DEVELOPING A

public-driven
regional transportation plan

RTA overview – The Regional Transportation Authority manages the implementation of a 20-year regional transportation plan that is funded through June 2026 and is developing a second plan to continue RTA project investments throughout Pima County. Approved by voters in May 2006, the existing plan is funded by a half-cent excise or sales tax. The 20-year tax also was voter-approved and is collected from the RTA's state-established taxing district within Pima County. To date, the RTA has delivered more than 1,000 projects within budget and on time, affirmed by 10-year and 15-year state-performance audits. The nine-member RTA Board, which is an independent governing body of local, county, state and tribal representatives, created and tasked a citizens' advisory committee with developing and recommending a new regional transportation plan for RTA Board review before seeking public input on the draft plan.

RTA investment – An extension of the RTA tax will provide a $2.46 billion investment in regional transportation improvements over a new 20-year period in alignment with the vision of other adopted and publicly vetted regional planning documents. The RTA investment must be identified as part of the region's federally required long-range transportation plan, which is developed every four years by Pima Association of Governments, the region's metropolitan planning organization. Development of the long-range plan helps to secure federal and state funding for the PAG planning area. PAG also manages the RTA.

What is the role of the public in this process? The RTA established a citizens' advisory committee (CAC), with people who represented diverse and geographically balanced interests, to draft a regional transportation plan for RTA Board review. Before moving into plan development, the CAC identified guiding principles and goals which were presented to the public in a regionwide survey. Over 85% of the 3,100 people participating in the survey indicated that they "strongly agree" or "agree" with the plan goals. Once a recommended draft plan is approved by the RTA Board, the RTA will seek public review and input.

Why a public-driven process? Public input is important to establish well-defined priority transportation needs. Based on this input, the RTA will work to deliver a regionally balanced plan Pima County voters will ultimately consider at the ballot box for a new investment period.

What is the role of RTA members? Each of the RTA members (Pima County and the cities of Tucson and South Tucson, towns of Marana, Oro Valley and Sahuarita, Pascua Yaqui Tribe, Tohono O'odham Nation and Arizona Department of Transportation) were asked to submit named corridor projects to be considered as candidate projects by the CAC and provide technical guidance as needed. Named projects are those with a clear scope and cost estimates that can be identified on a future ballot.

What are your transportation priorities?

RTAnext
Investing in transportation to meet your needs

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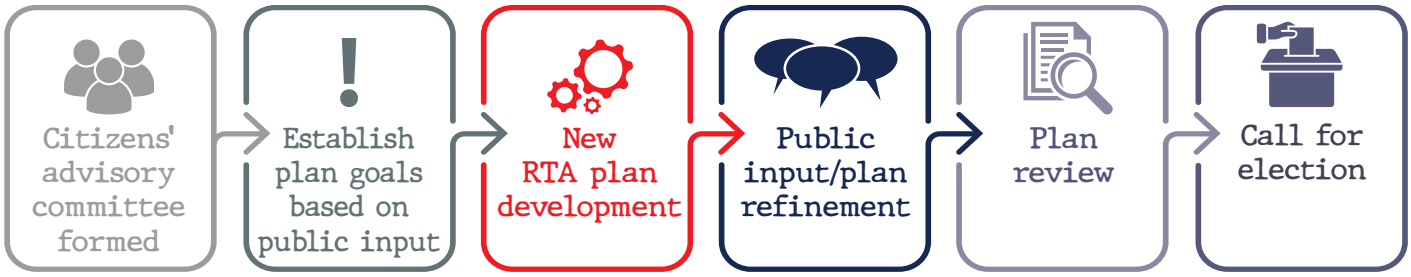

Plan Development

- The RTA Board formed a citizens' advisory committee (CAC) to develop and recommend a draft regional transportation plan. The CAC initially learned about factors to consider for project selection, such as desired performance outcomes.
- The committee established plan development guiding principles and goals, to which the majority of 3,100 respondents to a regionwide public survey "strongly agreed" or "agreed."
- The RTA Board set a plan budget of $2.46 billion based on estimated tax revenues over a new 20-year period. The RTA's sales tax is the only voter-approved, dedicated and flexible funding source to meet regional transportation priorities within Pima County. The CAC reviewed projects submitted by RTA members to consider funding amounts for selected roadway corridors (multimodal) and then considered funding amounts for transit, safety, environmental and bicycle and pedestrian improvement elements of the plan. Considering technical parameters and performance outcomes, the CAC recommended plan options to the RTA Board in December 2023.
  - The RTA Board is reviewing recommended plan options to develop a single plan for public input.
  - The plan will include a plan overlap period. The existing plan is effective from July 2006 through June 2026. A new plan would be effective as early as April 1, 2026. Funding from April, May and June 2026 would apply to projects in the existing plan to support project delivery from the 2006 voter-approved plan.
- Once the board approves a plan for public input, the RTA will seek public feedback across the region to ensure investment recommendations address priority transportation needs in the greater Tucson region.
- Based on public response, the draft plan will be refined as needed and the nine-member RTA Board will consider approval of a final draft.
- Upon approving the final draft, the RTA Board will set an election date, and voters will decide the fate of the plan at a future election (tentatively May 2025). Both the new plan and tax extension initiatives would need voter approval for the plan to go into effect.

Plan development goals for the next RTA plan:

- reduce congestion
- provide efficient crosstown mobility
- improve transit ridership
- reduce crashes at intersections
- reduce wildlife-related crashes
- improve the conditions of existing roadways
- provide safer bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- maintain or improve air quality
- improve access to workplaces
- add functionality to key corridors

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