

Meeting Minutes

City Council Special Meeting

April 29, 2024 | 10:15 a.m.

Chandler Museum

300 S. Chandler Village Dr., Chandler, AZ



Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Kevin Hartke at 10:40 a.m.

Roll Call

Council Attendance

Mayor Kevin Hartke

Vice Mayor OD Harris

Councilmember Angel Encinas

Councilmember Christine Ellis

Councilmember Mark Stewart

Councilmember Matt Orlando

Councilmember Jane Poston

Appointee Attendance

Joshua Wright, City Manager

Kelly Schwab, City Attorney

Dana DeLong, City Clerk

Staff in Attendance

Tadd Wille, Assistant City Manager

Dawn Lang, Deputy City Manager / CFO

Andy Bass, Deputy City Manager

Matt Burdick, Communications & Public Affairs Director

Alexis Apodaca, Mayor and Council Public Affairs Senior Manager

Kevin Mayo, Planning Administrator

Lauren Schumann, Principal Planner

David De La Torre, Planning Manager

Eric Bailey, Bailey Strategic Innovation Group

Ryan Myers Bailey Strategic Innovation Group

Welcome

ERIC BAILEY, Bailey Strategic Innovation Group provided introductions with RYAN MYERS, and presented the following sections.

Check In & Conversation

Welcome & Prepping for the Day

Principles of Human Understanding

Discussion

1. Strategic Framework Action Plan Progress, to include General Plan Update and Funding Capital Improvement Program

Strategic Framework Action Plan Progress

JOSHUA WRIGHT, City Manager, presented about the strategic framework.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked about the electric vehicle charging study and the plan moving forward.

MR. WRIGHT said Chandler had received some grant money to put in charging stations. The city has internal electric vehicles to examine, and outwardly how the public's electric vehicle needs are served.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked about a timeline for the research.

MR. WRIGHT answered that it is in progress and hoped to have more of an answer in a year or less.

COUNCILMEMBER STEWART asked if this is a core competency that Chandler should pursue.

MR. WRIGHT answered that this is the question at hand. Chandler has encouraged developers to implement electric vehicle charging in new developments.

COUNCILMEMBER STEWART said the city may act more as a facilitator.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO remarked that other municipalities have planned electric vehicle charging.

MAYOR HARTKE commented that the idea has not progressed regionally.

MR. WRIGHT said some organizations have done studies, but there has not been a lot of action coming out of regional organizations.

VICE MAYOR HARRIS noted that Chandler addressed the need for electric vehicle charging stations by encouraging developers to include them in new developments. The city can identify locations for electric vehicle charging and encourage private partners to act.

MAYOR HARTKE said that other municipalities have reevaluated the priority of electric vehicle charging.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON asked if the need is for Chandler to act as a partner with the private sector to acquire grants. Community leaders in business set the standards of industry.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS asked about the results of SRP study.

MR. WRIGHT said the main driver behind the SRP conducted study was to encourage SRP business. Before making a decision, staff will conduct more balanced studies.

MAYOR HARTKE requested to follow up on this topic.

VICE MAYOR HARRIS said that we need to look into a regional perspective.

MAYOR HARTKE noted that we have been able to stay focused with completing 84% of items related to the strategic plan. Mayor Hartke asked if there are any things within the strategic plan that we have missed.

VICE MAYOR HARRIS said that there should be more focused work in the sustainability and technology section.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON asked to discuss a comprehensive housing plan at a Council subcommittee meeting to address neighborhood and workforce needs.

MAYOR HARTKE said it is appropriate to discuss now, as we are reinvestigating items decided upon last year with the focus areas.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON said staff is looking into creative problem solving within this area.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS asked what specifically is being investigated.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON said workforce housing, affordable housing, multifamily housing and more would be researched with a presentation from staff for Council to give guidance in priorities. Having a plan would streamline any plans on housing and neighborhood goals in Chandler.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS said having a plan would help develop responses.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON added we should investigate the tools and data to make solid decisions.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS said the sector is driven by builders.

