



Commission on Climate, Energy, and
Sustainability (CCES)
Annual Report
2025



Commission Data

Name of the commission	Commission on Climate, Energy, and Sustainability (CCES)
Year covered by this report	2025
Name and contact information of the current Chairperson	Dan Stormont daniel.stormont@gmail.com
Maximum number of members	11
Current vacancies	2 (Mayor's office and Ward 4)
Designated number of meetings per year	No designated number of meetings, but the commission typically meets monthly
Number of meetings held this year	13
Number of meetings canceled for lack of a quorum	0
Number of meetings canceled for other reasons	0
List of subcommittees	Community Engagement & Communications Executive Franchise Agreement Data Center Energy Data Center Policy Data Center Water Green Stormwater Infrastructure/Safe Streets
Number of subcommittee meetings held	21

Mission and purpose of the CCES

On October 24, 2017, the Mayor and Council adopted Ordinance No. 11496, dissolving the Climate Change Committee; terminating the City's authorization for and participation in, the Tucson-Pima County Metropolitan Energy Commission; creating a new Commission on Climate, Energy, and Sustainability (CCES); and amending the Tucson Code by repealing current Chapter 10A, Articles X and XX by adding a new Chapter 10A, Article XX.

The designated purpose for the CCES in the ordinance is to advise the Mayor and Council on:

- a) The most effective and efficient methods of meeting the climate/energy/sustainability goals outlined in the City's General Plan.
- b) Methods for improving the City's climate and environmental impact and adaptability in its operations; and
- c) Achieving the incremental as well as transformative systemic outcomes necessary to respond to climate, energy, and broader sustainability challenges in our region.

We, the commissioners of the CCES, believe that this mission is still vitally important to the City of Tucson, especially as we face challenges of accelerating impacts from climate change while also having fewer resources to respond to these challenges as a result of reduced revenues at the federal, state, and local level.

We also ask that Mayor and Council include *Tucson Resilient Together*, the recently approved Climate Action and Adaptation Plan, in our formal charter as a commission. It was not included in the functions, purposes, powers, and duties of the CCES in Sec. 10A-212 of City Code since the plan wasn't in existence at the time Ordinance 11496 created the commission.

Additionally, the office of Chief Resilience Officer did not exist when the commission was formed. We answer directly to the Chief Resilience Officer as our primary liaison for taskings from and communications to Mayor and Council. This relationship should also be codified.

Major Accomplishments of 2025

Progress on CCES Goals for 2025 (from 2024 Annual Report)

- **Goal: Evaluate the Plan Tucson update and the GDS Energy Sourcing Study.**
 - On 22 January 2025, Amanda Smith briefed the commission on the draft of Plan Tucson and collected feedback provided by the commissioners.
 - On 26 March 2025, Cesar Acosta, Amanda Smith, and Ian Wan briefed the commission on the status of the Plan Tucson draft and collected additional feedback from the commissioners.
 - On 14 May 2025, the commission approved a memorandum to be sent to Mayor and Council with the commission's analysis and recommendations on Plan Tucson.
 - The commission was involved in reviewing the GDS Energy Sourcing Study and invited public comment. The study informed the development of the Franchise Agreement report by the commission.
- **Goal: Expand the key performance indicator list to tie into relevant aspects of the community climate plans.**
 - On 8 October 2025, the Chief Resilience Officer reported that the city has been identifying key performance indicators (KPIs) related to the subactions in *Plan Tucson* and *Tucson Resilient Together*. There could be up to 3 KPIs per

subaction. The commission will be asked to review the KPIs once the list is complete.

- The commission was also asked to review the data available on the Climate Action Hub at the October meeting. The Community Engagement and Communications standing subcommittee took on the task of reviewing the Climate Action Hub by January 2026.
- **Goal: Continue to build on the microgrid research to examine how distributed energy systems can be used to benefit the twin goals of creating non-fossil fuel energy and keeping energy costs low for consumers.**
 - The microgrid research took a back seat to research into the Franchise Agreement, data centers (and other large resource-using developments), and energy sourcing options. It seems unlikely we will return to a focus on microgrids in the coming year.
- **Goal: Create a library of local environmental planning documents and their relationship to current plans.**
 - This effort was started in 2025 as a traceability matrix of documents, goals, and actions relevant to the efforts of the CCES. We expect to complete this task in 2026.
- **Goal: Define and refine our outreach efforts to execute our primary function of researching and exchanging information.**
 - The Community Engagement and Communications Subcommittee took the lead on this task with a new focus on outreach. CCES tabled at one community event with plans to increase outreach in 2026. This will be an ongoing effort.
- **Goal: Research models of community engagement in other cities to develop a report to the Mayor and Council on best practices.**
 - This goal was not completed in 2025 but we are still researching methods for more effective community engagement and communication strategies through the Community Engagement and Communications Subcommittee. Once research is complete, the subcommittee will put together a white paper with best practices from across the nation.

Other Accomplishments

- In a 17 April 2025 special meeting, the commission approved a letter to be sent to Mayor and Council with recommendations about the Franchise Agreement with Tucson Electric Power.
- On 14 May 2025, the commission approved the report created by the Franchise Agreement subcommittee.
- At the 11 June 2025 commission meeting, representatives from the Dodge Flower and Garden District Neighborhoods reported on issues they've encountered trying to get Safe Streets Mini-Grant projects completed. The designs get approved by the Department of Transportation and Mobility, but then get held up during the review process. Both neighborhoods had their approved and funded projects cancelled or

modified by City Flood Control based on studies that didn't agree with the federal, county, and city flood maps. A subcommittee was formed to look into the challenges neighborhood associations are having with their approved Safe Streets Mini-Grant projects and the issue of conflicting flood maps in the city. The subcommittee paused its work while the commission was addressing the impacts of data center projects, but is expected to resume in 2026.

- On 9 July 2025, the commission approved a memorandum to Mayor and Council about the negative impacts from eliminating Sun Tran Route 5, especially from a heat resilience standpoint. (Route 5 service was retained.)
- On 9 July 2025, a number of members of the public expressed concerns about the Project Blue data center during the call to the audience. The commission agreed to look into the issue of data centers in Tucson.
- At a special commission meeting on 27 August 2025, the commission formed three subcommittees to create a report about the impacts of data centers in Tucson and recommendations for Mayor and Council. The subcommittees formed were: a policy subcommittee to look into relevant federal, state, and local laws and regulations; an energy subcommittee to look into energy needs and associated environmental impacts; and a water subcommittee to look into water needs and associated environmental impacts. The subcommittees are also addressing community concerns and feedback related to data centers. This work has been ongoing and is expected to result in a report to be sent to Mayor and Council in the spring of 2026.
- On 10 September 2025, Tucson Water Deputy Director Scott Schladweiler discussed the work the city was doing on the Large Water User Ordinance, uses of reclaimed water, and the impact of the City not annexing the Project Blue parcel in the Southeast Employment & Logistics Center (SELC). He also addressed costs and funding for water contamination cleanup.
- On 8 October 2025, Ryan Gruver, a data center design consultant, briefed the commission on data center design alternatives and the environmental and economic implications of various design decisions that could be made in a data center installation in the desert southwest.
- On 12 November 2025, Valerisa Gaddy of Watershed Management Group, Ed Hendel of Sky Island AI, and Russell Lowes, an independent energy researcher, presented their data and recommendations for data center development in Tucson.

