

City of Phoenix

*Meeting Location:
City Council Chambers
200 W. Jefferson St.
Phoenix, Arizona 85003*



City of Phoenix

Agenda

Tuesday, October 7, 2025

2:30 PM

phoenix.gov

City Council Policy Session

If viewing this packet electronically in PDF, open and use bookmarks to navigate easily from one item to another.

OPTIONS TO ACCESS THIS MEETING

Virtual Request to speak at a meeting:

- Register online by visiting the City Council Meetings page on phoenix.gov at least 2 hours prior to the start of this meeting. Then, click on this link at the time of the meeting and join the Webex to speak:

<https://phoenixcitycouncil.webex.com/phoenixcitycouncil/onstage/g.php?MTID=ebfc68c7611acd703405246a6063c37d8>

- Register via telephone at 602-262-6001 at least 2 hours prior to the start of this meeting, noting the item number. Then, use the Call-in phone number and Meeting ID listed below at the time of the meeting to call-in and speak.

In-Person Requests to speak at a meeting:

- Register in person at a kiosk located at the City Council Chambers, 200 W. Jefferson St., Phoenix, Arizona, 85003. Arrive 1 hour prior to the start of this meeting. Depending on seating availability, residents will attend and speak from the Upper Chambers, Lower Chambers or City Hall location.
- Individuals should arrive early, 1 hour prior to the start of the meeting to submit an in-person request to speak before the item is called. After the item is called, requests to speak for that item will not be accepted.

At the time of the meeting:

- Watch the meeting live streamed on phoenix.gov or Phoenix Channel 11 on Cox Cable, or using the Webex link provided above.
- Call-in to listen to the meeting. Dial 602-666-0783 and Enter Meeting ID 2554 462 7461# (for English) or 2550 539 4196# (for Spanish). Press # again when prompted for attendee ID.

- Watch the meeting in-person from the Upper Chambers, Lower Chambers or City Hall depending on seating availability.
- Members of the public may attend this meeting in person. Physical access to the meeting location will be available starting 1 hour prior to the meeting.

Para nuestros residentes de habla hispana:

- Para registrarse para hablar en español, llame al 602-262-6001 al menos 2 horas antes del inicio de esta reunión e indique el número del tema. El día de la reunión, llame al 602-666-0783 e ingrese el número de identificación de la reunión 2550 539 4196#. El intérprete le indicará cuando sea su turno de hablar.
- Para solamente escuchar la reunión en español, llame a este mismo número el día de la reunión (602-666-0783; ingrese el número de identificación de la reunión 2550 539 4196#). Se proporciona interpretación simultánea para nuestros residentes durante todas las reuniones.
- Para asistir a la reunión en persona, vaya a las Cámaras del Concejo Municipal de Phoenix ubicadas en 200 W. Jefferson Street, Phoenix, AZ 85003. Llegue 1 hora antes del comienzo de la reunión. Si desea hablar, regístrese electrónicamente en uno de los quioscos, antes de que comience el tema. Una vez que se comience a discutir el tema, no se aceptarán nuevas solicitudes para hablar. Dependiendo de cuantos asientos haya disponibles, usted podría ser sentado en la parte superior de las cámaras, en el piso de abajo de las cámaras, o en el edificio municipal.
- Miembros del público pueden asistir a esta reunión en persona. El acceso físico al lugar de la reunión estará disponible comenzando una hora antes de la reunión.

CALL TO ORDER**COUNCIL INFORMATION AND FOLLOW-UP REQUESTS**

This item is scheduled to give City Council members an opportunity to publicly request information or follow up on issues of interest to the community. If the information is available, staff will immediately provide it to the City Council member. No decisions will be made or action taken.

CONSENT ACTION

This item is scheduled to allow the City Council to act on the Mayor's recommendation on the Consent Agenda. There is no Consent Agenda for this meeting.

CALL FOR AN EXECUTIVE SESSION

A vote may be held to call an Executive Session for a future date.

REPORTS AND BUDGET UPDATES BY THE CITY MANAGER

This item is scheduled to allow the City Manager to provide brief informational reports on topics of interest to the City Council. The City Council may discuss these reports but no action will be taken.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION (ITEM 1)

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**1 2024-25 Year-End General Fund Budget Results and
Adoption of the 2026-27 Budget Calendar - Citywide**

This report provides an overview of the 2024-25 General Fund (GF) budget results and information on future budget challenges. Overall, actual GF resources of \$2,158.3 million exceeded estimates by \$15.7 million representing a variance of only 0.7 percent. Total actual GF expenditures of \$1,936.5 million were \$4.0 million more than the estimate representing a variance of only 0.2 percent. As a result, the GF ending balance of \$221.8 million was approximately \$11.6 million more than estimated.

THIS ITEM IS FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION.**Responsible Department**

This item is submitted by City Manager Jeffrey Barton, Deputy City Manager Amber Williamson and the Budget and Research Department.

Attachments[Attachment A.pdf](#)[Attachment B.pdf](#)[Attachment C.pdf](#)[Attachment D.pdf](#)

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION (ITEM 2)**2 Strategic Workgroup on Accessibility - Final Report and Transition Plan - Citywide**

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During Mayor Gallego's State of City in 2024 she shared her vision and goal for the City of Phoenix to become a global model of accessibility. On August 27, 2024, City Manager Jeffrey Barton established the Strategic Workgroup on Accessibility to advance the City's commitment to this goal. The workgroup focused on three key areas:

- Enhancing physical infrastructure to improve mobility and access.
- Advancing the digital environment to ensure inclusive technology.
- Promoting social awareness and participation to foster a culture of inclusion.

THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION.**Responsible Department**

This item is submitted by Assistant City Manager Inger Erickson, Deputy City Manager David Mathews, the Equal Opportunity and Planning and Development departments, the Office of Innovation and the Communications Office.

ADJOURN



2024-25 Year-End General Fund Budget Results and Adoption of the 2026-27 Budget Calendar - Citywide

This report provides an overview of the 2024-25 General Fund (GF) budget results and information on future budget challenges. Overall, actual GF resources of \$2,158.3 million exceeded estimates by \$15.7 million representing a variance of only 0.7 percent. Total actual GF expenditures of \$1,936.5 million were \$4.0 million more than the estimate representing a variance of only 0.2 percent. As a result, the GF ending balance of \$221.8 million was approximately \$11.6 million more than estimated.

THIS ITEM IS FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION.

