

What RTA Next means to Tucson, our Industry and you!

May 15, 2025

Alejandro Angel, Psomas

Mike Barton, HDR

Chris Bridges, ACEC AZ



Outline

- Impact of RTA
 - Economic
 - Quality of Life
- RTA Next Status
 - Timeline
 - Plan
- Public Outreach for RTA Next
 - RTA Survey
 - Business coalition poll
- Engaging and Messaging for RTA Next

Impact of RTA

- Economic Benefit Study by Rounds Consulting Group (Dec 2023)
- Created 40,000 – 60,000 permanent jobs
- Brought \$2.8B - \$5.1B in tax revenue
- \$55.7B - \$137.6B in economic impact

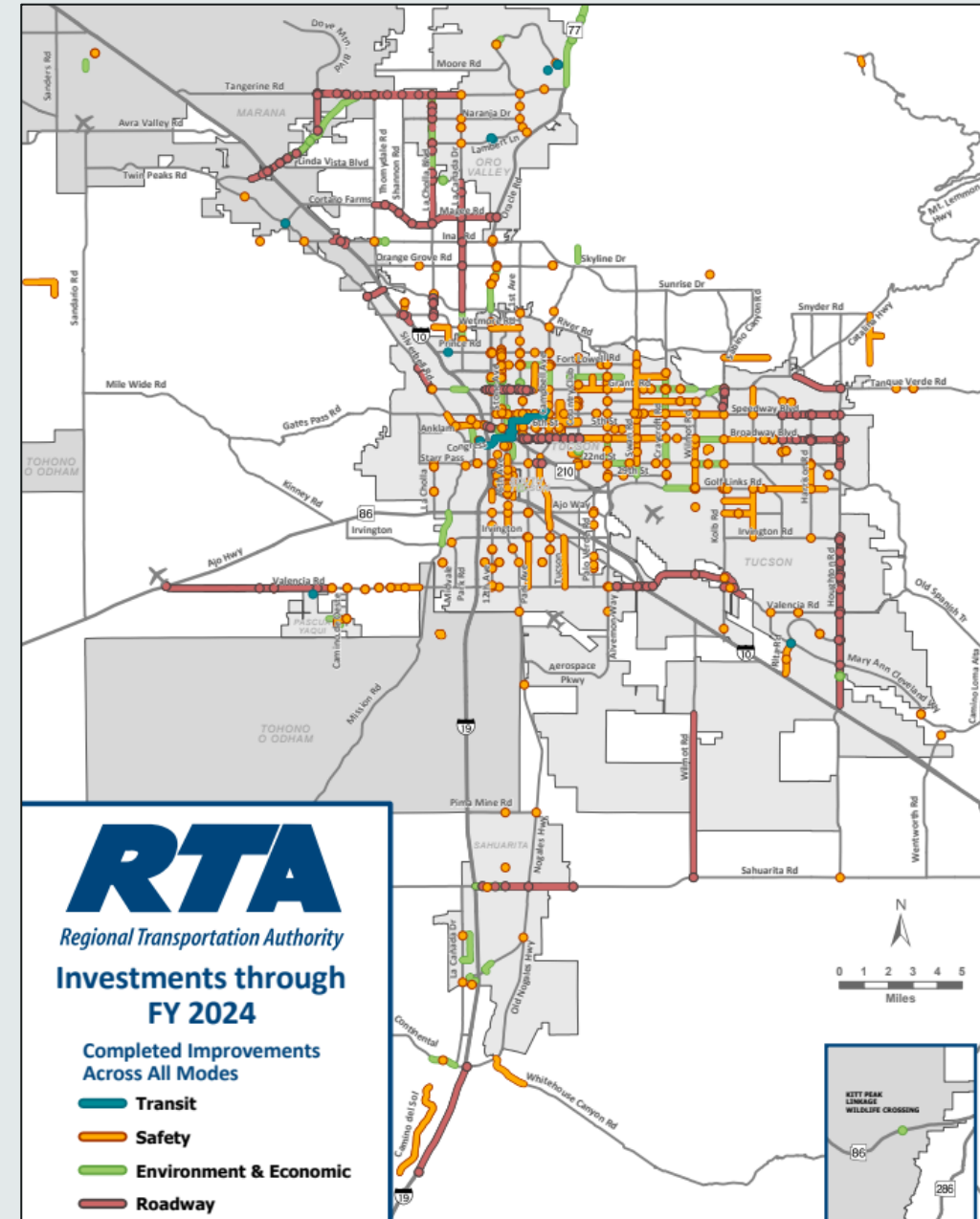


Impact of RTA

- 636 safety projects
- 247 bike or pedestrian improvements
- 36 Wildlife linkages projects
- Transit
 - Bus frequency
 - Neighborhood circulators
 - Extended service hours
 - Express service

Wildlife bridge and underpass are used thousands of times each month

Humans are helping them by volunteering during "habitat restoration days"