MAYOR HARTKE thanked Council for their ideas, and more discussion will be had later.

General Plan Update

LAUREN SCHUMANN, Principal Planner, presented the following presentation.

- General Plan Update 2026
- General Plan Update Overview
- What is a General Plan
- Hierarchy of Plans
- Broad Policy – More Specific Policy
- More Specific Policy – Detailed Regulation
- What is a General Plan?
- What is the General Plan? 17 Elements required by state law
- 2026 Potential Focus Areas
- Why Update the General Plan?

MAYOR HARTKE asked how much open land remains.

MS. SCHUMANN said 7% vacant land has not been zoned.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS asked how much land is remaining.

MS. SCHUMANN said 7% vacant land has not been zoned. 3% is envisioned for residential, with the remaining set for employment.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked what remains of county land.

MR. DE LA TORRE said some county islands anticipating annexation are included.

VICE MAYOR HARRIS asked for a map of county islands to determine where these remaining spots are.

MS. SCHUMANN said that information will be provided.

MS. SCHUMANN continued the presentation.

- City Council's Role in the General Plan Update?

MAYOR HARTKE said we are looking for community leaders to appoint as Citizens Advisory Committee members to be involved with the General Plan Update.

MS. SCHUMANN continued the presentation.

- General Plan Process
- General Plan Process (cont)
- General Plan Process (cont)

- Questions

MAYOR HARTKE asked if the primary election in 2026 is moved by state law.

MS. DELONG said the current bill only affected the 2024 primary election; the date of the 2026 primary election is still the first Tuesday in August.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS asked for one-on-one presentations for councilmembers. It is key to have information to communicate with residents.

MS. SCHUMANN said any opportunity to take public comment is encouraged.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked about the conservation and energy section in the General Plan.

MS. SCHUMANN said ensuring we are a healthy city is essential.

MR. DE LA TORRE said the state requires certain parts to be included in the General Plan.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked how to define conservation of energy.

MS. SCHWAB listed the state definition of conservation of energy as it pertains to the General Plan as 1. A conservation element for the conservation, development and utilization of natural resources, including forests, soils, rivers and other waters, harbors, fisheries, wildlife, minerals and other natural resources. The conservation element may also cover: (a) The reclamation of land. (b) Flood control. (c) Prevention and control of the pollution of streams and other waters. (d) Regulation of the use of land in stream channels and other areas required for the accomplishment of the conservation plan. (e) Prevention, control and correction of the erosion of soils, beaches and shores. (f) Protection of watersheds.

MAYOR HARTKE mentioned redevelopment would be a part of this.

Funding Capital Improvement Program

DAWN LANG, Deputy City Manager / CFO presented the following presentation.

- Strategic Framework – Capital Needs in All Areas
- GO Bond Authorization History and Shortfall

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO said there is a large cost for some of these CIP plans and asked about the \$30 million price in the Police Department section.

MS. LANG said the \$30 million associated with Police Department is for the planned forensic facility.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO said the plan for the forensic facility is still in development.

MS. LANG said this is built on the assumption of what is in the ten-year CIP plan.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO said there still may be changes depending on what Council decides.

MS. LANG agreed and added that other department CIP projects still have significant shortfalls in ten-year plans.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO shared concern with costly items in planning and development before pursuing a bond election.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS mentioned Council needs to consider this because it is already in the plan.

MS. LANG said the subject is up for discussion, but the plan is balanced with different funding methods.

MAYOR HARTKE said this is based on the scenario of what we have agreed upon with our CIP. There are moving parts, but the city will run out of funding based on the existing plan without additional bond funding.

MS. LANG continued the presentation.