Summary

The GF ending balance of \$221.8 million exceeded the estimate of \$210.2 million by \$11.6 million, primarily due to higher than anticipated revenues discussed further in this report. The fund balance carries forward to the current fiscal year and will be factored into the development of the 2026-27 GF Budget Status.

Two components make up the GF ending balance: resources and expenditures. GF 2024-25 actual resources were \$2,158.3 million and exceeded the estimate of \$2,142.6 million by \$15.7 million, or a variance of 0.7 percent. GF revenues were \$1,846.0 million, representing a variance to the revised revenue estimate of \$26.6 million or 1.5 percent. GF expenditures ended the fiscal year at \$1,936.5 million, and \$4.0 million more than the revised estimate of \$1,932.5 million. **Attachment A** provides graphical illustrations of the GF budget results and **Attachment B** provides a department by department comparison of 2024-25 GF operating expenditures to the revised estimate.

Over the coming months staff will develop revised resource and expenditure forecasts to prepare a 2026-27 GF Budget Status and Multi-Year Forecast scheduled to be presented to the City Council on February 24, 2026.

2024-25 General Fund Results

Resources

Total resources include:

- Beginning fund balance.
- Annual revenue.
- Recoveries of prior year encumbrances that were not spent.
- Interfund transfers to/from other City funds.

As mentioned above, GF resources were \$2,158.3 million for the 2024-25 fiscal year and include a beginning balance of \$293.5 million, revenues of \$1,846.0 million, recoveries of \$9.0 million, and net transfers out of \$9.8 million. Total GF resources exceeded estimates by \$15.7 million representing a variance of only 0.7 percent. The primary reason for the variance was higher than anticipated City sales tax and emergency transportation revenues.

Revenue collections for 2024-25 totaled \$1,846.0 million representing a variance to the revised estimate of 1.5 percent and growth over the prior year of (3.1) percent. The primary reason for the negative revenue growth compared to 2023-24 is due to actions by the State that eliminated residential rental sales taxes effective January 2025 and implementation of the flat income tax of 2.5 percent which lowered ongoing state shared income tax revenues distributed to cities and towns. Budget and Research Department (BRD) staff work diligently to analyze revenue data and economic conditions throughout the fiscal year. Sales tax is forecasted using our econometric model developed in partnership with the University of Arizona's Economic and Business Research Center. Additionally, staff closely follow information provided by our trusted economic sources, which are taken into account to project revenues. It is for these reasons that year after year, revenues end the fiscal year close to what was estimated. Staff has taken a cautious approach to estimating revenue and will continue to do so in order to ensure projections are not too aggressive. The 2024-25 Year End GF Revenue Report is available online at phoenix.gov/budget and provides further details on revenue collections.

Expenditures

Total GF expenditures were estimated at \$1,932.5 million, and actual expenditures were \$1,936.5 million, or \$4.0 million (0.2 percent) more than estimated. The variance is primarily due to slightly higher than estimated costs for personnel services including overtime. The City continues to experience significantly higher operating costs for employee wages and benefits including health insurance and Public Safety Pension, along with increased costs for various commodities and contractuals. The City Council

approved Classification and Compensation Study, which was a necessary investment in employees to ensure the City is competitive and can attract and retain a top quality workforce to serve residents, also has increased operating expenditures. Additionally, while inflation has moderated it continues to impact all City departments. **Attachment B** provides a department by department comparison of 2024-25 GF operating expenditures to the revised estimate.

Looking Forward

The 2024-25 GF ending fund balance variance of \$11.6 million will carry forward and remain in "reserve" until the budget status for 2026-27 is developed over the next several months. The higher than anticipated ending fund balance is good news and will be beneficial as we move forward. It is recommended by the City Manager upon development of the 2026-27 GF Budget Status, and dependent upon available resources, to allocate \$1.6 million of the one-time year-end variance to the Housing Trust Fund to further invest in affordable housing initiatives. This would bring the total amount in the Housing Trust Fund to \$5.2 million. Additional transfers to the trust from American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) interest earnings will continue as previously approved by City Council.

Staff is underway with the annual 3+9 technical review process, to evaluate spending at the line item level. This deep dive into department budgets will enable staff to identify savings and establish realistic estimates necessary to continue existing program and service levels. The process is followed by central expenditure review analysis in December, which involves estimating Citywide costs for various commodities such as fuel and electricity and personnel services line items, particularly pension. Revenue estimates will also be updated during this time including City sales tax and state shared revenues. These budget processes are critical steps in development of the GF Budget Status to be presented to City Council in February 2026.

The City continues to face many fiscal challenges and competing priorities described further in this report which will require strategic and difficult decisions to ensure the budget remains sustainable and balanced.

Other Budget Challenges, Priorities and Unfunded Needs

Impacts from the Federal Administration and the One Big Beautiful Bill (OBBB) Act

Staff are closely following impacts to the City from actions by the federal administration and OBBB Act signed into law on July 4, 2025 including potential reductions to grant funded programs and estimated impacts from the Joint Legislative Budget Committee

(JLBC) to state shared income tax revenues. Cities and towns share in state income tax revenues based on relative population share and revenues are based on actual collections from two years prior and allocated entirely to the GF. State of Arizona conforms to federal tax law as Arizona tax returns use federal adjusted gross income as the starting point from which to calculate the amount of state individual and corporate income tax owed. To the extent federal law changes would affect the calculation of federal adjusted gross income, Arizona and state shared revenues to the City would potentially be affected by the OBBB Act. Most of the federal tax law changes are effective for Tax Year 2025 income tax returns that would begin to be filed in the spring of 2026. The JLBC has published preliminary estimates of the impacts of the changes to federal tax provisions including deductions related to tip and overtime income and full expensing of business property and depreciation allowance for certain non-residential production property. The estimated cumulative impact to GF state shared income tax revenues beginning in 2027-28 through 2029-30 could be a reduction of \$56.7 million. Staff will obtain updated information from the JLBC in January 2026 and will include potential impacts to state shared income tax revenue in the 2026-27 GF Status and Multi-Year Forecast report.

Staff have also indicated grant funding for the Streets Transportation Department and Office of Sustainability will not be awarded and has either been rescinded or paused indefinitely. This includes a \$12.9 million grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) for a low carbon transportation materials grant and a \$15 million U.S. DOT Federal Highway Administration grant for charging and fueling infrastructure awarded in January 2025. Additionally, the Public Transit Department has indicated delays in grant application reviews, projects and reimbursement requests due to the reductions in staffing at the Federal Transit Administration.

