



---

# MEMORANDUM

---

Date: September 19, 2014

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

From: C.H. Huckelberry  
County Administrator

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "CHH", is written over the printed name "C.H. Huckelberry".

Re: **Future Regional Orientation Center Investment**

Pima County has worked with a variety of interest groups over the past several years to further the Regional Orientation Center (Center) development. The Center's concept currently has numerous partners, including the Western National Parks Association, Visit Tucson, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Forest Service, US Bureau of Land Management, The University of Arizona, Rio Nuevo and the City of Tucson. Significant research has been completed to advance the Center's concept, and work continues on the economic impact of these types of facilities. The Center will be the focal point of downtown development west of the Santa Cruz River.

The City and Rio Nuevo also proposed significant environmental restoration along the Santa Cruz River from Starr Pass Boulevard to Grant Road. These improvements are supported by the Riverpark Enhancement Initiative undertaken by Pima County in 2012. The proposed Regional Orientation Center will be the gateway to our community's most valued environmental assets, including Tumamoc Hill, Sentinel Peak and Tucson Mountain Park. As such, a separate bond project is proposed for these improvements.

To support these two projects, the Tucson Mayor and Council will review a package of options to provide in-kind contributions, thus ensuring economic viability and increasing attractiveness to the Bond Advisory Committee. The attached memorandum will be discussed at the September 23, 2014 Mayor and Council Study Session. The City's in-kind contribution to these projects includes:

1. Conveying a five-acre portion of the City-owned Tucson Origins Heritage Park to Pima County for the Regional Orientation Center (Center) and festival area, which includes the cultural connections support, outdoor amphitheater space, and river park connections; subject to voter approval of the bond funds.
2. Accepting, at no cost to the County, all removed landfill material from the five-acre site at the Los Reales Landfill. This acceptance includes City fees, as well as those for the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality.

The Honorable Chair and Members, Pima County Board of Supervisors  
Re: **Future Regional Orientation Center Investment**  
September 19, 2014  
Page 2

3. Specifying that future development in the surrounding Tucson Origins Heritage Park (Park) will maintain the viewsheds to Tumamoc Hill and the Catalina Mountains and allow the Center to function as the gateway to the Park.
4. Coordinating parking development adjacent to the Center to coincide with the Center's opening.
5. Providing water meter connections associated with the river park enhancements.
6. Providing all necessary reclaimed water at no cost for the same improvements.

The Regional Orientation Center provides a significant economic impact to the Westside Downtown Development effort. This Center creates the nucleus of the cultural and heritage area that includes the Covento site, Mission Gardens, and the Carrillo House. It will become the gateway to some of the region's richest biodiversity areas. The Regional Orientation Center and the associated river park enhancements may prove to be the catalyst needed to advance the region's longstanding desire for a vibrant and sustainable downtown area.

CHH/mjk

Attachment

c: John Bernal, Deputy County Administrator for Public Works  
Nanette Slusser, Assistant County Administrator for Policy, Public Works



---

# MAYOR & COUNCIL MEMORANDUM

---

September 23, 2014

Subject: Update on Process for Development of City-Owned Land West of I-10, South of Cushing Street (Ward 1) Page 1 of 6

Issue – Per direction from the Mayor and Council at the May 10, 2014 Study Session, staff has been conducting the Phase 1 - Due Diligence process for development of the 27.6\*acres of City-owned land adjacent to the western terminus of the Streetcar line south of Cushing Street, and is now returning with an update and request for direction.

City Manager's Office Recommendation – It is recommended that Mayor and Council approve the following: 1) convey a five-acre portion of the site to Pima County for a Regional Orientation Center (ROC) and festival area within Tucson Origins Heritage Park, subject to voter approval of Pima County Bond funds for this purpose; 2) City commitments associated with the ROC and the County's proposed downtown river park bond project as detailed in this memorandum under Current Considerations; and 3) the proposed public outreach, technical assistance, and stakeholder coordination plan for Phase 2.

Background – The City owns 27.6 acres of vacant land adjacent to the western terminus of the Streetcar line, south of Cushing Street. The property is bounded by Cushing Street on the north, the Santa Cruz River on the east, Mission Lane on the south, and Barrio San Agustín on the west, (see Attachment A, previously submitted on May 20, 2014). The Tucson Origins Heritage Park (TOHP) is included in this area (see Attachment B, previously submitted on May 20, 2014). To the north of Cushing Street, the City is in a development agreement with the Gadsden Company. To the south, the property is owned by the Rio Nuevo District, and Pima County owns the Mission Garden site.

On February 24, 2014, the Mayor and Council directed staff to work with the Urban Land Institute (ULI) stakeholder group, City departments, and City Council to outline a process to move forward with the sale of City-owned land on the west side of I-10, south of Cushing Street, and codifying cultural components. The Council directed the process to include: 1) an analysis of the highest and best use of land development that keeps pace with the timing of the streetcar, 2) an analysis of the highest and best use for the implementation of Rio Nuevo cultural components, including a process for proceeds from sales of land to be directed toward cultural facilities, 3) pre-development planning with stakeholders; Rio Nuevo funding for Mission Garden, based on the \$1.1 million committed; and other cultural facilities, prioritization and scoping of county bond funds (not to be prioritized above other critical needs and projects) for west side investments, including a visitor center and parking garage.

On May 10, 2014 the Mayor and Council endorsed a three-phase process to include:

SS/SEP23-14-191

Update on Process for Development of City-Owned Land West of I-10, South of Cushing Street (Ward 1)

1. Phase 1 (April – September 2014) – Due Diligence - a detailed review of existing plans and guidance documents, further analysis of existing conditions, individual meetings with stakeholders and neighbors, extensive coordination with other projects and investments, and a public stakeholder and project discussion meeting.
2. Phase 2 (September 2014 – January 2015) – Develop RFQ/RFP
3. Phase 3 (February 2015 – December 2015) – Issue RFQ/RFP, Select Developer, Negotiate Agreement

Project Update - Since May, the following activities have taken place:

- *Project team:* Elaine Becherer was designated as Project Manager; Office of Integrated Planning (OIP) Project Team was established (see Attachment C – Project Organization Chart)
- *ULI Westside Subcommittee Meeting:* held August 19, 2014 – discussed Regional Orientation Center and downtown river park concepts (subcommittee includes Council Member Romero (Ward I), City staff, a representative from Supervisor Elias' office, Menlo Park Neighborhood, Friends of Tucson's Birthplace, Rio Nuevo District, Pima County, Western National Parks Association, and University of Arizona).
- *Individual stakeholder meetings:* Elaine Becherer held 12 individual meetings with all key stakeholders listed on Project Organization Chart (Attachment C). Providing consistent information to stakeholders and developing a working relationship with stakeholders were goals of the meetings. Stakeholders commented on the following items: lack of consistent information regarding City and adjacent properties, concerns regarding neighborhood improvements, previous City/Rio Nuevo commitments, and follow-through/execution of the overall Phase 1 and Phase 2 process.
- *Public stakeholder meeting:* City staff held a project update and discussion meeting on August 27, 2014 that approximately 50 stakeholders and neighbors attended. Pima County, Rio Nuevo, Visit Tucson, Western National Parks Association, and Gadsden all attended this meeting. Pima County presented the Regional Orientation Center proposed project and Rio Nuevo gave an update on their property at the meeting. At this meeting, stakeholders voiced unanimous support for the ROC and downtown river park bond project.
- *Pima County Bond projects:* City staff held multiple meetings with Pima County, Pima County Regional Flood Control District, Rio Nuevo District, and Tucson Water to develop the concepts for the downtown river park and the ROC projects.
- *Landfill:* OIP staff is working with Environmental Services (ES) staff to determine approximate cost estimates to remove, haul and backfill the landfills found at the 6.46 acre site to the east of Barrio San Agustín, the five-acre site to the immediate south of the streetcar line, and the additional five acres to the east of the Mission Complex. In addition, ES is assisting with landfill tipping fees estimates and monitoring well locations. Staff has also identified outside technical and market expertise that can be brought in Phase 2 to determine the best methods for developing the property.

- *Parking:* Regarding the underground parking lot originally planned for the “brickyard site,” staff reviewed original construction drawings, met with TDOT staff to evaluate current status of the excavated area (which has been partially backfilled), and met with ParkWise staff to discuss future parking needs and financing methods for structured parking in the area.
- *Coordination with Rio Nuevo District:* City staff held multiple meetings with Rio Nuevo District regarding the District’s plans for its lands south of Mission Lane; and its possible financial support for neighborhood improvements within or adjacent to Barrio San Agustín, tree planting/landscaping around its property perimeter, and a proposed re-creation of a flowing acequia (canal) between Mission Garden and the Santa Cruz River on the south side of Mission Lane.

Current Considerations –

*Proposed County Bond Projects –* Two bond projects are proposed by Pima County, the Regional Orientation Center (ROC) and the downtown river park, which affect this area. These projects are shown on Attachment D, Phase I Concept Map.

The proposed ROC is a five-acre site within the eastern portion of the greater Tucson Origins Heritage Park (TOHP) that would be developed and owned by Pima County and jointly managed by the County, the Western National Parks Association, and other partners, both as a regional visitor center and the entrance to TOHP. Comprehensive information about the project can be found in the ROC’s Pima County Bond Project Sheet (Attachment E), and in presentations on the ROC concept from Pima County (Attachment F) and Western National Parks Association (Attachment G).

The proposed downtown river park project would involve a number of improvements to both banks of the Santa Cruz River Park between Starr Pass Boulevard and Grant Road (see Pima County Bond Project Sheet, Attachment H) Improvements would include upgrades to Pima County’s Urban Loop system, installation/upgrades of irrigation systems, and extensive planting of native vegetation. Between Starr Pass and Congress Street, the project would include a higher density and diversity of plantings, as well as water harvesting, to provide restoration of riparian habitat as well as recreation. The project would also include native tree plantings along Mission Lane between the Santa Cruz River and Mission Road. Between Congress Street and Grant Road, the project would add plantings and upgrade irrigation systems in the existing river park to increase shade and improve aesthetics.

These two projects, totaling more than \$18 million, present the best near-term opportunity to secure major public funding to invest in the area surrounding (and including) the City’s lands. If the projects are ultimately funded, they would help increase the value, functionality, and development potential for these properties, as well as implement elements of the TOHP Master Plan. It is expected that the commitment for these public investments would decrease risk and increase the attractiveness of the area for private development.

If the projects are supported by the Mayor and Council, Pima County has committed to the following:

- Construct, operate, and maintain the Regional Orientation Center, including:
  - Construction of a facility of regional architectural significance to serve as the ROC
  - Mitigation (complete excavation and filling) of all landfill on the five-acre site
  - Construction/operation/maintenance of a publicly accessible gathering space for TOHP (indicated as Festival Area on TOHP plan)
  - Operation of ROC as entrance and interpretation area for the TOHP (Mission Garden, Carrillo House, Mission Complex, Mission Lane)
- Construct, operate, and maintain all improvements to the Santa Cruz River Park and Mission Lane as detailed in Attachment I. The approximate location of the improvements is indicated in dark green in Attachment D, Phase 1 Concept Map.

