

Meeting Minutes

City Council Work Session

May 18, 2026 | 4:00 p.m.
Council Chambers Conference Room
88 E. Chicago St., Chandler, AZ



Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Kevin Hartke at 4:01 p.m.

Roll Call

Council Attendance

Mayor Kevin Hartke
Vice Mayor Angel Encinas
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

Absent

Councilmember Christine Ellis - excused

Staff in Attendance

Dawn Lang, Deputy City Manager / Chief Financial Officer
Ryan Peters, Deputy City Manager
Leah Powell, Deputy City Manager
Corey Povar, Community Services Assistant Director
John Sefton, Community Services Director
Rachelle Kuzyk, Library Senior Manager
Marge Zylla, Strategic Initiatives Director
Katie Gaul, Engineer
Mallori Heppler, Marketing & Communications Program Coordinator

Discussion

1. Presentation and Update of Recreation & Libraries Master Plan

MAYOR HARTKE called for a staff presentation.

JOHN POMBIER, City Manager, introduced the discussion item

JOHN SEFTON, Community Services Director, presented the following presentation.

- Recreation and Library Strategic Master Plan
- Consulting Team Introductions

JASON GENCK, Senior Manager with BerryDunn, introduced himself and provided information regarding the planning process.

J.R. CLANTON, Manager with BerryDunn, introduced himself and shared his areas of expertise in relation to the project.

MR. SEFTON continued the presentation and presented the following slides.

- Berry Dunn
 - Prime Consultant
 - Project and team management
 - Engagement
 - Market assessment
 - Program and service assessment
 - Data analysis
 - Recreation facility assessments
 - Visioning
 - Implementation
- Richard Kennedy Architects
 - Subconsultant
 - Library facilities assessment
 - Visioning
- J2 Engineering and Environmental Design
 - Subconsultant
 - Engagement
 - Local Experience
- Etc Institute
 - Subconsultant
 - Statistically valid survey development and administration
- Planning Process Overview: Where We Are Now

MR. GENCK continued the presentation and presented the following slides.

- Overview
 - Create a 10-year vision
 - Analyze current/future needs

- Conduct robust engagement
- Propose optimization of current facilities
- Identify opportunities for adaptive reuse & improvements
- Meet or exceed national standards
- National Accreditation
 - Agency Mission & Purpose
 - Admin & Org resources
 - Community & Park Planning
 - H.R., Workforce & Culture
 - Financial Mgt & Accountability
 - Programs & Service Mgt
 - Facilities and Land use Mgt
 - Law, Risk, Safety & Security
 - Marketing, Comm & Engagement
- We Are Here
 - Project Management and Coordination
 - Public Input, Outreach, and Engagement (August Completion)
 - Data Collection and Analysis (September Completion)
 - Visioning (November Completion)
 - Draft and Final Plan (January 2027 Completion)
 - Implementation Strategy (January 2027 Completion)
- Public Engagement
- Public Input, Outreach, and Community Engagement
 - Collaboration in partnership with the City of Chandler
 - “Going to the people”
 - Implementing engagements in person, online, and virtually
 - Individuals and groups
 - Statistically valid survey

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS emphasized focusing on the key points and decisions that will need to be made.

MR. SEFTON acknowledged Councilmember Harris’s comments and continued the presentation.

- We believe engagement...
 - Has the power to excite communities about their future.
 - Branding the planning process tells your community that they are a part something important and long-lasting.
- The Voices of Chandler
 - Leveraging a variety of tools and facilitation techniques has proven to increase engagement.
 - Meet you where you are
 - Pop-up events and engagement stations

- Focus groups
- Interviews

VICE MAYOR ENCINAS inquired about the strategy to reach everyone, particularly residents who are in older neighborhoods or who may not have much interaction with the city's programs. He also asked what feedback we are looking for.

MR. GENCK responded that they work hard to reach the entire community. The focus will be on working closely with staff to make sure they understand historic outreach efforts. Mr. Genck also provided additional information how they promote engagement to accurately represent the community.

MR. CLANTON emphasized a statistically valid survey to ensure true representation of the community through random sampling.

MR. GENCK noted the importance of the support of Council to identify different areas.

COUNCILMEMBER HAWKINS asked about the timeline and expressed concerns about responses during the summer with residents out of town.

MR. SEFTON noted the challenges of the summer timeline but emphasized that the statistically valid survey would provide balanced demographics.

MAYOR HARTKE asked for the timeline in regard to public input.

MR. SEFTON stated the goal is for it to be completed by the end of August and bring the information back to Council in November.

