

# ATTACHMENT A

**Phoenix City Council  
Community Services and Education (CSE) Subcommittee  
Summary Minutes  
Wednesday, February 25, 2026**

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

Subcommittee Members Present

Chairwoman Keshia Hodge Washington  
Councilwoman Ann O'Brien  
Councilwoman Anna Hernandez  
Councilwoman Debra Stark

Subcommittee Members Absent

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairwoman Hodge Washington called the Community Services and Education Subcommittee (CSE) to order at 10:04 a.m. with Councilwoman Stark, Councilwoman O'Brien, and Councilwoman Hernandez present.

**CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

None.

**MINUTES OF MEETINGS**

**1. Minutes of the Community Services and Education Subcommittee Meeting**

Councilwoman O'Brien made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 28, 2026 Community Services and Education Subcommittee meeting. Councilwoman Stark seconded the motion which passed unanimously, 4-0.

**CONSENT (ITEMS 2-3)**

**2. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Plans: Annual Agency Plan, Housing Choice Voucher Administrative Plan, Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy, and Capital Fund Program**

No presentations were planned, but staff was available to answer questions.

**3. Request Approval of the Head Start Birth to Five 2025-26 ERSEA Plan Updates**

No presentations were planned, but staff was available to answer questions.

Councilwoman O'Brien made a motion to approve items 2-3, Councilwoman Stark seconded.

## **INFORMATION (ITEM 4)**

### **4. Head Start Birth to Five Monthly Report – December 2025**

No presentations were planned, but staff was available to answer questions.

### **5. Head Start Birth to Five Program 2024-25 School Readiness Outcomes and Program Information Report**

No presentations were planned, but staff was available to answer questions.

## **INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION (ITEMS 6-7)**

### **6. City-Owned Land for Housing Update**

Housing Director Titus Mathew, Deputy Housing Director Samantha Keating, Neighborhood Services Director Spencer Self, and Deputy Community and Economic Development Director Xandon Keating presented this item.

Housing Director Mathew shared an overview of City owned land for housing including an overview of the Housing Department's Request for Proposal (RFP), planning, and construction plans for 2026.

Deputy Housing Director Samantha Keating shared information on specific housing projects throughout the City including their acreage, number of units, developers involved, and other information.

Neighborhood Services Director Self shared information on Neighborhood Services Department (NSD) efforts which included two new homes completed and 12 new homes in progress.

Deputy Community and Economic Development Director Xandon Keating shared an overview of economic development related to affordable housing, rezoning efforts, the Housing Phoenix Plan, and market rate housing.

Councilwoman O'Brien asked whether McKinley Court West was City property or if it was sold.

Mr. Keating responded that for McKinley Court West, the asset was sold to the developer.

Councilwoman O'Brien asked if some housing development will be on City land or if the City is disposing of property.

Mr. Keating clarified that for some projects, the land was sold to a developer and in other instances, the City was maintaining ownership of the land. Mr. Keating spoke about market rate housing units.

Director Mathew highlighted that Phoenix is the second fastest growing market for affordable housing construction and shared an overview of Phoenix housing supplies.

Chairwoman Hodge Washington thanked staff for their presentation and highlighted the use of City-owned land to address housing issues in Phoenix.

Councilwoman Stark commented on the influx of affordable housing construction and asked whether there was any concern of declining funding for multifamily housing.

Director Mathew shared that there were no cuts to affordable housing funds for the City from the federal government, and highlighted that efforts such as entitlements, use of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, and using City owned land for affordable housing development has helped.

Councilwoman Stark asked for clarification that the City's funding efforts have assisted in affordable housing development.

Director Mathew confirmed that the City's efforts have helped.

Councilwoman Stark expressed concern about possible decreases in federal funding and expressed support for the City to set aside funding for affordable housing development. Councilwoman Stark asked if there are other ways to incentivize construction of affordable housing in Phoenix. Councilwoman Stark suggested to set aside funding for affordable housing through the permitting process and to involve partners in affordable housing efforts.

Chairwoman Hodge Washington suggested using some funding from the City Housing Trust Fund for affordable housing incentives.