Pima County has requested the following commitments from the City:

- Signed contract with Pima County for the transfer of land (five-acre site) with deed in escrow, providing for closing contingent on successful bond election. The proposed site, shown in Attachment D, Phase 1 Concept Map was determined by all parties to be optimal for a number of reasons, including:
  - consistency of the ROC site and festival area with the Tucson Origins Heritage Park (TOHP) plan; (see attachment B, Tucson Origins Heritage Park Plan)
  - adjacency of the site to other elements of TOHP (Mission Complex and Scukson interpretive area), allowing the ROC to function as the entrance and orientation center for the TOHP, and providing appropriate type and scale of development adjacent to these cultural facilities;
  - access from the site to the Santa Cruz River Park, Urban Loop, and Mission Lane, providing connectivity between these natural/cultural/recreational amenities;
  - locating the ROC on the portion of City-owned lands outside the Central Business District, leaving GPLET-eligible lands open for private development (see Attachment D, Phase 1 Concept Map);
  - establishing a funding source for constructing and maintaining these elements of the TOHP.
- Provision of parking for the ROC to coincide with opening of the orientation center. Ultimately, a parking garage would need to be built by the City or future developer to provide parking for the ROC, TOHP, and private development (see Attachment D, Phase 1 Concept Map). A location for surface parking may need to be identified in the interim.
- Commitment to pay for Tucson Water meter connections associated with the downtown river park and ROC irrigation systems. This would involve the installation of several new 2" water meters and associated minor extensions, estimated to total \$20,000 to \$40,000.

- Commitment to provide and pay for water resources associated with ongoing irrigation of the downtown river park and ROC.
  - River park between Starr Pass Boulevard and Congress Street, and Mission Lane: the City would seek approval for use of Conservation Effluent Pool (CEP) reclaimed water resources on an ongoing basis for the ROC and river park segment between Starr Pass and Congress. Current cost of CEP water is approximately \$300 per acre-foot (af). Under this scenario, water costs for irrigation are estimated at \$21,000/year (70 af/year \* \$300/af).
  - River park between Congress Street and Grant Road: The City is currently responsible for irrigation for the majority of this section of river park, and pays the full reclaimed water rate (\$800/af). The County's bond proposal calls for adding vegetation to this segment, which would incrementally increase the City's costs. The total ongoing cost to the City for irrigation of this segment is estimated to be \$48,000/year (60 af/year \* \$800/af).
- Pima County has requested that views be preserved from the Regional Orientation Center to Tumamoc Hill and to the Catalina Mountains. City staff believes this can be accommodated by proper siting of ROC on the five acres, rather than through restrictions on development on the surrounding parcels. A cooperative approach with the County is recommended that does not explicitly place limits on adjacent development at this time.
- The five-acre proposed ROC site contains a closed landfill. Pima County has requested that the City accept all removed landfill at the Los Reales Landfill and waive tipping fees and the state environmental fee of 25 cents per ton.

*Phase 2 Proposed Process* (September 2014 – January 2015) – Develop Request for Qualifications/Proposals (RFQ/RFP)

The Phase 2 process is proposed to include four major components:

1. Execute contract (under \$50,000) and begin work with International Risk Group Advisors, LLC (IRG), a firm that specializes in redeveloping environmental impaired properties, on the 14.3 acres adjacent to the streetcar line intended for private mixed-use development (see red-hatched portion of Attachment D). IRG will assist the City with a highest and best use analysis of realistic development scenarios considering the landfill and floodplain issues on the site. They will also assist with identification of funding mechanisms and structures to construct cultural components, to remediate landfill, and to construct parking and other needed infrastructure (e.g. improvement or community facilities district).

2. Conduct formal stakeholder review and input process that will include dedicated meetings regarding the cultural components (Tucson Origins Heritage Park) and meetings regarding the future private mixed use development. Approaches to codifying, funding, and phased development of the cultural components will also be discussed.
3. Conduct land survey to establish property boundaries; potentially subdivide or re-plat land per survey results. Complete Infill Incentive District amendments to establish zoning, regulations, design requirements, and design review requirements for the property.
4. Incorporate the above into the drafting of an RFQ/RFP document and a proposal solicitation process and return to Mayor and Council for review and direction.

Financial Considerations – The majority of the work described above is being done in-house by City staff. The cost of the IRG contract will be approximately \$45,000, which will primarily be covered by Environmental Services brownfields funding. In future years, subject to the two bond projects being ratified by voters, the financial commitments required of the City will kick in.

Legal Considerations – The City Attorney's Office will assist and advise staff in all phases of the process outlined above.

Respectfully submitted,



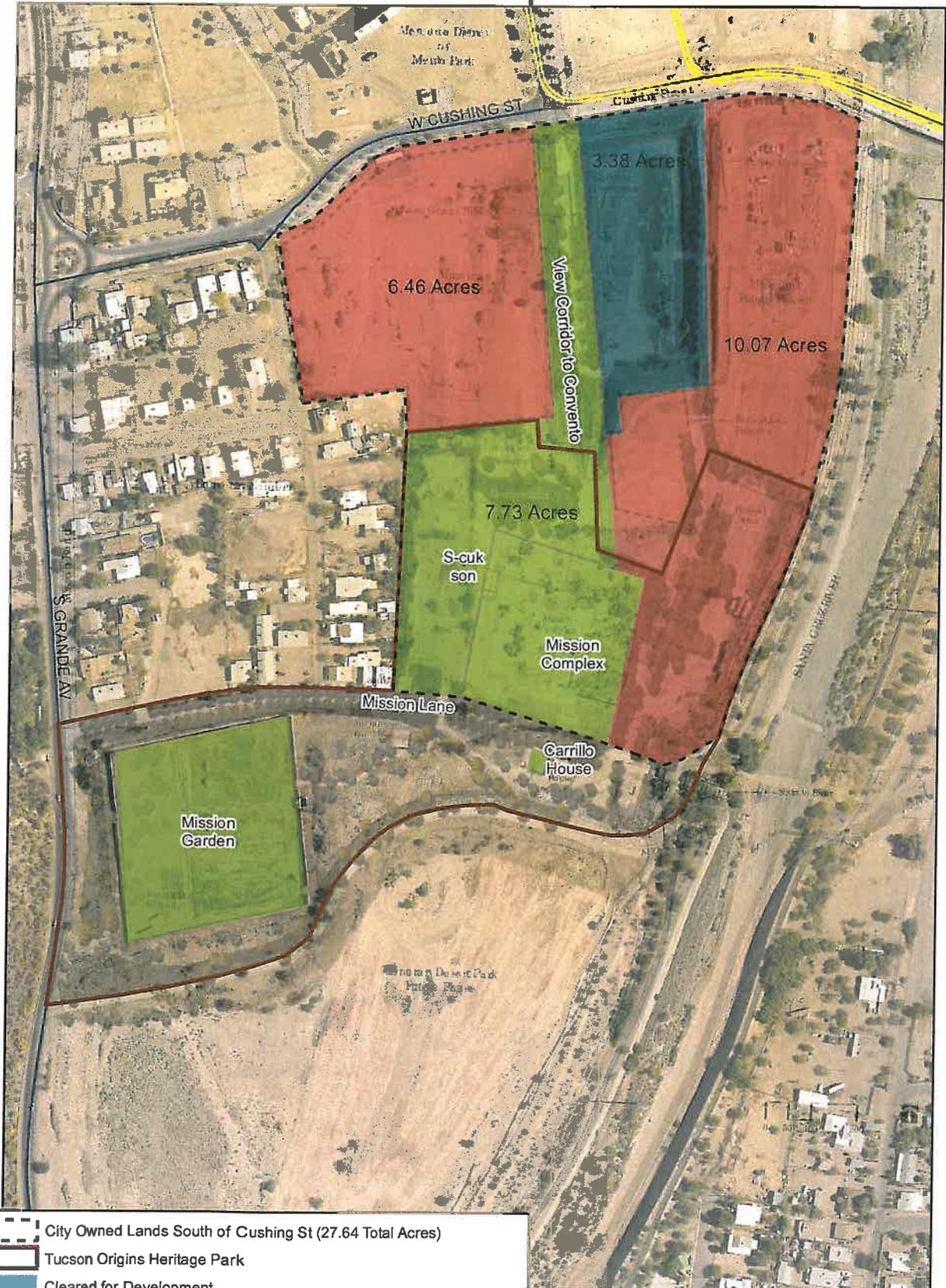
Martha Durkin  
City Manager

MD:NEG/EB

**Attachment:**

- A – Map of Westside Lands South of Cushing St.
- B – Tucson Origins Heritage Park Plan
- C – Westside Development Project Organizational Chart
- D – Phase 1 Concept Map
- E – Pima County Bond Project Sheet – Regional Orientation Center
- F – Pima County Presentation on Regional Orientation Center
- G – Western National Parks Association Presentation on Regional Orientation Center
- H – Pima County Bond Project Sheet – Downtown River Park Redevelopment