MAYOR HARTKE suggested participating in back to school events to increase engagement.

MR. SEFTON agreed with Mayor Hartke and continued the presentation.

- Online Engagement
 - In partnership with Chandler, we make it easy for anyone to contribute their ideas and keep up with project updates.

MR. CLANTON continued the presentation.

- A Balanced Approach of Connecting to Your Community
 - The statistically valid survey helps to better understand needs and prioritize competing interests.
 - Survey development and design
 - Random sampling
 - Mail and online versions

- Spanish translation
- Systems and Inventories

MR. SEFTON continued the presentation.

- Your Roadmap for Operational, Program, and Service Success
 - We will assess your facilities to help understand usage patterns, access, and barriers.
- Facility Inventories and Opportunities
 - Aligning infrastructure to meet community needs.
 - Identifying opportunities and constraints
 - Understanding access to facilities
 - Considering operations, conditions, and services
 - Connecting community voices to facility needs
- Your Roadmap for Operations, Program, and Service Success
 - Making Sense of your data.

MR. GENCK continued the presentation.

- Benchmarking
- Benchmarking and Comparison Strategic Analysis
 - Leveraging comparisons tailored to Chandler can uncover different perspectives.

MR. SEFTON continued the presentation.

- Your Input is Essential
 - Promote participation with your networks and communities
 - Participate in pop-up events
 - Connect resources
 - Share your ideas
 - Ask questions
- Recreation and Library Strategic Master Plan
- Mayor & Council
 - Insights, Interests, and Ideas

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS asked for information regarding the history of the master plan and how often it will be reviewed.

MR. SEFTON shared this plan was part of the CIP and referenced the Parks Strategic Plan from 2021. Mr. Sefton commented that this was approved last fall and the contract was competitively bid.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS clarified that this is a continuation since there is already a parks plan in place, noting that this plan will look at how we use space and what outcomes the city is getting.

MR. SEFTON confirmed.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS asked about internal programming and wanted to discuss the benchmarking with other cities. He asked if the listed cities have the same programs.

MR. SEFTON confirmed and shared that the comparable cities have similar demographics and budgetary resources. He commented that the consultants will help the city identify the gaps.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS asked for clarification related to Chandler and the benchmark cities, asking if the listed programs were already part of Chandler programming.

MR. SEFTON shared that the graphic is an example of a benchmarking study.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS clarified the benchmarking process and how other cities programs would be compared to Chandler's.

MAYOR HARTKE asked Councilmember Harris if he is asking why we are doing this study and inquired if recommendations would be made related to the benchmarking.

MR. SEFTON said yes, that is an effective summary and provided additional information on what the master plan would deliver for the City of Chandler.

MAYOR HARTKE inquired about the purpose of the plan, sharing that each councilmember receives different feedback from the community. He asked would this plan offer a broader view of what will meet the community needs.

MR. SEFTON confirmed the Mayor's comments, stating that they will focus on forecasting the future as well as understanding current needs.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS shared different areas that he would like the consultants to focus on such as senior programming, at-risk youth, the middle age gap for youth, and swimming programs. He emphasized identifying any gaps in demographics and programs that are not being provided.

MR. GENCK continued with the presentation and asked Council why they live and serve in Chandler as well as what are the biggest wins, gaps, or challenges in Chandler's recreation and library system.

MAYOR HARTKE shared what he appreciates about Chandler as well as feedback he hears from constituents is the speed of development, available activities, and safety.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON commented about when she moved to Chandler and what she enjoys about the city. She shared comments from residents about the need for more sports fields and

the limited land availability. Councilmember Poston also noted a gap in programs for teenagers and emphasized identifying programming for them.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO commented that he appreciates the quality of life in Chandler as well as safety. He shared that maintaining quality of life for residents such as restaurants or recreation is important. He agreed with Councilmember Poston about reaching kids 13 – 17 with community programming and partnering with the local schools. He also emphasized senior programming with integrated transportation.

VICE MAYOR ENCINAS answered that he receives positive feedback about Chandler's high level of customer service. He noted a gap in the young professionals demographic and city programming or city services.

COUNCILMEMBER HAWKINS shared that she appreciates the sense of community and engagement in Chandler. She expressed concern about awareness of the survey that may impact answers.

MAYOR HARTKE asked if the consultants would also inquire about engagement with different ethnic groups in the city and services that could be provided.

MR. GENCK confirmed that they would work to identify all the different groups in Chandler to get balanced results.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS shared that he wanted to include single moms and how they can be supported. He also noted daycare facilities and summer programs need to be examined.