Director Mathew clarified that financing for affordable housing is challenging. Director Mathew mentioned that the Housing Trust Fund is an option to use for building more affordable housing.

Councilwoman Hernandez thanked staff for their presentation. Councilwoman Hernandez highlighted that Middle Housing could help create more paths for homeownership. Councilwoman Hernandez asked how City zoning policies have affected growth of affordable housing.

Ms. Keating highlighted that several zoning text amendments were made in collaboration with the Planning and Development Department to help increase the supply of housing. For example, a change in the Walkable Urban Code to help increase density.

Councilwoman Hernandez asked how City Council could continue to assist housing efforts.

Director Mathew highlighted the importance of funding for building housing. For example, continuing to fund the Housing Trust Fund, considering the declining federal funds for housing. Director Mathew mentioned the importance of ongoing funding and that funding for the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Program was recently expanded.

Deputy City Manager Gina Montes shared that there are other parcels of land that could possibly be added as other opportunities to use City-owned land for housing or potentially acquiring additional land to serve the community with affordable housing. Deputy City Manager Montes mentioned the Arizona State LIHTC Program and highlighted the importance of gap financing, rehabilitation, and mentioned that non-profit developers must compete with for-profit developers.

Councilwoman Hernandez expressed support for the expansion of the LIHTC Program at the federal level and concern that the Arizona State LIHTC Program lapsed in the previous year. Councilwoman Hernandez highlighted another Arizona State effort to assist with gap financing. Councilwoman Hernandez shared that an overlay of District 7 for housing and mixed use had been developed.

Councilwoman O'Brien thanked staff for their presentation and asked what is done with the money from sold properties.

Deputy City Manager Montes highlighted that each department may treat the land differently.

Director Mathew shared that the Housing Department does not generally sell properties, as there are land-use restrictions placed on them to better ensure affordability.

Director Self shared that for the Neighborhood Services Department, the land is often sold to developers and those funds go into grant funds as program income since they are often funded with grants.

Mr. Keating shared that for the Community and Economic Development Department, properties are typically purchased in partnership with other departments. Therefore, depending on the source of funds, it would go back into a certain fund. Mr. Keating shared the example of Community and Economic Development typically being funded with Downtown Community Reinvestment Funds so funds from sold properties would go back to the Downtown Community Reinvestment Fund.

Director Self shared that some property was purchased with General Obligation Bond funds, and in that case, those funds would go back to the City.

Councilwoman O'Brien thanked staff for their explanations on how funds are used and where they go for housing. Councilwoman O'Brien asked when ground floor retail with some developments are requested based on resident feedback, and how the City ensures that those businesses would be successful.

Mr. Keating shared that studies have been conducted and discussions with developers, retailers, businesses, and the community about viability are important.

Councilwoman O'Brien expressed support for looking at additional properties for the City to consider for housing.

Chairwoman Hodge Washington highlighted the importance of City efforts to assist in housing needs for the community. Chairwoman Hodge Washington shared that Phoenix was recognized as one of the top 20 cities increasing their affordable housing availability. Chairwoman Hodge Washington asked for information on housing projects throughout various districts.

Director Mathew shared that a slate of available parcels was identified primarily in Districts 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8. Director Mathew shared that parcels for affordable housing are not as available in Districts 1, 2, or 6 due to the cost of the land.

Councilwoman Stark shared that much of the vacant land in Districts 1 and 2 is state-owned land which must be sold to the highest bidder in many instances, Councilwoman Stark also highlighted that there may be an opportunity to cooperate with Arizona League of Cities and Towns to work with the state and use some state-owned land for affordable housing development.

Chairwoman Hodge Washington expressed support for advocating for state-owned land for affordable housing development and for ensuring that affordable housing is available throughout the City. Chairwoman Hodge Washington asked how residents can learn about homeownership opportunities.

Director Self shared that property in the Garfield Neighborhood can be purchased by reaching out to Trellis, and that it was also listed on Multiple Listing Service (MLS). Director Self shared that once the housing projects on Polk Street are completed, residents can reach out to Habitat for Humanity for more information.

Chairwoman Hodge Washington asked about projects in progress.