- GO Bond Authorization Project Drivers
- GO Bond Projects Additional Bond Authorization Needs
- Capital Project Funding Needs
- Capital Project Long-term Funding
- Capital Project Funding Methods (GO)
- Capital Project Funding Methods (ETRO)

MAYOR HARTKE asked if expansion is paid for by TPT increases or sales tax.

MS. LANG said that is correct, the revenues would not be available for General Fund, they would be dedicated to pay the debt for the whole time.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked if streets could be dedicated as an excise tax obligation.

MS. LANG said yes.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked if it is regular sales tax.

MS. LANG said the type of bond does not require voter approval, if the city is significantly backed, the debt service is a direct expense that pays that debt. In case revenues are not enough, that is what that is for. A revenue is needed to pay the expense for any project. Enterprise funds are driven by sale of goods or services.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON asked where ETRO bonds are used.

MS. LANG said ETRO bonds are currently only used in water and wastewater projects.

MAYOR HARTKE said that these sources are discussed every other year in rate increase discussions.

MS. LANG continued the presentation.

- Capital Project Funding Methods (Revenue Bond)
- Capital Project Funding Methods (Cash)

MAYOR HARTKE said an example of the cash bond was the airport cleanup fund.

MS. LANG said that was correct, the uninsured liability fund contribution was funded by long-term saved cash.

MS. LANG continued the presentation.

- Other Considerations

VICE MAYOR HARRIS noted that taxes should not be increased to achieve funding for bond funded projects.

MAYOR HARTKE said Chandler has had success with bonds in the past. Bonding sets capacity for projects.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS said the numbers were aggressive.

VICE MAYOR HARRIS said in discussion with residents, they understand bond elections to responsibly fund important infrastructure.

MS. LANG continued the presentation.

- Previous Bond Election Committee
- Previous Bond Election Results
- Bond Exploratory Sample Committee Timeline

MAYOR HARTKE asked if the General Plan and bond citizen subcommittees would overlap.

MS. LANG said for this expected timeline, there would not be a lot of overlap. Differences in voter expectations helped Chandler pass the bond election.

MR. WRIGHT said studies conducted around the time of the 2021 bond election helped give insight on how best to communicate with voters.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS mentioned voter trust was a significant part of the successful passage of bond authorization.

MAYOR HARTKE added that the residents give great feedback.

COUNCILMEMBER STEWART noted that committee members help garner trust and marketing for bond election.

MS. LANG continued the presentation.

- Bond Election Sample Process

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked about the possibility of one-time dollars remaining over the next five years that could be used to cover the gap, or contingency fund.

MS LANG said we have investigated the one-time funding reserve policy. The reserve policy is four times the operating revenues in General Fund. The amount appropriating to spend is part of the amount. The fund balance we are required to keep. If the appropriation is reduced, we are not able to utilize it.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO said if we can reduce the appropriation, Council can make the change. It is a great opportunity to see if funding can be applied from one-time dollars rather than focus on bond authorization.

COUNCILMEMBER STEWART said this does not accrue from a new start every year, the same dedicated balance carries forward every year.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO requested more information on how the fund balance for CIP projects are affected by financial policy.

MAYOR HARTKE said Chandler has high standards for financial policies and would not want to change anything without understanding the effects it may have.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS asked what each funding source is.

MS. LANG explained in the revenue fund, over 50% of the revenue is from transaction privilege taxes, 30% is from state shared revenue, and the remainder is comprised from charges, fees, and interest income.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS asked how these funds are returned to the community.

MS. LANG said when investing in the community, idle funds are invested which goes into interest income into general fund as one revenue stream. The options to use these funds are to pay debt service cost or pay the difference.

MAYOR HARTKE asked if there is a consensus.

COUNCILMEMBER STEWART said staff does a good job of informing the community when it comes time to issues like bond authorization, and asked how much more is needed to cover costs remaining.

MS. LANG said it depends on tax rate which is decided by Mayor and Council. The ten-year plan is supported by the rate collected today. The question is dependent on input about projects that could increase the secondary tax rate.

