Meeting Minutes
City Council Work Session

September 14, 2026 | 4:30 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 4:30 p.m.

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

*Councilmember Harris attended virtually.

Appointee Attendance
John Pombier, City Manager
Deryck R. Lavelle, City Attorney
Jennifer Ekblad, City Clerk

Staff in Attendance
Tadd Wille, Assistant City Manager
Dawn Lang, Deputy City Manager / Chief Financial Officer
Ryan Peters, Deputy City Manager
Leah Powell, Deputy City Manager
Hezequias Rocha, Senior Transportation Planning Program Coordinator
Nancy Jackson, Senior Transportation Planning Program Coordinator
Marge Zylla, Strategic Initiatives Director
Jason Crampton, Transportation Planning Manager
Emilia Krajewski, Assistant to the City Manager
Brittany Barba, Government Relations Program Manager

Discussion
1. Presentation and Discussion regarding Proposition 479

MAYOR HARTKE called for a staff presentation.

JOHN POMBIER, City Manager, introduced the discussion item.

MARGE ZYLLA, Strategic Initiatives Director, introduced herself and Jason Crampton, Transportation Planning Manager, Nancy Jackson, Senior Transportation Planning Program Coordinator, and Hezequias Rocha, Senior Transportation Planning Program Coordinator.

JASON CRAMPTON, Transportation Planning Manager, presented the following presentation.

- Transit and Proposition 479
- Decision Points
    - Paratransit Service Area
    - RideChoice Eligibility (65+ Program)
    - Bus Service Enhancements
    - Chandler Flex Expansion
- Proposition 479 Background
    - Maricopa County ½-Cent Sales Tax for Transportation
        - Approved by Voters November 2024
        - Replaces Expiring Proposition 400
        - Effective January 2026 – December 2045
- Proposition 479: County Funding Programs
- Prop. 479 Projects in Chandler
- Prop. 479 Transit Lifecycle Program

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked what the rationalization was of leaving microtransit out of the ballot measure for Proposition 479.

MAYOR HARTKE said there was no state or regional interest in microtransit being included in the 2024 Proposition 479 ballot measure.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked if a person who was 65 or older who wanted to use transit would use Paratransit or RideChoice.

MAYOR HARTKE clarified that the transit user could use either Chandler Flex microtransit or Paratransit / RideChoice.

MR. CRAMPTON added that Chandler would pay for use of Chandler Flex microtransit trips for the transit user.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked if the 65+ rider program is state or federally mandated for Paratransit or RideChoice.

MR. CRAMPTON said no, this is an optional extra service Chandler provides that is locally funded.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked if the 65+ rider program had funding from Proposition 479.

MR. CRAMPTON confirmed that Chandler's Paratransit and RideChoice 65+ rider program did not have funding from Proposition 479, this is a 100% city-funded transit option.

MR. CRAMPTON continued the presentation.

- Transit Lifecycle Program (Cont.)
- FY2027 Local Funding – Without Policy Changes
- Existing Transit Services
- Existing Transit Services
- Existing Transit Services

MAYOR HARTKE asked about the percentage of Chandler Flex rides that are shared versus a single passenger.

MR. CRAMPTON said in Chandler Flex, about 50% of the rides are shared, and 50% of the rides are single passengers. Since adding Waymo to this service, the Chandler Flex rides have been able to become more efficient. The cost per trip has been reduced from about $27 per trip, to under $20 in recent months.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS asked if the Waymo service is used by booking a ride through Chandler Flex.

MR. CRAMPTON said yes and explained that if a passenger books a ride through Chandler Flex, if there are no Flex services available, it will be offered through Waymo. It is not a seamless integration, as if the passenger is offered a Waymo ride, they would need to set up a Waymo account.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS asked if usage of Waymo is being tracked through the Chandler Flex app.

MR. CRAMPTON said some older residents are hesitant to take Waymo, he estimated the acceptance rate of Waymo is less than 50%. If a passenger did not want to ride a Waymo, they can wait until a Chandler Flex driver is available.

