

Meeting Minutes

City Council Special Meeting

February 23, 2026 | 6:00 p.m.
Chandler City Council Chambers
88. Chicago St., Chandler, AZ



Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Kevin Hartke at 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Council Attendance

Mayor Kevin Hartke
Vice Mayor Angel Encinas
*Councilmember Christine Ellis
Councilmember Jane Poston
Councilmember Matt Orlando
Councilmember OD Harris
Councilmember Jennifer Hawkins

Appointee Attendance

John Pombier, City Manager
Kelly Schwab, City Attorney
Jennifer Ekblad, City Clerk

*Councilmember Ellis attended virtually.

Staff in Attendance

Tadd Wille, Assistant City Manager
Dawn Lang, Deputy City Manager/CFO
Leah Powell, Deputy City Manager

Invocation

The invocation was given by Pastor Chris Morris, Foothills Community Church.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Vice Mayor Encinas.

Scheduled Public Appearances

1. Karthik Pallam - Request for Family Restrooms at City Parks and Spaces

MR. PALLAM, Chandler, AZ, shared that he has two daughters and highlighted a challenge many parents face in public spaces like parks: the lack of single-user or family restrooms. He stated he has to choose between taking his daughter to the men's restroom or the women's restroom. This issue affects children's privacy, safety, and dignity, and places parents in difficult positions. Mr. Pallam advocated for more single-person and family restrooms in public facilities to provide privacy, safety, and peace of mind for parents, caregivers, and individuals with disabilities.

MAYOR HARTKE asked the City Manager to ensure that Parks staff connect with Mr. Pallam to review the issue and discuss possible actions or improvements.

JOHN POMBIER, City Manager, stated staff will follow up with Mr. Pallam.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON thanked the speaker for sharing his perspective as a parent. She noted that as a mother of boys, she faced similar challenges when her children were younger. She appreciated him bringing the issue forward so the city can consider ways to address it.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS commented that while Chandler typically has separate men's and women's restrooms, there should also be baby-changing tables in men's restrooms since fathers change diapers as well. He shared that when his children were young, he often had difficulty finding a place to change diapers in men's restrooms. He asked the City Manager if the city could consider adding baby-changing tables in men's restrooms.

MR. POMBIER said yes.

Public Hearing Item 1

1. Proposed Local Alternative Expenditure Limitation- Home Rule Option Election, First Public Hearing

Open Public Hearing

MAYOR HARTKE opened the public hearing at 6:08 p.m.

Staff Presentation

SYLVIA DLOTT, Budget & Research Administrator, presented the following presentation.

- Home Rule Option Public Hearing 2026 Proposed Local Alternative Expenditure Limitation
- Home Rule Origin
 - State Law effective June 3, 1980
 - Sets maximum spending limits for cities & Towns based on a formula
 - Maximum spending limit formula
 - Based on FY 1979-80 expenditures

- Allows for annual population increase
- Allows for inflation increases
- Allows for exclusions of some expenditures
- Alternatives to Formula
 - 1 One-time Override
 - 2 Local Alternative Expenditure Limitation (Home Rule)
 - 3 Permanent Adjustment Base Limit
- 2026 Home Rule Option
 - Allows City to use adopted budget as the expenditure limit versus formula set in 1980
 - Provides flexibility to establish budget based on anticipated revenues and set programs and service levels based on resident needs
 - Spending limit is re-established every 4 years. Requires a majority vote of the public at Primary or General election
 - Requires 2 Public Hearings prior to Council action. Special Meeting held immediately following the 2nd Public Hearing. Requires 2/3 Majority
 - Chandler Voters Have Approved the Home Rule Option 11 consecutive times since 1982-most recently in August 2022
- 2026 Home Rule Option Financial Implications (preliminary)
- 2026 Home Rule Option Financial Implications
 - Potential impacts if Home Rule does not pass
 - Reductions in street maintenance funding
 - Reductions in public safety funding
 - Deferral or cancellation of capital projects
 - Reduction to recreation, aquatics, and library programs
 - Approval of Home Rule does not increase taxes
 - If Home Rule does not pass revenue will continue to be received but not spent
- Home Rule Elections Schedule
- Questions?