COUNCILMEMBER STEWART summarized the need is to complete the projects as listed in the current ten-year plan.

MS. LANG agreed.

MAYOR HARTKE said if a new ten-year plan was started today, we would start behind set plans.

MS. LANG said the previous bond committee started with projects in 2020 to anticipate needs. Each committee looked at what could wait on projects. Their input led to priorities created for funding.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON asked if the bond committee is made aware of when forecasted projects will occur.

MAYOR HARTKE said no.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON said there is some flexibility in moving out project start dates. The projects may not be complete in the year originally anticipated. The economy is not the same as it was a couple years ago, this can allow for greater adjustment.

MAYOR HARTKE shared concerns that the decision to push projects is more about pushing out different phases of projects, rather than delaying the start of a whole project.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON said that could be the messaging to residents in an election.

VICE MAYOR HARRIS stated the conversation about funding needs to be addressed with the community. Focusing on the core projects is the goal.

MS. LANG said if bonds are not sold, the secondary property tax rate must be used for debt service or returned. A revenue stream is needed for the projects.

MAYOR HARTKE said there is a need to appropriate bond money to spend bond funds for projects.

MS. LANG said after lowering the secondary property tax, it is difficult to ask to raise the level of the tax afterwards.

COUNCILMEMBER ENCINAS said going back out for bond projects so quickly after the last election is troublesome. Residents may understand the need to push out project timelines due to high costs.

VICE MAYOR HARRIS said that projects started need to be completed.

COUNCILMEMBER STEWART said communication with residents on why a delay may occur would be essential.

MAYOR HARTKE said more information on bonds will be forthcoming.

2. Review and Reaffirm Council Rules and Procedures

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO mentioned recent citizen requests for citizen participation at study sessions and subcommittee meetings.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS said citizens are requesting the chance for discussion at study sessions and subcommittee meetings. Our residents have access to councilmembers. It is hard to manage orderly open discussion in a council meeting environment, but it is key to facilitating civil conversations with residents.

MS. SCHWAB said Council has discretion to manage public comment at Council meetings. Resident discussion is limited to what items are listed on the agenda, or presentation during unscheduled public appearance which does not allow for discussion. Many municipalities have similar rules and procedures regarding public comment, but it is up to Council.

VICE MAYOR HARRIS said that this could be difficult regarding subcommittee meeting items. This could involve a presiding officer over a subcommittee meeting. It would depend on future councils.

COUNCILMEMBER ENCINAS said getting resident input within the bounds of the law is important. Providing structure and process would facilitate better discussion.

MAYOR HARTKE said public input is invited at Council meetings when decisions are being made. Council does not vote at subcommittee or work session meetings, but gives direction to staff.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS asked about boundaries around speech.

COUNCILMEMBER ENCINAS suggested different solutions for speakers at Council subcommittees and work sessions.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS said the process requires speakers to sign up to speak at a regular Council meeting.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO gave an example of allowing a speaker to simply comment at a meeting.

VICE MAYOR HARRIS said some of these meetings do not have decisions involved.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON said getting input from residents earlier in some plans would be a benefit.

VICE MAYOR HARRIS said staff can check in with residents to gather feedback to bring to a subcommittee meeting.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS said comments should be allowable.

VICE MAYOR HARRIS said previous requests were for dialogue.

COUNCILMEMBER STEWART said the need is to unpack accessibility and transparency for residents. When it comes down to deciding, the public wants input before the vote is complete. Having a three-minute time limit or otherwise is up to Mayor and Council. Communicating where Council is in the process would help people address their concerns to Council.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO requested to give direction to move forward.

VICE MAYOR HARRIS said this is an important conversation, and requested more information about how other municipalities handle this topic.

MAYOR HARTKE requested more information.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON requested a review of the process for Council to see board and commission applications prior to Council vote for appointment.

MAYOR HARTKE asked to clarify if Council would like to see all applicants or those being appointed.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON said those being appointed.