JOHN POMBIER, City Manager, asked when benchmarking to other cities if it can be tied to resident satisfaction.

MR. GENCK shared that they do work with the team when identifying benchmarking cities. He shared the next question, what are the citywide challenges in the next five to 10 years.

VICE MAYOR ENCINAS commented about space utilization and the city population as it continues to grow. He shared he wants to know how Chandler can continue to grow and keep up with it.

MAYOR HARTKE noted impacts out of the city's control such as the Colorado River and water conservation. He emphasized how to manage resources out of the city's control when residents count on parks and other amenities.

COUNCILMEMBER HAWKINS added in the shade portion of parks and walkways in the city.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON commented about the aging population and how to draw younger

families to Chandler.

VICE MAYOR ENCINAS expressed concerns about the costs of services and programs for residents.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO shared about the challenge of technology costs in relation to libraries, maintenance, and use of parks. He shared about challenges related to organized sports and use of the fields by residents or outside groups.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS expressed concerns about school closures and impacts. He shared about park footprints in neighborhoods and near schools.

MR. GENCK moved on to the next question and asked if there were any citywide challenges now or in the future that recreation and libraries should be working on to help.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS spoke in favor of the city's mobile library and suggested maybe it could be used for other purposes. He also suggested it could be used to reach more areas of the community and emphasized communication of where it would be.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO commented that localization is important, sharing that residents prefer to stay within a radius. He suggested maybe other facilities could be used to localize programming and expressed concerns about costs.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON emphasized libraries and reading comprehension for kids. She suggested collaborating with local schools and promoting the libraries for educational achievement.

MAYOR HARTKE commented about libraries being additional gathering spaces and what that could look like in the future.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON provided comments on the relevancy of libraries and ways that they can support them and evaluate current programs and services.

COUNCILMEMBER HAWKINS shared about summer programs and identifying opportunities with the different city offerings.

MR. GENCK continued to the next question and asked what strengths or opportunities should libraries focus on and build upon for the future.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO shared about libraries in Europe and the different services offered. He emphasized it was more of a meeting place and spoke about localization and utilization.

MAYOR HARTKE commented that Chandler libraries have done a good job of integrating broader

programming and events for the community.

MR. GENCK moved on to the next question and asked about other organizations that may contribute to the future of recreation and libraries in Chandler.

MAYOR HARTKE commented about the impact of organizations in Chandler such as the Boys & Girls Club and the current partnerships.

COUNCILMEMBER HAWKINS shared about collaborating with the local school districts such as Kyrene and Chandler.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS commented on non-profit organizations such as SWIMBLK. He said he would like to see more cross collaboration with departments such as Connection & Impact since they have connections with Chandler non-profits. He suggested the non-profits could help fill programming gaps.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON shared about groups that use the parks such as yoga, martial arts, or dog meet ups. She emphasized promoting those organic groups and identifying ways to reach them to have better utilization of the parks.

MR. POMBIER asked if the consultants would provide lessons learned from other communities across the country and also asked if they had seen large communities that were able to balance the use of facilities between residents and non-residents effectively.

MR. GENCK shared that they will conduct a fee analysis and sports field usage and incorporate his suggestions.

MAYOR HARTKE commented on one of Chandler's pools that is used by residents and non-residents, he expressed concerns on balancing the use and fees.

MR. GENCK continued to the last question and asked, with consideration for balancing a focus on expanding services, maintaining existing assets, and ensuring equitable access, what success looks like or how it should be measured.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON shared that success would be if they returned and provided information that Council did not already know or that they could solve a problem that Chandler didn't have a solution to.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO agreed with Councilmember Poston and emphasized having a strong vision for the future.

MAYOR HARTKE shared about his experience with other strategic plans and studies; he

commented about focusing on balance and a path to the future.

COUNCILMEMBER HAWKINS commented that her priority would be maintaining current assets as well as prioritizing a replacement strategy.

MR. POMBIER shared staff will return to Council with an update and more information.

COUNCILMEMBER HAWKINS requested that Council receive information on how share the survey and any other related materials.

MR. SEFTON confirmed that would be shared with Council.

Public Comment

None.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 5:29 p.m.

ATTEST:



City Clerk



Mayor

Approval Date of Minutes: June 11, 2026

Certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Work Session of the City Council of Chandler, Arizona, held on the 18th day of May 2026. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

DATED this 11th day of June, 2026.



City Clerk

