

MESA STRATEGIC PLAN

On February 19, 2026, the Mesa Mayor and City Council convened for a Strategic Retreat to establish shared priorities, align on direction, and map their collective visions. The retreat focused on defining the Mayor’s community initiative *Elevate Mesa*, hearing from the Vice Mayor and Councilmembers on their district vision and priorities, outlining the financial policies and principles as they impact the City budget, discussing economic development opportunities, and brainstorming placemaking as a value creator for the City.

Through collaborative discussion, the Mayor and Council affirmed the importance of long-term thinking, transparent financial stewardship, and outcome-driven policy. The retreat served as the foundation for this Strategic Plan, ensuring that Mesa’s vision, priorities, and implementation strategies are aligned and positioned to guide the City’s growth and stability.

Executive Summary

Mesa’s Strategic Plan establishes a governing framework that aligns the Mayor and Council’s strategic drivers with the City’s operational priorities into one cohesive strategy. It guides Mayor and Council decision-making to ensure that long-term vision, implementation, and financial stewardship operate together.

Within this structure, the Mesa 2050 General Plan provides long-range vision and *Elevate Mesa* establishes standards for execution and accountability. This Strategic Plan integrates both into a disciplined approach focused on structural integrity, competitive positioning, and community stability.

Mesa’s Strategy Prioritizes:

- Thriving Community
- Jobs and Prosperity
- Quality Developments
- Safe Community
- Fiscal Responsibility
- Efficiency and Effectiveness

Mesa’s approach emphasizes quality, proactive investment, and transparency, and is guided by the Mayor and Council’s four strategic drivers aligned with the Mesa 2050

General Plan and realized through the City's operational priorities. Together, these ensure that people, economy, land, and governance function as one coordinated system. These themes reflect Mesa's commitment to honoring its foundation, expanding opportunity, governing collaboratively, and ensuring long-term resilience.

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Guiding Principle

Mesa's strong communities are built through safety, opportunity, and neighborhood stability.

Purpose

Mesa's long-term success begins with its people. This driver focuses on maintaining the City's leadership in public safety, aligning education and workforce initiatives with economic opportunity, supporting balanced housing, and strengthening neighborhoods and community connectivity.

Governance Principles

Council will:

- Prioritize safety and neighborhood stability.
- Support education tied to economic needs.
- Align housing and workforce strategies.
- Serve as ambassadors for strong communities.
- Invest in livability and community design.

Strategic Outcomes and Actionable Commitments

Mesa will:

Support the purpose of the driver and the Governance Principles through strategic outcomes with actionable commitments as follows:

- **Safety Outcome** — Maintain our national leadership in public safety through innovation, performance, and public trust. (See Action Plan Items 1.1 & 1.2)

- **Opportunity Outcome 1a** — Pursue, cultivate and sustain strategic partnerships that support workforce readiness in alignment with economic opportunity. (See **Action Plan Item 1.3**)
- **Opportunity Outcome 1b** — Ensure balanced and attainable housing to support long-term stability. (See **Action Plan Item 1.4**)
- **Neighborhood Stability Outcome 1a** — Strengthen neighborhoods and livability through consistent standards. (See **Action Plan Item 1.5**)
- **Neighborhood Stability Outcome 1b** — Implement a coordinated placemaking approach that leverages community connectivity, public spaces, and enriching experiences to strengthen neighborhood vitality and long-term prosperity. (See **Action Plan Item 1.6**)

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Guiding Principle

Mesa's focus on Economic Development will generate long-term fiscal value and increased regional competitiveness.

Purpose

Economic development is a strategic tool to strengthen Mesa's fiscal health and competitiveness. The City will prioritize industries and investments that generate sustainable revenue, create high-quality jobs, and reinforce Mesa as a destination for business and tourism.