# Westside Properties



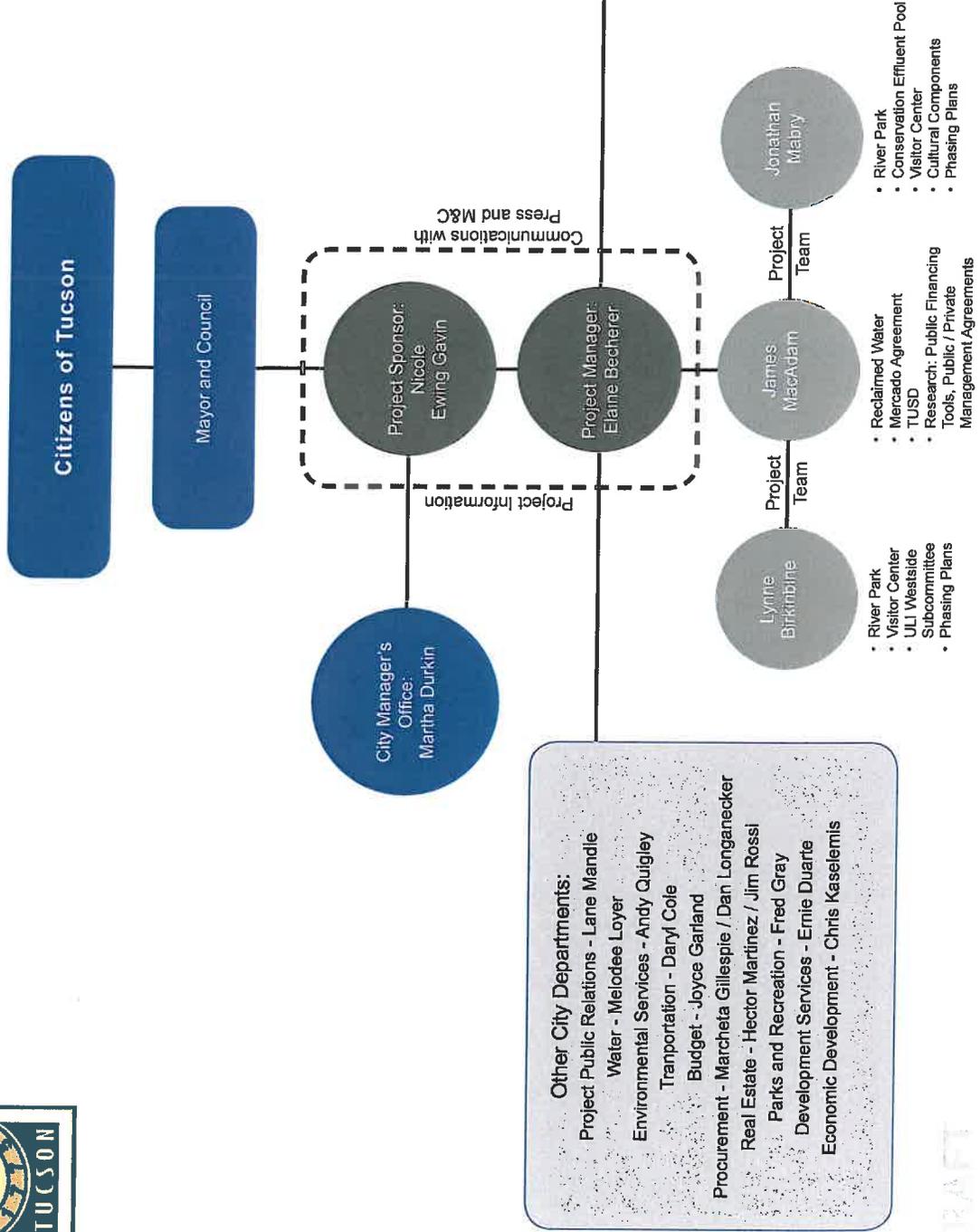
-  City Owned Lands South of Cushing St (27.64 Total Acres)
-  Tucson Origins Heritage Park
-  Cleared for Development
-  Defined Cultural Elements
-  Further Archaeology & Environmental Clearance Needed if Developed
-  Modern Streetcar





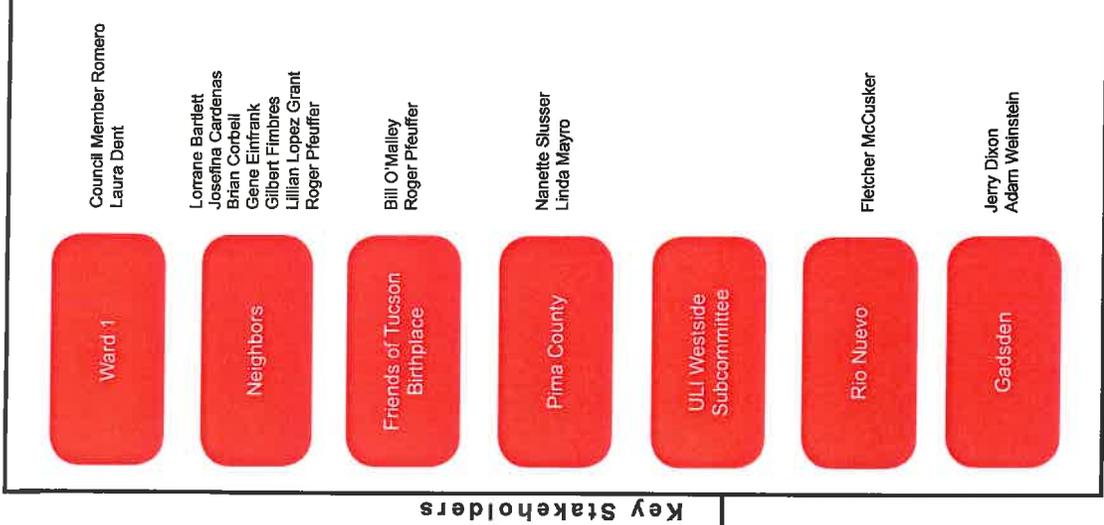


# WESTSIDE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT ORGANIZATION CHART



- Other City Departments:**
- Project Public Relations - Lane Mandie
  - Water - Melodee Loyer
  - Environmental Services - Andy Quigley
  - Transportation - Daryl Cole
  - Budget - Joyce Garland
  - Procurement - Marcheta Gillespie / Dan Longanecker
  - Real Estate - Hector Martinez / Jim Rossi
  - Parks and Recreation - Fred Gray
  - Development Services - Ernie Duarte
  - Economic Development - Chris Kaselemis

- River Park
- Visitor Center
- ULI Westside Subcommittee
- Phasing Plans
- Reclaimed Water
- Mercado Agreement
- TUSD
- Research: Public Financing Tools, Public / Private Management Agreements
- River Park
- Conservation Effluent Pool
- Visitor Center
- Cultural Components
- Phasing Plans



# Phase 1 Concept Map



- Potential Regional Orientation Center and Festival Area
- City Owned Lands South of Cushing St.
- Tucson Origins Heritage Park Master Plan
- Defined Cultural Elements
- Future Private Mixed Use
- Pima County Bond Project - River Park Reforestation
- Additional Areas of Reforestation
- Central Business District
- Modern Streetcar

0 170 340 680 Feet

Created: 4/9/14 NR  
 Edited: 8/29/14 MB



Department: Economic Development/ Facilities Management  
Date: 4/19/2013

2015 Bond Election Proposed Projects Template

Project Name: Southern Arizona Regional Orientation Center

Location: West side of Santa Cruz River near Tumamoc Hill

Scope: Create a Regional Orientation Center along the Santa Cruz River near Tumamoc Hill - including land acquisition, environmental remediation, planning, design, and construction of a facility and related infrastructure that may include indoor space for exhibits, educational programs, auditorium, gift shop, offices, and outdoor cultural plaza. The Center will showcase our region's many natural, cultural, and science based attractions and serve as the gateway to understanding the very origins of Tucson, located at the base of Sentinel Peak between Tumamoc Hill and the Santa Cruz River. This is one of Pima County's most beautiful and historic landmarks, where native people lived and practiced agriculture for more than 4,000 years ago and where Fr. Kino in 1694 encountered the Piman village of "Stjuckshon," giving Tucson its name. With Tumamoc Hill as the backdrop, this Center will be located on 5 acres of land on the west bank of the Santa Cruz River and will provide the opportunity to encourage visitation to attractions in Tucson, the Santa Cruz Valley and southern Arizona, and it will provide visitors and residents alike a one-stop point of access to information about educational opportunities, activities, and information related to these destinations.

Benefits: Development of a regional orientation center sited on the Santa Cruz River near Tumamoc Hill will help to advance our efforts to enhance economic development in our community by revitalizing tourism in our region. Tourism studies show the natural environment- the exploration of it and activities surrounding it- is Tucson's greatest attraction. The Center will promote local and regional tourism that sustains and enhances the geographical character of our region-its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of our residents.

- Information hub for regional attractions, natural area and heritage destinations, public outreach/education
- Central location to market, coordinate and direct visitors/residents to area attractions;
- High visitation will benefit local restaurants, hotels and local businesses;
- High traffic will encourage future investments and reinvestment in the West side;
- Gateway to Tucson Origins Heritage Park- commemorating the Birthplace of Tucson and educational programming about Stjuckshon, the San Agustin Mission, Mission Garden, and Tucson's history.

Costs: \$15.0 million

Bond Funding: \$15.0 million

Other Funding: None identified at this time

Fiscal Year Project Start and Finish Date: FY2015/16 – FY2017/18

Project Management Jurisdiction: (Provide the jurisdiction that will manage the project development.)  
Pima County, with other partners such as the City of Tucson, Rio Nuevo District Board, University of Arizona, Western National Parks Association, Visit Tucson, Friends of Tucson's Birthplace, and local stakeholders

Future Operating and Maintenance Costs: Will be paid by operating partners, various agencies/jurisdictions.

Regional Benefits: Will coalesce, promote and showcase the vast assortment of natural, cultural, scientific, and other attractions throughout Pima County and southern Arizona.

Supervisor District of Project Location: District 5

Department: Economic Development/ Facilities Management  
Date: 4/19/2013

2015 Bond Election Proposed Projects Template

Project Name: Southern Arizona Regional Orientation Center

Location: West side of Santa Cruz River near Tumamoc Hill

Scope: Create a Regional Orientation Center along the Santa Cruz River near Tumamoc Hill - including land acquisition, environmental remediation, planning, design, and construction of a facility and related infrastructure that may include indoor space for exhibits, educational programs, auditorium, gift shop, offices, and outdoor cultural plaza. The Center will showcase our region's many natural, cultural, and science based attractions and serve as the gateway to understanding the very origins of Tucson, located at the base of Sentinel Peak between Tumamoc Hill and the Santa Cruz River. This is one of Pima County's most beautiful and historic landmarks, where native people lived and practiced agriculture for more than 4,000 years ago and where Fr. Kino in 1694 encountered the Piman village of "Stjuckshon," giving Tucson its name. With Tumamoc Hill as the backdrop, this Center will be located on 5 acres of land on the west bank of the Santa Cruz River and will provide the opportunity to encourage visitation to attractions in Tucson, the Santa Cruz Valley and southern Arizona, and it will provide visitors and residents alike a one-stop point of access to information about educational opportunities, activities, and information related to these destinations.

Benefits: Development of a regional orientation center sited on the Santa Cruz River near Tumamoc Hill will help to advance our efforts to enhance economic development in our community by revitalizing tourism in our region. Tourism studies show the natural environment- the exploration of it and activities surrounding it- is Tucson's greatest attraction. The Center will promote local and regional tourism that sustains and enhances the geographical character of our region – its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of our residents.

- Information hub for regional attractions, natural area and heritage destinations, public outreach/education
- Central location to market, coordinate and direct visitors/residents to area attractions;
- High visitation will benefit local restaurants, hotels and local businesses;
- High traffic will encourage future investments and reinvestment in the West side;
- Gateway to Tucson Origins Heritage Park- commemorating the Birthplace of Tucson and educational programming about Stjuckshon, the San Agustin Mission Mission Gardens, and Tucson's history.

Costs: \$15.0 million

Bond Funding: \$15.0 million

Other Funding: None identified at this time

Fiscal Year Project Start and Finish Date: FY2015116 – FY2017118

Project Management Jurisdiction: (Provide the jurisdiction that will manage the project development.)  
Pima County, with other partners such as the City of Tucson, Rio Nuevo District Board, University of Arizona, Western National Parks Association, Visit Tucson, Friends of Tucson's Birthplace, and local stakeholders

Future Operating and Maintenance Costs: Will be paid by operating partners, various agencies/jurisdictions.