Council Discussion

MAYOR HARTKE asked how many times the measure had been brought forward and noted that, based on his recollection, it usually passes with about 85–90% support. He asked whether any figures or data were available to confirm that.

MS. DLOTT responded that in 2022, the measure passed with a figure close to that, though she would need to verify the exact numbers.

MAYOR HARTKE commented that the issue is not controversial; the process is simply a procedural step required to satisfy the state requirement.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO noted that the requirement stems from a law over 40 years old and suggested reviewing it to avoid having to repeat the process annually.

COUNCILMEMBER HAWKINS asked for the website address where the slides presented today could be accessed for future reference.

MS. DLOTT confirmed that the slides are available on the city's website for tonight's City Council meeting and mentioned they could also be provided on the budget page.

MAYOR HARTKE suggested that, as the election approaches, the information should be made prominent and easy to find so citizens can access it without difficulty.

DAWN LANG, Deputy City Manager/CFO, stated that the city will create a webpage featuring educational materials and presentations.

Discussion from the Audience

None.

Close Public Hearing

MAYOR HARTKE closed the Public Hearing at 6:16 p.m.

Public Hearing Item 2

2. Chandler General Plan Update, PLH25-0010, Public Input, Consideration and Discussion Regarding the Update of Chandler's General Plan - Continued from the February 5, 2026 Regular Meeting

Open Public Hearing

MAYOR HARTKE opened the public hearing at 6:17 p.m.

Staff Presentation

LAUREN SCHUMANN, Principal Planner, presented the following presentation.

- PLH25-0010 Chandler General Plan Update
- General Plan Update Overview
 - What is it and why update it?
 - Update Process/Timelines
 - Innovative Public Participation
 - Proposed Revisions
- City of Chandler Growth By Recorded Plat Years Map
- What's a General Plan
 - Approved 2016 General Plan
 - Comprehensive set of broad policies used to guide development
 - Vision for city's ultimate build-out
 - Strategic plan: not parcel specific
 - Community Goals

- 2016 approved by voters 85.8% no amendments
- What's a General Plan
 - Required For All Municipalities
 - Land Use
 - Circulation
 - Required for Population over 10,000:
 - Open Space
 - Growth Area
 - Environment Planning
 - Cost of Development
 - Water Resources
 - Elected Element:
 - Economic Growth
 - Required for populations over 50,000:
 - Conservation
 - Recreation
 - Public Services and Facilities
 - Public Buildings
 - Housing
 - Conservation, Rehabilitation, and Redevelopment
 - Safety
 - Bicycling
 - Energy
 - Neighborhood Preservation and Revitalization
- Why Update the General Plan?
 - State statutes requires update every 10 years
 - Any rezonings must be consistent with the General Plan
 - Address new development trends/factors facing Chandler
 - Community vision & values remain relevant
 - Approaching build-out
- Changes since 2016
- Changes since 2016
 - Approximately 70% remaining land planned for non-residential uses
 - Housing 2016-Jan 2025 11,956 units built
 - Finite water resources; plan accordingly
- Public Engagement Overview
- General Plan Process and Timeline
 - Launch Oct 2024 – Feb 2025
 - Project Website
 - Kickoff Meetings
 - Online Questionnaire 1
 - Informational Brochures