Mr. Keating shared that several projects are in the pipeline and can be seen at [investinfoenix.com](http://investinfoenix.com) with opportunities to learn more via the development opportunities webpage and a development hotlist email distribution list.

Chairwoman Hodge Washington asked how someone can sign up for the development hotlist.

Mr. Keating clarified that individuals could sign up online at [investinfoenix.com](http://investinfoenix.com).

Chairwoman Hodge Washington thanked staff for their work.

## **7. Improving Third Grade Literacy**

Youth and Education Director Tim Valencia presented this item.

Director Valencia shared an overview of chronic absenteeism and its effect on student performance, such as literacy rates. Director Valencia shared information about Read On Arizona and the Arizona Literacy Plan to help increase literacy rates. Director Valencia also shared information on City of Phoenix specific efforts to help increase literacy rates.

Chairwoman Hodge Washington thanked staff for their work and highlighted the importance of third grade literacy rates as an indicator of long-term academic success.

Councilwoman Hernandez shared the urgency of improving literacy rates and the importance of coordinated efforts. Councilwoman Hernandez commented that proficiency levels declined notably in 2022, which she attributed to the decline in funding going to schools. Councilwoman Hernandez asked what signs the City could track to assess reading levels earlier, prior to third grade.

Director Valencia shared that schools provide beginning, middle, and year-end reading assessments to determine whether additional assistance is needed to help with literacy.

Councilwoman Hernandez asked if there have been conversations with partners to assist with literacy screenings at pediatric visits or other locations.

Director Valencia shared that there are programs in doctor's offices to promote early childhood literacy, such as with Southwest Development.

Councilwoman Hernandez shared interest in exploring these partnerships. Councilwoman Hernandez asked if the City of Phoenix has explored funding for universal Pre-K programs or working with partners for this.

Director Valencia shared that there have been conversations around universal Pre-K and clarified that is an Arizona State decision.

Councilwoman Hernandez commented on the importance of exploring solutions and highlighted research that incarceration rates are tied to school performance and literacy rates.

Councilwoman O'Brien asked about exploring funding for universal Pre-K and highlighted that the state does not fully fund Kindergarten. Councilwoman O'Brien discussed the decline in third grade literacy rates in 2021 and its potential relationship with children learning remotely during the pandemic. Councilwoman O'Brien highlighted the importance of partnerships to address issues that are causing absenteeism, such as lack of dental care.

Chairwoman Hodge Washington asked about literacy strategies for 2026 through 2030 and cross departmental collaboration.

Director Valencia shared the importance of professional development for educators and staff to be more evidence-based. Director Valencia also spoke about efforts to get funding for after school programs. Director Valencia mentioned that Read On Phoenix works with United Way.

Chairwoman Hodge Washington asked about funding for these programs.

Director Valencia answered that schools are asking for funding and that funds are limited so any City funds or grant funds would be helpful.

Chairwoman Hodge Washington asked if there are additional pathways to help positively impact specific school districts.

Director Valencia mentioned that efforts are data-driven and that he is willing to discuss opportunities where additional funding could be most helpful.

Chairwoman Hodge Washington expressed support for helping assist schools in specific districts with a need for more support.

Councilwoman Hernandez shared that she would be willing to help as well.

Chairwoman Hodge Washington asked for examples of measures for success in 2026 through 2030.

Director Valencia shared that third grade reading, attendance rates, and partnership outcomes are some measures for success. Director Valencia shared that a discussion on data and matrices for success was discussed during the Phoenix ReadOn Community Meeting.

Chairwoman Hodge Washington asked if minutes or reports from the Phoenix ReadOn Community Meeting could be shared with her office.

Director Valencia replied that each partner shared a one-page sheet of data and he agreed to share this information with the subcommittee.

Chairwoman Hodge Washington highlighted the importance of partnerships to strengthen literacy.

Oumayma Hilal shared appreciation that the report highlighted how early literacy rates predict academic success, and more, such as long-term health outcomes.

Chairwoman Hodge Washington shared the importance that children have opportunities to succeed, starting with reading.

### **CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

None.

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chairwoman Hodge Washington adjourned the meeting at 11:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Cecilia Alcantar-Chavez  
Management Fellow

DRAFT