Impact of RTA

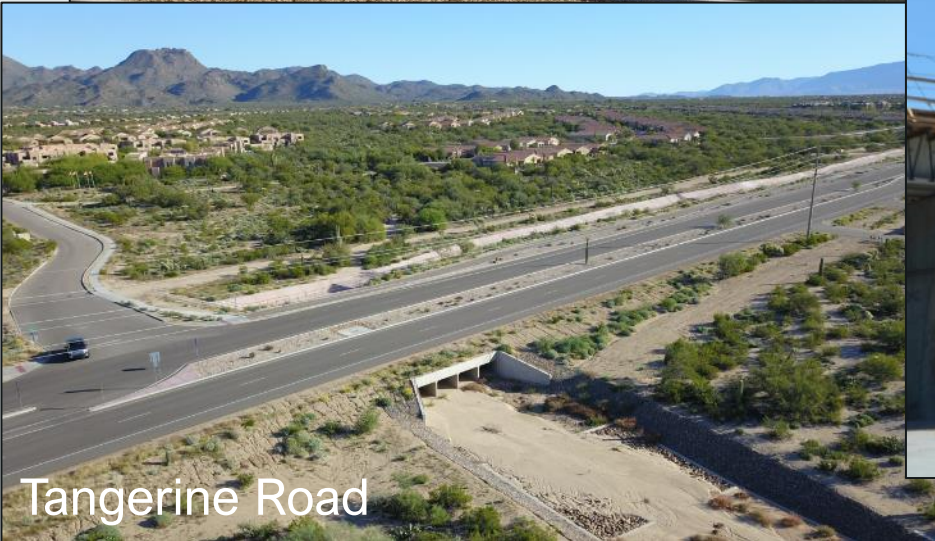
Before RTA



After RTA



Impact of RTA



Impact of RTA



Sun Link



Downtown Links



Broadway Blvd



La Cholla

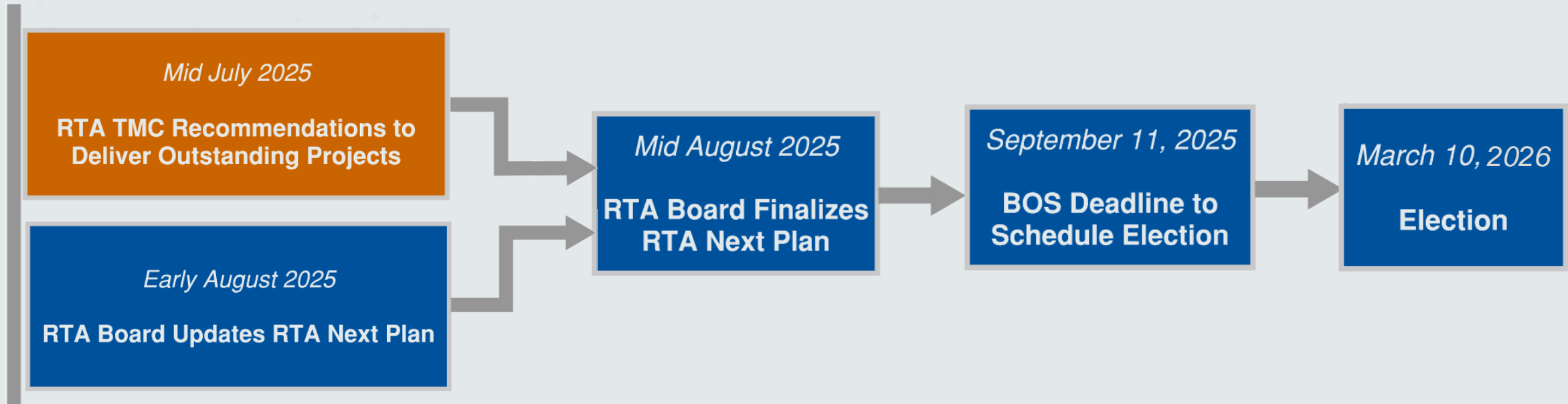
Impact of RTA



RTA Next Status

- Board vote to target election on March 10, 2026
 - November 2025 is too soon
 - May 2026 creates 9-month gap in sale tax collections

Today, May 15,
2025



RTA Next Status

- Minor revisions to draft plan presented to RTA Board on April 21
- No changes in funding allocations or periods
- Changes to project #s
- Corridor projects – changing or clarifying limits
 - Thornydale Road (#6) – northern limit extended to Tangerine Rd (1 mile)
 - Irvington Road (#20) – western limit changed to Sunset or Kinney (realignment)
 - Limits added to multiple 4th period projects

I. Roadway (multimodal) Corridor Element (Cont.)	RTA Project Budgets (000s) *	Committed Non-RTA Dollars (000s) †	Construction Start Period ▲
26. Mary Ann Cleveland Way: Houghton Road to Tucson City Limits Widen to 4-lane roadway including turn lanes, bicycle, pedestrian and associated drainage improvements	\$50,000		4th Period
27. La Cholla Boulevard: Ajo Highway to Starr Pass Boulevard Modernize existing roadway including bicycle, pedestrian and associated intersection improvements	\$8,500		4th Period
28. 29th Street: Alvernon Way to Craycroft Road Consideration of removal of travel lanes to modernize existing roadway including bicycle, pedestrian and associated intersection improvements	\$26,000		4th Period
29. Mission Road: Approximately 1,500 feet south of 36th Street to Starr Pass Removal of travel lanes to modernize existing roadway including bicycle, pedestrian and associated intersection improvements	\$10,000		4th Period
30. Camino Seco: Wrightstown Road to Speedway Boulevard Modernize existing roadway including bicycle, pedestrian and associated intersection improvements	\$10,000		4th Period