- Community Conversations
- Vision Jan 2025 – Sep 2025
 - RAC Meetings
 - Online Questionnaire 2&3
 - Speaker Panel Event
 - Drop-In Events
 - Visioning & Scenario Workshops
 - Immersion lab
 - Boards/Commissions Session
- Draft Feb 2025 – Oct 2025
 - TAC Meetings
 - Boards/Commissions Sessions
 - 60- Day Public Review
 - CHP Completed
- Adopt Jan 2026 – Aug 2026
 - P&Z Commission Hearings
 - City Council Hearing Ratification
- What's different?
 - Minor Housekeeping Changes
 - Changed the plan structure
 - Updated policies
 - Updated demographics
 - Updated historic timeline
 - Updated reference plans
 - Updated glossary
 - Updated graphics/photos
 - Summarized public participation
 - Vision Statement
 - More Significant Changes
 - Future Land Use Map
 - Category mapping revisions
 - Growth Area revisions
 - Illustrations of Area Plans
 - Future Land Use Categories
 - Revisions and refinements
 - Implementation Action Table
- Future Land Use Map (FLUM)
 - 2016 Map
 - 2026 Map
- 2026 Neighborhood Category
 - 2016

- The predominant land use in this category is residential, however; a variety of other uses are allowed based on location and other compatibility criteria described below. The following residential densities and non-residential land use are allowed in the Neighborhoods category subject to the following criteria:
 - High-density residential (12-18 dwelling units per acre) ...
 - Urban residential (densities exceeding 18 dwelling units per acre) ...
- 2026
- The predominant land use in this category is residential; however, a variety of other uses are allowed based on location and other compatibility criteria described below. The following residential densities and non-residential land use are allowed in the Neighborhoods category, subject to the following criteria:
 - High-density residential (13-25 dwelling units per acre) ...
 - Urban residential (26+ dwelling units per acre) ...
- 2026 Regional Commercial Category
 - 2016
 - This category includes major regional commercial developments such as malls, power centers, large single-use retail, and other major commercial centers. Regional commercial locations are shown on the Future Land Use Plan Map and are also eligible for consideration of urban-style mixed-use developments, large office users, and a compatible mix of residential densities
 - 2026
 - This category includes major regional commercial developments such as malls, power centers, large single-use retail, and other major commercial centers. Regional commercial locations are shown on the FLUM and are also eligible for consideration of urban residential and large office users.
 - The maximum allowable density for urban residential (26+ dwelling units per acre) will be determined at the time of development plan approval by the city and based on such considerations as existing and planned capacities for water and sewer infrastructure, adequate transportation facilities, compatibility with adjoining land uses, ability to transition to adjacent existing lower-density residential if applicable, and other factors.
- 2026 Employment Category
 - 2016
 - The Future Land Use Plan Map focuses attention on strengthening the community's economic base by expanding the growth areas and identifying a variety of employment areas for future growth. Major employers, knowledge-based industries, and industrial/business parks are allowed within Employment. A compatible mix of industrial support uses and residential densities as an integral component may be considered.
 - Light industrial business parks may be considered in campus-like settings containing knowledge-based employers, corporate offices, manufacturing, and warehouse and distribution. A compatible mix of industrial support uses

and residential densities may also be considered as an integral component of a planned mixed-use development.