Impacts on City decision-making or operations in 2025

The CCES has had a very busy year, especially in response to citizens' concerns brought to our attention. Unfortunately, we did not seem to be able to respond to these concerns as quickly as they evolved or were addressed by Mayor and Council, minimizing the impact of our efforts. We are looking for more guidance from Mayor and Council for 2026. How can we help you with your decision making in the upcoming year?

Work Plan for 2026

If 2025 serves as a guide, we will be reacting to a number of issues that are not on our horizon right now. These are some of the tasks we currently expect to be working on in 2026:

- Reviewing the Climate Action Hub and recommending improvements to the City.
- Completing and submitting the Data Center Report to Mayor and Council in Spring 2026.
- Resuming our research into issues faced by neighborhoods as they try to implement their Safe Streets Mini-Grant projects. We hope to have some recommendations ready by Summer 2026.
- Reviewing the KPI list from the Chief Resilience Officer when it is ready for review.
- We were asked to make recommendations about deconstruction as an alternative to demolition for building projects in Tucson. We need to determine if this is within our scope and will form a subcommittee, if so.
- We expect to continue to be involved in issues related to large water users, large energy users, energy sourcing, and the franchise agreement in 2026.
- The Community Engagement and Communications Subcommittee will continue to look into innovative methods for making civic engagement and communication related to climate issues affecting the greater Tucson area more effective.

Attachment 1

Notice on Engagement with Franchise Agreement

(Approved by the CCES on 17 April 2025)



**Commission on Climate, Energy and Sustainability
Franchise Agreement Subcommittee**

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Notice on Engagement with Franchise Agreement

Prepared by Franchise Agreement Subcommittee

Garrett Weaver (Chair), Ojas Sanghi, Katy Brown, and Vanessa Gallego

April 17, 2025

The *Tucson Commission on Climate, Energy, and Sustainability* wishes to inform Mayor and Council that we are actively engaged and closely following the ongoing Franchise Agreement (FA) and Energy Cooperation Agreement (ECA) discussions. Our members are present in the community, exploring various options and gathering input from stakeholders across Tucson.

We understand the significance of this matter and view the outcomes of this process to be pivotal for Tucson's energy future and for Tucson to meet its goals of net-zero emissions for the City by 2030, and across the whole community by 2045.

We would like to acknowledge the dedicated work of City staff, including Fatima Luna, Michael Catanzaro, Karina Martinez Molina, Roi Lusk, and others, for organizing the Energy Future Townhalls. These public engagement sessions have brought tremendous value to the franchise agreement process.

We are aware of the upcoming timeline for the FA and the ECA, and anticipate that Mayor and Council will vote at the April 22 meeting to place it on November's ballot. To help inform the FA and ECA, which **are expected to be finalized by July**, we have begun compiling a report that will contain our analyses, insights, and recommendations. This will focus on:

1. Leverage points and a relationship analysis
2. Language to include in the Franchise Agreement and Energy Cooperation Agreement
3. Opportunities for goal alignment across stakeholders

We remain committed to supporting the City's climate and energy goals through this process. We are happy to additionally look into specific ideas or questions if any member of Mayor and Council may wish to reach out to us. We will continue to provide updates as our work progresses.

Attachment 2

Research and Recommendations related to the 2025 TEP and City of Tucson Franchise Process

(Approved by the CCES on 14 May 2025)

City of Tucson Commission on Climate, Energy, and Sustainability

Research and Recommendations related to the 2025 TEP and City of Tucson Franchise Process

**Prepared by the Franchise Agreement Subcommittee:
Garrett Weaver (Subcommittee Chair), Ojas Sanghi,
Katy Brown, and Vanessa Gallego**



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Executive Summary

The City of Tucson's Commission on Climate, Energy, and Sustainability (CCES) analyzed opportunities for climate action in the new Franchise Agreement (FA) process between the City of Tucson (CoT, or City) and Tucson Electric Power Company (TEP). The current agreement is due to expire on April 15, 2026, with a one-year automatic extension, making its effective expiration date on April 15, 2027. The new franchise process will result in two or more final documents, including the FA for voter approval and an Energy Collaboration Agreement (ECA).

CCES views the outcomes of this process of adopting a new FA and ECA as critically important to meet the CoT's climate, sustainability, and resilience goals as expressed in *Plan Tucson* and *Tucson Resilient Together*. The CoT now has the rare opportunity to bring TEP to the negotiating table and secure concrete commitments to climate, such as reducing community-wide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, modeling pathways to net-zero emissions with clean energy resources in their 2026 Integrated Resource Plan (IRP), and establishing a climate action fund using shareholder money. This will enable the City to both act on and adapt to the climate crisis, making Tucson a happier and healthier place for all.

While creating this report, CCES studied examples from other cities that have leveraged franchise agreements to advance sustainability goals, while considering the different regulatory environments. The Commission also reviewed previous agreements passed by the City of Tucson and considered a range of issues that affected the voter response to the 2023 FA proposal in Proposition 412. Furthermore, members of CCES closely followed the CoT Energy Townhall process and incorporated participant comments into their analysis.

Recommendations

For The Franchise Agreement

1. Negotiate a short agreement period. Approve a 5-year period, with the option for Mayor and Council to approve two 5-year extensions, for total voter-approved term of 15 years.

For The Energy Collaboration Agreement

2. Include a commitment from TEP to reach net-zero community-wide GHG emissions by 2045 and model pathways to net-zero emissions with clean energy resources in their 2026 Integrated Resource Plan.
3. Establish a Climate Action Fund to aid the implementation of the Climate Action Plan, composed of shareholder money provided by TEP and Fortis (TEP's parent company).
4. Establish a Climate Action Fund Oversight Committee, composed of representatives from TEP, the City, and multiple community members.
5. Require TEP to send an annual report of its progress on implementing the provisions in the ECA and reaching its net-zero goals to the City.

General Recommendations

6. At the 5-year review periods, and at the end of the FA, the City should thoroughly review the impact and implementation progress of the ECA and solicit extensive public feedback to determine how and whether to renegotiate the ECA.

See the “Elaboration of Recommendations” section for details on these recommendations.

The City’s Leverage in Negotiations

In the section titled “The City of Tucson’s Strong Leverage in FA Negotiations,” CCES conducts an analysis and offers reasoning as to why CCES believes that the City possesses strong leverage in the current FA negotiations. CCES recommends that the City use this strong negotiating position to their and the community’s advantage.

Analysis of Proposition 412

In the section titled “Analysis of Proposition 412 Outcome,” CCES goes over various narratives and reasons for the failure of Proposition 412. CCES concludes with a recommendation that the City address the key pitfalls of Prop 412 – an increase in taxes and a lack of strong climate action.

Other Sections

CCES has included various other useful analyses and pieces of information in this report but have omitted them from the executive summary for brevity. If possible, CCES encourages the reader to peruse the document in full, including the multiple sections in the Appendix that CCES has not described here.