The BRD and City departments are closely monitoring impacts from federal administration actions and the OBBB Act and will update City leadership as more information becomes available.

Employee Compensation

A top priority of the City is attracting and retaining a high quality workforce to deliver programs and services to the community. It is essential employees are valued and rewarded for the work they do every day for residents and visitors alike. The City Council voted unanimously in May 2023 for the City of Phoenix to move forward with the implementation of a multi-year classification and compensation (C&C) study. The results from the study moved the City closer to its goal of becoming Arizona's premier public sector employer. The City began the C&C study to not only ensure job classifications and pay structures are aligned with the local municipal market, but to also make the City's pay ranges competitive in the local market. Setting those pay

ranges demonstrates the value the City places on its employees and the community they serve. Current labor contracts expire June 2026, and the next labor negotiations process begins in December 2025.

Homelessness

The City Council and Office of Homeless Solutions (OHS) have made investments and progress in addressing homelessness over the last three years. Investments in the infrastructure of the region's homeless services system have been monumental. As we move out of pandemic-era funding, OHS has additional unfunded needs necessary to continue its momentum and ensure the transformational projects and services implemented are able to continue.

Additional resources will be needed in 2026-27 for homelessness estimated at \$22 million due to the expiration of American Rescue Plan Act funding. Funding is necessary to maintain operational support at several sites the City opened over the last three years in an effort to increase shelter capacity in our homeless services systems. Sites that will require operational support include the Safe Outdoor Space, Phoenix Navigation Center, Washington Shelter, Rio Fresco and North Mountain Healing Center. Operational funding for the Key Campus and Heat Relief operations are also ongoing needs. Staff will continue to seek additional external funding for these programs, and evaluate other City funding sources, which if received would offset the need for a portion of the GF request.

Ongoing Operating Costs for the 2023 General Obligation Bond Program

Phoenix voters approved a \$500 million General Obligation (G.O.) Bond Program in November 2023 that will provide the resources necessary to build, rehabilitate, expand and enhance City facilities. The program includes resources for fire stations, parks, regional pools and splash pads, libraries, community and senior centers, police stations, affordable housing, arts and culture facilities, streets and storm drains. Additional GF resources will be required in 2026-27 for ongoing operating and maintenance costs for these projects. Staff is in the process of updating ongoing operating cost estimates with departments but based on information provided last fiscal year estimates range from \$11.7 million in 2026-27; \$23.4 million in 2027-28; and \$32.7 million annually starting in 2028-29. Departments are seeking alternative sources of funding where possible including Fire SAFER grants to reduce the amount needed from the GF.

Other budget challenges beyond the aforementioned include:

- Economic uncertainty and volatility from tariffs, trade policy, federal reserve actions, geopolitical concerns, housing affordability, and overall consumer confidence.

- Rising employee benefit costs, particularly for Public Safety pension (**Attachment C**) and health care.
- Vehicle replacements for City departments, increased costs due to inflation.
- Major facility maintenance needs and rising construction costs.
- Increased funding needs for critical IT infrastructure and systems.
- Challenges estimating revenue collections in the current economic and global climate.
- Demands from residents for expanded or new GF services.
- Potential reduction in state and federal funding or new unfunded state or federal mandates, including environmental requirements and attempts by the legislature to further reduce revenues.

The items above add significant pressure and uncertainty to the GF operating budget and create challenges estimating revenues and expenditures. Staff will be working over the next several months to study data trends, gather updated economic information, and complete our necessary budget development steps in order to construct the GF 2026-27 Budget Status and Multi-Year Forecast.

It is important to mention that Phoenix's public safety pension costs will continue to increase for the foreseeable future based on information staff received from the Public Safety Personnel Retirement System (PSPRS) actuary. Updated pension rates from the June 30, 2025, actuarial valuation will be provided to the City in December and will be used to develop the GF 2026-27 Budget Status and Multi-Year Forecast.

Attachment C includes historical and forecasted GF public safety pension costs based on the most recent estimates from the PSPRS actuary.

2026-27 Budget Calendar

The City Charter and Code include legal deadlines and actions that must be followed in adopting the budget. In cases where the deadlines conflict, the City meets the earlier of the two dates or a date designated by the City Council. Adoption of the budget calendar ensures compliance with the City Charter and Code, and also allows staff to properly plan the budget development process and all legally required advertising.

Staff requests City Council approval of the 2026-27 budget calendar reflected in **Attachment D**.