- 2026
 - The FLUM focuses attention on strengthening the community's economic base by identifying a variety of employment areas for future growth. As Chandler approaches build-out, most of the available land is designated for employment; therefore, it is imperative to target key industries for healthy growth of the city. For more than 50 years, Chandler has welcomed high-tech manufacturing, pioneering research, and emerging technologies that have shaped our community. We will continue to prioritize employment uses of advanced manufacturing, knowledge-based industries, advanced business services, next-generation software engineering, and healthcare services.
 - Light industrial business parks are also permitted, prioritizing manufacturing, research and development, and emerging technologies. Corporate and large office developments are allowed uses within employment designation.
 - Residential can be considered with employment if designed as part of an integral component to the campus, see growth area polices and area plans for additional criteria. The maximum allowable density for urban residential (26+ dwelling units per acre) will be determined at the time of development plan approval by the city and based on such considerations as existing and planned capacities for water and sewer infrastructure, adequate transportation facilities, compatibility with adjoining land uses, ability to transition to adjacent existing lower-density residential if applicable, and other factors.
- Growth Areas/Area Plans Map
- South Price Road Corridor Growth Area
- South Price Road Corridor Growth Area
 - New Policy: Enhance the campus-like environment by supporting development that includes true vertical mixed uses, allowing for employee and ancillary residential uses which are subordinate to the primary employment use, centered on a common design theme.
 - Urban residential (26+dwelling units per acre) with vertically integrated uses may be considered when ground floor uses include non-residential uses that directly support employees and residents (e.g., retail, restaurants, coworking space, or business services) and it is ancillary to and a subordinate part of a large employment campus that offers shared amenities and enhanced pedestrian connections.
- Implementation Action Plan
 - Chapter 5 – Chandler Honors
 - The purpose of this chapter is to honor the community's vision for Chandler by articulating a systematic action plan. The 73 actions below are organized by chapter theme and topic areas and are meant to be implemented within short- (1–5 years), mid- (5–10 years), or long- (10 or more years) term timeframes and on an ongoing basis. These actions and timeframes will assist the city in complying with the

statutory general plan reporting requirements detailed in ARS §9-461.07. More importantly, these actions are a guide and roadmap forward to help the city realize the community's vision; however, they remain flexible and subject to staffing and financial resources.

- 60 Day Public Review Period
- RAC Review & Recommendation
 - 21 Member Committee appointed by the Mayor
 - 7 Meetings total; Final meeting December 9, 2025
 - Review changes made from public comments
 - Committee Members made the following edits:
 - Renamed Growth Area 1 from Uptown Chandler back to North Arizona Avenue
 - Removed all text containing future light rail
 - RAC unanimously recommended approval
- Two Planning and Zoning Commission meetings
- January 7, 2026 Informal Meeting
- January 21, 2026 Recommended approval to City Council 7-0
- Next Steps:
 - City Council
 - February 23, 2026
 - Public Hearing & City Council Vote
 - Primary Ballot for Ratification
 - July 21, 2026
- Questions

Council Discussion

MAYOR HARTKE noted that the 4,500 residents who provided input on the General Plan represented 1.5% of the population. He asked if they considered this a strong level of public participation, and how this compares to previous efforts.

MS. SCHUMANN stated she reviewed the 2016 touch points, which amounted to about a quarter of what we received during the process. They are pleased with the public participation and the innovative methods we used to engage with the community.

MAYOR HARTKE mentioned increased densities, which are largely mandated by regulations. He clarified that if someone wants to develop a project outside the mall area, there is no maximum density requirement; it allows for higher density.

MS. SCHUMANN confirmed, and it's encouraging higher densities in and around the mall area.

MAYOR HARTKE asked whether the "Chandler Honors" project list would still require presentation to Council and Council approval before moving forward.

MS. SCHUMANN confirmed that they hope to use it as a report card to provide an annual update on the number of items that were completed throughout the year.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS asked about the backgrounds and careers of the individuals who participated in the process.

MS. SCHUMANN said the Resident Advisory Committee included a diverse group, such as former mayors, former councilmembers, the president of the Chamber of Commerce, zoning attorneys, and community members passionate about Chandler. She noted it was inspiring to hear the variety of perspectives.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS asked why the advisory group decided to remove the light rail discussion from the plan and whether there was a specific reason for that decision.

MS. SCHUMANN explained that the light rail reference was included in error. She said the consultant assumed the city might consider it in the future, but staff noted that current bus ridership levels do not support light rail at this time. She added that while it is not part of this General Plan update, it could be discussed in the future.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS stated that light rail is designed as a high-density people mover, and Chandler bus ridership levels are not high enough.

MS. SCHUMANN said that is correct.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON referred to the Price Corridor and asked whether requiring the bottom floor in these mixed-use areas to serve employees and residents would include the general public.

MS. SCHUMANN confirmed that these businesses are intended to be open to the public to serve employees, residents, and anyone in the nearby area.