VICE MAYOR ENCINAS asked if Chandler Flex is federally funded.

MR. CRAMPTON answered that there was a state grant that helped launch Chandler Flex that covered the operational cost for the first two years. Chandler just started receiving federal funds this fiscal year consisting of a congressionally directed spending grant for up to 50% of the cost of

service and 5310 formula funds to pay for trips for individuals aged 65+ or with a disability. The federal requirements for microtransit providers are less than other transit service providers.

VICE MAYOR ENCINAS asked if Chandler will continue seeking federal grants for microtransit funding and asked what the total cost of microtransit would be if the city were to pay for the full cost of the service.

MR. CRAMPTON said yes, the city will continue seeking grants for microtransit funding. He explained that the city expects to fund this project with 100% local funds in the future.

VICE MAYOR ENCINAS asked if Lyft's First Mile, Last Mile program could be integrated into the Chandler Flex and Waymo service area.

MR. CRAMPTON explained that the First Mile, Last Mile program has a different range of service than Waymo; First Mile, Last Mile goes further east. It is an option to incorporate First Mile, Last Mile into Chandler Flex, the contractor does this in other markets. This overflow service provider could potentially handle additional service requests.

MAYOR HARTKE asked if the Waymo service area had been extended.

MR. CRAMPTON said Waymo has been testing an extended service, but it has not been confirmed.

MR. CRAMPTON continued the presentation.

- Existing Transit Services

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked if the bus routes were to be extended then would the federally mandated paratransit area increase.

MR. CRAMPTON noted that if a bus route would extend, then yes, the region would fund those Paratransit and RideChoice rides within ¾ of a mile of the bus routes.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO commented that some of the federally mandated paratransit may be paid for if the bus routes are extended.

MR. CRAMPTON continued the presentation.

- Paratransit Services
    - Federally-complaint service for people with disabilities.
    - Users must be formally ADA Certified
    - Door-to-Door Service
    - Local/Regional Cost: $75/trip
    - Resident Fare: $4/trip
    - Volume: 25,000 Trips/Year

- RideChoice
    - Alternative Service for People with Disabilities
    - Does not meet federal ADA requirements
    - Citywide Service, also offered to Seniors (65+)
    - City Cost: $33 / Trip | Resident Fare: $3 | Volume: 48,000 trips / year

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS shared that she had heard constituent feedback regarding the difficulty of booking a Paratransit ride by phone. She asked if the city runs the Paratransit phone line or an outside company.

MR. CRAMPTON said that the city uses the region's call center, who had recently changed contractors for this phone service.

NANCY JACKSON, Senior Transportation Planning Program Coordinator, added that the contractor for the software to manage Paratransit rides had changed as well and within the past 4-6 weeks, the call center has been closer to reaching its answering goals.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS reported that there still had been issues reported on weekends for high call volumes where customers were not able to get ahold of a representative. She shared positive feedback with the Paratransit app, where rides can be tracked.

MS. JACKSON said the app is a part of the transition to the new software, which allows people to schedule a ride on the app.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS said there are some challenges with scheduled rides in the app.

MR. CRAMPTON continued the presentation.

- Ridership Trends

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked if the city was reimbursed for RideChoice rides.

MR. CRAMPTON said the region pays for RideChoice rides directly for north and west Chandler certified residents if it meets certain criteria and any rides in southwest Chandler are paid directly by the city.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked why there was an interest in converting eligible Paratransit rides to RideChoice rides.

MR. CRAMPTON explained it is more cost effective to ride RideChoice instead of Paratransit. Even though it is regionally paid, the region pays less, meaning more funding can be directed towards bus services and other transit options. The difference for the rider is that RideChoice is $3 compared to Paratransit $4 rides, and the RideChoice is a private ride, while Paratransit can be a

shared ride.

MR. CRAMPTON continued the presentation.