Public Outreach – RTA Survey

- Part of broader RTA Next outreach
- 2,213 surveys completed

RTA Next Survey and Outreach, October 2024 through January 2025

RTA Next Survey Ad Campaign total impressions: **5,046,515+**

15 
Open houses

1 
Virtual event

5 
5 emails sent to
6,500 recipients
Email notices

2 
Newsletter articles

11/366 
Community group
presentations/attendees

2 
News releases

74 
Mentions*
102 
Groups/individuals
Stakeholder outreach

463,303 
Impressions

165,380 
Reach
Social media ads

4,176 
Clicks

23 
Outreach events to
hard-to-reach audiences

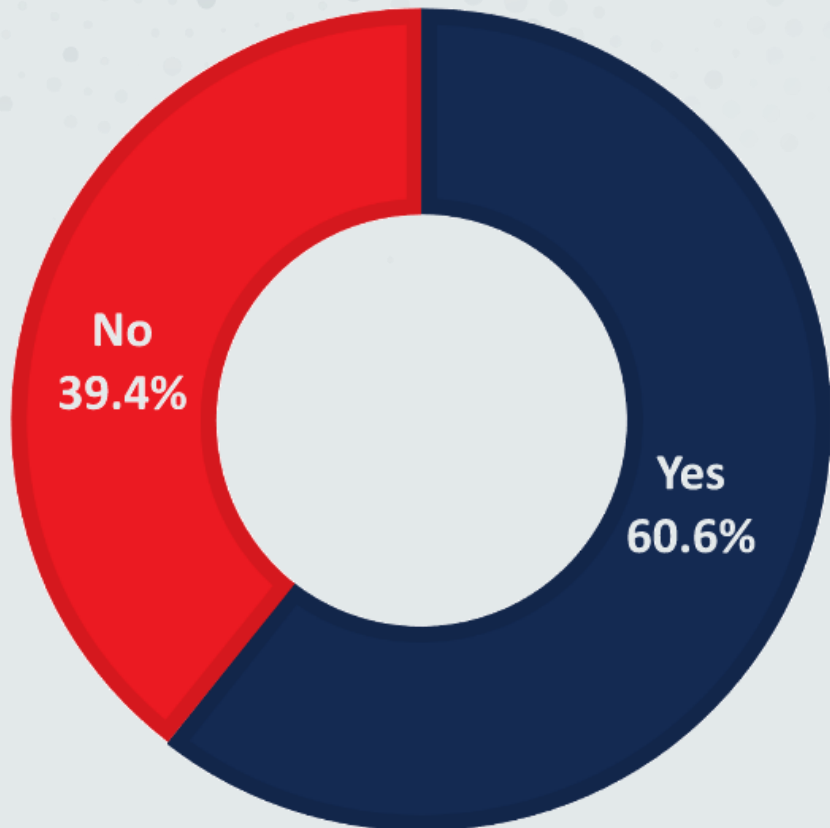
95,659 
RTA Next site views

58,118 
RTA Next survey
page views

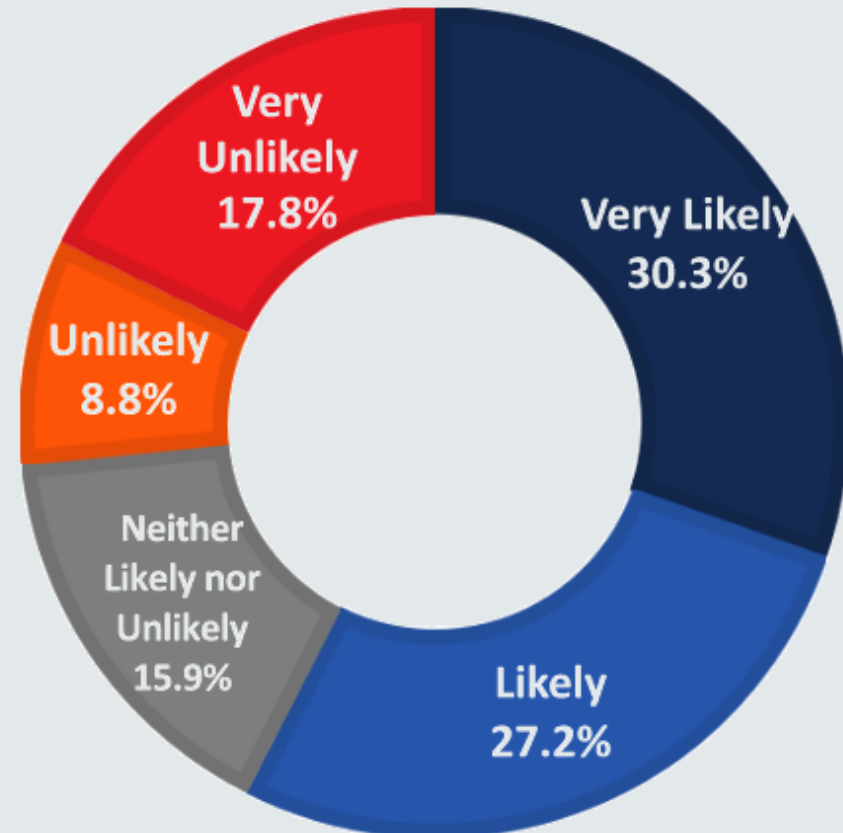
3,519 