Elaboration of Recommendations

Recommendation 1: A Short Franchise Agreement

A shorter franchise agreement is essential for ensuring accountability under the Energy Collaboration Agreement. Cities with strong sustainability and resilience goals, such as Minneapolis, San Diego, and Salt Lake City specifically negotiated shorter franchise agreements with their respective investor-owned utilities to ensure alignment between the city and utility.

However, CCES recognizes that Tucson/Arizona is unlike most other cities/states in that franchise agreements are required to be approved by voters and not strictly Mayor and Council (State of Arizona, 2025). While we recognize there may be some legal obstacles, **CCES recommends a 5-year FA with the option for Mayor and Council to approve up to two 5-year extensions.** This achieves two goals:

1. Such a setup would grant Mayor & Council (M&C) leverage similar to what cities in other states hold. The decision of whether or not TEP will get to retain its franchise after the first 5 years would not be based on an electoral process, but instead a select group of informed and highly-engaged officials. When they hold the power to approve a FA, M&C can extract stronger concessions from TEP because they can guarantee that their FA will be approved. This is on top of their power to let the FA lapse and force re-negotiation if TEP fails to act on their climate goals as agreed upon.
2. It would additionally reduce repeated costs of organizing an election.

Salt Lake City agreed to a 5-year franchise agreement with their utility Rocky Mountain Power in 2016 (Salt Lake City, 2016). Previously, the city had a 25-year franchise agreement, but after adopting a goal of 100% renewable energy by 2032, they intentionally chose to negotiate a shorter term to ensure accountability between the City and utility in pursuing projects under their Clean Energy Implementation Plan. **A former sustainability staff member highlighted the importance of the shorter period** as being “essential to ensure accountability, in terms of following through on the vision, as well as creating a near-term contractual checkpoint for both the city and utility to evaluate where things stand, and if in fact we are moving forward in the right way on these goals” (Iowa Environmental Council, 2022). Staff also emphasize that “Critical to the success was Mayor Jackie Biskupski’s strategic cooperation yet **firm commitment on the term length.**” They now are in the process of negotiating a new agreement of a similarly short term (Building Electrification Institute, 2022).

In Minneapolis, the City signed a 10-year agreement in 2014 (Laney, 2021). Now in the process of renegotiating, they are again working to sign a short agreement: one with a duration of less than 10 years that would commit Xcel Energy to cut emissions by 93% by 2035 (Bosley, 2025). In San Diego, they signed a 20-year agreement with an option to exit after 10 years (City News Service, 2021); in Chicago, they signed a 15-year term with an optional extension of 5 years (City of Chicago, 2023).

These examples highlight **two key takeaways:**

1. Cities across the US have recognized the **length of a franchise agreement as a key tool for leverage** and have reduced its length to successfully extract climate concessions.

2. After signing a FA with a short term, **cities will choose to renew with a short term again**. This choice to do it again highlights the benefit and value that Cities themselves feel they gain from such short franchise agreements.

CCES further **strongly recommends against** a long period of a franchise agreement (15+ years) with no options for off-ramps, optional Mayor and Council-approved extensions, or similar mechanisms of curtailing the agreement length and forcing accountability from the utility. We have less than 25 years to reach the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's guidance of net-zero emissions by 2050 (Boehm & Schumer, 2023) and the City's own goal of net-zero community-wide emissions by 2045 (City of Tucson, 2023), so giving a *carte blanche* to TEP in such a way, at such a time, would be an effective betrayal of the promises the City has made to take the climate crisis seriously and take bold action to decarbonize.

Recommendation 2: Commitment to Reaching and Modeling Pathways to Net-Zero Emissions with Clean Energy

Given the state of federal action on climate and the rollback of the Renewable Energy Standard Tariff by the Arizona Corporation Commission (Carrico, 2024), there is now no policy requiring TEP to decarbonize. The only level of government where carbon emissions reduction goals can be pursued over the next two to four years is municipal – the City must take bold climate action and do all it can to get TEP to decarbonize given the lack of pro-climate leadership at the Arizona Corporation Commission. As we've expressed earlier, the FA and ECA must be used as a means to such an end.

This FA and ECA **would not be complete unless its underlying goal is expressly acknowledged and committed to by TEP and Fortis** – reaching net-zero emissions with clean energy resources by 2045. This should include targets to show measurable progress toward the goal of decarbonization with reliability and resilience for the community by 2045.

However, it must be acknowledged that such a commitment made by TEP cannot be legally binding, as all of its energy generation and procurement decisions must be approved by the Arizona Corporation Commission. This is typically done by TEP analyzing and laying out options in an Integrated Resource Plan (IRP), which it creates every 3 years. Thus, CCES recommends **requiring TEP to model pathways to net-zero emissions with clean energy resources in their 2026 IRP**. TEP should model the options that GDS Associates did in their Energy Sourcing Study that they just created for the City (GDS Associates Inc. et al., 2025), and investigate approaches that include, but is not limited to:

1. microgrids with solar and storage,
2. an emissions forecast over time with different generation mixes,
3. Virtual Power Plants,
4. and Distributed Capacity Procurement, as described by (Sparkund, 2025).

Recommendation 3: Establish a Climate Action Fund using Shareholder Money from Fortis and TEP

While the City of Tucson has been seeing funding shortfalls due to the Arizona State Government's passage of the flat tax, TEP and Fortis have been making substantial revenue. In 2024 the company reported higher earnings per share because of "new customer rates at Tucson Electric Power effective September 1, 2023 and higher retail electricity sales associated with warmer weather" (Fortis, Inc., 2024b). This creates perverse incentives: as climate change worsens, TEP and Fortis will see increasing revenue from air conditioning use from higher temperatures and the City of Tucson and its community will see higher costs through increasing temperatures and more disruptions from a changing climate.

To address these needs, maintain an amicable relationship, and substantively support the implementation of the City's Climate Action Plan, **TEP and Fortis should provide shareholder funds to support the implementation of the City's climate and resilience goals.** This money, which would not be passed onto ratepayers and would be dedicated exclusively to climate action projects, **should be in the range of millions of dollars,** and would represent a concrete and meaningful action of support by TEP to act on climate. Such a commitment, aside from its technical and implementation benefits, would also garner the goodwill necessary to get this FA approved by the voting populace.

Again, this recommendation is not without precedent. San Diego Gas & Electric agreed to pay, from shareholder funds, the city \$80 million for franchise rights, plus \$20 million into a Climate Equity Fund and \$10 million for solar rebates in underserved areas (The City of San Diego, 2021). In Chicago, ComEd agreed to provide \$100–120 million of shareholder funds for local climate initiatives (City of Chicago, 2023).

Recommendation 4: Oversight Committee for the Climate Action Fund

Along with the establishment of a new fund comes a natural need to establish an effective method of overseeing its implementation that is responsive to the needs of the community. CCES recommends establishing a Climate Action Fund Oversight Committee.

This Committee would track and oversee all expenditures from the Climate Action Fund, and would ensure that its resources are spent exclusively on impactful climate action projects. The Committee would vote on recommending and approving expenditures for specific projects, and M&C would actively take their opinion into consideration before officially spending the money.