- Recommendation #1 (Paratransit)
    - Maintain Citywide Paratransit Service
- 1. Paratransit Service Area
- 1. Paratransit Service Area Implications
    - Ridership: 25,000 Annual Trips (6,000 Trips Outside ¾ mile).
    - User Base: 128 Passengers
    - Cost / Savings
        - City Cost for Trips Outside Mandated Area: ~$500K per year.
        - Potential Cost Savings to reduce area: $200 - $250K per Year.

MAYOR HARTKE asked if riders have the choice to utilize both Paratransit and RideChoice transit options.

MR. CRAMPTON said yes.

MAYOR HARTKE asked if there was any ridership data to share for riders who can only use Paratransit services.

MR. CRAMPTON said there was not a lot of data to share for riders who can only use Paratransit services. For riders who are eligible to ride either, some have transitioned to using RideChoice. Some riders have chosen to remain using Paratransit services only. Although RideChoice is usually the cheaper option, it is not always cheaper, especially when providing wheelchair accessible vehicles.

VICE MAYOR ENCINAS asked if the city were to only provide Paratransit services for the federally mandated area, which would reduce the current service area, would RideChoice have the capacity to take on the 6,000 rides that are taken on Paratransit outside the federally mandated area.

MR. CRAMPTON said RideShare has the capacity, as a number of different providers are used to offer the service. Sometimes there is not enough capacity for wheelchair access to RideChoice. Valley Metro would need to provide enough accessible vehicle options for use within RideChoice. It is less about the capacity and more about the type of service, as Paratransit offers door to door service for riders.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS shared that individuals with different cognitive abilities may need to rely on Paratransit due to the door to door service provided.

COUNCILMEMBER HAWKINS asked if the user base of 128 passengers are based out of residential areas or in assisted living facilities.

MR. CRAMPTON answered that there are no clusters of riders as they are dispersed across Chandler and anyone may request a ride on Paratransit service.

MR. CRAMPTON continued the presentation.

- 1. Keep Paratransit Service Area – Impact
    - Pros
        - Resident Maintain Paratransit Benefits
        - Paratransit Provides Door-to-Door Service
        - Residents Still Have the Option to Use RideChoice
    - Cons
        - City does not realize savings ($200 - $250K/ Year)
        - City does not align with most of the region

MAYOR HARTKE asked for more information on riders who would be impacted by moving to a reduced Paratransit service.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS provided more information on individuals with disabilities living across the city rather than in assisted living facilities. She asked to keep the Paratransit service area.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON asked for information about RideChoice promotion.

MR. CRAMPTON explained that city staff have done outreach for users at the Senior Center about RideChoice. The region has moved to one call center which allows call operators to provide more information about RideChoice over the phone. He noted that the move has been effective, as RideChoice has grown to about 50,000 trips per year.

VICE MAYOR ENCINAS asked to clarify how booking a ride on RideChoice or Paratransit works.

MS. JACKSON explained that if a rider calls to request a ride, both options will be offered and if a ride is requested through the app, then both options will be offered.

VICE MAYOR ENCINAS confirmed that both transit options are available through phone and through the app.

MR. CRAMPTON said yes.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS asked if Paratransit is a shared ride with multiple guests being provided service at the same time on the same vehicle.

MS. JACKSON said RideChoice is not a shared ride, however, Paratransit is a shared ride. She explained that when RideChoice was released, the city connected with high usage users to explain

the difference between the two services. When a user is ADA certified through Valley Metro, they are signed up for both options. She said more information about user patterns can be shared.

MAYOR HARTKE asked if the price per ride is set by Valley Metro.

MS. JACKSON confirmed.

MAYOR HARTKE asked if the city could encourage ridership by changing the prices.

MR. CRAMPTON said no that would not be permitted as the Paratransit ride cost is set at the federal level and cannot cost more than $4 per ride.

MAYOR HARTKE asked Council for a consensus.