RTA Next site downloads

Public Outreach – RTA Survey

In your opinion, are the projects listed in the RTA Next draft plan a good representation of transportation needs in the region?



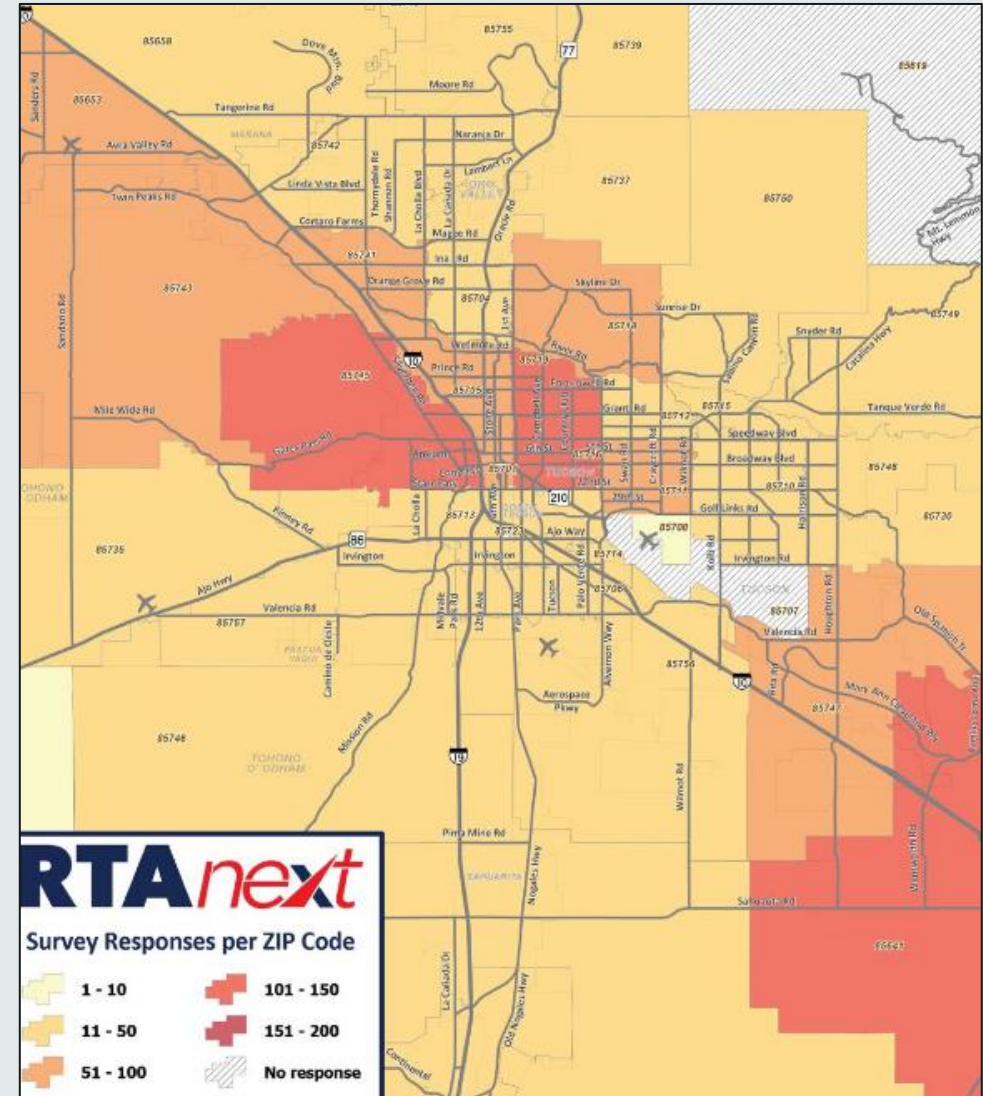
The proposed RTA Next plan would be funded by a half-cent sales tax. The tax represents nearly two-thirds of the region's transportation funding, or about \$110 M annually. Given what you know about the proposed plan, please indicate your level of support for the plan and the tax



Public Outreach – RTA Survey

- Good source of public input/comment
- Open survey - not everyone is equally likely to respond
- Prone to influence by interest groups
- Not representative
 - Demographically
 - Geographically