Regional Benefits: Will coalesce, promote and showcase the vast assortment of natural, cultural, scientific, and other attractions throughout Pima County and southern Arizona.

Supervisor District of Project Location: District 5

# **Southern Arizona Regional Visitor Center Concepts and Discussion**



## **Stakeholder and Project Discussion Meeting**

August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Nanette Slusser, Assistant County Administrator  
Pima County Administration

Linda Mayro, Director  
Pima County Office of Sustainability and Conservation

# A Shared Vision for the Regional Visitor Center: "Tucson's Heritage and Sustainable Tourism"

*"tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place – its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of its residents"*

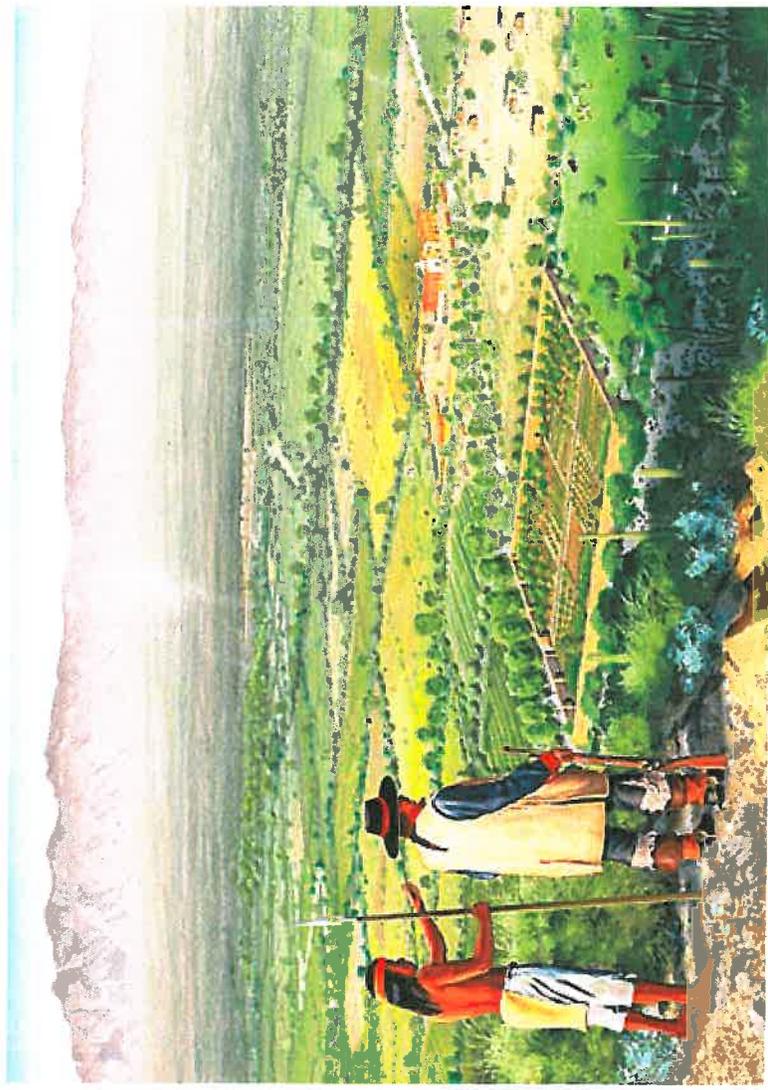
## Revitalizing Tourism

City of Tucson-Pima County-Rio Nuevo District Board -University of Arizona - Western National Parks Association - Visit Tucson-Friends of Tucson's Birthplace - Local Stakeholders

## Regional Visitor Center Proposed 2015 Bond Project

- \$10 - \$15 Million Bond Project to construct Visitor Center and Plaza
- Gateway to Tucson Origins Park
- Exhibits and Educational Programs
- Information hub for regional attractions and heritage destinations

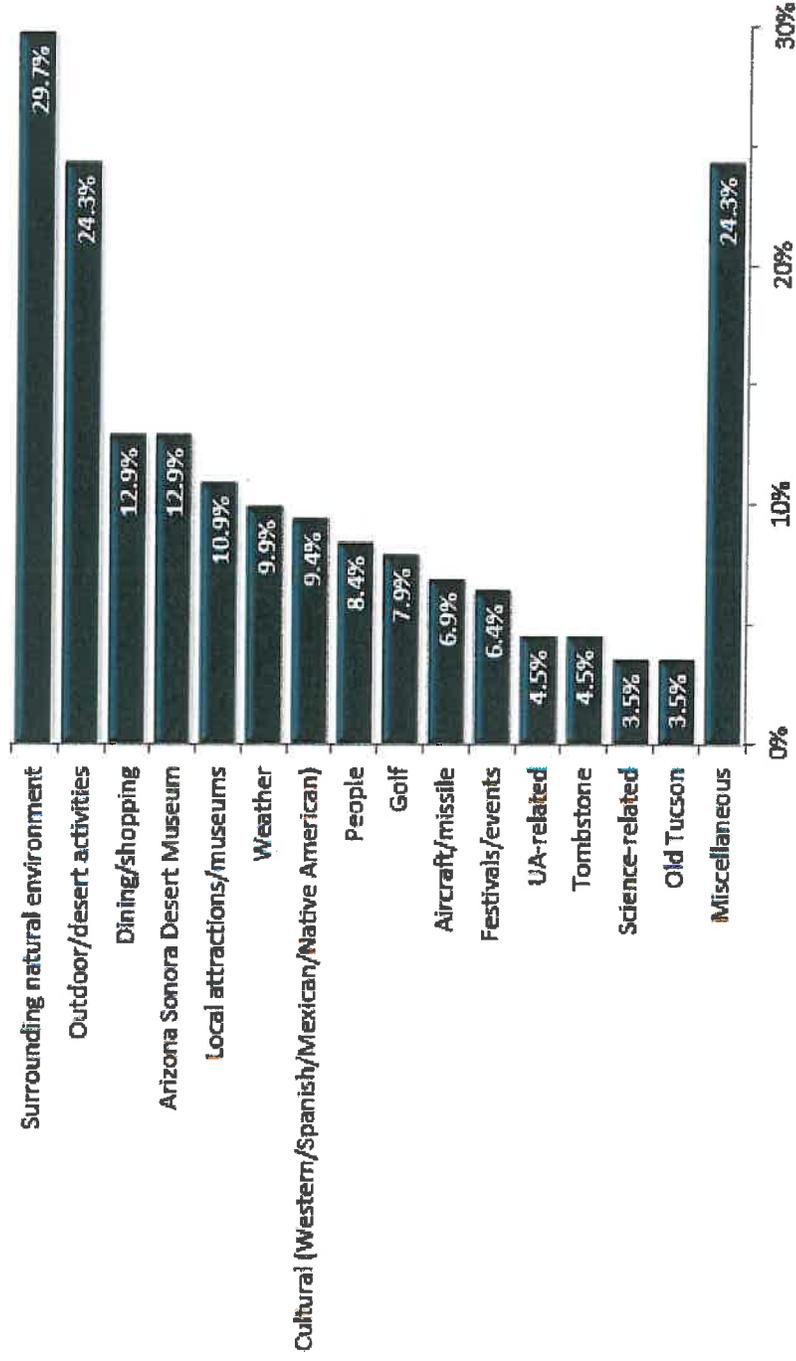
- National Geographic Center for Sustainable Destinations



Mission San Agustin del Tucson and Mission Gardens ca. 1810

# The natural environment, and the exploration of and activities surrounding it, is Tucson's greatest attraction

## Primary reason for recommending Tucson to other travelers



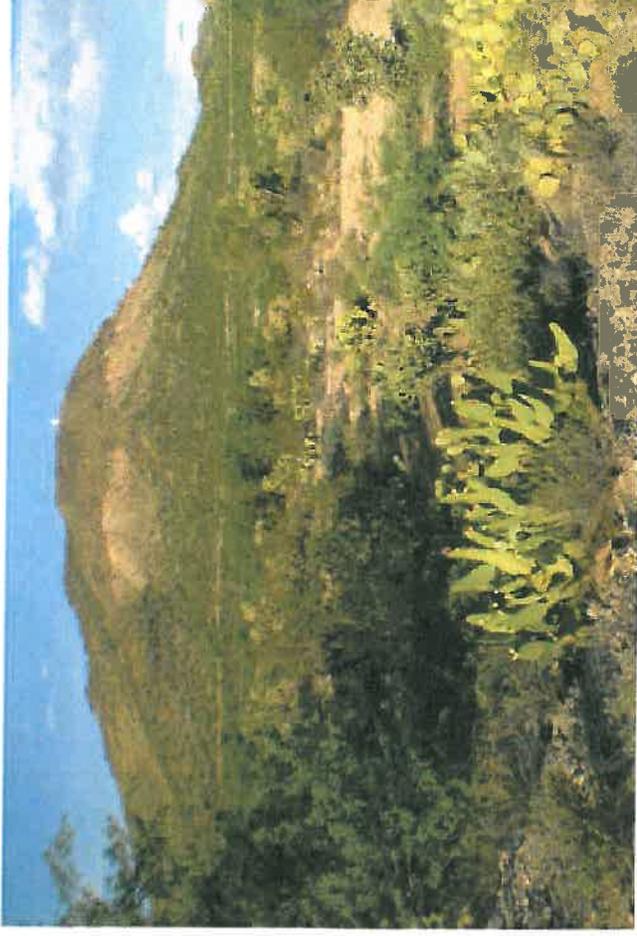
## The Site:

It is the site of Tucson's origins, between mountain and river...

