



## COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLANNING MINUTES

September 18, 2025

The City Council of the City of Mesa met in a Strategic Planning Session at The Northeast Public Safety Facility, Community Room, 1333 North Power Road, on September 18, 2025, at 7:37 a.m.

| COUNCIL PRESENT   | COUNCIL ABSENT | OFFICERS PRESENT                           |
|---|----------------|--|
| Mark Freeman<br>Scott Somers<br>Rich Adams<br>Jennifer Duff<br>Alicia Goforth<br>Francisco Heredia<br>Julie Spilsbury | None           | Scott Butler<br>Holly Moseley<br>Jim Smith |

Mayor Freeman conducted a roll call.

1. Mayor's welcome.

Mayor Freeman welcomed the Council and staff, noting that staff will review the City's 2025 Strategic Priorities and accomplishments.

2. Hear a presentation, discuss, and provide direction on the Follow-Up City Council Strategic Planning Session Purpose and Agenda:

2-a. Hear a presentation, discuss, and provide direction on the purpose of the Follow-Up City Council Strategic Planning Session and an overview of the day's agenda.

City Manager Scott Butler displayed a PowerPoint presentation. (**See Attachment 1**)

Mr. Butler explained that this presentation reflects Council's request for more frequent updates on the Strategic Planning; specifically, the status of related projects and accomplishments. He emphasized that, despite recent changes, the City remains rooted in its foundational ethics, and principles, with renewed energy. He added that staff have embraced the Mayor's Elevate Mesa initiative, accomplished a great deal, and is looking forward to making improvements. He highlighted several accolades the City of Mesa has received, including being ranked ninth as the "Best Big City to Live In" out of 859 cities nationwide. (See Pages 2 and 3 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Butler discussed recent leadership changes and appointments, noting that the City benefits from decades of combined experience and new talent. He presented an organizational chart designed to create synergy under shared leadership, improving communication and strategic alignment with Council's strategic priorities. He emphasized Mesa's commitment to hiring and retaining top talent, with a focus on delivering results. (See Pages 4 through 9 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Butler provided an update on the status of projects for the first 100 days since he became the City Manager. He discussed the challenges of aging facilities that need upgrading, and the opportunities to capitalize on economic development, create partnerships, and enhance neighborhoods. He outlined the improvements to internal processes and communication, such as revamping the summer schedule for Council to align with school breaks and conferences. He reviewed upcoming areas for improvement and commented that the goal is to create a sense of urgency due to the number of projects to be completed. (See Pages 10 through 17 of Attachment 1)

Mayor Freeman thanked staff for the presentation.

3-a. Hear a presentation, discuss, and receive an update on the General Governmental Funds outlook and forecast.

Management and Budget Director Brian Ritschel displayed a PowerPoint presentation. (**See Attachment 2**)

Mr. Ritschel stated that the City's General Governmental Fund is the major fund that supports the City's operations and includes the Quality-of-Life Sales Tax. He presented charts illustrating the monthly consumer activity and reviewed the revenues for the City's sales tax, retail, and contractor sectors. He commented that the City sales tax has remained steady over the last few years, with increases in some areas and slight reductions in others. He noted retail sales have shown positive growth, particularly the spikes in May and June, which are linked to new and used car sales. He reported contract revenue is unpredictable as it depends on timing of permits and commencement of construction; however, the City is doing well due to several active and upcoming projects. He provided a summary of the tax revenue that came in flat due to increasing expenditures and the loss of the residential rental revenues. He emphasized that the City's actual revenue over budget came in at 5.1% higher, down significantly from 16% in Fiscal Year (FY) 23/24, indicating a return to more typical, post-pandemic trends. (See Pages 2 through 5 of Attachment 2)

In response to a question from Councilmember Duff, Mr. Ritschel replied that if the revenue remained the same, and the residential rental revenue was removed, the results would be negative growth compared to previous years. He indicated a \$30 million loss is a significant ongoing impact to the General Governmental Fund.

Mr. Butler added that strong retail activity has helped offset losses, but expenditures outpaced revenues. He emphasized the City will continue to implement 2% budget cuts and other measures to stabilize finances until revenue growth recovers.

Responding to a question from Councilmember Heredia, Mr. Ritschel answered that the most significant increases in retail sales are from auto sales recently and online sales year after year.