	Survey Respondents	County Demographic
Hispanic/Latino	14.6%	42.4%
Income under \$50,000	18.0%	46.5%
Age 65+	27.1%	16.6%



Public Outreach – Business Coalition Poll



Southern Arizona Leadership Council



— ARIZONA —
BUILDERS
— ALLIANCE —

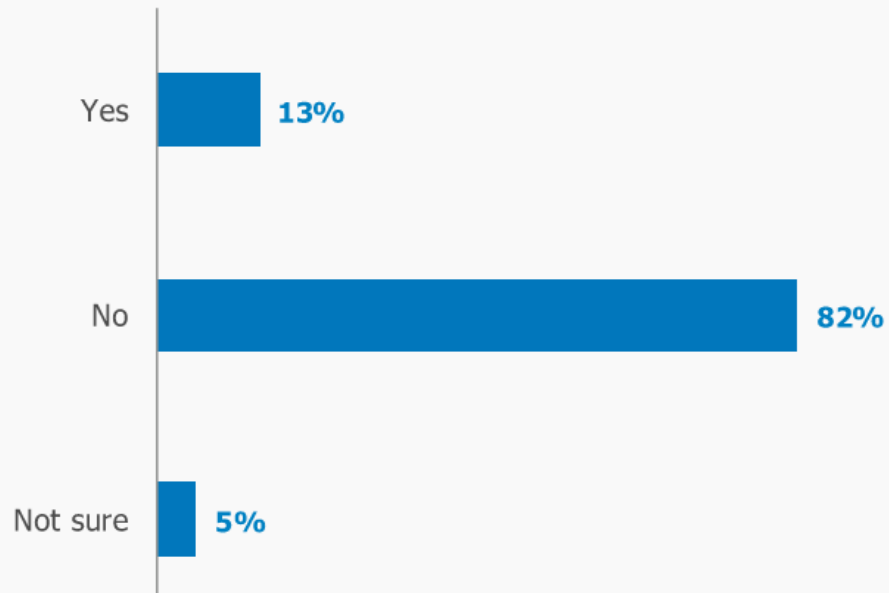


- \$50,000 invested by various organizations
- Conducted by Noble Insights
- February 24-28, 2025
- Weighted random sample of 639 County residents

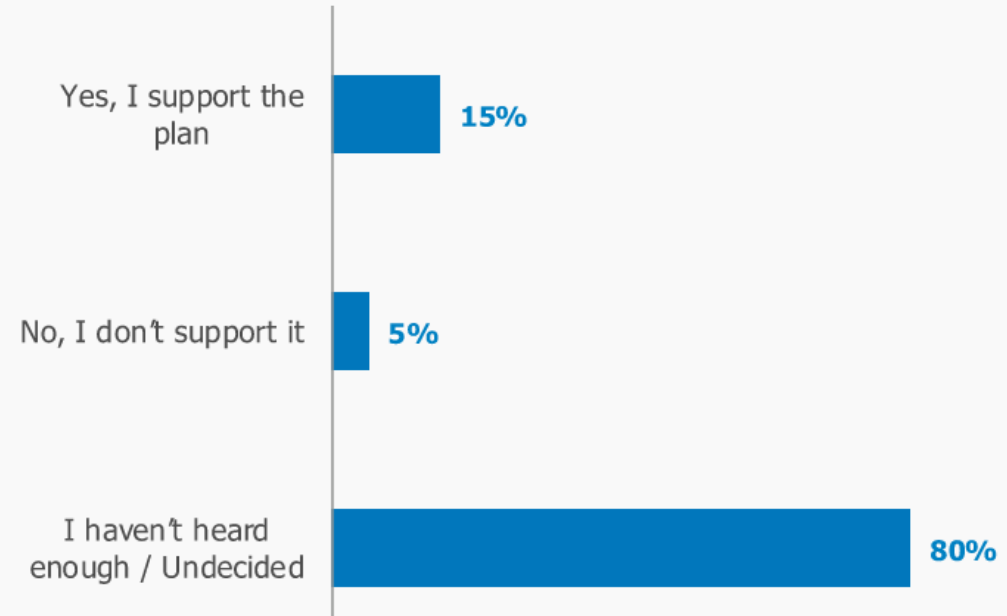
Public Outreach – Business Coalition Poll

Before we gave people ANY details, we asked about their awareness of the RTA. Very few respondents knew what we were talking about.

Have you heard any news about the Regional Transportation Authority's (RTA) next draft plan?



Do you support the Regional Transportation Authority's (RTA) next draft plan?

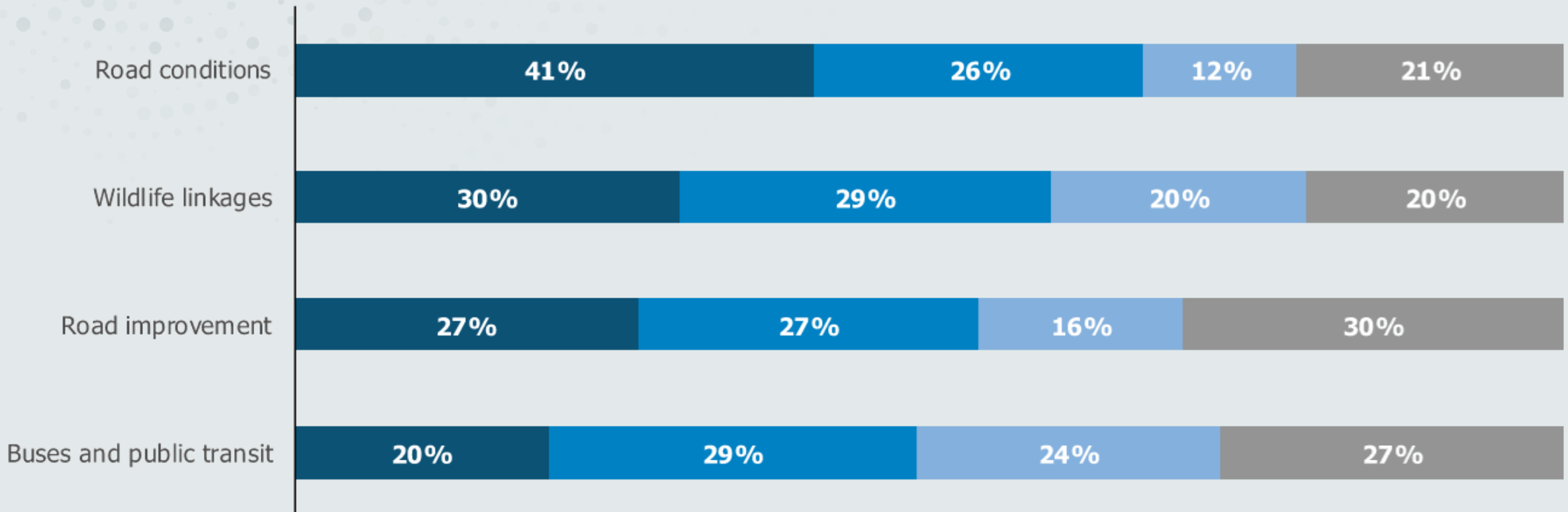


- Only 13% of people are aware of plan → need additional education / outreach

Public Outreach – Business Coalition Poll

Willingness to Spend More, As Much, or Less Than the RTA Plan Laid Out in Each Area

■ Spend MORE than draft plan ■ Spend EQUAL to draft plan ■ Spend LESS than draft plan ■ Not sure



- Most people willing to spend as much or more than proposed in every element, BUT

Public Outreach – Business Coalition Poll

- What if the public had to prioritize elements?
- Road condition is highest priority across party lines, demographics, inside/outside City

Road Condition Improvements vs Transit

Road condition improvements (such as fixing potholes) 53%

Transit improvements (improving bus, train, etc. transit) 9%

Spend the same on both 28%

Not sure 10%

Road Improvements vs Condition

Road improvements (such as adding lanes to a road) 19%

Road condition improvements (such as repaving arterial streets) 39%

Spend the same on both 32%

Not sure 10%

Road Improvements vs Transit

Road improvements (such as adding lanes to a road) 49%

Transit improvements (such as improving buses or streetcars) 12%

Spend the same on both 27%

Not sure 11%

Public Outreach – Business Coalition Poll

- RTA Next will need to ask voters two questions – both need to pass
 - Do you support the plan?
 - Do you support the sales tax to fund the plan?
- Support for Plan (post interview) → 1/3 of voters are undecided

Support for the RTA Plan

■ Yes, I support the plan ■ No, I don't support it ■ I haven't heard enough / Undecided

Post-test

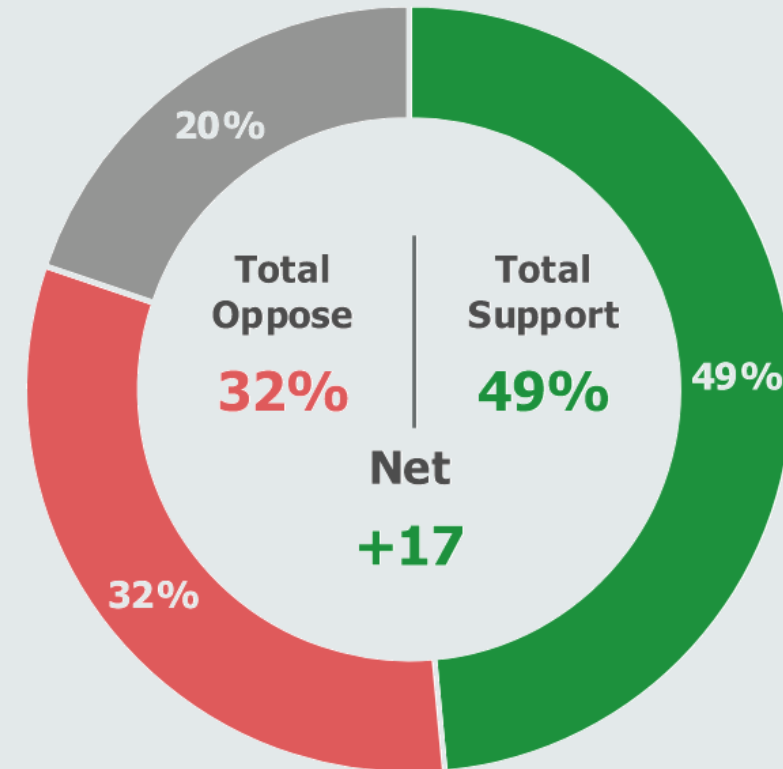


Public Outreach – Business Coalition Poll

- Slightly lower support for tax
- Groups opposed to tax
 - Rural residents (31% Yes, 35% No)
 - Republicans (36% Yes, 46 % No)
- Need to reach 20% undecided voters

Support for Continuing Half-Cent Sales Tax to Fund Transit Improvements

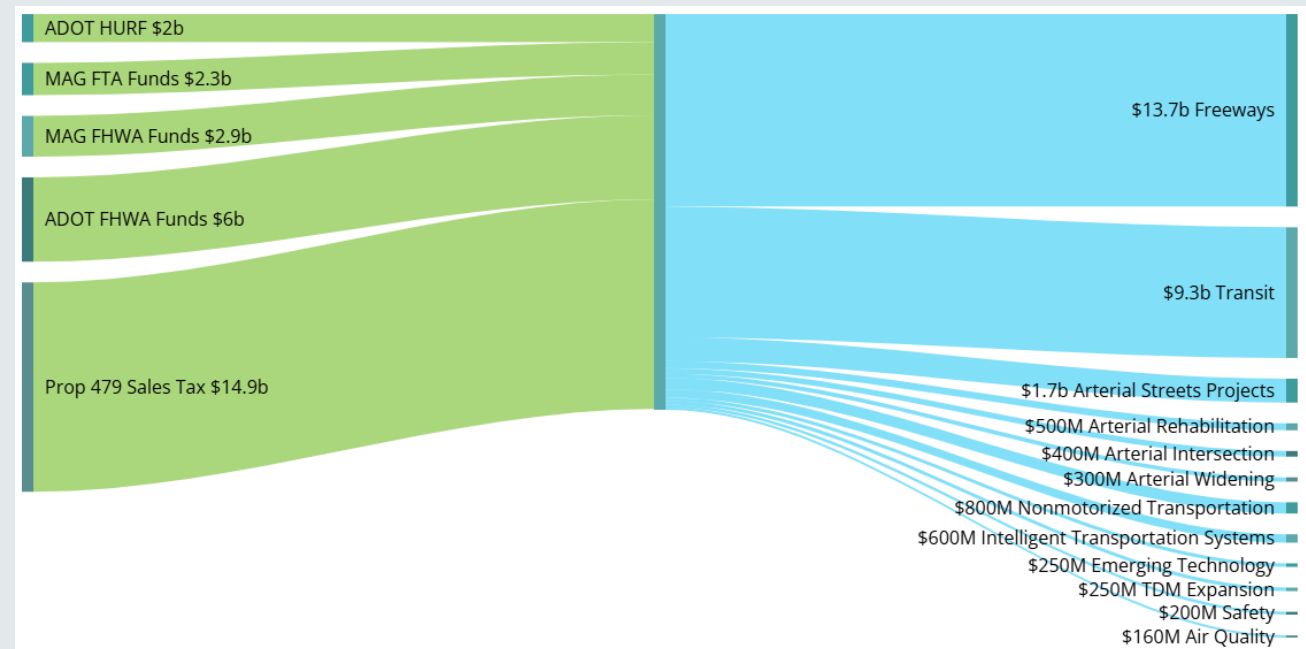
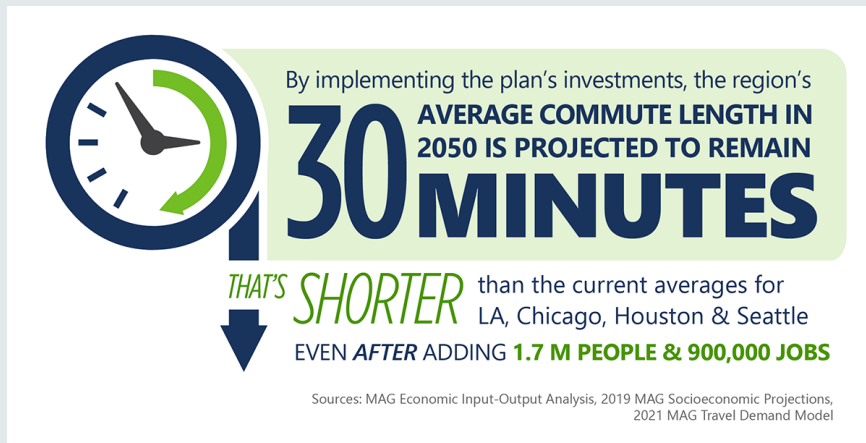
- Support the tax
- Oppose the tax
- Not sure



Engaging and Messaging for RTA Next

Maricopa County Transportation Sales Tax

- 20-year transportation sales tax extension (Prop 479)
- Passed in November 2024, 60% to 40%
- Lessons learned
 - Understand public priorities → Consistent message
 - Show of agency unity
 - Transparency

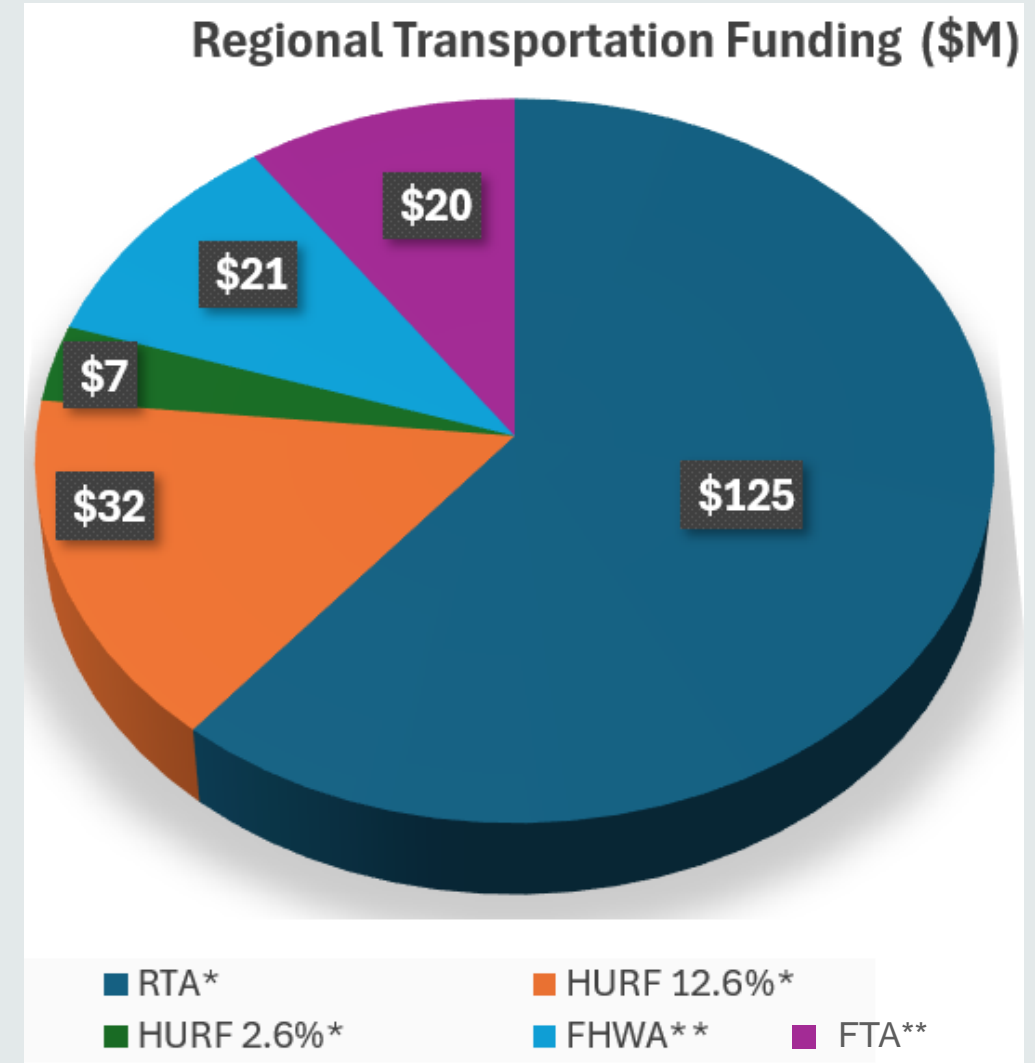


Engaging and Messaging for RTA Next

- Elevator speech
 - Ask people about needs/interest first
 - Mention something positive RTA did in their area (project, category)
 - Emphasize Economic Growth
 - RTA funds leverage other funds (federal, state grants)
 - 48,000 additional jobs, \$2.9B revenue over baseline (Rounds)
 - \$11.9B in economic benefits – new jobs, new tax revenue, leverage state/federal grant funds
 - Good roadways make Tucson more competitive for site selectors

Engaging and Messaging for RTA Next

- Elevator speech
 - What will happen if RTA goes away
 - Loss of 60% of regional funding
 - \$250-400M in RTA1 unfinished projects
 - Loss of transit routes, frequency
 - Loss of 54,000 jobs and \$3.5B in tax revenues compared to baseline (Rounds)



* Extrapolating FY25 Projections after 03/25

**From PAG 2025-29 TIP

Engaging and Messaging for RTA Next

- Answers to FAQs
 - “I don’t like the plan”
 - “I don’t use the bus”
 - “The roads in my area are kept in good shape”
 - “What’s in it for me?”
 - “Aren’t we better off if each jurisdiction passes its own tax?”

Engaging and Messaging for RTA Next

- Reach out to your elected officials to emphasize need for RTA Next
- Volunteer - Educate family and co-workers
- If we end up with a plan on the ballot – Donate time and/or money!



Q & A