Where people have lived for more than 4,000 years

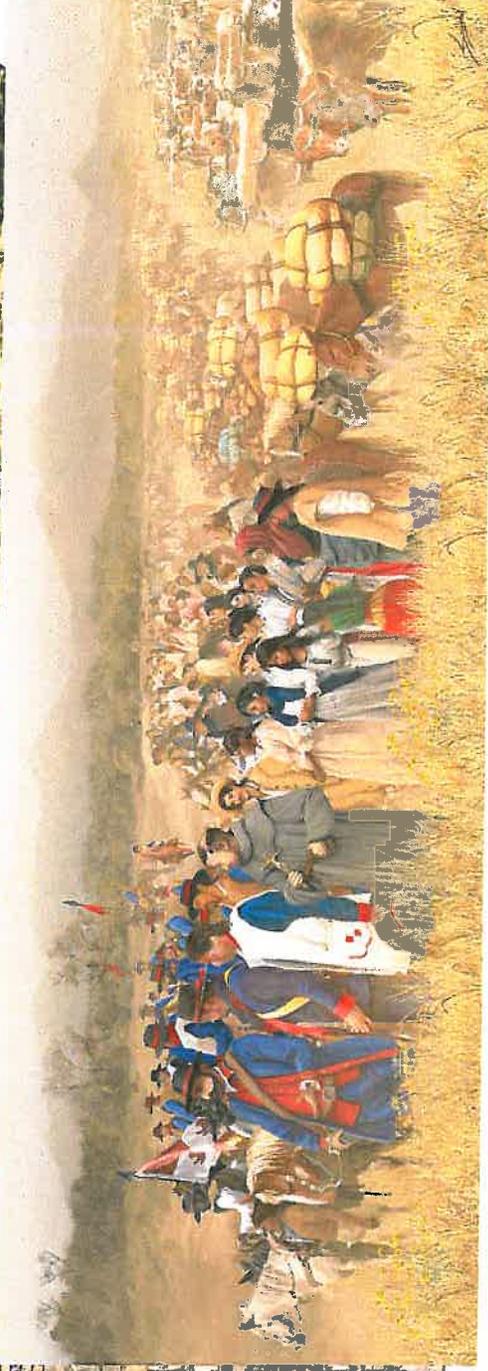
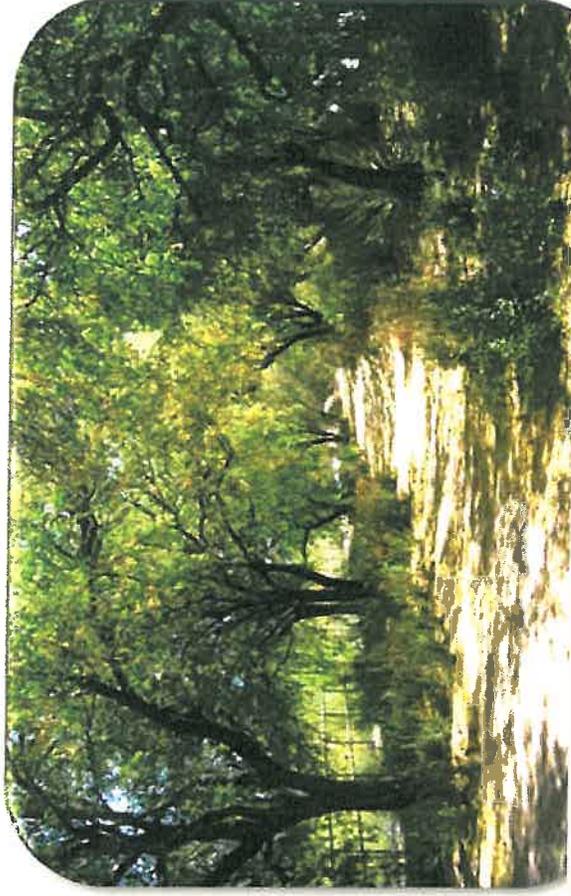
Where some of the earliest agriculture in North America has been documented

Where the Piman village of "stjuckshon" was encountered by Fr. Kino in 1694, giving Tucson its name...



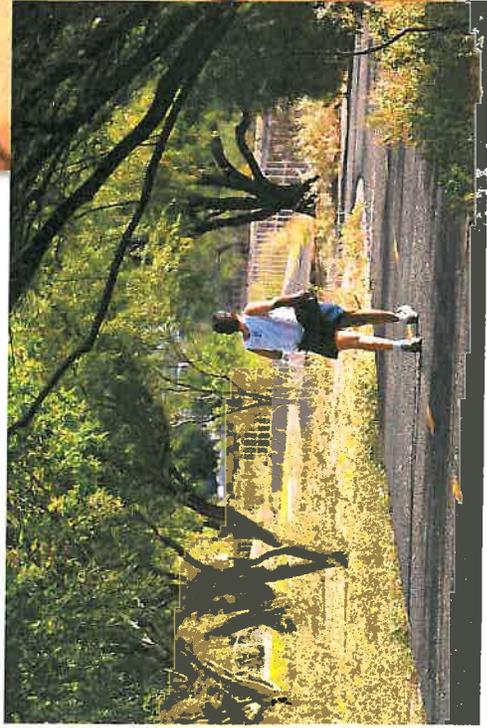
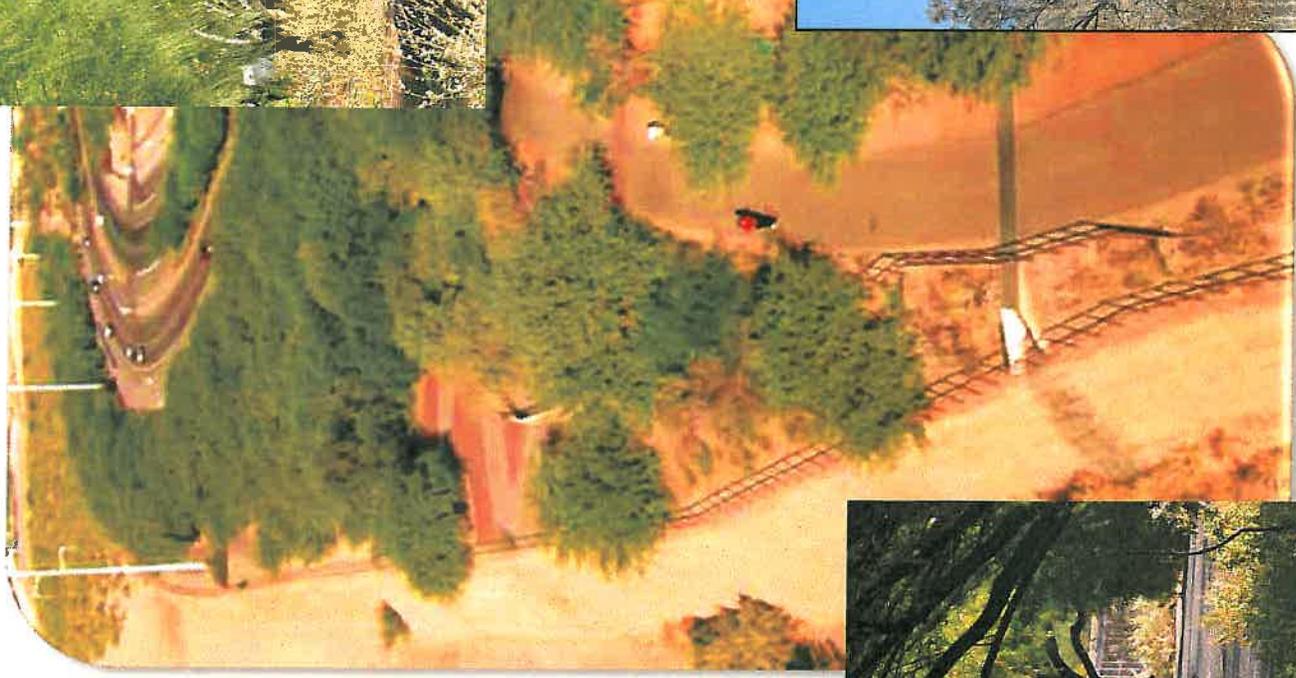
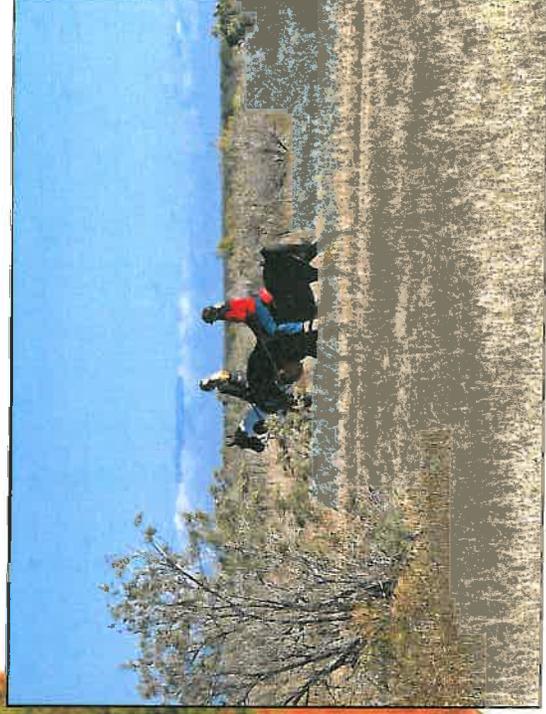
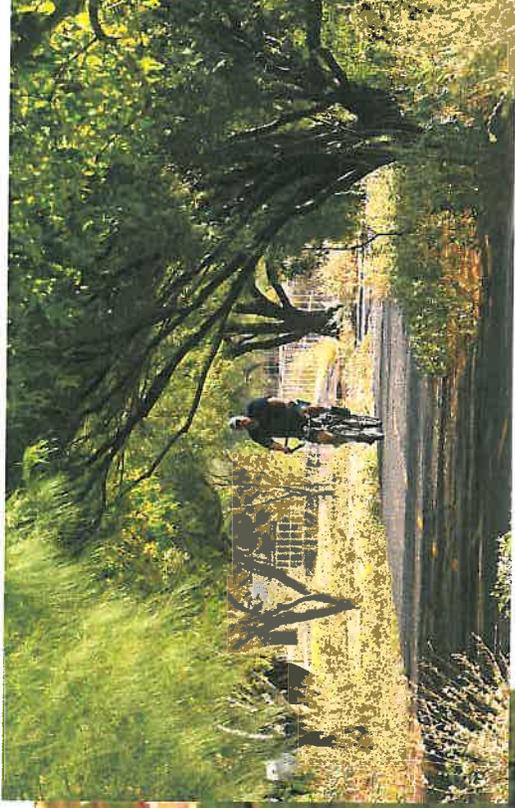


# Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail & Reforestation of River



