

# Attachment A

## Phoenix City Council Economic Development and Arts (EDA) Subcommittee Summary Minutes April 8, 2026

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

Subcommittee Members Present  
Councilwoman Ann O'Brien, Chair  
Councilwoman Laura Pastor  
Councilman Kevin Robinson  
Councilwoman Debra Stark

Subcommittee Members Absent

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairwoman O'Brien called the Economic Development and the Arts (EDA) to order at 10:05 a.m. with four members present.

### **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 March 11, 2026, Economic Development and Arts Subcommittee meeting. Councilwoman Pastor seconded the motion which passed unanimously, 4-0.

#### **CONSENT ACTION (ITEM 2)**

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

#### **2. Arizona Department of Economic Security Industry-Driven Skills Training Fund Grant and Advanced Manufacturing Employer Contracts**

Councilwoman Stark made a motion to approve Item 2. Councilwoman Pastor seconded the motion which passed unanimously, 4-0.

### **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION (ITEM 3)**

#### **3. Downtown Phoenix Entertainment District Implementation Plan**

Assistant City Manager Ginger Spencer shared the item was continued from the previous meeting and asked for the item to be withdrawn and brought back at a later date to give staff time to do additional stakeholder engagement. Chairwoman O'Brien asked Assistant City Attorney David Benton if the item is withdrawn the speaker would not be heard.

Mr. Benton replied yes.

Councilwoman Pastor asked to make a motion to withdraw the item and recommended it be brought back in May.

Chairwoman O'Brien stated staff would need more time.

Ms. Spencer explained the motion is to withdraw the item today and staff understands the Council's request to bring the item back. She reiterated staff would need more time to do the additional work necessary.

Councilwoman Pastor explained this item has been delayed with high expectations for it to be presented in April. She explained it is a high priority item, and she is hoping it will be here in May.

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

#### **INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION (ITEMS 4-6)**

Chairwoman O'Brien informed Subcommittee members and staff that Item 5 Opportunity Zones Guidance will be taken out of order.

#### **5. Opportunity Zones Guidance**

Councilwoman Stark shared because of the Opportunity Zone (OZ) the Paradise Valley Mall area was designated as an OZ and now an IKEA is there, which brings in sales tax.

Ms. Spencer introduced Community and Economic Development Director Ryan Touhill and Research Manager Jasmin Lombera to present.

Mr. Touhill updated the Subcommittee on the Federal OZ program. He explained the Federal Government has issued new guidance on the program and requires the City to establish a new OZ map. He stated staff will outline the process to select OZ's which will be brought forward for Formal Council action in April.

Ms. Lombera shared in 2017, the Jobs Act established the Federal OZ Program, which provides tax incentives to investors who reinvest into Qualified Opportunity Funds. She explained 42 qualified census tracts were designated as OZ's in Phoenix and the tracts must meet the Federal criteria: a poverty rate higher than 20 percent; Median Family Income (MFI) at or below 80 percent of the Metropolitan Statistical Area; or up to five percent of tracts could be designated if they were adjacent to a tract that was less than or equal to 25 percent of the MFI. Ms. Lombera shared examples of development in or

adjacent to OZ's such as the Mack Innovation Park and Union Apartments at Roosevelt. She announced the 2027 OZ 2.0 Program requires the State to re-nominate up to 25 percent of eligible tracts and Phoenix is expected to submit 33 eligible tracts.

Mr. Touhill presented the review process with Phase One being identification and analysis of eligible census tracts, Phase Two being City Council briefings to finalize the 33 qualified tracts and Phase Three being City Council approval of the new OZ map at the April 22, 2026, Formal Meeting, which will be submitted to the State by the May 8, 2026 deadline to the Arizona Commerce Authority (ACA) .

Councilman Robinson asked if the Council should engage their districts to gather input from the community.

Mr. Touhill replied staff encourage the Council to engage the community and staff can help facilitate those discussions.

Councilwoman Stark shared she had the chance to look at the OZ's in District 3 and would like to touch base with the landowners.

Councilwoman Pastor shared there are 10 or more OZ's in District 4 and she will not be able to get to all of those by April 22, 2026. She asked if she cannot engage all of those 10 communities by April 22, 2026, if the item could be pushed to May.

Mr. Touhill replied, if staff misses the April 22 deadline, then they would miss the deadline to submit the OZ map to the ACA and offered to assist with outreach.

Councilwoman Pastor asked for the deadline.

Mr. Touhill replied May 8, 2026.

Ms. Spencer explained the presentation today is to provide an update on the guidance received and staff will consult with City Council to confirm their selected OZ areas. She emphasized there are two Formal Council meetings remaining before the May 8 deadline, one being April 22 and one being May 6.

Councilwoman Pastor pointed out there are a number of things happening in the community such as the Food Ordinance and Budget Hearings. She questioned if the May 6 meeting will require City Council to approve the list and then submit. She explained Council may need additional time to engage stakeholders.

Ms. Spencer stated staff will do all they can to make April 22 work if not May 6 to give Council and staff enough time to meet the May 8 deadline.

Chairwoman O'Brien thanked staff for the presentation and agreed they do not want to miss the deadline. She reiterated Councilwoman Pastor's concern with the amount of community engagement happening at this time and will appreciate staff assistance with retrieving stakeholder feedback.