Mr. Ritschel reported that Mesa's unemployment rate has seen a slight increase, following a seasonal pattern where rates dip in summer and rise in winter. He reviewed a chart of statewide data on job announcements and losses, explaining that when the moving average of job losses surpasses job announcements, it can indicate a recession, which staff monitors. (See Pages 6 and 7 of Attachment 2)

In response to a question from Vice Mayor Somers, Mr. Ritschel stated that the unemployment rate data is sourced from the State of Arizona and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and reflects company announcements of adding or cutting jobs, not the number of positions affected.

Mr. Ritschel provided an overview of the forecast for the General Governmental Funds, which shows revenue trends for City sales tax and state-shared revenues. He advised that both are expected to dip slightly in FY 25/26, mainly due to residential rental impacts, before gradually recovering. He summarized the General Governmental Funds sources and uses, noting that expenditures continue to outpace revenues, gradually reducing the fund balance. He emphasized by the end of the forecast, the City remains within their financial policy of 8 to 10%. He noted that a spike in FY 25/26 reflects carryover expenses from FY 24/25 and one-time costs. (See Pages 8 and 9 of Attachment 2)

In response to multiple questions from Councilmember Duff, Mr. Ritschel confirmed that the total sources and uses account for utility fund contributions to the General Governmental Fund. He added that adjustments are made to the forecast to reflect added expenses for upcoming projects, ongoing operational and maintenance expenses, and future projects.

Mr. Butler stressed that maintaining fiscal discipline, managing expenditures carefully, and using reserves strategically while continuing to find efficiencies and ensure sustainable program funding is important to the City of Mesa (COM).

Mayor Freeman thanked staff for the presentation.

3-b. Hear a presentation, discuss, and receive an update on improvements for the Development Services Department, including department coordination, doing business in Mesa, small business support, and land use planning.

Development Services Director Nana Appiah displayed a PowerPoint presentation. (See Attachment 3)

Mr. Appiah highlighted the primary functions of the Development Services Department, which is to guide and coordinate new development to improve the City's urban form and image, ensuring high-quality growth consistent with City Council policies. He said over the past 100 days, his team has focused on evaluating departmental structure and processes, identifying inefficiencies, and launching a project to map all policies and procedures to improve coordination among departments. He identified the areas of focus for the Development Services Department where staff has worked closely with the development community and City Council on collecting feedback and categorizing issues related to policy and process improvements. He mentioned the challenges staff has experienced and their new proactive approach to growth. (See Pages 2 and 3 of Attachment 3)

In response to multiple questions posed by Vice Mayor Somers, Mr. Appiah clarified that the City had strategic plans and he discussed the challenges with long-term planning and an approach to be proactive in adapting to changing economic conditions.

Mr. Appiah outlined policy improvements based on developer feedback and staff's evaluation for areas of improvement such as opportunities to expand administrative approvals. (See Page 4 of Attachment 3)

Discussion ensued regarding expanding administrative approvals, long-term planning policies, process streamlining, and maintaining design standards.

Mr. Appiah continued discussing the policy improvements, stating that several processes and personnel changes have been made across departments involved in the development review process. (See Pages 4 and 5 of Attachment 3)

Mr. Appiah identified the changes implemented by the department to improve the Development Review Process, including an enhancement to the Digital Innovation Mesa Electronic Services (DIMES) system, which currently automatically notifies applicants when their submissions are received and provides review dates. He stated that the focus is on streamlining processes to improve workflow. (See Pages 6 and 7 of Attachment 3)

Responding to a question from Councilmember Duff, Mr. Appiah replied that Public Safety is part of the review process. He explained that the role of Ombudsman Services is to find solutions and minimize the referral process.

Mr. Appiah highlighted the major administrative changes that include empowering administrative staff to minimize matters routed to the director, and focusing on long-range planning, current planning, development, and review. (See Pages 9 through 11 of Attachment 3)

Mr. Appiah shared the emphasis on placemaking strategies used to improve Mesa's image at entryways in older areas that need attention. He discussed the potential in utilizing canals in the City as recreational amenities for public use by residents and visitors. (See Pages 12 and 13 of Attachment 3)

Mr. Appiah provided a status update on the improvement initiatives that are ongoing and completed. (See Page 15 of Attachment 3)

Mr. Appiah presented a chart comparing the process timelines across various cities in Arizona. He reported that the COM meets their review deadlines 96% of the time and are adding several measures with fees to encourage responsiveness and accountability. He noted the challenges of developers not responding to comments. (See Page 17 of Attachment 3)

In response to a question from Councilmember Heredia, Mr. Appiah mentioned that the COM has one of the lowest fee structures in the Metro area, and the intent of fees is to cover the cost of services.

