

**Phoenix City Council
Economic Development and the Arts (EDA) Subcommittee
Summary Minutes
Wednesday, November 12, 2025**

City Council Chambers
200 W. Jefferson St.
Phoenix, Arizona.

Subcommittee Members Present

Vice Mayor Ann O'Brien, Chair
Councilwoman Debra Stark
Councilman Kevin Robinson
Councilwoman Laura Pastor

Subcommittee Members Absent

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Mayor O'Brien called the Economic Development and the Arts Subcommittee to order at 10:01 a.m. with Councilman Kevin Robinson present. Councilwoman Debra Stark attended virtually.

Councilwoman Laura Pastor joined the meeting at 10:05 a.m.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

None.

MINUTES OF MEETINGS

1. Minutes of the Economic Development and the Arts Subcommittee Meeting

Councilwoman Stark made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 12, 2025, Economic Development and the Arts Subcommittee meeting. Councilman Robinson seconded the motion which passed unanimously, 3-0.

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION

2. Light Rail's Impact on Economic Development and Community Visioning

Light Rail Administrator Markus Coleman, Planning and Development Director Joshua Bednarek, Valley Metro Marty Ziech, and Acting Community and Economic Development Director Eric Johnson presented on the item.

Councilman Robinson thanked staff for an excellent presentation and highlighted how it showcased collaboration across multiple departments including transit, economic development, and planning.

Councilwoman Pastor asked when the community would be able to provide input about the light rail track placement.

Mr. Coleman stated that community input was the starting point for light rail track placement discussions.

Councilwoman Pastor noted while Valley Metro was involved in community engagement, the City should lead the effort and work closely with the community. She asked staff if this collaborative planning approach was accurate.

Mr. Coleman explained how the City's Planning and Development Department leads most Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) or Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC) processes. He noted these efforts help shape the community's vision not only for the light rail and high-capacity transit projects but also for broader land use and corridor planning.

Councilwoman Pastor reflected on the long-term impact of light rail in the Central Corridor, noting the community was seeing the results of years of planning, including increased density and economic development. She thanked staff for the presentation which highlighted both current and future benefits.

Vice Mayor O'Brien noted voters have approved light rail funding multiple times, yet concerns about cost persist. She acknowledged the significant return on investment shown in the presentation and asked staff how they would respond to those who still question whether light rail was a good investment for the City.

Mr. Coleman clarified light rail was never intended to stand alone but to complement and enhance the broader transit system, including buses, express routes, and future bus rapid transit. He stated light rail improves the overall efficiency and reach of the transit network, serving as a vital tool to meet the needs of entire communities.

Mr. Johnson added while economic development takes time, the groundwork laid since 2004 has shown a strong multiplier effect, with light rail serving as a significant amplifier of growth along transit corridors. He emphasized infrastructure investment attracts development, increases density, and ultimately delivers a higher return on investment through greater use and tax revenue.

Vice Mayor O'Brien noted the significant role light rail played in the nearly billion-dollar investment in the metropolitan area, helping revitalize a long-overdue corridor. She thanked staff for the presentation.

Councilwoman Pastor noted light rail has improved transportation access across the City, especially in areas that previously had limited transportation options. She highlighted how light rail, working in coordination with bus routes, was helping more people travel efficiently and has exceeded initial ridership expectations.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

3. Phoenix Sister Cities Update

Acting Community and Economic Development Director Eric Johnson, President/CEO Phoenix Sister Cities Rita Marko, and International Relations Administrator Joseph MacEwan presented on the item.

Councilwoman Stark thanked Ms. Marko for her outstanding leadership and contributions to the City of Phoenix. She expressed support for the Sister Cities, which fostered economic development and collaboration with other cities.

Councilman Robinson shared his positive experiences participating in Sister Cities and noted the tangible benefits these programs have brought to local businesses. He thanked Ms. Marko for her outstanding leadership and contributions to the City of Phoenix.

Councilwoman Pastor shared her appreciation for Ms. Marko's leadership and reflected on their shared Sister Cities experiences..

Vice Mayor O'Brien expressed appreciation for the presentation, noting it effectively highlighted the unique way the City of Phoenix integrates cultural, artistic, and economic elements through its Sister Cities program. She shared her gratitude for Ms. Marko's leadership and mentorship, reflecting on the program's growth and impact, and welcomed Joseph MacEwan as the incoming leader.

Councilwoman Pastor made a motion to approve the item. Councilman Robinson seconded the motion which passed unanimously, 4-0.

4. Employer-Developed Registered Apprenticeships Program Memoranda of Understanding

Acting Community and Economic Development Director Eric Johnson, Deputy Community and Economic Development Director LaSetta Hogans, and Business and Workforce Operations Manager Deb Furlong presented on the item.

Vice Mayor O'Brien asked staff where do the funds for the apprenticeship program come from.

Ms. Hogans explained the program was initially launched using funds from the Arizona Quest Grant, part of a National Dislocated Worker Grant from the U.S. Department of Labor. Subsequent funding came from the Semi Foundation, with current staffing supported by Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) resources within Community and Economic Development Department.

Councilman Robinson made a motion to approve the item. Councilwoman Stark seconded the motion which passed unanimously, 3-0. Councilwoman Pastor declared a conflict of interest on item 4.

5. Employer-Developed Registered Apprenticeships Employer Program Contracts

Acting Community and Economic Development Director Eric Johnson, Deputy Community and Economic Development Director LaSetta Hogans, and Business and Workforce Operations Manager Deb Furlong presented on the item.

Councilman Robinson made a motion to approve the item. Councilwoman Stark seconded the motion which passed unanimously, 4-0.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Ginnie Ann Summer requested an update on the refurbishment of the public art installation in the old Crosscut Canal Park, located between McDowell and Thomas Roads. Ms. Ginnie proposed a more cost-effective approach involving concrete repair and repainting. She noted the original artwork was completed when the park opened on August 25, 1997, and expressed that refurbishment was appropriate given its age. She shared she was informed that the goal was to complete the project by the end of 2025 but expressed concern about the limited time remaining and requested ongoing communication and updates.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairwoman O'Brien adjourned the meeting at 11:16 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dayana Rosas
Management Fellow