VICE MAYOR ENCINAS shared that he would like to remain with the current coverage and asked to pursue an educational campaign to encourage RideChoice among eligible riders.

MAYOR HARTKE agreed.

Council consensus was to keep the current Paratransit service area.

MR. CRAMPTON continued the presentation.

- Recommendation #2 (RideChoice)
    - 2.a. Require Existing 65+ RideChoice Passengers to Pursue ADA Certification.
    - 2.b. Require New RideChoice Applicants to meet ADA Certification Requirements.
- 2a. ADA Certification for Existing RideChoice Participants
    - 200 Residents in 65+ Program (155 Active Users).
    - Participants provided age documentation; eligible participants were approved as 'non-ADA'.
    - City is responsible for all 'non-ADA' trips under Proposition 479.
    - Recommendation
        - Require all 65+ Program Participants to go through ADA Certification Process (Provide Information from Doctor, Go to Valley Metro Mobility Center for Assessment).
        - If Certified: Trips Paid by Regional Prop 479 Funds.
        - If Not Certified: Can Continue Using Program (City Pays).
- 2b. ADA Certification for New RideChoice Applicants
    - New 65+ Applicants
    - Required ADA Assessment for all New Applicants
    - If Certified:
        - Program Access Granted.
        - Trips paid by Proposition 479.

    - If Not Certified: Suggest Other Transportation Options:
        - Chandler Flex
        - Bus
        - First-Mile, Last-Mile
- 2. RideChoice 65+ Certification Requirement Impact
    - Local Cost to Provide Service = $340K and Growing
        - 11,000 Annual 65+ Trips @ $31 / Trip
        - 155 Active 65+ Passengers
        - 29High Frequency 65+ Users (100+ Trips per year)
        - Over 100 New 65+ Users per Year
    - Estimated Annual Cost Savings
        - $150,000 - $200,000 Immediately
        - Prevents future cost increases of ~$50K / Year

MAYOR HARTKE clarified the difference between the two options and asked for Council discussion.

VICE MAYOR ENCINAS asked what the process of ADA certification through Valley Metro consists of and how long does it take.

MS. JACKSON explained that the ADA certification applicant will submit an application to Valley Metro online or via mail. Once received, Valley Metro will verify disability with the applicant's medical provider. Valley Metro will then invite the applicant to an in-person assessment to verify disability. This process can take up to two and a half weeks for approval.

MR. CRAMPTON also added that applicants have to travel to Phoenix to do the in-person portion of the application and Chandler is working with Valley Metro on a closer mobile assessment option.

MAYOR HARTKE asked if the recommendation is for new applicants to pursue ADA certification through Valley Metro, but they are not currently using the service.

MR. CRAMPTON said that was correct.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO agreed with accepting existing users and allowing new users to apply for ADA certification.

MAYOR HARTKE agreed.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS noted that Valley Metro will provide other accommodations for individuals with disabilities when applying or choosing other transit options. He shared that Chandler is working on providing other locations for the mobile assessment. Valley Metro has hosted highly successful pop-up assessments in other communities. He noted that registering for

ADA certification is important to capture appropriate data and seek grant funding.

COUNCILMEMBER HAWKINS agreed with the recommendation and asked for feedback on implementing this process.

MR. CRAMPTON said that feedback will be gathered.

VICE MAYOR ENCINAS asked if current users will need to seek ADA certification through Valley Metro.

MR. CRAMPTON said staff will work on how this can be implemented in the future.

MAYOR HARTKE said this can be revisited in the future to ensure users are registered to capture data and seek funding.

Council consensus was to require existing 65+ RideChoice passengers to pursue ADA certification and require new RideChoice applicants to meet ADA certification requirements.

MR. CRAMPTON continued the presentation.

- Recommendation #3 (Bus)
    - Leverage Regional Funds to Enhance Bus Service
- 3. Bus Routes 112 and 136: Extend to South

MAYOR HARTKE noted that the proposal is to extend the end points of the bus routes, which may not see as many riders at the end points.

MR. CRAMPTON explained the middle of the route is where the buses look fuller as it picks up more riders as there are historically less riders in South Chandler. He explained that another recommendation is to eliminate some of the service on Route 114 south of Frye Road due to low ridership.

MAYOR HARTKE asked if those riders will have alternate transit options.

MR. CRAMPTON said yes there are other bus routes available in the area and Chandler Flex may also provide appropriate service.

MR. CRAMPTON continued the presentation.

- 3. Bus Route Enhancements
    - Estimated Unprogrammed Regional Bus Funds: $1.9M

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked what the process is to get the change in routes approved through Valley Metro.

MR. CRAMPTON explained that the city would work with Valley Metro on the change in routes which would involve public outreach to receive feedback, then Chandler would work with the region for approval and implementation. He noted that there are several regional meetings with other cities, as changing the bus routes within Chandler does impact other bus routes in other cities.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked if there were ridership statistics collected to support the suggested enhancements.

MR. CRAMPTON said the city has collected population and employment numbers and further noted that the city will need to justify the bus expansion further into South Chandler, as expanding the bus network will increase the federally mandated Paratransit coverage. He continued by noting that the growth and development of residents on Arizona Avenue in the past five years can be demonstrated clearly.

VICE MAYOR ENCINAS asked for clarification on extending the bus service leading to more regional funding for Paratransit and RideChoice.

MR. CRAMPTON said if the bus route was increased then there would be a cost savings to Chandler, as the region would pay for the Paratransit and RideChoice rides within ¾ mile of the bus route. He stated that the impact to the city is about $200,000 - $300,000 of savings due to the transition of eligible RideChoice and Paratransit services to regional funding.

Council consensus was to leverage regional funds to enhance bus service.

MR. CRAMPTON continued the presentation.

- Recommendation # 4 (Chandler Flex)
    - Service Area Expansion Scenarios
- 4. Chandler Flex Expansion Scenarios

MAYOR HARTKE asked what the city is currently using transit-specific funds for.

MR. CRAMPTON explained that transit-specific funds are often used to fund transit studies. The city receives lottery funds and bus stop advertising funds yearly. These revenue streams help fund operational costs. Currently, there is a surplus of these funds that can be used for one-time transit-related expenses.

VICE MAYOR ENCINAS asked who the riders would be if the service area would be expanded, and if there had been requests for service area expansion in these geographic areas.

MR. CRAMPTON said there are regular requests to extend Chandler Flex service to the south and

east. Staff suggest there would be a high number of students traveling to Arizona College Prep (ACP) High School or Basha High School, residents visiting local shopping centers, and commuters traveling to regional transit centers such as the Park and Ride.

VICE MAYOR ENCINAS spoke in favor of continuing the current Chandler Flex service area until more stable transit funding can be obtained.

MAYOR HARTKE noted that if the Scenario A service area was implemented there would be a break-even point with existing funding and the cost of service.

MR. CRAMPTON confirmed that if Scenario A was implemented, existing funding could be used for the existing budget without the need for any additional funds from the city.

MR. POMBIER asked if Chandler Gilbert Community College falls within Scenario A.

MAYOR HARTKE asked if ACP High School falls within Scenario A.

MR. CRAMPTON said yes to both and confirmed both schools are within Scenario A.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS wished to pursue Scenario A & B to include Riggs Road, as many requests for transit service have been made in that area.

MAYOR HARTKE asked for Council input.

COUNCILMEMBER HAWKINS supported Scenario A.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON backed Scenario A.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO confirmed support for Scenario A.

Council consensus was to pursue Scenario A.

MR. CRAMPTON continued the presentation.

- FY2028 Transit Budget – With Policy Changes
- Questions and Comments

Public Comment

None.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 5:38 p.m.

ATTEST: _____ _____

City Clerk Mayor

Approval Date of Minutes: October 12, 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 14th day of September 2026. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

DATED this _____ day of October, 2026.

_____

City Clerk