MAYOR HARTKE said Council's recommendations are considered when making appointments to boards and commissions.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON asked for information on the applicants that other councilmembers have recommended.

VICE MAYOR HARRIS reviewed the use of staff time in the Rules and Procedures. It is difficult to accomplish personal initiatives with limited use of staff time. Each councilmember works on their own goals. The four-hour limitation should be reexamined.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked for an example of the use of staff time.

VICE MAYOR HARRIS said the issue lies in the description of time used and resources available and knowing what staff to follow up with.

MAYOR HARTKE mentioned the consideration of gathering multiple councilmembers to work on a project versus a single councilmember's initiative.

COUNCILMEMBER STEWART mentioned that ideas start at an individual level but grow to involve the whole Council to act on behalf of the vision and mission plan.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS asked to pursue training for board and commission members and reports from boards and commissions.

VICE MAYOR HARRIS added that it would be great to have introductions for board and commission members.

MAYOR HARTKE clarified if the intent was to invite board and commission members to the meeting where they are appointed.

VICE MAYOR HARRIS said yes and mentioned that Mayor could conduct the oath of office.

MAYOR HARTKE said it is currently conducted on an individual basis. An event could be held, but the oath of office is completed on their own schedule. Generating more interaction with board and commission members is a new focus.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO requested the continuance of current board and commission appointment practice of advanced communication with councilmembers.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS mentioned the three-councilmember requirement for discretionary budget amendments is challenging due to competing priorities. More guidelines around discretionary budget amendments would benefit councilmembers.

MAYOR HARTKE said that it may come down to a vote if there is a high demand for Council discretionary budget amendments.

MAYOR HARTKE suggested the idea of it taking multiple councilmembers to suggest an item to be added to the agenda. Currently one councilmember can suggest adding any item to the agenda.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON said the Council discretionary budget amendments was to foster conversation but lacked collaboration.

VICE MAYOR HARRIS requested less of a presentation and more of a back-and-forth conversation with directors about discretionary budget amendments.

MAYOR HARTKE said it takes two councilmembers to raise a budget amendment.

MR. WRIGHT said the current policy for budget amendments is to suggest items based on unfunded departmental needs or needs within the community.

MAYOR HARTKE noted Council should present ideas and requests to directors in a written format, not presented in a phone call so that staff can interpret requests appropriately.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS said it depends how an idea is passed on to staff.

MAYOR HARTKE suggested written memos from Council for clarity.

COUNCILMEMBER STEWART said Council budget amendments are intended to fund anything that was missed in the budget. Staff has directives by the strategic plan. Special requests from Council may take away time from the strategic plan and core competencies.

MAYOR HARTKE said the Council Rules and Procedures and the strategic framework are intended to set an outline for both staff and Council.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON asked if there are priorities set within unfunded departmental needs in the discretionary budget amendment process.

MR. WRIGHT said a list of all is provided to Council.

COUNCILMEMBER STEWART said the needs vary.

3. Review, Reaffirm, and Revise Strategic Framework

Direction and Purpose

Focus Areas and Goals

Economic Vitality

MS. SCHWAB discussed expanding infill and development, diversification, housing strategic plan and developing and maintaining City rights.

Sustainability and Technology

VICE MAYOR HARRIS discussed following through on the comprehensive plan already developed, continuing to pursue grants, and keeping electric vehicle items to private sector.

Quality of Life

COUNCILMEMBER STEWART discussed noise abatement, volunteerism, researching needs to improve quality of life, buildings relationships with the healthcare industry, and increasing the variety of Break Time classes.

MAYOR HARTKE asked if there is any prohibition related to engine braking for noise abatement.

MS. SCHWAB said there is a prohibition on engine braking, but it is hard to enforce as it is related to safety.

MAYOR HARTKE said there is a gap in our zoning code when it comes to noise and visual buffers.

Connectivity

