



MAYOR

*Regina Romero*

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) Takes Steps to Increase City of Tucson Representation on Key Committees, Address Funding Gaps, and Ensure Flexibility**

*Plan includes Mayor Romero Amendment to Continue Exploring Proportional Voting Models*

Tucson, Arizona—Today, the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) moved forward with a series of important decisions to provide the City of Tucson with greater representation on various committees that will draft and oversee the implementation of RTA Next—the planned extension of a countywide half-cent sales tax that funds regional transportation projects set to expire in 2026. The board also voted to address funding gaps on remaining RTA projects in city limits.

*"Today's vote is a positive step forward in the direction of regional collaboration," said Tucson Mayor Regina Romero. "Tucsonans want fair representation in making critical decisions about our transportation future that will affect our region for decades to come. Today we made progress, although we still have much work that lies ahead," said Romero.*

The RTA Board approved changes that will increase City of Tucson representation on the Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) tasked with drafting RTA Next. The RTA Board also approved changes to increase City of Tucson representation on the Technical Management Committee (TMC) as well as to explore the possibility of adding members from the city to the Citizen's Accountability for Regional Transportation (CART) Committee. The TMC and CART committees monitor performance and provide oversight over RTA projects.

The RTA Board also accepted an amendment submitted by Mayor Romero to continue exploring the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) governance structure (see attached). This structure would provide for the option to use a proportional vote based on population under certain circumstances.

*"I am pleased to see that we will continue exploring governance structures that provide an equitable voice to Tucsonans and return to this issue at a later time, especially considering the current political challenges of getting approval from state elected officials,"* **said Romero.**

Importantly, the RTA Board voted to address funding gaps for the remaining RTA projects inside of city limits by potentially frontloading them to the beginning of RTA Next. The plan also outlines an option to ensure these projects are counted as original RTA projects, and do not count towards the city's share of RTA Next projects.

**Romero added,** *"My colleagues on the Council, city staff, and I have been raising these funding concerns for the last four years. I am pleased to see progress on a plan that ensures the city's remaining RTA projects are fully funded and does not place an unfair burden on city taxpayers."*

The city had previously expressed concern over the funding gap that exists between original 2006 costs on its remaining projects, and what these projects cost today.

This funding gap is largely the result of increasing construction costs and depressed revenues during the 2008 Recession. Since the city has the largest share of projects that were scheduled to be completed towards the end of the 20-year period, this primarily affects the city. Until today, the RTA's position had been that it was the responsibility of the city to make up for any funding gaps despite provisions in the RTA's [Administrative Code](#) that specifies that 2006 project costs would be adjusted annually for inflation (see pg. 84, Section 3-2: Programming the RTA Plan).

Lastly, the plan approved by the Board gives direction to the Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) to include in RTA Next a plan/system for periodic (5 year or 10 year) review of remaining projects for current feasibility. This is in response to concerns voiced by Mayor Romero, the Tucson City Council, and many Tucson residents about the inflexibility of the current RTA, most recently with the First Avenue Project.

*"Ensuring flexibility to meet constantly changing needs is a critical component of long-term transportation planning. I am glad that my colleagues on the RTA Board took action to address my concerns,"* **continued Romero.**

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Attachment: Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) Voting Structure Model