Responsible Department

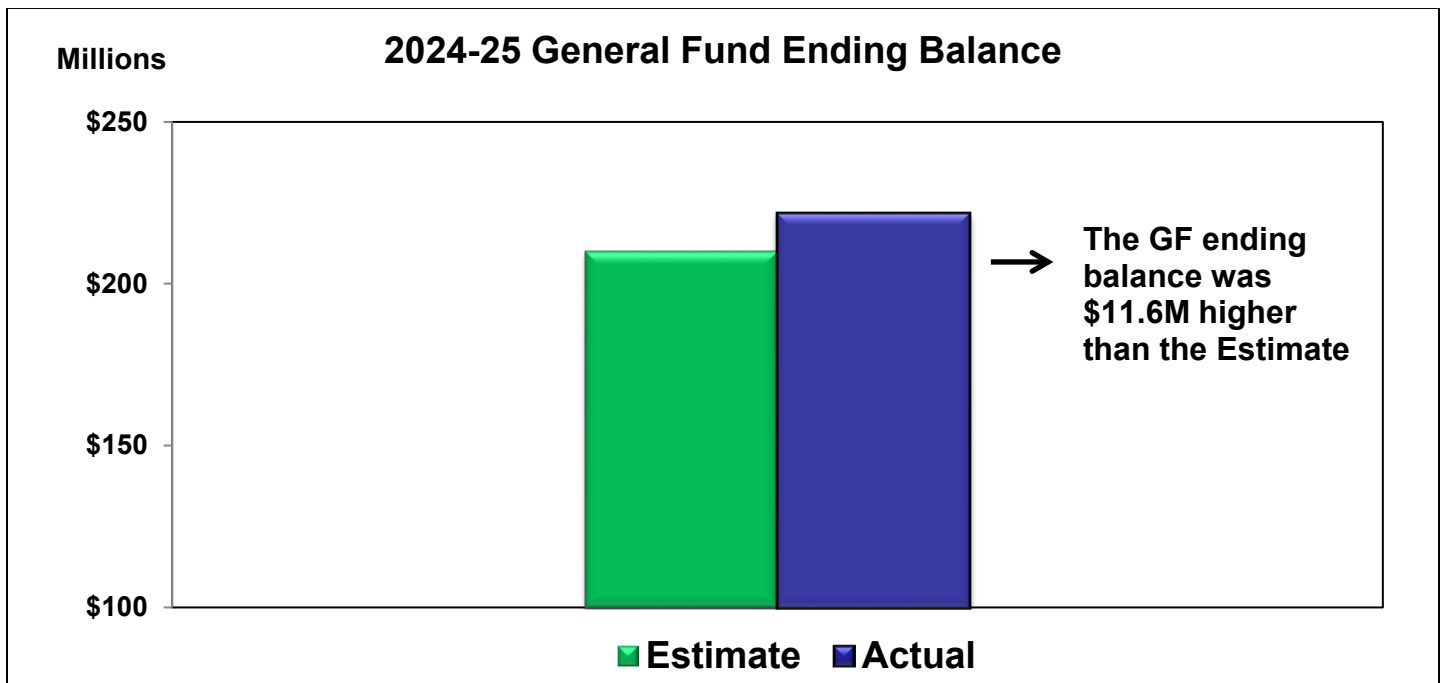
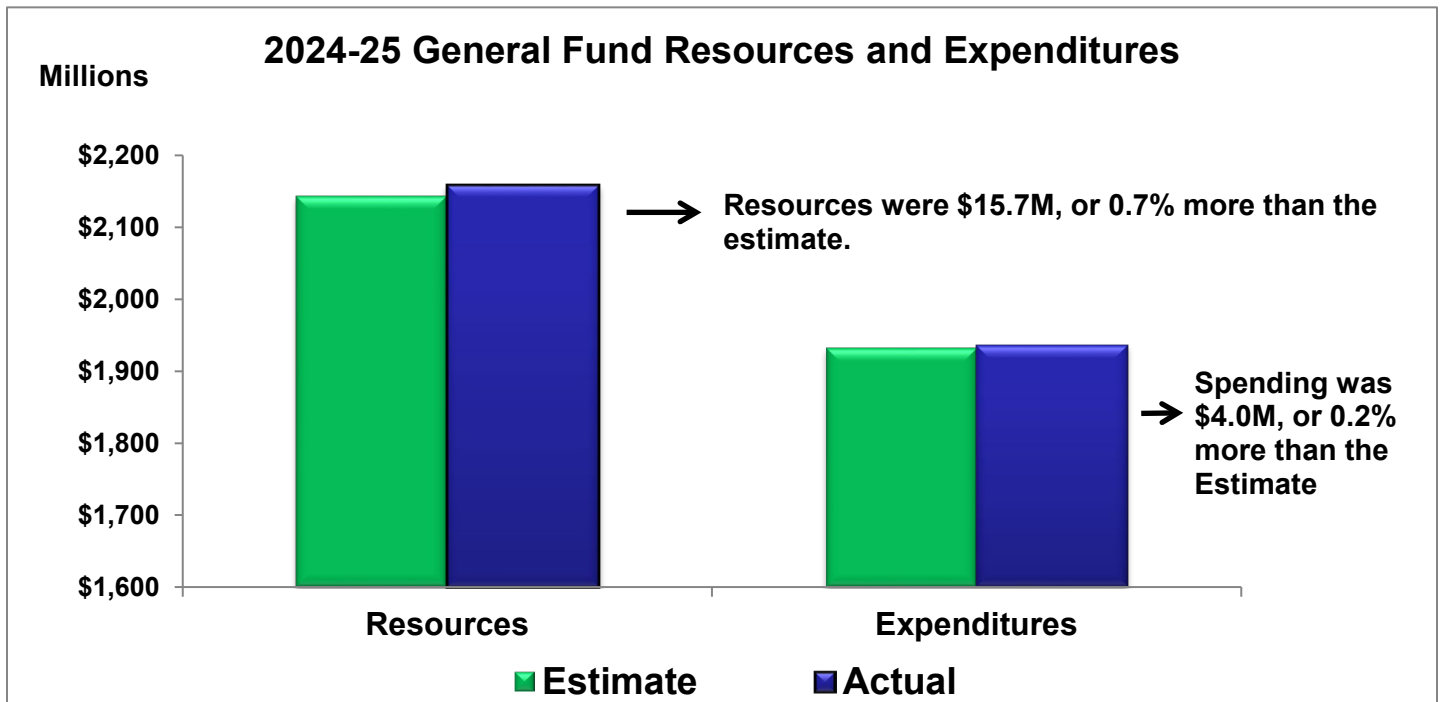
This item is submitted by City Manager Jeffrey Barton, Deputy City Manager Amber Williamson and the Budget and Research Department.

ATTACHMENT A

2024-25 General Fund Budget Results

Total 2024-25 General Fund (GF) resources were \$2,158.3 million and \$15.7 million more than estimated representing a variance of 0.7%. GF spending was \$1,936.5 million and \$4.0 million more than the estimate representing a variance of 0.2%. As a result, the year-end fund balance was \$221.8 million and \$11.6 million more than estimated.

	Actual	Estimate	Variance Amount	Variance Percent
GF Resources	2,158.3	2,142.6	15.7	0.7%
GF Revenues	1,846.0	1,819.3	26.6	1.5%
GF Expenditures	1,936.5	1,932.5	4.0	0.2%
GF Ending Balance	221.8	210.2	11.6	5.5%



ATTACHMENT B
2024-25 COMPARISON OF GENERAL FUND OPERATING EXPENDITURES
REVISED ESTIMATE TO PRE-AUDIT ACTUALS
(In Thousands of Dollars)