This Committee should be composed of members of TEP, the City, and most importantly, the community. A major flaw in the design of Proposition 412 pointed out by critics was a lack of power given to community members in the oversight commission that the Proposition would have established. This Committee should **have multiple members from the community** – far outnumbering the City and TEP representatives – that are appointed by Council Members or the City Manager. CCES further recommends that one or multiple of the seats be reserved for a youth with equal voting power, as the money that is being spent directly impacts their future.

Recommendation 5: Annual Progress Report of Implementation of Energy Collaboration Agreement

To effectively track the actions of TEP and to scrutinize their commitments in the ECA, CCES recommends that the City require **TEP provide an annual progress report on their implementation of the provisions in the ECA**. Such a report would provide transparency and insight on the utility's actions, thereby enhancing the efficacy of the City's own actions as well as building community trust and support. The annual report should include clearly defined metrics and demonstrate year-over-year progress on aspects including, but not limited to:

1. Total GHG emissions across all three scopes (Scopes 1, 2, and 3), disaggregated by gas type (CO₂, CH₄, N₂O, etc).
2. Megawatt-hours of new and total energy generation, reported by energy type (solar, wind, nuclear, natural gas, coal), nameplate capacity, effective (or derated) capacity, and actual utilization (capacity factor).
3. Volume and percentage of energy sourced from clean energy (solar, wind, nuclear, etc.), disaggregated by source.
4. Capital investment in clean energy projects, including community-scale and utility-scale.
5. Status of grid upgrades (e.g., smart meters, energy storage installations, transmission enhancements).
6. Installed and operational battery/storage capacity (MW/MWh).
7. Data on support for electrification of buildings and transportation (e.g., EV charging infrastructure installed).
8. Uptake in demand response, energy efficiency, rooftop solar, and low-income energy assistance programs.
9. Comparison of actual progress against year-over-year targets or milestones laid out in the ECA, with explanations for delays or deviations, if any.
10. Cost allocations and rate impacts of clean energy investments, and cost savings or efficiency gains passed on to customers.

CCES further recommends that the **City of Tucson have a section on the implementation progress of the ECA** in its existing quarterly reports of updates on climate action implementation.

Recommendation 6: Review Periods and Renegotiation of the ECA

Each review period within the Franchise Agreement (FA) presents a critical opportunity for reflection, accountability, and bolder climate leadership. As demonstrated by the current FA renewal process, these moments generate heightened public interest and a strong community call for meaningful climate action.

In the new FA—particularly under the recommended structure that includes City Council review and reapproval every five years—the City should dedicate significant effort to evaluating the implementation of the Energy Cooperation Agreement (ECA). Importantly, this evaluation should include a robust public engagement process to gather input from community members, advocacy groups, and other stakeholders.

It must also account for evolving political conditions and regulatory developments at the state and federal levels. CCES further recommends that at this point, CCES send in a report of its own viewpoints on renewal, and that it be seriously considered. Establishing CCES as a central figure in the community around which to center conversations about climate will facilitate more structured and robust communication.

It is of utmost important that at these review periods, the City not just rubber stamp the renewal of the FA. Instead, it **must undertake a rigorous and transparent process of assessing the whether the ECA is meeting its goals** – and if not, undertake the long and hard work of negotiating stronger terms, demanding accountability, and flexing its political muscles. At these 5-year review periods, the City would be on a similar negotiation footing as Salt Lake City, San Diego, and Minneapolis because the renewal would be dependent upon M&C, and not a city-wide election. M&C would have the ability to make firm commitments to TEP that they can deliver on – and they should use this leverage to its maximum.

Appendix

The City of Tucson's Strong Leverage in FA Negotiations

Since the negotiation and defeat of Prop 412 in 2023, multiple developments have shifted leverage toward the City.

The first relates to municipalization. In 2014, Minneapolis secured a 100% renewable energy commitment from Xcel Energy in part because the utility feared a growing municipalization effort in Boulder, CO—another city it served (McCoy, 2022). Today, TEP's parent company, Fortis Inc., faces a comparable situation: a serious municipalization push targeting one of its subsidiaries, Central Hudson, in New York's Hudson Valley. In 2024, the New York State Legislature introduced a bill to municipalize the utility (Kinniburgh, 2024). Although it did not pass, the proposal marks a credible attempt to shift another Fortis-owned utility to public ownership, certainly worrying Fortis and prompting them to reduce the likelihood of municipalization in Tucson. And as discussed earlier, the threat of municipalization was key to enabling strong FAs to be adopted in other cities. Already, Tucson has a similar municipalization effort, with advocates pointing to lower consumer costs and stronger climate action as justifications for public power (Cree, 2025). As Lee Ziesche, the spokesperson of the Tucson chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America, noted, "fifty-four million people get their electricity from a publicly owned utility, and they not only tend to be cheaper, they tend to be more reliable and better on climate action" (Robbins, 2025). Since Prop 412, this campaign has gained in reach, power, and influence, having garnered more than 3,400 signatures (Cree, 2025) and held multiple rallies (Alder, 2025).

Second, following the lobbying from the public power campaign and the broader climate community, the City committed \$300,000 to commission an Energy Sourcing Study from GDS Associates, which found that both Community Choice Energy and municipalization would save money for the City and ratepayers. For utilities, the franchise agreement represents an almost existential question of their continued operation and profit — and in Tucson, the technical case has already been made that separating from TEP may be better. TEP, clearly threatened, has issued statements attacking the "profoundly flawed" study as delivering "false promises" in order to "[drive] a wedge" between the City and TEP and support a "hostile takeover" (Tucson Electric Power, 2025b). Notably, GDS has publicly stood its ground, saying that they trust their results (Cree, 2025).

Third, the City has taken great pains to publicize the results of the study as well as bring in the community in the creation of the franchise agreement. They have held multiple town halls across the City at various times, in both English and Spanish (Staub, 2025), and have let this process play out over a longer amount of time than they did Prop 412. This places the City in a better negotiating position, as they can speak more confidently to the community's support of an eventual FA and ECA (assuming enough time is provided for the drafts of those to be circulated and iterated once drafted).

Finally, TEP's CEO, Susan Gray, has already signaled openness to collaboration, stating, "we should be working together to address our city's long-term needs" (Tucson Electric Power, 2025b). Fortis, too, has publicly committed to reaching net-zero GHG emissions by 2050 (Fortis, Inc., 2025a). This alignment of interests—paired with growing public pressure—places the City in a strong negotiating position.

When considered as a whole, the City has a strong amount of leverage and is in a great position to negotiate – especially when compared to its position when drafting negotiating Prop 412 in 2023. Tucson can now position municipalization as the progressive option while presenting a franchise agreement with strong climate provisions as a moderate compromise. Prop 412's failure has already demonstrated that the City of Tucson's residents won't vote for an agreement that doesn't meaningfully address climate and that increases prices, and it is well-demonstrated that the Climate Action Plan is popular amongst Tucsonans.

So, the City has the legitimate standing to deliver a clear message to TEP: this FA must both address climate as well as deliver shareholder-provided funds. CCES recommends that the City and its elected officials unabashedly flex this leverage during negotiations.

