

Tucson Mayor and Council Passes Broadway Widening Project



A Divided Public Showed up for the Vote on Broadway Widening

Tucson Mayor and City Council approved an agreement with the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) to move forward funding on the Broadway Improvement Project in a 5-1 vote on Tuesday evening.

After years of design study, Councilman **Steve Kozachik** favored another six-month delay for more study and was the sole vote in opposition to moving forward. Councilwoman **Regina Romero** was absent from the meeting because of a family emergency, making the vote 5-1.

The vote approves the City to accept \$18 million from the RTA and to begin negotiations to buy needed properties along this major gateway to Downtown Tucson.

Tucson can now move forward with the purchase of these needed properties along Broadway east of downtown, from Euclid to Country Club Road, also affectionately called the 'Sunshine Corridor' for the road-widening project.

Construction of the roadway is to begin in 2017-2018.

During the call to the audience, Broadway property owner **Richard Rose** described himself as a “hostage” to the years of discussions about how to widen the major arterial street. Having already purchased another building to relocate his business, Rose believes the City needed to honor its promises to the business owners.

That struck a chord with Councilmember **Richard Fimbres**, who represents some of the neighborhoods south of Broadway who agreed the city needs to start working with those property owners.

Fimbres said he has seen the compromise happen, going from an 8-lane to a six-lane widening and now, “I think we need to move this thing forward,” he said.

Mayor **Jonathan Rothschild** encouraged the divided public not to think of compromise as a bad word. He said moving forward will allow the city to work with property owners to save as many buildings as possible.

No plan is perfect, Rothschild said, but more than \$4 million has already been spent on planning, design and engineering, and “I’m not going to support throwing that money away.”