Governance Principles

Council will:

- Focus on long-term economic sustainability.
- Prioritize high-value industries.
- Align economic policy with infrastructure capacity.
- Ensure consistent evaluation standards.
- Strengthen public-private partnerships.

Strategic Outcomes and Actionable Commitments

Mesa will:

Support the purpose of the driver and the Governance Principles through strategic outcomes with actionable commitments as follows:

- **Long-Term Fiscal Value and Regional Competitiveness Outcome** — Drive an integrated business ecosystem that aligns people, capital, infrastructure, and governance to drive business growth, attract investment, and maximize long-term

fiscal value—ensuring a resilient, sustainable, and opportunity-rich community.
(See Action Plan Items 2.1 - 2.3)

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Guiding Principle

Mesa's approach to land & infrastructure will support strong communities and long-term economic productivity through intentional, place-based, resilient land use and infrastructure development.

Purpose

Placemaking, redevelopment, and proactive planning and resource management are strategic tools to advance Mesa's intentional, place-based approach to land and infrastructure. The City will support optimized land use and community redevelopment investments and will coordinate infrastructure planning and resource stewardship to strengthen community character; create connected, economically productive places; and ensure resilient, sustainable development over time.

Governance Principles

Council will:

- Prioritize high-value infrastructure investments.
- Align land use with fiscal sustainability.
- Coordinate across planning, transportation, and utilities.
- Support placemaking and redevelopment.
- Ensure growth reflects long-term capacity.

Strategic Outcomes and Actionable Commitments

Mesa will:

Support the purpose of the driver and the Governance Principles through strategic outcomes with actionable commitments as follows:

- **Intentional, Place-Based, and Long-Term Economic Productivity Outcome**
— Advance a coordinated, place-based pattern of growth and redevelopment that is intentional and responsive to the unique context of each area—creating connected, high-quality places that strengthen community connection and identity while supporting sustained economic productivity and long-term value. **(See Action Plan Items 3.1 & 3.2)**
- **Resilient Infrastructure Outcome** — Maintain a high-performing infrastructure system that is aligned with growth, sustainably managed, and capable of supporting long-term reliability, adaptability, and resilience. **(See Action Plan Items 3.3 – 3.5)**

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Guiding Principle

Mesa's approach to governance will be intentional, transparent, and disciplined—clearly communicating fiscal accountability, priorities, performance, and impacts to build trust, protect taxpayers, and ensure long-term value.

Purpose

Governance and resource management are strategic tools to advance Mesa's intentional, transparent, and disciplined approach to proactive strategic planning and data-informed decision-making. The City will align financial planning, capital investment, and budgeting practices to maintain structural balance and ensure responsible stewardship of public resources. Through performance management and cross-department coordination, Mesa will connect priorities to outcomes, optimize resources, and deliver measurable results—ensuring accountability, long-term capacity, and public trust.

Governance Principles

Council will:

- Maintain strong fiscal policies.
- Evaluate decisions through a long-term lens.
- Ensure transparency across all funds.
- Align policy, budget, and outcomes.

Strategic Outcomes and Actionable Commitments

Mesa will:

Support the purpose of the driver and the Governance Principles through strategic outcomes with actionable commitments as follows:

- **Transparent & Disciplined Governance Outcome** — Advance a proactive, data-informed approach to governance that is transparent, disciplined, and strategically aligned—ensuring financial stability and accountable decision-making to sustain long-term public trust and value. (See Action Plan Items 4.1 & 4.2)
- **Clear Communication of Priorities, Performance & Impacts Outcome** — Advance clear, consistent communication of priorities, performance, and community impacts—ensuring transparency, strategic alignment, and informed decision-making that strengthens accountability, fosters public trust, and optimizes resources. (See Action Plan Item 4.3)

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COUNCIL STRATEGIC DRIVERS



PEOPLE

Mesa's strong communities are built through safety, opportunity, and neighborhood stability.



ECONOMY

Mesa's focus on Economic Development will generate long-term fiscal value and increased regional competitiveness.



LAND & INFRASTRUCTURE

Mesa's approach to land & infrastructure will support strong communities and long-term economic productivity through intentional, place-based, resilient land use and infrastructure development.



INTENTIONAL GOVERNANCE & TRANSPARENCY

Mesa's approach to governance will be intentional, transparent, and disciplined—clearly communicating fiscal accountability, priorities, performance, and impacts to build trust, protect taxpayers, and ensure long-term value.

MAJOR CITY STRATEGIC PLANS

TBD

TBD

TBD

TBD

TBD

TBD

CITY OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES



Thriving Community



Jobs & Prosperity



Quality Developments



Safe Community



Fiscal Responsibility



Effectiveness & Efficiency



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Implementation & Accountability

Governance Rhythm

- Biannual strategic retreat
- Mid-year recalibration
- Quarterly fiscal and economic reports

Strategic Review

Reviewed annually:

- Timeline to structural balance
- Bond pacing and affordability
- Utility clarity and integration
- Redevelopment effectiveness
- Economic competitiveness
- Neighborhood outcomes

Appendix A: Additional Notes & Context

Placemaking

Place creates value. Value attracts investment.

Priority Geographic Areas

- Downtown (Arts & Innovation District)
- Legacy Park / Arizona LIVE
- Fiesta Mall
- Mesa Riverview
- Southeast Mesa
- Rio Corridor
- Union Area
- Dana Park & Buckhorn

Core Placemaking Elements

- Distinct identity and design
- Arts and cultural integration
- Retail, dining, and entertainment
- Walkability and accessibility
- Green and recreational spaces
- Multigenerational environments

Infrastructure as Opportunity

- Fiber and digital infrastructure
- Transportation aligned with economic growth

- Early planning to prevent future constraints
 - Strategic capital investment
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Cross-Cutting Strategic Themes

These principles guide decision-making across all anchors.

1. Emphasis on Quality

Growth must enhance both revenue and community character.

2. Destination of Choice

Mesa must compete regionally for residents, visitors, and employers.

3. Long-Term Thinking

- 10+ year forecasting
- Future-proof economic drivers

4. Protect Taxpayers

- Transparent reserves
- Responsible utilities and bonding
- Disciplined capital planning

5. Outcome-Focused Organization

Align policy, budget, and placemaking with measurable results.

6. No Silos

Promote collaboration across departments and Council.

Mayor & Council Priorities

Mayor Freeman

Priorities:

- Quality Growth & Development
- Housing Balance
- Water & Infrastructure Resilience
- Safe & Innovative Communities
- Education & Workforce
- Neighborhoods: Standards & Reinvestment
- Transparent Government

District 1 – Councilmember Adams

Priority 1: Keep Mesa Safe and Strengthen Our Neighborhoods

- Smart Growth
- Strategic Economy
- Innovative Housing

Priority 2: Protect Our Land Through Responsible Growth and Stewardship

Priority 3: Promote Economic Growth That Supports Our Community

District 2 – Councilmember Taylor

Priority 1: Redevelopment Opportunities

District 3 – Councilmember Heredia

Priority 1: Redevelopment

Priority 2: Infrastructure

Priority 3: Quality of Life

District 4 – Councilmember Duff

Priority 1: Arts and Innovation District

Priority 2: Catalyze Vertical Growth and Job Creation Along the Arts and Innovation Corridor

Priority 3: Build a Walkable, Multimodal Downtown Core

District 5 – Councilmember Goforth

Priority 1: Public Safety

Priority 2: Responsive and Market Differentiated Development

Priority 3: Executive Business Aviation Airport at Falcon Field

District 6 – Vice Mayor Somers

Priority 1: The Economy – Attract sectors that bring more high-value jobs per acre.

Priority 2: The Land – Improve synergy of development.

Priority 3: The People – Reinforce focus on Quality Retail Initiatives with measures.