Analysis of Proposition 412 Outcome

Proposition 412 was the last attempt to pass a franchise agreement with TEP. It would renew TEP's FA for 25 years more and raise the franchise fee by 0.75% to fund climate action and undergrounding powerlines. It was defeated by voters in a special election in May 2023.

In the leadup and aftermath of Proposition 412, there were many community members who offered reasons to vote no for the proposition. CCES believes it was a combination of a) an increase of fees passed onto ratepayers – effectively, an indirect tax increase; b) a lack of climate action; and c) a lack of extensive and meaningful community engagement.

Before the vote, some groups advocated for voters to reject the agreement, such as “The Pima County Republican Party, ... citing rate increases” (Washington, 2023a). Furthermore, at this time, TEP was seeking a rate increase from the Arizona Corporation Commission, amplifying cost concerns. Simultaneously, climate change-focused groups also amplified the message to vote no. Groups such as the Tucson Climate Action Network, Citizens' Climate Lobby, and Arizona Youth Climate Coalition all ran public campaigns urging voters to defeat the proposition, citing weak climate measures and a rushed process with little community engagement (Washington, 2023a). Additionally, then-Council Member Steve Kozachik openly opposed the proposition, stating that too much money was going to undergrounding and not enough to climate action, and that “something nearer a 50-50 split would benefit everyone” (Foster, 2023). After the election, some pointed out “a voter turnout of less than 22% in the all-mail election” (Washington, 2023b), and it is possible that the small number of voters allowed organized groups to effectively deny the passage of the agreement.

Some members of the Arizona Youth Climate Coalition conducted an analysis, comparing voter turnout across precinct maps for Prop 412 versus the 2020 Presidential Election and Prop 411, which was a tax extension to fund road development (Sanghi, 2023). By examining voting patterns among pro- and anti-climate action voters as well as pro- and anti-tax increase voters (using Prop 411 as a rough proxy), the analysis concluded that the key factor in Prop 412's defeat was the lack of climate action, not the modest tax increase. As the author notes, “the climate-concerned electorate may not have been all the voters against Prop 412, but they were the deciding group.” The piece goes on to argue that **if TEP and the City hope to pass a new franchise agreement, earning the support of climate-conscious voters will be essential.**

What CCES concludes from these analyses is that voters will reject a proposition that includes cost increases and does not take strong climate action. Any successful agreement **must not require more money from ratepayers, must have its benefits distributed across the country, and must include more funding for and strong action on climate and community resilience.**

Robust Stakeholder Engagement

For an eventual FA and ECA to be adopted by the Tucson populace, CCES believes that significant stakeholder and community outreach will be required. This will have to go beyond gathering input; these groups should have the influence to educate the City on its blind spots and have the power to actively shape the language. By involving these groups, they will be able to educate their own communities and build a broad base of support for the FA.

We recommend the City compile an extensive list of stakeholder groups and reach out to them. This should include those involved in the creation of TRT, present at the Energy Townhalls, etc.

The Commission is willing to shape this list and aid in the City's outreach process as needed.

Comparison of Franchise Agreements in Tucson and Other Cities

This table shows the franchise agreements passed in other cities, what climate funding and clean energy commitments were part of the agreement, and leverage the city had in securing the commitments.

City (Year) and Utility	Franchise Term	Climate Funding	Clean Energy Commitments	Context for enabling city and community goals
<p>City: Minneapolis, MN (2014)</p> <p>Utility: Xcel Energy (electric), CenterPoint Energy (gas)</p> <p>NB: As of 2025, Minneapolis is in the process of renewing for another 10 years.</p>	10 years (Building Electrification Institute, 2022)	Changed franchise fee in 2018 from 4.5% to 5% to raise funds for climate action.	100% carbon-free electricity by 2030	Xcel did not want municipalization, which was occurring in Boulder CO, which was also served by Xcel (Building Electrification Institute, 2022).
<p>City: Salt Lake City, UT (2016)</p> <p>Utility: Rocky Mountain Power</p> <p>NB: As of 2022, Salt Lake City is in the process of renewing.</p>	5 years	No dedicated funding. Focused on energy cooperation agreement and joint projects.	100% clean energy by 2032 (Van Horn, 2016)	Pursuing both Municipalization and Enabling Legislation for Community Choice Aggregation.
<p>City: San Diego, CA (2021)</p> <p>Utility: San Diego Gas and Electric</p>	10 years, with optional 10-year extension (City News Service, 2021)	<p>\$20M to advance city's climate equity goals.</p> <p>\$10M for solar-energy rebates in underserved neighborhoods</p>	The city's Community Choice Aggregation program <i>San Diego Community Power</i> procures energy	Competitive bidding process for franchise included interest from Berkshire Hathaway Energy and Indian Energy of Orange County (Nikolewski, 2020)
<p>City: Chicago, IL (2023)</p> <p>Utility: Commonwealth Edison Company (ComEd)</p>	15 years, with optional 5-year extension	ComEd will provide \$100-\$120M of shareholder money to climate initiatives.	Alignment with Chicago's Climate Action Plan—62% carbon reduction by 2040 (City of Chicago, 2023)	Issued a Request for Information (RFI) to explore alternatives to ComEd and to solicit new ideas for electricity delivery and energy generation.

				Additionally: compliance with Illinois 2021 Climate and Equitable Jobs Act, a multi-year long political campaign to extract concessions from ComEd, and an exposed bribery scheme (Lydersen, 2023).
Tucson, AZ; Prop 412 (2023, proposal) / Tucson Electric Power <i><u>NB: Not Adopted</u></i>	25 years	0.75% fee on electric bills split between undergrounding and climate action plan (Miranda, 2023)	100% renewable energy for city owned facilities announced in parallel efforts	Desire from TEP to have a new franchise agreement 3-years ahead of expiration.

CCES identified some major takeaways from the comparing these agreements. CCES has already highlighted two – a short franchise length and shareholder money for funding – but here CCES discusses two more.

First, the prospect of turning to alternative utilities (like in San Diego) or pursuing municipalization (as in Minneapolis, Salt Lake City, and Chicago) gave the respective city leverage and negotiating power. CCES contends that Tucson is now in a similarly advantageous situation and possesses the bargaining power necessary to negotiate an impactful FA and ECA, should the City and its elected officials choose to exercise it. Further details are provided in the section titled “The City of Tucson’s Strong Leverage in FA Negotiations.”

Second, this FA and ECA should be seen as a first step that sets the stage for a stronger clean energy agreement in the future. As costs of clean energy fall further and as need for climate action becomes clearer, utilities will be more open to looking into ways to enter mutually beneficial agreements. In Minneapolis and Salt Lake City, they have begun new FAs that are just as impactful as their original versions, while retaining a short length to preserve the City’s leverage and ensure accountability from the Utility. As an even stronger example, Salt Lake City’s FA process set the stage for the passage of the Community Renewable Energy Act at the state level (Salt Lake City, 2019), thus empowering cities across the whole state to achieve 100% clean energy quickly and independently.

Analysis of Line Siting Concerns

The CCES Subcommittee looked at information related to line siting and undergrounding. The issue was important during the Proposition 412 election. No comments about this topic were brought up at CoT Energy Future Townhall events as of the writing of this document. Because there are no significant climate or resiliency impacts related to this issue, CCES has no recommendations.