COUNCILMEMBER OLANDO praised Ms. Schumann for her thorough and balanced presentation and highlighted the 3D visuals used in public engagement.

MS. SCHUMANN explained that to maintain public engagement in October, the city held a second "Chandler Talks" event, followed by an immersive experience. Using technology provided by Logan Simpson, four scenarios were rendered in 3D on a large screen, allowing viewers to feel as if they were walking through the neighborhood. This gave the community a chance to see how neighborhoods could develop under the proposed General Plan policies.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO said he particularly enjoyed the immersive experience because it helped him visualize the areas referenced in the General Plan. He noted that seeing it in 3D

allowed residents to better understand the possibilities compared to viewing plans on paper. He added that the 4,500 participants represent a significant share of the population. He expressed confidence in the public engagement process, looked forward to the measure appearing on the ballot, and praised the team's work.

VICE MAYOR ENCINAS thanked the staff, residents, and committee members for their time and input, noting that the plan serves as a blueprint for the city's evolution over the next decade.

MAYOR HARTKE thanked Council, noting that the process of forming a committee was a collaborative effort. He mentioned that relationships among committee members were excellent, and staff expressed satisfaction with an engaged group. Mayor Hartke thanked committee members.

Discussion from the Audience

None.

Close Public Hearing

MAYOR HARTKE closed the Public Hearing at 6:49 p.m.

Action Agenda Item 3

3. General Plan Update, Chandler 2026 General Plan: Evolving the Chandler Way
Move City Council pass and adopt Resolution No. 5973, updating the city's general plan to guide future development within the City of Chandler and place the "Chandler 2026 General Plan: evolving the Chandler way" on the primary ballot for voter ratification, as recommended by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Councilmember Orlando moved to pass and adopt Resolution No. 5973, updating the city's general plan to guide future development within the City of Chandler and place the "Chandler 2026 General Plan: evolving the Chandler way" on the primary ballot for voter ratification, as recommended by the Planning and Zoning Commission, with the following amendment to the South Price Road Corridor Growth Area Policy: Enhance the campus-like environment by supporting development that includes true vertical mixed uses, allowing for employee and ancillary residential uses which are subordinate to the primary employment use, centered on a common design theme. Urban residential (26+dwelling units per acre) with vertically integrated uses may be considered when ground floor uses include non-residential uses that directly support employees and residents (e.g., retail, restaurants, coworking space, or business services) and it is ancillary to and a subordinate part of a large employment campus that offers shared amenities and enhanced pedestrian connections.; Seconded by Councilmember Hawkins.

Motion carried unanimously (7-0).

Action Agenda Item 4

- Resolution No. 5990, Repealing Resolution No. 5968 and Providing Notice of the Primary and General Elections to be held on July 21, 2026 and November 3, 2026, Respectively
Move City Council pass and adopt Resolution No. 5990, repealing Resolution No. 5968; designating and providing notice of the 2026 Primary and General Elections to be held on July 21, 2026, and November 3, 2026, respectively; and authorizing the City Clerk to enter into agreements, as required, to provide election services for the 2026 Primary and General Elections.

Vice Mayor Encinas moved to pass and adopt Resolution No. 5990, repealing Resolution No. 5968; designating and providing notice of the 2026 Primary and General Elections to be held on July 21, 2026, and November 3, 2026, respectively; and authorizing the City Clerk to enter into agreements, as required, to provide election services for the 2026 Primary and General Elections; Seconded by Councilmember Poston.

Motion carried unanimously (7-0).

Public Comment

None.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:52 pm.

ATTEST: *Jennifer Ehlbaud*
City Clerk

Kevin Harbo
Mayor

Approval Date of Minutes: March 23, 2026

Certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Special Meeting of the City Council of Chandler, Arizona, held on the 23rd day of February 2026. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

DATED this 23rd day of March, 2026.

Jennifer Ehlbaud
City Clerk