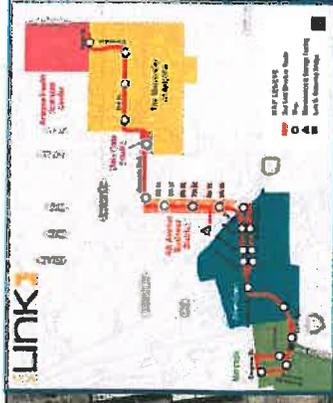
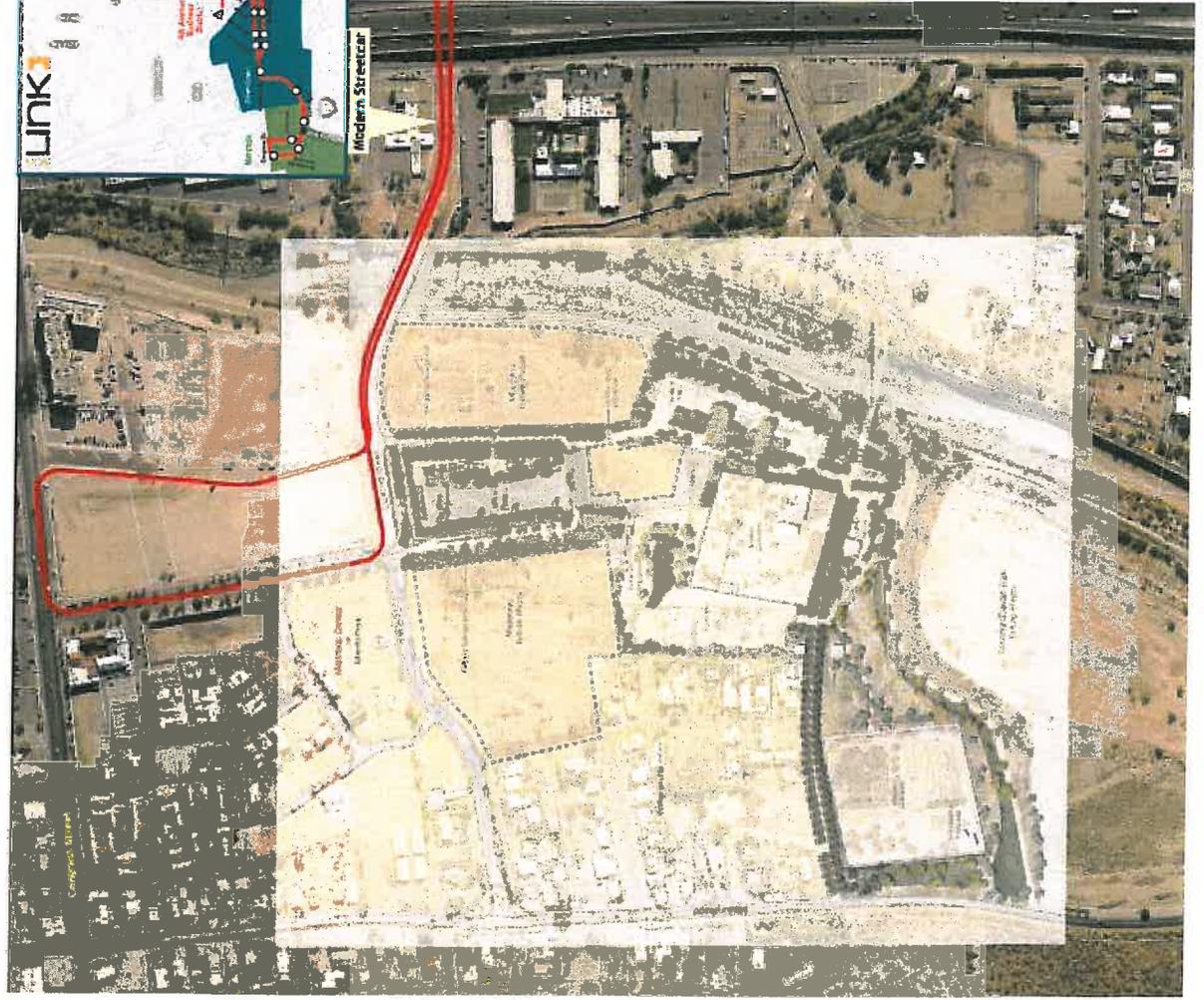
# The LOOP...

*Connecting our community and our region with our cultural heritage and natural heritage through more than 100 miles of river paths and trails.*

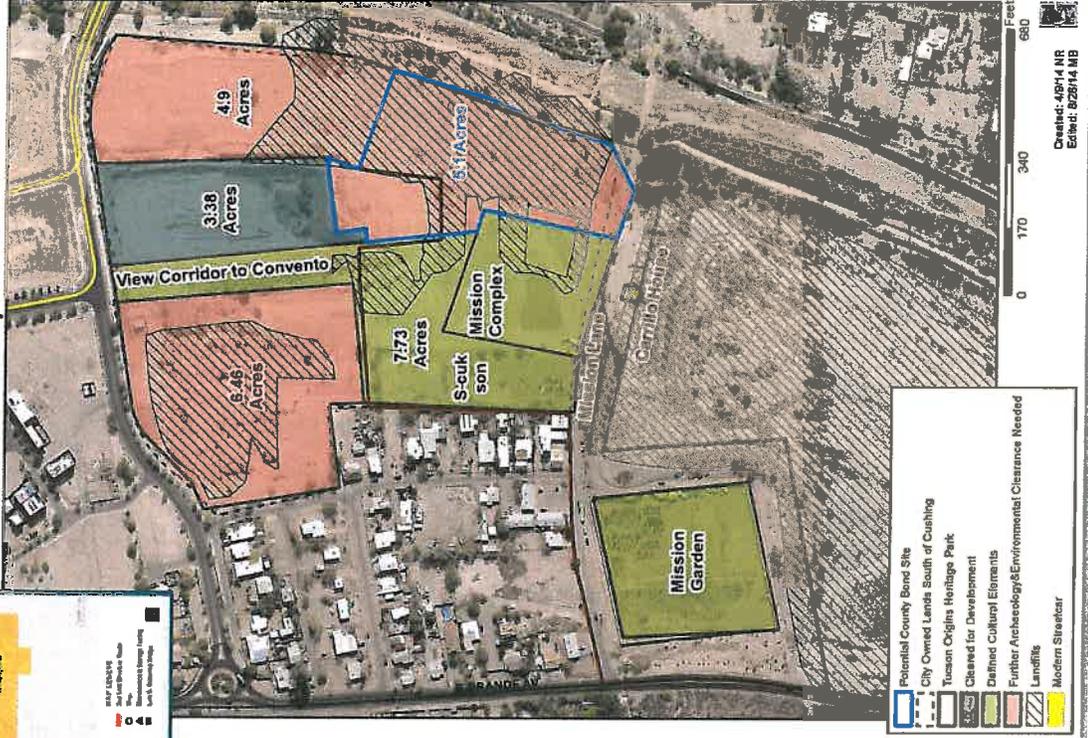


# Preliminary Concept :

Mission Gardens - Mission Complex - Regional Visitor Center - Cultural Plaza - Anza Trail - River Walk  
 Equestrian Trail - Mixed Use Development - Parking Garage - SunLink Streetcar Access



## Westside Properties



# Regional Visitor Center

## Center Management Partners:

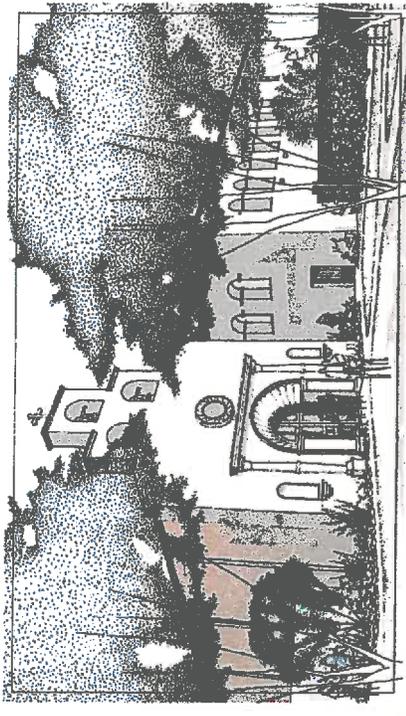
- Western National Parks Association
- Visit Tucson
- City of Tucson, Pima County, UofA, Rio Nuevo, FOTB, Local Stakeholders

## Programming:

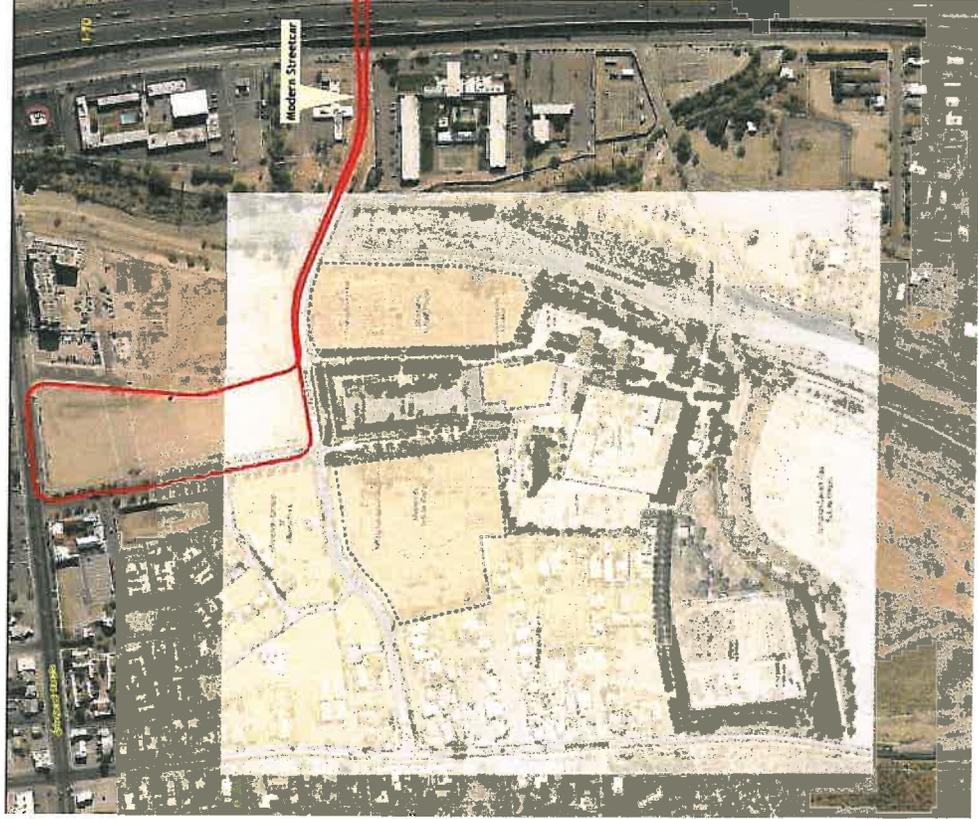
- Gateway to Tucson Origins Heritage Park and Birthplace of Tucson
- Information hub for natural/cultural attractions, tours, events, museums
- Workshops and educational lecture series

## Facility:

- Promote local and regional sustainable tourism
- Indoor space for exhibits, educational programs
- Technological center with software/applications to assist visitors in planning their stay in Tucson region
- Auditorium, gift shop, class room space, offices
- Outdoor cultural plaza
- Easy access to the *SunLink* streetcar
- Parking for over 400 cars by City of Tucson.