#### **4. Upcoming Events and Programs at Cultural Organizations**

Arts and Culture Interim Director Carrie Brown introduced the item and provided an update on the cultural facilities funded by the General Fund and General Obligation (GO) Bond. She noted the facilities shown on the slide are funded and managed by the Office of Arts and Culture.

Jami Kozemczak presented on the investment into community engagement volunteer opportunities, and philanthropy events held at Ballet Arizona.

Kate Wells listed statistics the City makes possible. She indicated the Phoenix Children's Museum hosted 360,563 visitors, 623 volunteers, and 38,792 field trips. Ms. Wells shared expansion of the Museum with the assistance of GO Bond funds and expected completion in 2027. She explained the expansion will include a full-service pre-school, early literacy center, eight to ten new exhibits and seven reimagined favorites.

Jeremy Mikolajczak presented the demographics of visitors from the Phoenix Arts Museum, which model the Maricopa County Index. He announced the museum has awarded over \$1 million to local Arizona artists and programs for internationally recognized artists. Mr. Mikolajczak noted collaborative methods with national partners and the Sister Cities programs. He announced upcoming renovations of the Asian Wing and Family Center this fall, as well as the hosting of Nike Form Follows Motion in 2027 which is an international museum exhibition dedicated to Nike.

Nicole Armstrong-Best shared the Phoenix Arts Museum is different in being operated by the City. She announced the Harmony: Balancing Past and Present fundraising event on April 18 which is an immersive Sonoran Desert experience to taste, learn, and connect to the site of the Ancestral Sonoran Desert People. Additionally, she announced the Indigenous Identity Exhibit, opening this fall, and repurposing exhibits using a satellite approach to travel exhibits to other locations such as the South Mountain Visitor Center, City Hall and the airport.

Shonna James shared the Shemer Art Center operates out of a historic home and focuses on supporting and showcasing Arizona artists through education and experiences. Ms. James explained the Center holds 11 exhibitions every year including the New Horizon High School exhibition which showcased the top two exhibitions from over 46 high schools across the valley. She shared the Center also hosts five festivals every year and will host the Expansion and Legacy Campaign of Martha Shemer this year. Ms. James specified the center has raised over 75 percent of its goal for the campaign.

Councilwoman Stark shared one of her constituents dreams of having a Sesame Street exhibit, noting one of the show's creators was born in Phoenix and the creator's grandfather, a former Mayor of Phoenix, established the City's first professional Fire Department.

Councilman Robinson asked Ms. Kozemczak about their upcoming event.

Ms. Kozemczak confirmed an event would be held that upcoming Friday at the Desert Botanical Garden.

Councilman Robinson asked Ms. James about their upcoming event.

Ms. James stated Valley in Bloom would be held in the next few weeks in partnership with Desert Botanical Garden.

Councilman Robinson asked Ms. Wells about the Children Museum's upcoming fundraiser.

Ms. Wells explained the gala will be in November and the Museum is bringing in the Daniel Tiger Traveling Exhibit of the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh from September to January.

Councilman Robinson acknowledged Ms. James efforts with preservationists and a homeowner, which resulted in the AI Beetle Exhibit on Shermer Center grounds and preservation of parts of the home. He thanked the directors for their work.

Councilwoman Pastor thanked the presenters, and shared arts and culture brings life to the community. She recalled a previous experience where worked on programs that brought museums to public schools and designed curriculum tied to experiences.

Chairwoman O'Brien thanked Ms. Brown for bringing everyone together and highlighted the movement to children and adults with Parkinson's disease, her tour with Ms. Wells, and the pre-school's impact. She praised Phoenix Art Museum's visitor demographics and noted she would encourage District 1 residents to visit the Museum. Councilwoman O'Brien highlighted the historical preservation of the indigenous community and shared she looks forward to attending the upcoming events.

## **6. Phoenix Economic Overview and Update: Part 3 – Land, Real Estate, and Economic Geography**

Mr. Touhill introduced part three of the Economic Development Series focused on land, real estate and geography. He shared Phoenix is one of the few major cities with available and developable land. Mr. Touhill shared the tools to support growth include transit-oriented policies, partnerships, and General Obligation Bond investments.

Community and Economic Development Deputy Director Xandon Keating presented the capacity of land availability and growth. He emphasized the City has shifted from a reactive growth model to targeting key industries and investments, which shifted the City for long term competitiveness. Mr. Keating noted the 16 percent population increase since 2010 which demands jobs and services. He explained development strategies include greenfield development and infill redevelopment. Mr. Keating noted those development strategies focused on walkability, housing, entertainment and

community spaces. He highlighted Park Central, Paradise Valley mall, and the Metrocenter as examples of mixed-use development.

Mr. Touhill stated the department is focused on building great places including mixed-use and walkable environments. He shared the developments improve quality of life for residents through housing, jobs, and entertainment. Mr. Touhill also mentioned sales tax as a fiscal benefit.

Chairwoman O'Brien expressed her appreciation for the presentation and the work being done.

### **CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

None.

### **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Councilwoman Pastor requested the Entertainment Land District be presented by June.

Councilwoman Stark requested to hear from the Science Museum in September.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

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

Respectfully submitted,

Taniya Williams  
Management Fellow