s OpenBooks.gov site so the public can review every dollar spent by the County. The Finance Department has received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association for 19 of the past 20 years and budget excellence awards for 18 years.

**Pima County employees have donated $7.8 million to charitable organizations through the annual Employee Combined Appeal Campaign program administered by United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona**

Pima County makes it easy for its employees to support charitable organizations that have made a difference in their lives and the lives of others in our community. Each year, County employees are asked to consider donating to any of more than 200 organizations through the Employee Combined Appeal Program. The program is administered by the United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona. Over the past 20 years, Pima County employees have donated over $7.8 million to charitable organizations in our community, including the County’s Ending Poverty Now Initiative.