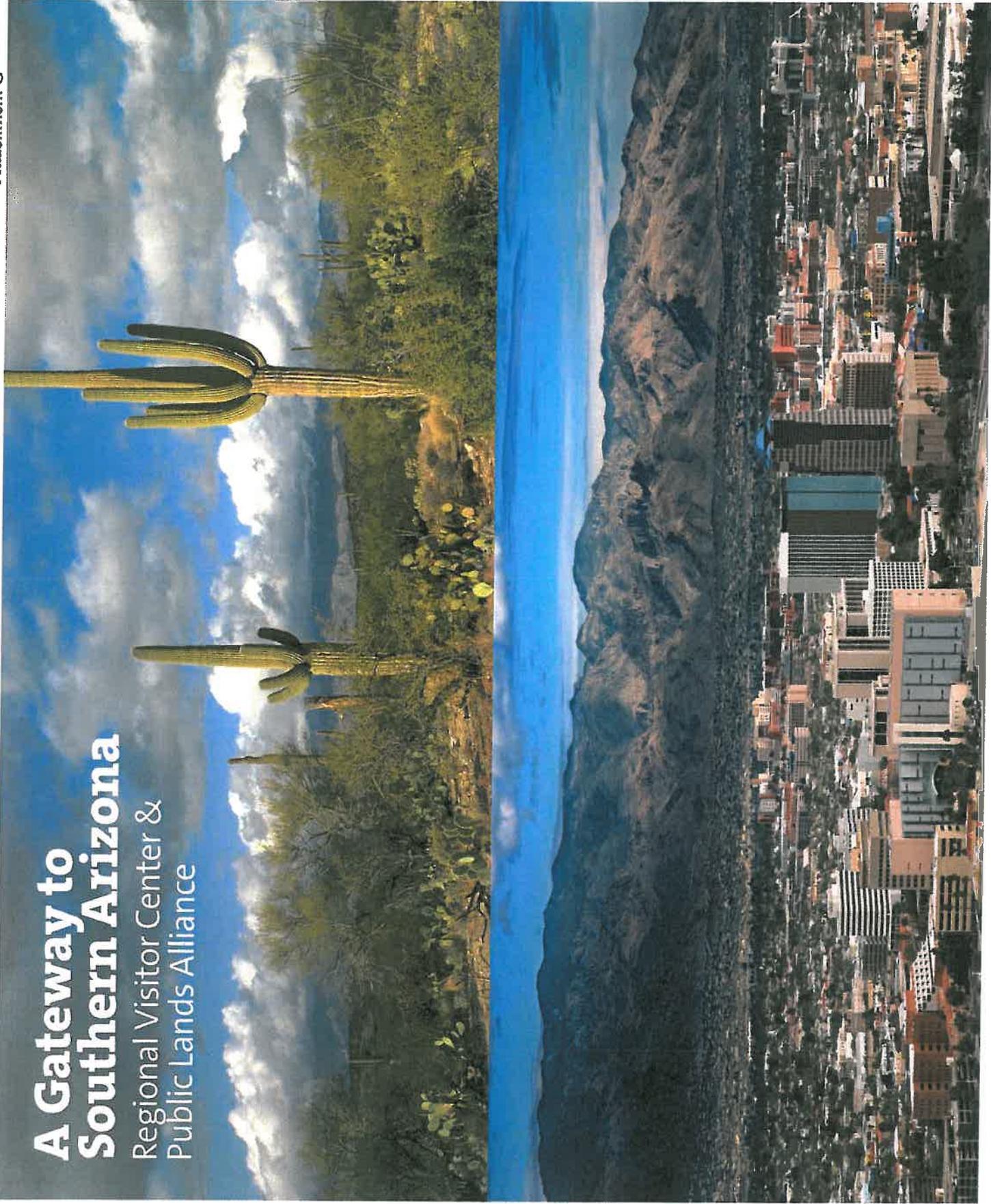
# Summary & Discussion



- Celebrates Tucson and region
- Tucson Origins Heritage Park
- Promotes sustainable tourism to benefit local community
- Educational programming for residents and visitors

# A Gateway to Southern Arizona

Regional Visitor Center & Public Lands Alliance



## Challenge

Southern Arizona is one of the most beautiful natural settings in the country. Vast Sonoran Desert spaces and the rugged Sky Island landscape define our region. Our lives are enhanced by the ability to access these beautiful places for recreation, exercise, and reflection.

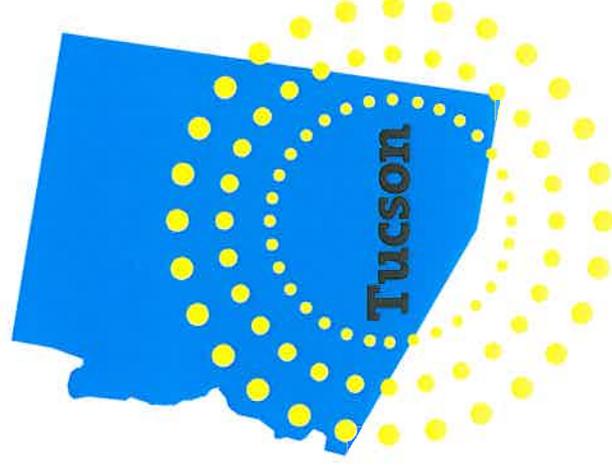
Visitors from across the globe come to experience the unique cultural, historical, and natural resources—bringing dollars and vitality to the local economy.

But if we want to thrive, we must work to preserve the rich biodiversity of our region. We must protect the significant areas of unspoiled desert and mountains. And we must do all of this while promoting exploration of Southern Arizona.

## Opportunity

We propose creating a Southern Arizona Regional Visitor Center.

- A consolidated gateway for all of our region's unique resources.
- A robust partnership between local governments, federal agencies, educational institutions, nonprofit entities, and private sector investors
- A self-sustaining facility that offers comprehensive information, education, and programming
- A welcoming destination for visitors and locals alike
- A driver for the local economy



# Creating a Gateway to Southern Arizona

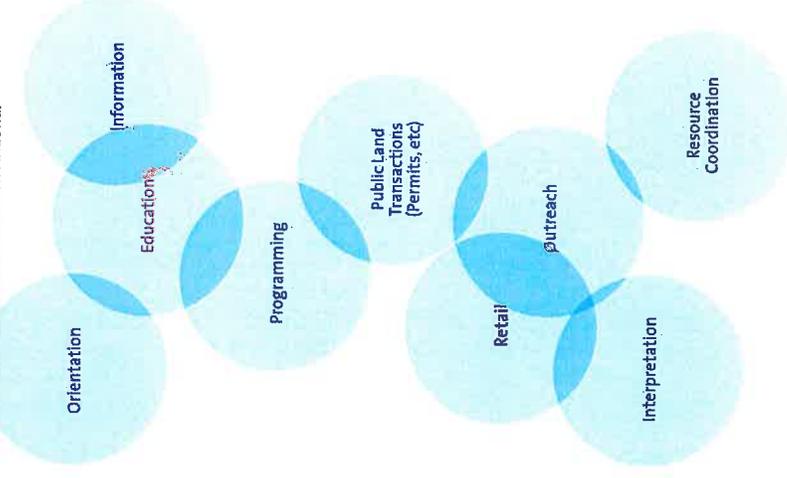
**The center will be a one-stop gateway to the region's cultural, historical, and natural resources, amplifying their importance through innovative partnerships and programs. It will advance our community's commitment to sustainable, positive change while nurturing the local economy.**

- Strategic location on Tucson's burgeoning west side along the Santa Cruz River, adjacent to the Mission complex
- Destination complex supports optimal visibility, accessibility, convenience, and proximity to parking and transportation modes
- One-stop facility representing all stakeholders
- Architecturally significant structure that reflects the unique qualities and values of the region
- Orientation point for Tucson Origins Heritage Park and related programs
- Destination community center that would anchor the west terminus of the modern streetcar
- Contemporary interpretative gallery that inspires longer visitation in the region and creates relevancy for current and future generations

- Local education and community interface through innovative partnerships and robust programming with a focus on urban, youth, diverse, and underserved audiences
- Educational opportunities for the natural and cultural environment, including a theater for education & information
- Community meeting facilities for forums addressing public land and community needs
- Potential to get visitors to stay in the region longer, adding dollars to the local economy
- Potential to serve as a driving force for other new development in the surrounding area

## Unique combination of offerings serves locals and visitors alike.

The new center will have a broad but focused program model, featuring the cultural, historical, and natural resources of Southern Arizona.



# Who's Involved?

**A diverse group of organizations and individuals has come together to create this proposal, addressing funding, design, development, and operations, and impact of a regional visitor center. The work group brings expertise and enthusiasm to assist the City of Tucson in broader development efforts.**

## Smart Partnerships for Success

The success of the new center depends on broad-based involvement and support. The project involves City of Tucson, Pima County, University of Arizona, Rio Nuevo, United States Fish & Wildlife Service, United States Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, and Western National Parks Association





# How Does Tucson Benefit?

**The center creates many benefits for the greater Tucson community. It's a nexus of converging interests and opportunities, adding value to the City of Tucson, Pima County, and the Southern Arizona region.**

- Creates the environment for economic development consistent with ULI recommendations
- Catalyst for appropriate mixed-use development on the west side
- Promotes extended visitation (hotels, restaurants, etc)
- Drives spending at local businesses and helps grow tax base
- Federal agencies and nonprofit organizations are willing and able to commit long-term funding through extended leases and annual operating budgets to help fund and operate facilities
- Tangible evidence of city/county/private collaboration—a “win” for the community at large & symbolic transition from recent past
- The opportunity is now—time sensitive (USFS, City RFQ, County Bond)
- Pima County Bond process is essential to realize the vision

## **There are a few concerns worth noting:**

- City of Tucson Master Development RFQ schedule is intended to correspond with the County bond schedule, but they are different processes. Aligning the various processes and stakeholders is essential
- An operator with the experience and financial capacity to operate the center has not been identified
- The role of the many cultural, historical, and natural resources and community stakeholders has not been clearly defined
- Federal agencies need a governmental partner to facilitate the ability to lease facilities outside of GSA authority

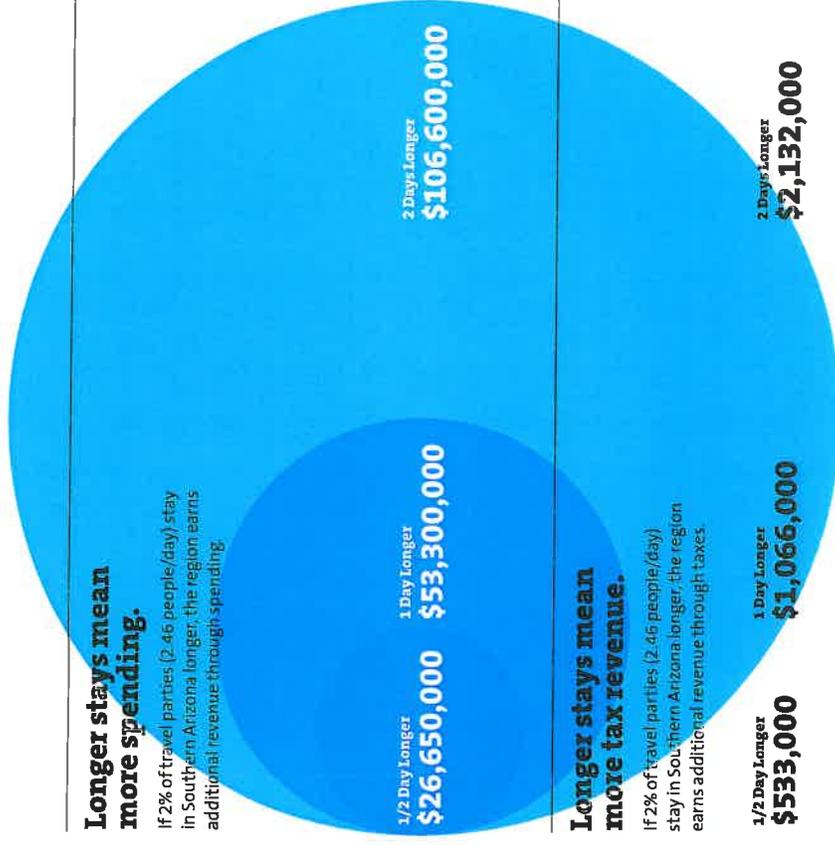
**Urban Land Institute Recommendations**  
The Urban Land Institute generated specific recommendation for revitalizing downtown Tucson, including build a regional visitors center. Our proposal is directly aligned.