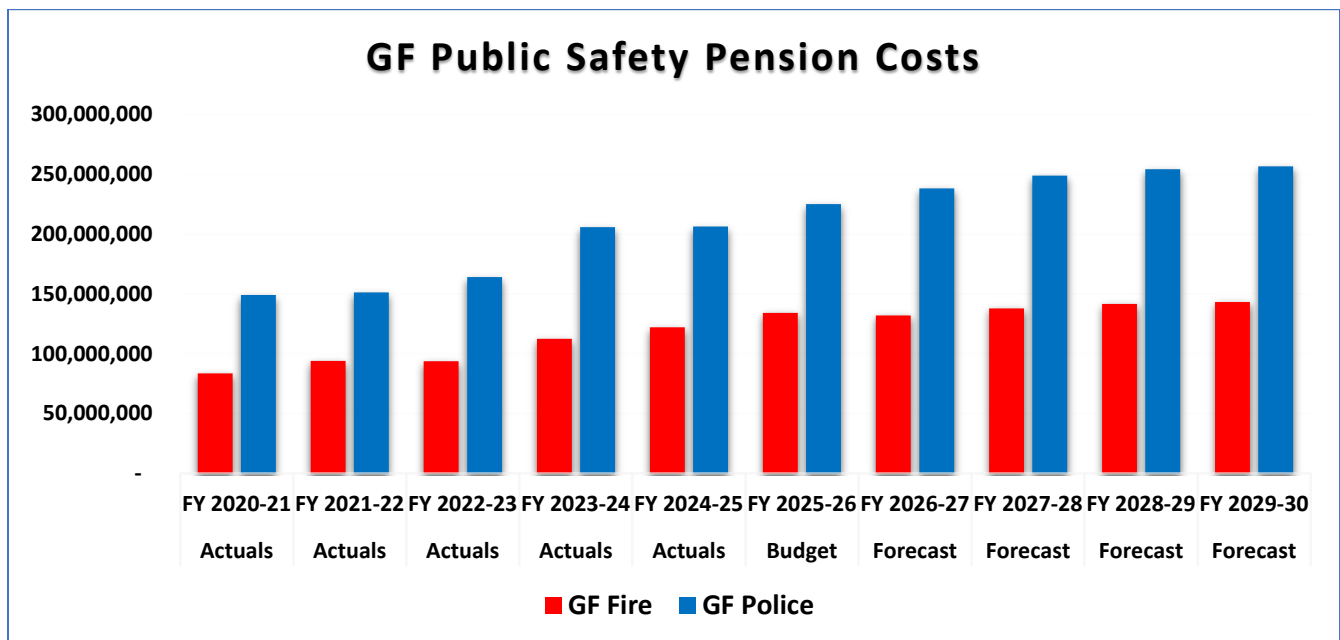
Program	Estimate	Pre-Audit Actuals	Variance	
			Amount	Percentage
General Government				
Mayor	\$ 2,749	\$ 2,597	\$ (152)	-5.5%
City Council	7,038	6,725	(313)	-4.4%
City Manager	11,261	9,588	(1,673)	-14.9%
Government Relations	1,775	1,749	(26)	-1.5%
Communications Office	5,400	5,211	(189)	-3.5%
City Auditor	3,633	3,358	(275)	-7.6%
Equal Opportunity	3,677	3,374	(303)	-8.2%
Human Resources	30,142	28,513	(1,629)	-5.4%
Phoenix Employment Relations Board	129	102	(27)	-20.9%
Retirement Systems	-	1	1	+100.0%
Law	11,784	10,934	(850)	-7.2%
Information Technology	103,533	101,142	(2,391)	-2.3%
City Clerk and Elections	6,218	5,055	(1,163)	-18.7%
Finance	40,312	36,925	(3,387)	-8.4%
Budget and Research	4,490	4,316	(174)	-3.9%
Total General Government	\$ 232,141	\$ 219,590	\$ (12,551)	-5.4%
Public Safety				
Police	\$ 768,095	\$ 777,579	\$ 9,484	1.2%
Fire	475,284	473,506	(1,778)	-0.4%
Total Public Safety	\$ 1,243,379	\$ 1,251,085	\$ 7,706	0.6%
Criminal Justice				
Municipal Court	\$ 39,961	\$ 38,759	\$ (1,202)	-3.0%
City Prosecutor	21,583	20,558	(1,025)	-4.7%
Public Defender	6,896	6,806	(90)	-1.3%
Total Criminal Justice	\$ 68,440	\$ 66,123	\$ (2,317)	-3.4%
Transportation				
Street Transportation	\$ 25,248	\$ 24,687	\$ (561)	-2.2%
Total Transportation	\$ 25,248	\$ 24,687	\$ (561)	-2.2%

ATTACHMENT B
2024-25 COMPARISON OF GENERAL FUND OPERATING EXPENDITURES
REVISED ESTIMATE TO PRE-AUDIT ACTUALS
(In Thousands of Dollars)

Program	Estimate	Pre-Audit Actuals	Variance	
			Amount	Percentage
Community Development				
Planning and Development Services	\$ 7,083	\$ 6,796	\$ (287)	-4.1%
Housing	2,048	1,943	(105)	-5.1%
Community and Economic Development	10,181	9,816	(365)	-3.6%
Neighborhood Services	21,286	20,436	(850)	-4.0%
Total Community Development	\$ 40,598	\$ 38,991	\$ (1,607)	-4.0%
Community Enrichment				
Parks and Recreation	\$ 133,302	\$ 129,926	\$ (3,376)	-2.5%
Library	50,640	50,583	(57)	-0.1%
Phoenix Convention Center	4,150	3,650	(500)	-12.0%
Human Services	38,795	37,528	(1,267)	-3.3%
Office of Arts and Culture	8,809	8,377	(432)	-4.9%
Total Community Enrichment	\$ 235,696	\$ 230,064	\$ (5,632)	-2.4%
Environmental Services				
Public Works	\$ 34,201	\$ 31,202	\$ (2,999)	-8.8%
Environmental Programs	1,776	1,664	(112)	-6.3%
Office of Sustainability	662	595	(67)	-10.1%
Total Environmental Services	\$ 36,639	\$ 33,461	\$ (3,178)	-8.7%
Non-Departmental Operating				
Unassigned Vacancy Savings/Pension True-up to Budget	\$ (191)	\$ 22,239	\$ 22,430	+100.0%
Total Non-Departmental Operating	\$ (191)	\$ 22,239	\$ 22,430	+100.0%
GRAND TOTAL	\$ 1,881,950	\$ 1,886,240	\$ 4,290	0.2%

ATTACHMENT C

The below chart illustrates the rise in General Fund (GF) costs for public safety pension. The forecast for fiscal years 2026-27 through 2029-30 is based on information from the Public Safety Personnel Retirement System (PSPRS) Actuary based on the valuation dated June 30, 2024, and included in the most recent GF Multi-Year Forecast presented to City Council on February 25, 2025. Projected amounts account for changes made by the PSPRS Board to lower the payroll growth assumption from 2.0% to 1.5%, which causes upward pressure on employer contribution rates. Actual amounts may differ from the forecast. The forecast will be updated based on the June 30, 2025 valuation to be issued in December 2025 and will be included in the 2026-27 GF Budget Status and Multi-Year Forecast scheduled to be presented to City Council on February 24, 2026.