The Commission understands that this is an important issue to some voters, especially around the Sam Hughes and University of Arizona area. It would be prudent for the City to engage these voters for the successful passage of a franchise agreement.

Arizona's Energy Regulation and Implications for Tucson

While the City of Tucson holds significant leverage in its negotiations with Tucson Electric Power (TEP), any resulting agreements must operate within the boundaries of Arizona's legal and regulatory framework. These were carefully considered in the creation of the report. For the reader's reference, a high-level outline is provided below.

State Regulatory Authority

Arizona is a vertically integrated, regulated monopoly state. TEP, as an investor-owned utility, is overseen by the constitutionally-established Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC), which holds broad exclusive authority over electricity rates, energy generation and procurement decisions, and utility Integrated Resource Plans (IRPs). Because of this structure, the City of Tucson cannot independently mandate that TEP use a specific mix of energy resources or impose new rates through a franchise agreement. Any provisions that impact rates or require significant capital investment by the utility must ultimately be reviewed and approved by the ACC.

Franchise Approval and Term Limits

The Arizona Constitution requires that any new, extended, or renewed franchise must be approved by a majority vote of the municipality's qualified electors. In other words, Tucson's voters have the final say on the franchise agreement with TEP. This adds a political layer to what can be included – provisions that might be seen as too costly or controversial could risk voter rejection (as happened with Proposition 412 in 2023). The requirement for a public vote inherently constrains extreme terms; the deal needs to appeal to voters as a fair trade-off.

Municipalization Option

Tucson retains the legal authority to pursue municipalization—that is, to form a public electric utility by condemning TEP's local distribution assets and compensating the company accordingly. While full municipalization is difficult, the City can include language in the FA preserving the legal right to explore this path or purchase the system in the future. Such clauses, as used in cities like Chicago, can provide additional leverage during negotiations.

State Preemption of Energy Policy

The Arizona Legislature has, in recent years, shown hostility to local energy mandates – for example, passing laws to preempt cities from banning natural gas in new buildings (Pontecorvo, 2020). While these don't directly affect electric franchise terms, they indicate a political climate where overtly "green" requirements might draw state-level scrutiny. The City likely cannot, for instance, require TEP to implement a program exclusive to Tucson if it contradicts state statutes or ACC policies. However, many progressive provisions can be structured in harmony with state regulations (e.g. voluntary utility programs, use of city funds, or utility shareholder contributions that do not impact regulated rates).

Existing Franchise Fee Structure

TEP's current franchise includes a 2.25% fee that is passed through to those customers on their bills. This fee is authorized by state law as part of doing business in the city. The City has the authority to adjust this fee, introduce new surcharges, or earmark revenues for specific purposes, so long as voters approve the changes as part of the FA. The ACC does not regulate the franchise fee's existence—they treat it as a pass-through cost—but simply ensure that it's listed on bills and that the utility isn't earning profit on it. The key constraint around increasing a franchise fee to generate more money for purposes such as climate action is not legal, but political—getting the voting populace to agree to what is effectively a tax increase. Pursuing this option failed during Prop 412. This forms the basis for our focus on securing shareholder funds.

ACC Oversight on Utility Commitments

If Tucson and TEP agree to certain progressive programs (say, a new solar program or expanded efficiency offerings in the city), the implementation might require ACC approval, especially if it involves utility expenditures recoverable via rates. The ACC has in the past approved “green tariffs” or special contracts for large customers to buy clean energy; already, the City and the University of Arizona have entered, or are in the process of entering, special agreements to use 100% clean energy on paper (University of Arizona, 2019).

The ACC is likely supportive of voluntary measures that don't raise costs for non-participants. For citywide programs, Tucson would need to craft them either as utility shareholder-funded (so they bypass ACC rate implications) or as city-funded (using franchise fees or other city resources), or structure them as opt-in programs subject to ACC program approval. It is also important to note that the ACC's composition can be politically influenced (currently fully Republican) and could either support or hinder aggressive sustainability moves, depending on whether those moves align with “safe, reliable, affordable” service or are seen as outside the ACC's mandate.

Conclusion

In summary, Arizona's constraints mean Tucson cannot simply mandate clean energy requirements without ACC approval. However, even though franchise agreements in Arizona are typically limited to granting use of right-of-way, there is no formal legal limit on what else can be included in it (Michael et al., 2024a, 2024b). Thus, cities can negotiate franchise conditions such as fees, reporting requirements, and collaborative agreements that include GHG reduction goals, as long as they don't usurp the ACC's role on rates.

Note that if a franchise agreement lapses, the City could choose to require TEP to obtain a permit for every piece of work it wishes to do, which could increase costs, administrative burden, and lead to service uncertainties. Although not without precedent – Eugene, OR let their FA lapse and required individual permits for every piece of work after their utility refused for years to negotiate in good faith for clean

energy (Building Electrification Institute, 2022) – it is not ideal for either side, so both parties have incentive to find a mutually agreeable path.

Compatible Fortis and TEP Goals and Policy Statements

These are Fortis and TEP environmental goals that demonstrate their commitment to a sustainable future. These are important collaboration points that have the potential to bring both Fortis and TEP in alignment with our Tucson Resilient Together goals.

Fortis:

1. "Strategy... Our goal is to get the energy we provide as clean as possible, as fast as possible, without compromising our ability to deliver safe, reliable, affordable energy to customers... Tap into innovative solutions to provide reliable, cleaner energy" (Fortis, Inc., 2025a).
2. Target Net-Zero direct GHG emissions by 2050, 75% reduction by 2035 (Fortis, Inc., 2025b).
3. Fortis Home Page motto: "Delivering a Cleaner Energy Future - A North American Leader in Energy Delivery".
4. About Fortis: "We believe local leadership is best for electricity and natural gas utilities, ensuring a strong focus on our customers and communities." (Fortis, Inc., 2024a).

TEP:

1. Net Zero by 2050 - The new goal keeps us on pace toward an 80 percent reduction in carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions by 2035, a target we set in our 2020 IRP (Tucson Electric Power, 2023).
2. Our plan accelerates TEP's buildout of clean energy resources, with 1,520 MW of new renewable systems and storage coming online by 2030, a 44 percent increase over the level projected in the 2020 IRP (Tucson Electric Power, 2023).
3. TEP has a strong local connection and history with Tucson. "Even after 125 years of service, our growth and success remains linked to the growth and success of Southern Arizona" (Tucson Electric Power, 2025a).
4. TEP needs community support to reach its goals: 1.5 Net Zero Hero (Tucson Electric Power, 2023).

Comparison of 2001 and 2023 Agreements

CCES reviewed the previous two Franchise agreements. This comparison is useful for considering the content of the 2025 Franchise agreement and ECA.

Differences between the current Franchise agreement (2001) and the attempted franchise agreement (2023):

9

Section	2001	2023
Section 2 - Grant of Franchise	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Refers to "necessary appurtenances" 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Adds section about Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment (EVSE) Allows with CoT approval, without unreasonable (CoT) delays New EVSE language gives TEP the opportunity to expand services while preserving CoT control and oversight." Refers to "necessary facilities"
Section 5: Renegotiation of Terms	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5 years after date Sections subject to review 9, 16, 17, 20, 21 only CoT can terminate 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10 and 15 years after date More sections to review 9, 10(e), 16, 16.5, 17, 20, 21 (added the Community Resilience Fee sections) Either TEP or CoT can terminate (with new info about post-termination obligations - specifically with regard to Community Resilience fee collection, debt and renewal)
Section 10: Franchise and Other Fees	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Franchise Fee 2.25%- renegotiation after 3yrs if revenue falls below 90% intended level 1/9 to low-income, undergrounding, renewables (Public Benefits Fee) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Franchise and Other Fees Defines "Applicable Revenues" -2.25% no renegotiation if revenue below 90% target 1/9 to same - (PBF) Added Community Resilience Fee 0.75% for "climate adaptation, undergrounding, resilience hubs, EV infrastructure, etc" -to be held in interest bearing trust account - NOT a City payment - or triggers renegotiation
Section 10: Franchise and Other Fees		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Adds request to have energy use data available to use more readily if technology allows
Section 16.5: Community Resilience Coordination Committee		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> New section. Added new committee - Community Resilience Committee composed of CoT and TEP (5) Purpose to coordinate between TEP and CoT for undergrounding, long-range planning for environment, aesthetics,

		ratepayer costs, General Plan, use of Resilience funds, transmission line siting (as allowed)
Section 19: Project Design Modifications	1. If CoT needs to change a project design due to TEP right of way presence, TEP pays the cost	1. Same, but TEP pays unless CoT should have know prior to design, did not factor it in, and there is not a suitable alternative
Section 21: Undergrounding	1. Undergrounding Same - City pays costs	1. City Required Undergrounding Where Not Required by Law Same (but includes 16.5 in moratorium on relocation).
Section 30: Indemnification and Insurance	1. The Company indemnifies City unconditionally	1. New qualifier added: "Except to the extent caused by the gross negligence or willful misconduct of the City....."

Acronyms

CCES	Commission on Climate, Energy, and Sustainability
CoT or City	City of Tucson
ECA	Energy Collaboration Agreement
FA	Franchise Agreement
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
IRP	Integrated Resource Plan
M&C	Mayor and Council
TEP	Tucson Electric Power Company
TRI	Tucson Resilient Together

CCES Commission Members

Members of the Commission on Climate, Energy, and Sustainability at the time this report was published.

Member	Role	Appointer	Classification
Vanessa Gallego	Member, Franchise Agreement Subcommittee Member	Ward 1	None
Adriana Bachmann	Vice Chair	Ward 2	None
Ojas Sanghi	Member, Franchise Agreement Subcommittee Member	Ward 3	None
Manon Getsi	Member	Ward 5	None
Dr. James Sell	Chairperson	Ward 6	None
Garrett Weaver	Secretary, Franchise Agreement Subcommittee Chair	City Manager	None
Katherine Brown	Member, Franchise Agreement Subcommittee Member	City Manager	Environmental Organization Combating & Adapting to Climate Change
Daniel Stormont	Member	City Manager	None

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Attachment 3

Letter to Mayor and Council with Recommendations about *Plan Tucson*

(Approved by the CCES on 14 May 2025)



Commission on Climate, Energy, and Sustainability

14 May 2025
Ward 6 Office
3202 E 1st St
Tucson, Arizona 85716

Honorable Mayor Regina Romero and Members of Tucson City Council:

The Commission on Climate, Energy, and Sustainability (CCES) respectfully submits the following recommendations about the current revision of the City of Tucson General Plan, *Plan Tucson*.

Members of the CCES have been engaged throughout the revision process for *Plan Tucson*. We appreciate all the effort put into the plan revision since 2023 by the Planning and Development Services Department (PDSD), the consultants who worked with them to refine the plan, and the community members who engaged in development and feedback on the plan. The extraordinary level of public input in the process to date is noted and appreciated.

The CCES does have some recommendations we ask you to consider to ensure public engagement and support continues after the plan is presented to voters for approval in November.

- **We recommend all future plans make specific reference to goals and policies in *Plan Tucson* relevant to the implementation plan.**
 - In reviewing the functional and specific plans that have been created since the 2013 approval of the current *Plan Tucson*, we note that these plans have not consistently referenced the goals and policies in the general plan that they are implementing. Of the 13 plans created since 2013 referenced as being relevant to the development of the 2025 revision of *Plan Tucson*, only three specifically reference goals and policies in the general plan, six reference the general plan as providing guidance but don't reference any goals or policies, and four don't even reference the general plan. We would expect the implementation plans to refer to the goals and policies they are being created to enact.
- **We recommend that a matrix be created on the *Plan Tucson* website that links actions in the implementation plans to relevant goals and policies in the general plan. This matrix should be updated as new implementation plans are created.**
 - The process of understanding the connections between the goals and policies in *Plan Tucson* and the functional and specific plans is very complicated. It is necessary to search each implementation plan for

references to the general plan (if the references exist). This will improve accountability and make this process more accessible to the citizens of Tucson.

- **We recommend that annual reports be publicly posted on the *Plan Tucson* website.**
 - Arizona Revised Statute (ARS) 9-461.07 requires progress reports on the general plan be provided to the Legislature annually. Yet, the *Plan Tucson* website only shows two progress reports for the 2013 *Plan Tucson* - one in 2019 and one in 2021.
- **A public dashboard that graphically indicates progress toward the goals of *Plan Tucson* would be very helpful in building public support for the plan.**

The CCES stands ready to assist with the implementation of *Plan Tucson* and is very appreciative of the efforts to date.

Sincerely,

Dr. James Sell (Chair)
Adriana Bachmann
Vanessa Gallego
Camila Martins-Bekat
Ojas Sanghi
Daniel Stormont
Garrett Weaver

Attachment 4

Memorandum to Mayor and Council about the Proposed Discontinuation of Sun Tran Route 5

(Approved by the CCES on 9 July 2025)

To: Honorable Mayor Romero and Council Members
From: Commission on Climate, Energy, and Sustainability
Subject: Proposed Discontinuation of Sun Tran Route 5

In an April 8, 2025 memorandum, City staff was directed to begin the process for a Major Service Change to eliminate Sun Tran Route 5, including public outreach and a public hearing at a future Mayor and Council meeting. The Commission on Climate, Energy, and Sustainability (CCES) has been reviewing this proposed route elimination with regard to the City's commitment to addressing the causes and impact of climate change in Tucson. The CCES is also very concerned with social/environmental equity. This memorandum summarizes our recommendations regarding Route 5.

The CCES recommends that Sun Tran Route 5 be retained. Furthermore, it is important that public mass transit improvements be expanded wherever and whenever possible, as a significant element of City of Tucson planning and policies that have been in effect for more than a decade.

The issue of climate change from greenhouse gas emissions is real, and this ties in with social and environmental equity: the most vulnerable people are most affected. People who ride the bus, need the bus—there is no alternative. In addition, the amount of heat stress placed on residents throughout our increasingly longer summer makes this issue one of health and safety.

Compliance with City Guidance. The availability of safe, reliable, and accessible public transit is referenced in and critical to a number of City plans and guidance. The following is a listing of the references we were able to identify.

- *Plan Tucson (2013)*
 - Policy LT4c: Ensure urban design that provides multi-modal connections between and within building blocks.
 - Policy LT13: Continue to explore and monitor opportunities to increase the use of transit, walking, and bicycles as choices for transportation on a regular basis.
- *City of Tucson Complete Streets Policy (2019)*
 - Section 1, Vision and Intent: To accomplish this goal, the City is committed to rebalancing transportation investments in order to make walking, biking, public transit, and shared mobility safe, attractive, and viable travel options in Tucson.
- *Move Tucson (2021)*
 - Tucsonans want more options for getting around, including using public transit.
 - The public transportation system can be made a more viable travel option by reducing trip times and increasing reliability.
 - Citizens of Tucson supported funding for public transit as an investment priority second only to road maintenance, as documented in the Phase 1 Engagement Results.
 - Pima Street was identified as a Catalyst Corridor and prioritized for Tier 1 and Tier 2 modernization improvements, reflecting its importance as an East-West corridor in midtown.

- Opportunities for improving ridership include improving route travel time and improving connectivity to stops by foot and by bike.
- *Tucson Resilient Together* (2023)
 - Strategy T-2: Invest in safe, comfortable, and convenient public transit as the backbone of a sustainable and resilient transportation system.
 - Strategy T-3: Adopt a “smart growth” approach that supports car-free and car-lite living throughout the City of Tucson and concentrates public services and infrastructure investments in existing neighborhoods.
- *Heat Action Roadmap* (2024)
 - Strategy CH-1: Improve cooling centers by establishing operational standards, optimizing accessibility, and supporting transportation.
 - Action CH-1.3: Support Transportation to Cooling Centers.
 - Strategy CH-3: Expand heat relief resources for people facing housing insecurity to reduce heat-related illnesses.
 - Action CH-3.4: Provide Transportation to Heat Relief Locations.
 - Strategy CN-3: Cool commutes by enhancing accessibility, comfort, and safety for multimodal transportation systems.
 - Action CN-3.1: Enhance Urban Mobility Through Comprehensive Street Design: Collaborate with City and regional partners to implement Complete Streets, Green Streets, and standards for Green Infrastructure and Urban Forestry across all transportation projects.
- *Plan Tucson* (2025)
 - Goal 2: Support the Development of an Equitable Community.
 - Policy Equity 5: Expand public infrastructure to improve access to employment, education, services, and resources, with a focus on removing barriers and strengthening connections for historically disinvested communities.
 - Goal 3: Be a Leader in Carbon Reduction and Resiliency to Extreme Heat and Climate Impacts.
 - Policy Climate 2: Support resources that protect vulnerable individuals and communities from the impacts of heat.
 - Policy Climate 12: Develop codes, policies, incentives, and support programs to facilitate the transition to greenhouse gas neutrality.
 - Goal 6: Expand Access to Quality Education for All Ages and Abilities.
 - Policy Education 7: Improve and provide well-maintained public facilities and infrastructure that serve educational activities.
 - Goal 8: Promote a Clean Community and Reduce the Harmful Effects of Pollutants in Our Environment.
 - Policy Environment 1: Reduce and mitigate air, water, light, and noise pollution citywide.
 - Goal 13: Expand and Improve Access to High-Quality Transportation Choices, Enhance Safety, and Improve the Condition of City Streets and Other Infrastructure.
 - Policy Transportation 9: Develop and enhance transportation and other infrastructure to increase our community’s resiliency to extreme heat, extreme drought, flooding, fire, and all emergencies.
 - Policy Transportation 10: Improve low-emission or no-emission transportation options that are safe, reliable, and accessible to all ages and abilities.
 - Policy Transportation 12: Continuously evaluate transit service provision to identify opportunities to expand the Frequent Transit Network, increase and extend service hours, transit coverage, and invest in infrastructure that supports speed, reliability, and service quality.

The referenced plans and policies emphasize increasing access to public transit, decreasing exposure to extreme temperatures, and providing services to the most vulnerable populations in the city. Eliminating Route 5 contradicts these policies and strategies by requiring residents of midtown to walk farther to catch a bus and often having to take a transfer to get to a destination they can currently access directly.

Heat Equity. As the Route 5 map below shows, a significant percentage of Route 5 traverses areas with above average (light purple) or high (dark purple) Heat Call Equity Index values. These are not neighborhoods we should be taking services away from.



Route 5 is also a direct route with no transfers to the cooling center at the Udall Recreation Center.

Safe Routes to Schools. There are no fewer than fourteen schools within a half-mile of Route 5, with the majority along Pima Street. These schools range from preschools to adult education, with some of the large schools being Wright Elementary, Catalina High School, Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind, the University of Arizona, and the Pima Community College Downtown and West campuses. Eliminating Route 5 would require a student to walk half-a-mile to a bus route and then half-a-mile to the school from most locations in midtown or make two transfers. Anyone traveling west past Stone Avenue will also need to make an additional transfer to Route 22. Sun Tran has suggested that students going to the Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind utilize On Demand shuttle service at the western terminus of Route 4 (the Speedway bus). The issue with that suggestion is that the On Demand service zone doesn't extend to Stone to the east, so it would still be necessary to transfer to a bus heading west to get into On Demand Zone 1, as shown in the following graphic.

Proposed Changes



LEGEND	
Existing Routes	Proposed Routes
Route 1	Route 1
Route 2	Route 2
Route 3	Route 3
Route 4	Route 4
Route 5	Route 5
Route 6	Route 6
Route 7	Route 7
Route 8	Route 8
Route 9	Route 9
Route 10	Route 10
Route 11	Route 11
Route 12	Route 12
Route 13	Route 13
Route 14	Route 14
Route 15	Route 15
Route 16	Route 16
Route 17	Route 17
Route 18	Route 18
Route 19	Route 19
Route 20	Route 20
Route 21	Route 21
Route 22	Route 22
Route 23	Route 23
Route 24	Route 24
Route 25	Route 25
Route 26	Route 26
Route 27	Route 27
Route 28	Route 28
Route 29	Route 29
Route 30	Route 30
Route 31	Route 31
Route 32	Route 32
Route 33	Route 33
Route 34	Route 34
Route 35	Route 35
Route 36	Route 36
Route 37	Route 37
Route 38	Route 38
Route 39	Route 39
Route 40	Route 40
Route 41	Route 41
Route 42	Route 42
Route 43	Route 43
Route 44	Route 44
Route 45	Route 45
Route 46	Route 46
Route 47	Route 47
Route 48	Route 48
Route 49	Route 49
Route 50	Route 50



Alternative Savings. The CCES understands that the City of Tucson is facing serious funding challenges with reduced revenue from state income tax and cuts in federal funding; however, it appears that the impact of the suggested Sun Tran route changes will be much more detrimental than the roughly one million dollars in savings they promise. Hopefully, the RTA Next negotiations will result in more positive options than eliminating an essential bus route.

Respectfully submitted,



Daniel P. Stormont
Chair, Commission on Climate, Energy, and Sustainability

Commission Members:

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