- An interpretive center**
- A center to incentivize exploring Tucson**
- A flex space for seasonal display changes**
- A community center for the south and west side neighborhoods**
- Easy access to Interstate 10 and the river front**
- Encourage street car and bicycle use with ample parking**
- Connect with the riparian restoration zone**

# What's the Economic Potential?

**The center can have a significant economic impact on Southern Arizona. It will encourage visitors to stay in the region longer, contributing more to the local economy. And it will help catalyze development of Tucson's West side.**

- Travel and tourism represents the largest industry in the region, and tourism-impact research reveals that 67% of local tourists visit or recommend Tucson to others because of our natural environment
- The center is targeted way to encourage visitors to stay longer, translating into extra spending and increased tax revenue
- The center can be a driving force for other new mixed-use development in the surrounding area, including the services to support increased visitation to the west side's various cultural resources
- Based on comparative models in other cities, spending and tax increases that the center generates make up for any potential loss in property and sales tax revenue



# What's the Other Value?

## The center helps create solutions by aligning multiple organizations and interests around a specific opportunity.

- Conditions are ripe to build on existing commitment from major institutions to help develop content and programming
- WNPA and Visit Tucson bring operational management expertise and budget capacity to operate the facility
- Rangers from the US Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management and other agencies add considerable value to the visitor experience
- Potential co-location of USFS/USFWS/WNPA offices with the center provides needed synergy and creates:
  - economic development opportunity
  - considerable number of office workers become consumers at local shops and restaurants
  - opportunities to collaborate on public programming
  - easy public access to the agencies
  - additional visitation to the center through federal land partners (i.e. USFS, NPS) “brand” identity
- Additional visitation due to federal historic designation at the Santa Cruz (Juan Bautista de Anza Trail), coupled with pending federal Santa Cruz River Heritage status
- A LEED gold-certified visitor center designed to encourage stewardship for public lands, increase visitation to the area, and provide state of the art interpretation and information on outdoor experiences, cultural history, and recreational opportunities in the area
- A Memorandum of Understanding is in process
- WNPA has confirmed that the City RFQ process for redevelopment of the west side property will include the proposed center site and that the center site will be offered for development on a schedule compatible with the County bond process.
- WNPA is working with the City and other stakeholders to develop a process to ensure a shared vision, solid business plan, and clarity on potential roles & responsibilities
- WNPA (or other sponsors) willing to consider entering into an option to purchase the site (for discussion – subject to successful bond issue; precedent: Ft. Lowell/Pima Bond project )
- WNPA is willing to consider being the strong and inclusive owner needed to achieve a great project

# Other Models

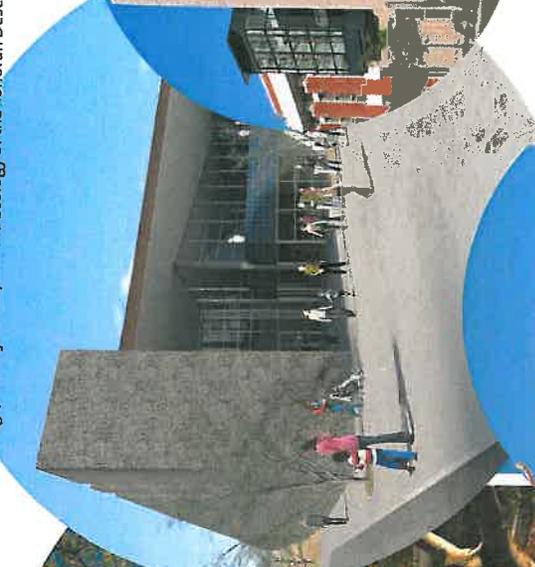
## 1995 Concept for a Southern Arizona Visitor Center

The main objective of this concept was to inform—to create a place where tourists as well as natives could learn about Southern Arizona through interpretive display and human interactions. It focused on regional recreation, community, heritage, the city center, and the ecology of the Sonoran Desert.



## Red Rock Canyon Visitor Center

Introducing more than one million visitors a year to the wonders of Red Rock Canyon, the new Interpretive Facility is designed to introduce visitors to the relevant science, art and culture that will enhance their experience in Red Rock Canyon, and then encourage them to visit the real thing nearby.



## Liberty Bell Center

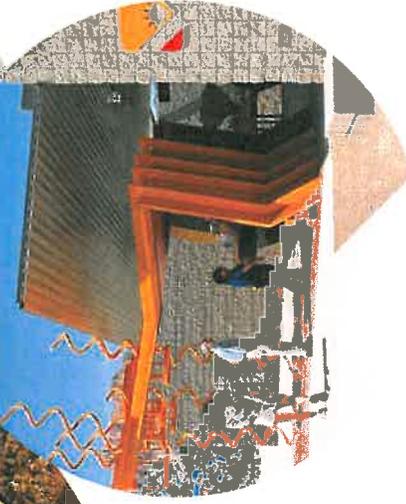
The Liberty Bell's new home employs larger-than-life historic documents and graphic images to explore the facts and the myths surrounding the Bell. The center also serves as an orientation point for many of Philadelphia's other cultural and historical resources. Visitors coming to see the Bell have access to information and tickets to facilities well beyond the center itself.



In Richmond, VA, regional visitor centers created an economic impact of **\$853,500**

## Discover Richmond

In 2010, 47,500 visitors were served by three Richmond-area visitor centers (a small number in comparison to what the proposed Southern Arizona Visitors Center can reach). One-third of visitors responding to a survey the same year said they would make additional purchases when visiting the area because of visitor center interaction. The additional spending amounted to about \$38 per travel party, for a total economic impact of \$853,500.



## **Why Now?**

**The center is an opportunity to foster stewardship of regional cultural, historical, and natural resources and responsible economic development at the same time. It will connect powerfully with visitors and locals to help preserve our region's resources for future generations. And it will attract other quality development by providing a place where workers want to live, locals want to explore, and tourists want to visit.**

Department: Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation  
Revised: July 2013

**Future Bond Election Proposed Project**

**Project Name: Santa Cruz Riverpark: Downtown Redevelopment**

**PRXXX**

**Location: Santa Cruz River Park, from Starr Pass to Grant Road**

**Scope:** On November 6, 2012 the River Park Initiative Report was provided to the Pima County Board of Supervisors.

[http://webcms.pima.gov!UserFiles/Servers/Server6/File/Government/The%20Loop/110612\\_River\\_Park\\_Initiative\\_Report.pdf](http://webcms.pima.gov!UserFiles/Servers/Server6/File/Government/The%20Loop/110612_River_Park_Initiative_Report.pdf)

This 126 page document provided an exhaustive review of the Riverpark standards, current compliance of the Loop System with those standards, and costs to bring the entire system to the premium standard. This document reviewed the entire Loop, and suggested up to 84 improvement projects that total over \$89M. The projects provided below are based on the report's findings.

This project will improve connectivity between major Rio Nuevo destinations and the Downtown core, increasing the pedestrian experience. This also includes significant canopy enhancement to provide a riparian environment along the banks. The portions of the project between Starr Pass and Congress Street will be developed and managed to provide ecosystem restoration and riparian habitat enhancement, in a manner coherent with Pima County's Paseo de las Iglesias project further south on the Santa Cruz River (<http://webcms.pima.gov/cms/one.aspx?portalId=169&pageId=68814>). Mission Lane improvements are included along with the Riverpark, connecting the Loop to the Mission Gardens and through to Tumamoc Hill. This bond project assumes the reclaimed water system is adequate for these improvements, or will be separately addressed by the City of Tucson prior to project development.

**Downtown Core Program**

Reach/Project	Map	BOS	Project Cost
Mission Lane*: Mission Gardens to SCR (Roadside Development to connect to riverpath)		5	\$230,000
Starr Pass to Mission Lane (both banks)		5	\$490,000
Mission Lane to Cushing Street (both banks)		5	\$530,000
Cushing Street to Congress (both banks)		5	\$995,000
Subtotal:			\$2,250,000

\*Any utility relocation costs associated with this project to be by City of Tucson, not included in the bond project.

**Downtown Canopy Enhancement Program**

Reach/Project	Map	BOS	Project Cost
Congress to St. Mary, East Bank		5	\$40,000
Congress to St. Mary, West Bank		5	\$90,000
St Mary's to Speedway, East Bank		5	\$135,000
St Mary's to Speedway, West Bank		5	\$115,000
Speedway to Grant, East Bank		5	\$210,000
Speedway to Grant, West Bank		5	\$220,000
Subtotal:			\$810,000

**Benefits:** The intent of this project is to enhance the downtown core portion of the Santa Cruz Riverpark which will create a riparian pedestrian and bicycle connection along key Rio Nuevo sites and downtown proper. This improves the economic viability of the corridor, and continues to enhance the Loop as a

destination for tourism.

**Costs:** \$3,060,000

**Bond Funding:** \$3,060,000

**Other Funding:** Potential of receiving grants as a supplement to bond funding.

**Start and Finish Date:** Approximately three years.

**Project Management Jurisdiction:** Pima County

**Future Operating and Maintenance Costs:** \$30,000/mile, total mileage depending on projects, to be maintained per existing IGA's. The City of Tucson commits to provide reclaimed water for enhanced riparian development for a term of 25 years, in the estimated amount of \$20,000 to \$40,000 per year depending on the source.

---

**Regional Benefits:** This project shall make it possible to utilize the linear park system for a broad range of recreational, wellness, and tourism-related activities while providing alternate modes of transportation on a regional basis. For every dollar spent on the Loop, the community receives a 9.4 return on investment.

**Supervisor District of Project Location:** All BOS Districts

For Internal Use only:

**Specific County Administrator Contemporary Issue being addressed with expenditure:**

**Department:** Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation