

**Phoenix City Council
Economic Development and the Arts (EDA) Subcommittee
Summary Minutes
Tuesday, March 11, 2026**

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

Subcommittee Members Present

Councilwoman Ann O'Brien, Chair
Councilwoman Debra Stark
Councilman Kevin Robinson
Councilwoman Laura Pastor arrived at 10:05 a.m.

Subcommittee Members Absent

CALL TO ORDER

Chairwoman O'Brien called the Economic Development and the Arts Subcommittee to order at 10 a.m. with three members present. Councilwoman Pastor arrived 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 February 11, 2026, Economic Development and the Arts Subcommittee meeting. Councilman Robinson seconded the motion which passed unanimously, 3-0.

CONSENT ACTION (ITEMS 2-3)

Items 2-3 were for consent action. No presentations were planned, but staff was available to answer questions.

2. Acquisition of Vacant Land in Spark Area 2 Located at 627 S. 9th Place

3. Youth Workforce Development Services Contract

Councilwoman Stark made a motion to approve Items 2-3. Councilman Robinson seconded the motion which passed unanimously, 3-0.

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION (ITEM 4)

4. Phoenix Economic Overview and Update: Part 2-Global Positioning and Market Access

The Community and Economic Development Director Ryan Touhill introduced Deputy Community and Economic Development Director Nathan Wright, Program Manager Claudia Whitehead and International Relations Administrator Joesph MacEwan to present the Phoenix Economic Overview and Update.

Mr. Touhill stated Phoenix has had one of the fastest economic turnarounds since the Great Recession and this is because of intentional strategies, policies, land use decisions, and partnerships that have helped push the City toward global growth. He explained Phoenix is competing on a global stage for investment, talent, and market access. The Community and Economic Development Department (CED) has developed a strategy of creating innovation hubs across Phoenix to catalyze growth. He described the six sectors anchoring these innovation hubs: advanced manufacturing, aerospace and defense including emerging sectors like advanced air mobility and electronic and autonomous vehicles, biosciences and healthcare, the circular economy, corporate headquarters, and emerging technologies including artificial intelligence and quantum computing.

Mr. Touhill shared CED helps facilitate company locates and expansions, job creation, and private investment across these six target industries using a multifaceted approach. He explained this approach includes building connections with site selectors, attending industry trade shows to meet companies and build relationships, meeting with existing companies to help them remain and grow in Phoenix, talking to brokers and real estate developers, and partnering with state, regional, and international partners to build leads that can be converted into company locates and expansions. Mr. Touhill announced this work has resulted in 11 business locates this fiscal year with a goal of 12, over 2,600 job creations, 1.3 million square feet of commercial space occupied, and \$647 million in capital investment. Mr. Touhill emphasized the average salary of the jobs created is \$96,830.

Mr. Touhill stated Phoenix benefits from its strategic location and export-oriented industries driving economic growth due to strong relationships with trading partners in Mexico and Canada. He shared the Phoenix Hermosillo Trade Office has helped drive activity in Mexico and has assisted over 812 businesses over the last five fiscal years, helped 26 incorporate in Arizona, and located nine in Phoenix. Mr. Touhill announced the Arizona Commerce Authority reported Phoenix as a leader since 2020 in international investment driven by Mexico, Canada, Taiwan, and other countries. He highlighted exports are growing in areas where Phoenix ranks 3rd in the nation for computer equipment, 5th for semiconductors, and 10th for aerospace parts and production. Mr. Touhill emphasized that our CED locates have grown by 30 percent in the last 10 years, and the City is benefiting from the increased activity. Mr. Touhill reported Phoenix has added more than 262,000 jobs from 2010 to 2024 and Arizona businesses have seen a 37 percent increase in exports from 2024 to 2025.

Deputy Community and Economic Director Nathan Wright stated the 2020 \$12 billion Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC) announcement, which has since grown to \$165 billion, and its effects are being felt throughout the City. He explained TSMC has been a great company to work with, is a Top Ten market cap company globally and is acquiring 900 additional acres from the State Land Department. Mr. Wright highlighted the TSMC project as the largest construction project in North America, bringing thousands of construction workers to Phoenix and building some of the most complicated buildings in the world. He stated the company's supply chain is putting Phoenix on the map for new technologies including space, quantum, aerospace, medical device manufacturing, and CED is focused on using this supply chain to attract additional companies. Mr. Wright explained that every Council district has TSMC suppliers, creating a 5.8 percent economic multiplier and ripple effects across the City with suppliers from Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, the Netherlands and existing local companies. He stated Phoenix is ranked 4th as a corporate headquarters destination and although office vacancies rose after the pandemic, Mayor and Council leadership allowed the City to protect key buildings, resulting in 90 percent of CED locates going into existing space. He added there is significant new office growth along the 101 in North Phoenix, including campuses such as Republic Services and Fender, and CED will provide feedback to Public Works to explore future office space opportunities. Mr. Wright stated Arizona is the 3rd most attractive state for aerospace and defense due to engineering talent and legacy companies like Honeywell, which recently spun out its aerospace division in Deer Valley. He emphasized thanks to Mayor and Council leadership, Phoenix has become a place where new mobility companies can operate and has been named the #1 large city for startups.

CED Program Manager Claudia Whitehead stated that under Council leadership growing biosciences and health care in Phoenix has been a priority because residents benefit from bio innovations, which positively impact health and create quality jobs. She explained a recent study showed bioscience jobs on average pay 30 percent higher than the rest of the private sector in Arizona. Ms. Whitehead shared Phoenix has experienced unprecedented growth with almost \$7 billion in new capital investment, more than 8 million square feet of new primary facilities, and 14,000 new quality jobs since 2020. She shared the example of Backfax, a homegrown early-stage company originating at Phoenix Children's Hospital, which developed vaccines for ear infections and caught the attention of Australian company GPN Vaccines, which acquired Backfax and is committed to scaling and growing in Phoenix because of the strong ecosystem. Ms. Whitehead stated Phoenix is home to a number of incubators, accelerators, and soft-landing programs providing resources for growth, including the Healthcare Innovations Accelerator led by Mayo Clinic and Arizona State University (ASU). She explained companies such as NeuroCatch and MyHealth have located in Phoenix through this accelerator, which helps introduce companies to the local ecosystem. Ms. Whitehead stated Phoenix is home to world-class research hospitals with built-in institutes of research excellence, contributing to Arizona's ranking as 8th in the nation for clinical trials. She noted Phoenix is also home to top tier research universities, with ASU and the University of Arizona each investing \$1 billion in research last year,

making them global research institutions and key partners for industry collaborations. Ms. Whitehead stated Phoenix is home to TGen, the Translational Genomics Research Institute, which has made Phoenix a global leader in precision medicine, and international manufacturers such as Schott Minifab, which strengthens the City's Australian connections. She highlighted Venture Café Phoenix as a key part of the infrastructure supporting local, national, and global connections, with more than 150 innovators attending weekly gatherings and international delegations participating. She stated through the leadership of the Taipei Sister Cities partnership, Taiwan signed a declaration of collaboration to open the Taiwan AI Smart Health Showcase Center on the Phoenix Bioscience Core campus bringing 18 Taiwanese companies to Phoenix. She added Venture Café Phoenix is part of an international network of 16 cities and was recognized at the global gathering in Tokyo with the Making It Happen Award for the 2nd time, where the City's hackathon was featured as a model for other cities.

CED International Relations Administrator Joseph MacEwan stated Phoenix Sister Cities has been the backbone of the City's economic diplomacy for decades and has kept key relationships with key markets strong. He explained, an example is Phoenix's engagement with Grenoble including an outbound delegation in 2024, reconnection with companies at the CES event in 2025, and a follow-up business delegation later that year, which supports Phoenix's ability to attract capital, talent, and partnerships. Mr. MacEwan stated the recent Global Links luncheon brought key strategic leaders across industries, resulting in active conversations on quantum opportunities for Phoenix and Arizona and securing partnerships and speakers for the upcoming Phoenix Global Forum. He emphasized convenings are used to identify opportunities for long-term engagement and execute on them. Mr. MacEwan highlighted the civic side is equally important, with the strongest recent example being the Double Ten event, which under Chairwoman O'Brien's leadership has become a signature event for Phoenix and is now the largest Double Ten celebration in North America. He stated Phoenix and Sister Cities are not doing this work alone and are part of an ecosystem including universities, GPEC, the Arizona Commerce Authority, trade groups, the consular community, and other civic partners. Mr. MacEwan explained Sister Cities utilizes this network to maintain strong connectivity with Sky Harbor playing an important role enabling trade, investment, executive travel, and technical visits for global firms and those being attracted to Phoenix. He stated Sister Cities is where opportunities and ongoing engagement are brought together so Phoenix can be ready to act when opportunities present themselves rather than starting from scratch.

Councilman Robinson stated he had the opportunity to sit down with the leadership from China Airlines, which is headquartered in District 6, and they had nothing but good things to say about economic development including CED's outreach and assistance. He stated China Airlines are very happy and looking forward to a long-term relationship.

Councilwoman Stark agreed with Mr. MacEwan on the Double Ten event, congratulated Chairwoman O'Brien, and asked are there any other cities we are trying to zero in on.

Mr. MacEwan replied there are a number of cities such as Colombia and specifically Melbourne, Australia. He stated there are other cities CED is exploring but cannot announce those at this time.

Councilwoman Stark thanked the team for the presentation.

Councilwoman Pastor thanked the team for the presentation and stated it is a testament to all the work being done. She shared she has learned more about the business market of TSMC and the suppliers of TSMC are now wanting to move here. She congratulated the team and thanked them for their great work.

Chairwoman O'Brien highlighted the increase in average salary from \$36,000 to \$86,000 between 2014 and 2025 and noted the presentation showed the average salary for jobs created in the last several months is now \$96,830. She applauded the department for continuing to raise the bar for community members and citizens and emphasized the importance of Phoenix ranking 4th as a corporate headquarters destination. Chairwoman O'Brien explained Phoenix came out of the Great Recession because leaders before her, including the Mayor, made a conscientious decision to pursue TSMC, and as Councilwoman Pastor mentioned, the ripple effects of TSMC and its suppliers. Chairwoman O'Brien stated Ms. Whitehead noted life sciences jobs pay 30 percent higher, and it is remarkable leaders made difficult decisions that resulted in attracting major businesses while not resting on prior success to raise the bar for Phoenix and surrounding communities. Chairwoman O'Brien added Phoenix welcomes wins, including when companies locate in nearby Arizona communities. She stated she was reminded at an event of a comment made by a small business owner and requested staff to develop the six-part series including a discussion of small businesses, which are the backbone of the community and the support of larger companies. Chairwoman O'Brien noted people often comment on how differently the City of Phoenix approaches the Sister Cities program, focusing not only on cultural exchanges and friendship but also on the economic aspect, which contributes to success. She added the department does amazing work and must continue because there is still much to accomplish for citizens and businesses in Phoenix.

Councilwoman O'Brien recognized and thanked board members.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

None.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairwoman O'Brien adjourned the meeting at 10:42 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Taniya Williams
Management Fellow