Responding to multiple questions from Councilmember Goforth, Mr. Appiah explained the 14-day rezoning deadline for staff to perform a detailed digital review, and discussed the challenges.

Councilmembers Duff and Spilsbury suggested adding alternate members to the Planning & Zoning (P&Z) Board to increase participation and broaden perspectives.

Councilmember Adams expressed disappointment with the recent lack of more than four votes on project approvals by the P&Z Board and stated a desire for greater Boardmember attendance at meetings.

(Mayor Freeman declared a recess at 9:20 a.m. The Council Strategic Planning Session resumed at 9:32 a.m.)

In response to a request from Councilmember Spilsbury, Mr. Appiah revisited the process issues raised by the developer community that initiated improvements. He identified the structures that

have been implemented for process improvement to provide clarity to the development community and create a sense of urgency. (See Page 5 of Attachment 3)

Mr. Butler shared that he has observed positive results from having an Ombudsman and noted that it is beneficial for staff to guide developers through each step of the process to navigate the system.

Responding to a question posed by Councilmember Goforth, Mr. Appiah commented that his staff is currently in the process of hiring an urban designer, which has been a challenge finding the right person.

Discussion ensued regarding the role and responsibility of the transportation planner and urban planner, roads being cohesive with land use, and connecting pathways.

Mr. Appiah explained the functions of an urban designer and commented that currently the City utilizes several consultants. (See Page 6 of Attachment 3)

Responding to a question from Vice Mayor Somers, Mr. Appiah explained that the challenges with junior staff is more of a cultural issue and the focus of the Development Services Department is to empower their staff to make decisions.

Mr. Appiah emphasized the significance of ongoing and upcoming zoning text amendments as part of the City's long-range planning efforts, as well as the importance of being proactive. He noted that Council continues to provide direction on priorities. (See Page 8 of Attachment 3)

Mr. Appiah discussed the proposed actions to policy changes, including aligning the expiration dates of the building and site plan without going to Council, with administrative authority to approve the plans or re-approve expired site plans. He stated that staff is beginning public outreach efforts and announced a new policy introducing a 20% review fee for fourth and fifth plan reviews. He explained that this fee applies when applicants fail to respond to prior review comments and repeatedly resubmit unchanged plans. He said that the intent is to improve efficiency, encourage accountability, and align with practices in cities like Scottsdale and Phoenix, where similar cost-of-service fees are in place. (See Page 11 of Attachment 3)

Discussion ensued regarding review fees, accountability, tracking software for status of review and standards for recommendations.

Mr. Appiah commented that the new process improvements include clear submittal dates and review timelines which will help prevent misunderstandings and reduce unnecessary conflicts. (See Page 12 of Attachment 3)

Mr. Appiah reviewed plans and programs available to redevelopment in the COM and mentioned that staff will continue to work with the Downtown Transformation Team for redevelopment opportunities. He emphasized that 80% to 90% of the city is developed, and there will be a strong focus on redevelopment. (See Page 14 of Attachment 3)

Mr. Appiah provided a summary of the improvement initiatives and stated that the staff ensures that landscaping matches the project. (See Page 15 of Attachment 3)

Mayor Freeman thanked staff for the presentation.

3-c. Hear a presentation, discuss, and receive an update on Economic Development in Mesa, including attracting high-wage/high-value jobs and retail.

Economic Development Director Jaye O'Donnell displayed a PowerPoint presentation. (**See Attachment 4**)

Ms. O'Donnell provided an overview of Mesa's Economic Development for FY 25 and the outlook for FY 26. She reported that last year the City was successful in attracting businesses and identified several of the industries that shared in the successes, as well as working on expanding existing businesses. She stated that staff continues to innovate and offer programs that provide value to Mesa's small businesses and entrepreneurs. She highlighted the successes of the resources and specialty spaces for small businesses and entrepreneurship. (See Pages 2 through 4 of Attachment 4)

Ms. O'Donnell reviewed the results of the proactive media and marketing strategies, which delivered measurable impacts and amplified the Mesa story to audiences nationally, positioning Mesa's community as a dynamic hub of innovation, growth, and opportunity. (See Page 5 of Attachment 4)