ATTACHMENT D

2026-27 BUDGET ADOPTION CALENDAR

Date	Budget Items
November 2025	Inventory of Programs
February 24, 2026	Preliminary 2026-27 Budget Status and Multi-Year General Fund Forecast
March 24, 2026	City Manager's Trial Budget and Preliminary CIP
April 2026	Community Budget Hearings
May 5, 2026	City Manager's Proposed Budget
May 19, 2026	Council Budget Decision
June 3, 2026	2026-27 Tentative Budget Ordinance Adoption
June 17, 2026	2026-27 Funding Plan and Final Budget Ordinance Adoption
July 1, 2026	2026-27 Property Tax Levy Ordinance Adoption



Strategic Workgroup on Accessibility - Final Report and Transition Plan - Citywide

During Mayor Gallego's State of City in 2024 she shared her vision and goal for the City of Phoenix to become a global model of accessibility. On August 27, 2024, City Manager Jeffrey Barton established the Strategic Workgroup on Accessibility to advance the City's commitment to this goal. The workgroup focused on three key areas:

- Enhancing physical infrastructure to improve mobility and access.
- Advancing the digital environment to ensure inclusive technology.
- Promoting social awareness and participation to foster a culture of inclusion.

THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION.

Summary

The Strategic Workgroup on Accessibility was created to address accessibility challenges in Phoenix despite decades of progress under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The workgroup was tasked with developing a strategic framework to promote accessibility and was organized into three subcommittees across the following domains:

1. **Physical infrastructure** - The City aims to make its built environment easy to navigate for its residents and visitors and identify projects that enhance accessibility.
2. **Digital environment** - The City recognizes the digital environment is expanding and aims to align technology uses with national best practices for accessibility.
3. **Social awareness** - The City aims to raise awareness of its commitment to accessibility and collaborate with the public to create a plan that reflects the community's needs and design aspirations.

The workgroup consisted of over 20 members representing City departments, disability advocacy organizations, and community stakeholders. These individuals included:

- Councilwoman Debra Stark, Chair
- Inger Erickson, City Manager's Office
- Don Logan, Equal Opportunity Department

- Judy Boros, Equal Opportunity Department
- Chris Rodriguez, CEO, Ability360
- Nicole Almond Anderson, Chair, Mayor's Commission on Disability Issues
- Darrel Christenson, Disability Advocate
- David Steinmetz, Community and Public Relations, Arizona Industries for the Blind
- Denise Resnik, Founder and CEO, First Place AZ
- Michael Hammett, Chief Innovation Officer, City of Phoenix
- Matthew Heil, Deputy Aviation Director, Sky Harbor International Airport
- Kirsten Verbus, ADA Compliance Program Manager, City of Phoenix
- Todd Shackelford, Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation
- Antionette Cooper, Civil Rights Program Manager, City of Phoenix
- John Dee, Project Manager and ADA Coordinator at Street Transportation, City of Phoenix
- John-Jozef (JJ) Proczka, Structural Plans Engineer, Planning and Development, City of Phoenix
- Maurita Harris, Senior Architect, Phoenix Architecture
- Sandy Moshi, Office of Mayor Gallego
- Tony Motola, Office of Mayor Kate Gallego
- Ashley Patton, Deputy Communications Director, City of Phoenix
- James Ritter, Public Information Officer, City of Phoenix
- Saneeya Mir, Public Information Officer, City of Phoenix
- Shan Obra, Multimedia Specialist, City of Phoenix
- Twila Chow, Marketing/Graphics Program Manager, City of Phoenix
- Diana Cuspard, City Manager's Office
- Hezel Gomez, City Manager's Office
- Zack Wallace, City Manager's Office

This report provides a comprehensive summary of the workgroup's accomplishments, community engagement, and recommendations for future efforts as the work transitions to the Mayor's Commission on Disability Issues.

Physical Infrastructure Subcommittee

The Physical Infrastructure Subcommittee worked on several initiatives requiring extensive research, collaboration with multiple departments and external agencies, and engagement with community and committee members.

Key Accomplishments:

- ***Residential Building Code Amendments*** - The City adopted inclusive design

elements into the International Residential Code, effective August 1, 2025, to support aging in place and reduce retrofitting costs.

- **ADA/Building Code Gaps** - Gaps were identified between ADA requirements and local building codes. Ongoing discussions aim to integrate the ADA Compliance Program into plan reviews for City-owned facilities.
- **Tactile Directional Indicators (TDIs)** - TDIs are being incorporated into pedestrian access routes and light rail designs to assist individuals with low or no vision.
- **Save Our Space Campaign** - Accessible parking regulations were enforced by the Accessibility Compliance Enforcement (ACE) team, which educated property owners and ACE issued citations when necessary.
- **Private Property Accessibility Program** - Educational resources were developed for private communities to improve accessibility and are available through the Planning and Development Department.

Residential Building Code Amendments

The goal of amending the International Residential Code by adding basic inclusive design elements was a primary initiative of the committee from the beginning. Understanding the expense and challenges of renovating existing residences for disabilities and aging in place improvements versus implementing basic accessibility elements during construction was a catalyst for this effort.

Comparisons with other municipalities that have successfully codified similar amendments were performed. Discussions with those municipalities were helpful in identifying potential challenges with the proposed City of Phoenix amendments. Amendments were approved by the City Council on June 18, 2025, and went into effect on August 1, 2025.

ADA/Building Code Gaps

Identifying “gaps” between the ADA and the building codes was an ongoing effort throughout the past year. While the City adopts building codes from the International Code Council that include many structural elements aligned with the ADA, differences between these codes and ADA requirements can result in certain newly constructed facilities not fully meeting ADA standards.

The Planning and Development Department (PDD) is tasked with permitting and inspecting to verify compliance with the building code which leaves additional ADA requirements unchecked. Conversations with PDD and the City Engineer's Office on possibly adding the ADA Compliance Program (ADACP) for City owned facilities are on-going to better ensure that non building code ADA requirements are double checked as part of the review process.

Additional conversations on specific training and reporting procedures for non-compliant items to the inspections section have been ongoing. Resource and visual aid documents have been developed by the committee to provide private property owners with information on meeting and maintaining ADA requirements after the Certificate of Occupancy has been issued.

Tactile Directional Indicators (TDIs)

Tactile Directional Indicators (TDIs) are physical elements incorporated into the Pedestrian Access Route (PAR) to provide tactile directional aid to those with low or no vision. A presentation on the different types of TDIs and their application was made to the full Work Group in early 2025.

Street Transportation staff is currently developing standard applications for the use of TDIs in the PAR. Public Right of Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG) compliant bicycle curb ramp standards are being developed with the proposed inclusion of TDIs. Exploration of how to integrate TDIs for pedestrian wayfinding in the downtown area is ongoing and a test project is currently being developed with the Active Transportation team to assist the Micro Mobility program with reclaiming a sidewalk spur at 12th Street and Moreland. Community feedback regarding the TDIs has been overwhelmingly positive.

Save Our Space Campaign

The Save Our Space (SOS) Campaign educates the public about leaving accessible parking spaces available for those who need them. The work is led through the Phoenix Police Department's Accessibility Compliance Enforcement Program, which is made up of volunteers who are trained and equipped to educate the community and issue citations for accessible parking violations.

For example, private businesses and apartment complexes have been discovered removing accessible parking spaces when restriping a public parking lot. The SOS Campaign was able to educate the groups about the violation. When needed, the Neighborhood Services Code Enforcement Division has the authority to issue citations for these code violations and will continue to work collaboratively with the ADACP and SOS programs to investigate and develop a formal reporting/coordination process.

Private Property Accessibility Program

The committee discussed the possible development of a private community/property accessibility improvement program. Research concluded that the City, as well as other governmental agencies, have jurisdictional limitations in what resources they can provide to assist private property owners and communities (HOA, 55+, schools, etc.)

with accessibility improvements. However, the City is committed to providing reasonable accommodations whenever possible. While there are no grants available for this purpose, educational resources are available to assist these communities and property owners with proper permitting and processes. These educational resources are available through the Planning and Development Department and will be added to the accessibility resources page currently under development.

Long Term Goals for Physical Infrastructure

The Subcommittee identified several long-term goals related to physical infrastructure. These long-term goals include to:

- Develop and implement training, reporting, and process changes for plan review and inspections to improve ADA compliance at City facilities.
- Formalize a process for enforcing commercialized accessible parking spaces.
- Incorporate TDIs into the City of Phoenix building standards where effective to assist residents with low or no vision to better navigate the PAR within the City of Phoenix.
- Develop a formal reporting/coordination process to ensure accessible parking spaces are restored or improved during a resurfacing/restriping project.

Digital Environment Subcommittee

The Digital Environment Subcommittee focused on short and long-term goals to advance the latest technologies and systems to empower and support individuals with disabilities. The Subcommittee members identified several new innovations to improve City of Phoenix operations and service delivery as well.

Key Accomplishments:

- ***Innovate PHX Challenge*** - A Citywide "hackathon" on May 15, 2025, generated digital accessibility solutions. A Work Group member served as a judge.
- ***Hearing Loop Technology*** - Successfully tested in City Council Chambers and being installed permanently. Already in use at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport.
- ***Language Translation Tool*** - Supports over 220 languages, including American Sign Language (ASL). Deployed in libraries and under consideration by other departments.
- ***Smart Cities Roadmap*** - A community survey identified accessibility as a top priority. A digital tool will track accessibility projects across departments.
- ***Performance Dashboard Enhancements*** - Improved navigation for users with mobility challenges, including keyboard access and simplified metric cards.
- ***Digital Kiosks*** - Enhanced with features for mobility, low-vision, and multilingual users in Downtown Phoenix.

Innovate PHX Challenge

The Innovate PHX Challenge on May 15, 2025, brought together more than 150 residents, academics, start-ups and businesses for an all-day hackathon to explore digital solutions focusing on accessibility, public spaces and active transportation. Ideas generated during the event are currently being explored. A member of the Work Group served as one of five judges during the event.

Hearing Loop Technology

Hearing loop technology seamlessly connects sound from a microphone directly into a hearing aid for a more natural listening experience in public settings. A system currently welcoming passengers at Phoenix Sky Harbor was successfully tested in the City Council Chambers and is being installed as a permanent solution.

Language Translation Tool

A language translation tool that features more than 220 languages and dialects, including ASL, was demonstrated for City departments. Phoenix Public Library has on-boarded 12 desktop units at various branches. Additional departments are considering on-boarding the technology.

Smart Cities Roadmap

A community survey was recently launched to support the development of the City's first Smart Cities roadmap. Sixteen percent of respondents noted "accessibility" as one of their top priorities for Smart City technologies. Accessibility will be a key focus area of the roadmap. Additionally, Information Technology Services and the Office of Innovation will utilize a digital tool to track accessibility-related projects across City departments, as part of the Smart Cities initiative.

Performance Dashboard Enhancements

As part of the continuous improvement process for the City Manager's Performance Dashboard, enhancements have been made to provide a more seamless experience for residents with mobility challenges, as they explore key performance indicators across more than 30 departments and functions. The recent update supports full navigation of the dashboard from the keyboard. It also reduces text and the need to scroll within each metric card. The dashboard also includes an expanded ADA section with easy-to-follow steps to navigate.

Digital Kiosks

The Digital Environment Subcommittee partnered with the Street Transportation Department to advance and amplify accessibility features of the Digital Kiosks in Downtown Phoenix. This includes features for those with mobility challenges, low-

vision and blind residents, and human-aided language translation options. Recently, additional languages were added to include the most commonly spoken languages in the Valley. The vendor, IKE, is committed to supporting the City's mission to continue advancing its accessibility features.

Long Term Goals for Digital Environment

The Subcommittee identified several long-term goals related to the digital environment. These long-term goals include to:

- Identify additional digital products supporting accessibility.
- Expand successful solutions throughout all City operations.

Social Awareness Subcommittee

The Social Awareness Subcommittee members identified and implemented new and creative approaches to raise awareness of the City's commitment to accessibility.

Key Accomplishments:

- **Multimedia Awareness Campaign** - This was launched to position Phoenix as a global leader in disability inclusion. Includes still graphics and videos featuring community members and City resources.
- **Zencity Community Engagement** - Conducted a survey to measure community sentiment around accessibility that will be used to guide the ongoing work.

Comprehensive, Multimedia Communications Plan and Awareness Campaign

The City of Phoenix launched a comprehensive, multimedia communications and awareness campaign to position the City as a global leadership for accessibility. This initiative aimed to elevate Phoenix as a leading hub for innovation in health, housing, education, workforce development, and supportive technology, while also showcasing its role as a magnet for accessibility solutions-from inclusive design principles and building materials to the strength of a connected, supportive community.

The campaign emphasized Phoenix as a self-improving, self-sustaining, and self-perpetuating environment where individuals of all abilities can thrive. To authentically represent this vision, the subcommittee strategically selected a dozen locations across the City for photo/video shoots that captured both community members with diverse abilities and the City's accessibility-focused resources. A soft launch of the campaign began with still photos and graphics distributed across the City's owned platforms, including social media, Phoenix.gov, Legends Billboards, newsletters, and more. Performance analytics and community feedback will be gathered in the coming weeks.

The campaign's video elements will debut during the October 7, 2025, City Council

Policy Sessions and will be integrated into the City's platforms in October. The subcommittee also helped identify which community members and resources would be featured in the initial video series to effectively tell Phoenix's story of inclusion and innovation.

Additionally, the subcommittee created a digital hub of accessibility resources, both City-owned and community-based, on Phoenix.gov. The central resource portal brings together the wide range of accessibility-focused initiatives City departments offer while also showcasing available resources for residents and visitors through nonprofit and partner organizations.

Zencity Community Engagement

To better understand community perceptions of accessibility, the subcommittee leveraged the ongoing Zencity community survey that measures resident sentiment and feedback about City programs and services each quarter. Staff added accessibility-focused questions to the ongoing survey from April to June 2025. The survey gathered input from more than 1,000 residents on the accessibility of public infrastructure, City services, and the effectiveness of current policies supporting individuals with disabilities.

Key findings of the survey focused on perceptions of the City's support for people with disability and the accessibility of public spaces. In response to the City's support for people with disabilities, 35 percent of respondents felt the City's policies and procedures support people with disabilities "not at all," 34 percent were neutral, 16 percent responded "to a small extent," 11 percent responded "to some extent," and 3 percent believed they support them "to a large extent."

Respondents highlighted several priority areas where accessibility enhancements are needed. The top areas included:

1. Bus stop and light rail access.
2. Accessible amenities at City facilities.
3. Pedestrian pathways, sidewalks, and curb ramps.
4. Street and crosswalk signals.
5. Additional concerns included telephone, website, meeting, and print access.

Long Term Goals for Social Awareness

The subcommittee identified several long-term goals associated with enhancing social awareness. These long-term goals include to:

- Expand the use of Zencity for targeted surveys and refine the campaign based on community feedback.

- Continue to work with community partners to amplify Phoenix’s position as the most accessible city and raise awareness about available programs and services.

Additional Accessibility Initiatives by the City

In addition to the efforts of the Strategic Work Group on Accessibility, numerous City departments have also implemented initiatives and improved services to achieve the vision of Phoenix as the most accessible City. Examples of these departments include Parks and Recreation, Public Transit, Public Works, Equal Opportunity and Community and Economic Development.

Parks and Recreation Department

Telephone Pioneer Park was the first barrier-free park in the nation. In partnership with Ability360, the park offers safe, inclusive and accessible adult and youth sports classes and programs, aquatics programs, golf, outdoor nature programs, and many other adaptive recreation classes. Encanto Park maintains the first fully accessible playground and pathway to modern ADA standards. Papago Park installed a fully accessible fishing dock with accessible parking and pathway and has been recognized as the “Best wheelchair-friendly” trail by AllTrails, a popular national trail site.

Public Transit Department

Public Transit provides several services focused on accessibility and has made significant intrastate investments to enhance access to transit options as well. Phoenix Dial-a-Ride is a shared-ride service that allows ADA-certified residents to schedule trips around the City. Seniors and those certified under the ADA can access Dial-A-Ride shared-ride service daily from 4 a.m. to 12 a.m. Reservations can be made by phone or online.

RideChoice provides seniors and those certified under the ADA access to subsidized personal transportation providers such as rideshare, taxicabs and other wheelchair-accessible vehicles. Services are available 24-hours per day, every day of the year.

A major transit infrastructure investment was the development of the 50th Street Light Rail Station. The station provides access to the Ability360 facility and neighboring business community and supports transit-oriented communities. While all Valley Metro light rail stations are ADA accessible with features such as level boarding and lowered fare vending machines, the 50th Street Station features an enhanced pedestrian detection crosswalk signal, wider platforms and gently sloped entries. Since it began service in April 2019, the 50th Street/Washington light rail station has had over 600,000 boardings. During Fiscal Year 2024-25, nearly 8,500 boardings occurred every month.

Equal Opportunity Department

The City has been conducting a self-assessment of existing facilities, programs, and services available to the public to ensure they are accessible to all individuals in accordance with the ADA. Next steps include developing a comprehensive ADA Transition plan to identify barriers and achieve compliance.

Additionally, the City is working toward obtaining the Certified Autistic Center designation through the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards. The training program was launched in May 2025; Citywide, 2,200 employees have completed the required coursework. The City achieves certification when 80 percent of public facing employees complete the required coursework and maintains certification when employees complete the refresher training every two years.

Community and Economic Development (CED) Department

CED's Mobile Career Unit (MCU) connects employers with residents seeking job opportunities and provides hands-on resources to support job seekers. The MCU is a fully accessible 38-foot RV providing a wheelchair ramp, an adjustable desk, and computers with accessibility tools. This groundbreaking initiative was developed by the City of Phoenix as part of the Bloomberg Philanthropies Global Mayors Challenge. Chosen as one of 15 cities to receive a \$1 million grant, Phoenix is leading the charge in the future of workforce services. As of June 2025, 477 contingent employment offers have been made through the MCU.

Public Works

As part of the City's recent General Obligation (GO) Bond program, Public Works staff is managing a \$10 million project focused on implementing ADA improvements for City-owned facilities. The project is focused on ensuring ongoing compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) at City facilities. The scope of work primarily involves improvements to the ADA accessible route from parking to main entrance and additional prioritized improvements to signage, parking lots, ramps, doors, and other barriers to maximize access. As of July 2025, an ADA design consultant has assessed and provided scope of work drawings for 19 public facing sites.

Future Goals and Transition Plan

As the Strategic Workgroup on Accessibility concludes its term, the work will transition to the Mayor's Commission on Disability Issues. The Mayor's Commission on Disability Issues in the City of Phoenix is a key advisory body focused on advancing accessibility and inclusion for individuals with disabilities. The transition to the Commission will ensure continuity and reinforces the City's long-term commitment to accessibility and inclusion.

Future Goals

- Continue implementing and expanding successful initiatives.
- Strengthen interdepartmental collaboration.
- Maintain Phoenix's leadership in accessibility innovation.

Responsible Department

This item is submitted by Assistant City Manager Inger Erickson, Deputy City Manager David Mathews, the Equal Opportunity and Planning and Development departments, the Office of Innovation and the Communications Office.