Ms. O'Donnell provided an update to the retail strategy, stating that last year the City generated more than 30 quality prospects that staff are actively working with, and assisted in landing six retailers and several new retail focused developments, including Medina Station, Restaurant Row, Tempo by Hilton in Gallery Park that offers a contemporary sit-down restaurant, and Revel Surf at Canyon Beach that offers themed restaurants, retail and entertainment. She recognized the need to better align the retail offerings in Mesa with the rising income levels, adding the difference in income levels and educational attainment with neighboring communities creates a challenge. She referenced several retail trade areas that are adjacent to vacant land and tribal communities and suggested increased density might be a solution to add attractiveness to those areas. (See Page 6 of Attachment 4)

Ms. O'Donnell discussed potential solutions to promote Mesa as a retail location locally and nationally, beginning with telling a better story of Mesa regionally. She identified campaigns for Business to Consumer (B2C) and Business to Business (B2B) for promoting retail options and change the perception to recruit elevated brands. She highlighted growth opportunities and provided examples of campaign platforms, noting that Mesa will continue its contract with the Retail Coach. She shared the staffing adjustments that have occurred will help going forward. (See Pages 7 through 12 of Attachment 4)

In response to a question from Councilmember Duff related to the various branding portrayed from different departments in the City, Communications Director Ana Pereira replied that the goal is to identify Mesa as one unified brand.

Responding to multiple questions posed by Councilmember Duff, Ms. O'Donnell advised that the Economic Development Office is collaborating with other departments to identify opportunities and encourage additional developments for mixed-use, multi-family, and for-sale products. She explained the collaborations with Visit Mesa to elevate and promote Mesa regionally in the Phoenix Metro area, as well as nationally.

Ms. O'Donnell shared the vision for the future of Mesa as the premier location for companies and investors who are looking for a dynamic, innovative city to enhance our competitiveness, which will improve and diversify the City's economy, advancing businesses and growing quality jobs. (See Pages 13 and 14 of Attachment 4)

Ms. O'Donnell discussed the City's premier service of business attraction and indicated that Mesa has a robust retention and expansion program in place. She noted that staff will be visiting 175 existing Mesa businesses to collaborate with their outlook for the future and assist in improving their competitiveness and will advise the Council on any policy-level needs. (See Page 15 of Attachment 4)

Ms. O'Donnell summarized the industries of opportunity in the COM, pointing out that retail encompasses restaurants, entertainment, hospitality (hotels), and signature attractions. She provided an overview of the Office of Economic Development's goals and opportunities to address growing Mesa's economy nationally and globally and discussed the challenges. (See Pages 16 through 18 of Attachment 4)

In response to a question posed by Councilmember Goforth related to any ongoing communications with approved developments, Ms. O'Donnell explained that staff remains engaged with the developer throughout the process, including sharing leads for retail development.

Ms. O'Donnell identified the action items to attract businesses in FY 26 to align with emerging opportunities and strengthening the competitive edge. (See page 19 of Attachment 4)

(At 10:52 a.m., Mayor Freeman excused Councilmember Adams from the remainder of the meeting.)

Ms. O'Donnell discussed the strategies and resources available to assist small businesses in their growth. (See Page 20 of Attachment 4)

Responding to multiple questions from Councilmember Duff, Ms. O'Donnell answered that any Mesa Business license holder can apply for a technical assistance program and the City is supportive of small businesses and shares available resources.

Ms. O'Donnell emphasized the importance of revitalizing underutilized areas to unlock new potential. She noted that the Redevelopment Task Force will return to Council in the fall with recommendations, including a redevelopment toolkit and various program options. (See Page 21 of Attachment 4)

Ms. O'Donnell advised that the Retail Awareness Campaigns will continue through FY 26 to support B2B efforts. She highlighted the marketing and business development approach and stated that the Office of Economic Development has invested in a refreshed brand and the launch of a new website which will be released in the next few weeks to reach new audiences and amplify the impact of Mesa's programs. (See Pages 22 and 23 of Attachment 4)

Ms. O'Donnell discussed workforce development efforts aimed at supporting business expansion and stated that a refreshed COM Workforce Redevelopment Strategic Plan will be presented to Council in the fall. (See Page 24 of Attachment 4)

Ms. O'Donnell informed the Council that the Office of Economic Development is accredited by the International Economic Development Council, a distinction renewed every three years through an independent peer review of the City's operations and practices. She noted that the accreditation signals to employers and partners that the City maintains a high-performing, professional organization. (See Page 25 of Attachment 4)

Ms. O'Donnell stated that staff is seeking a consultant to develop a comprehensive strategic plan for fiscal years 2027-2029 for regional, national, and global market engagement. She mentioned the goal is to drive investments in Mesa's specific districts, growing jobs, and supporting entrepreneurs and business owners. She reviewed the timeline for contract execution by the end of the calendar year in order to have a plan in place for FY 2026. She noted that Councilmembers, City leadership, and staff will be consulted as part of this strategic planning process along with private sector partners. (See Page 26 of Attachment 4)

In response to a question from Councilmember Heredia, Ms. O'Donnell explained that ASU provides a broad range of programs and opportunities the City can leverage and outlined strategies used to strengthen that collaboration.

Mayor Freeman thanked staff for the presentation.

3-d. Hear a presentation, discuss, and receive an update on citywide branding efforts.

Mr. Butler stated that due to time constraints, this item would be continued to a future date.

3-e. Hear a presentation, discuss, and receive an update on Artificial Intelligence in Mesa.

Assistant to the City Manager Ian Linssen introduced Chief Information Officer Scott Conn and displayed a PowerPoint presentation. (**See Attachment 5**)

Mr. Linssen provided an update on Mesa's utilization of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and encouraged feedback from the Council. He noted the rapid evolution of AI tools and shared a video of an AI presentation. He explained that AI has been in use since the 1950s and described how its capabilities have steadily advanced over time. (See Pages 2 through 4 of Attachment 5)

Mr. Linssen explained that as Mesa expands its use of AI, the City is guided by a human-centered approach focused on enhancing, not replacing, employees. He emphasized the importance of using AI safely, that employees remain fully responsible for the accuracy of any AI-assisted work, and that the City's Management Policy includes expectations of AI use.

Mr. Conn discussed the current AI projects, future tools, and examples of successful improvements and efficiencies to processes and systems. He reviewed the benefits of utilizing Mesa's AI assistant, Mesan, for citizen and business use, which has been successful and is being developed for use in other departments. He explained that the phone menus can be adapted according to who is visiting the COM. He provided an overview of the enhancements to the operations and safety of smart systems and safer processes. (See Pages 6 through 8 of Attachment 5)

In response to a question from Councilmember Heredia, Mr. Conn replied that there are multiple AI applications that can perform language translation that is voice-based or text based. He commented that several applications have been tested, and Google has a strong translation option. He mentioned that staff is researching the implementation of AI language translation at Council meetings.

Mr. Conn outlined the City's strategies for AI growth, noting that AI has the potential to transform how business is conducted in Mesa, similar to smartphones. He emphasized focusing on scalable, purpose-driven applications that add value, explaining that the City continually pilots new tools but invests only in those that make sense and improve the residents' experience. He

noted that use-cases from various departments and the AI sandbox will help identify meaningful opportunities. (See Page 9 of Attachment 5)

Mr. Conn discussed future AI possibilities and their potential impact across the City. (See Page 10 of Attachment 5)

In response to multiple questions from Councilmember Duff, Mr. Conn replied that the City is researching AI training courses specific to ChatGPT for effective ways for day-to-day activities. He compared Microsoft's Co-pilot application to ChatGPT and stated that ChatGPT is more advanced.

Mayor Freeman thanked staff for the presentation.

4. Brief discussion on City Council Strategic Priorities.

Mayor Freeman suggested holding quarterly meetings at different locations across the city to promote transparency. He emphasized that Mesa is a full-service city offering a wide range of services, making it essential for Council to stay informed and engaged with staff, and give policy directions to continue enhancing the community.

Mr. Butler explained that this update is the first in a series of updates. He noted that additional departmental updates will be provided in the future as part of an effort to streamline communication. He emphasized that staff is open to adjusting the methods and frequency of updates to ensure that Council receives the information needed and will continue refining the communication approach moving forward.

5. Adjournment

Without objection, the City Council Strategic Planning Session adjourned at 11:38 a.m.

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MARK FREEMAN, MAYOR

ATTEST:

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HOLLY MOSELEY, CITY CLERK

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Strategic Planning Session of the City Council of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of September 2025. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

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HOLLY MOSELEY, CITY CLERK

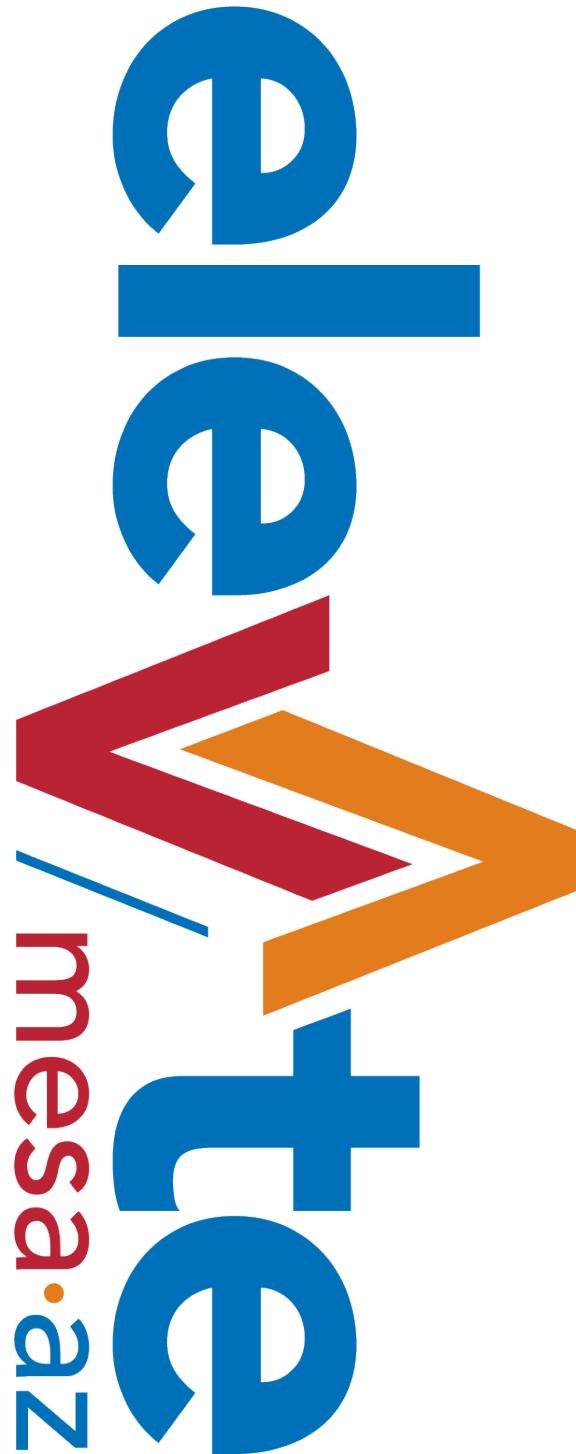
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(Attachments – 5)



# City Manager's Update



New Vibe

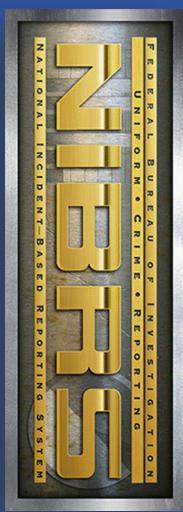


Same Organization

mesa.az



**#1 Best-Run City in Arizona**  
**#11 Best-Run City in the U.S.**  
(WalletHub, 2025)



**#2 Safest Large City in the U.S.**  
(Most recent data from the National Incident-Based Reporting System or NIBRS)

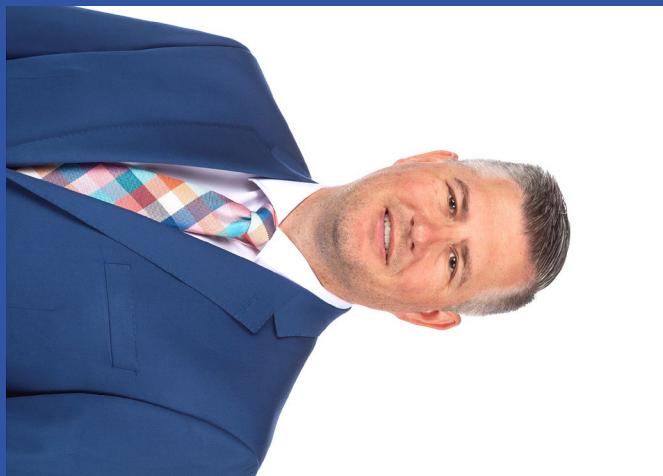


**#4 for Economic Growth**  
**Among Large U.S. Cities**  
(CoworkingCafe, 2025)



**#9 Best Big City to Live In**  
(U.S. News & World Report, 2025)

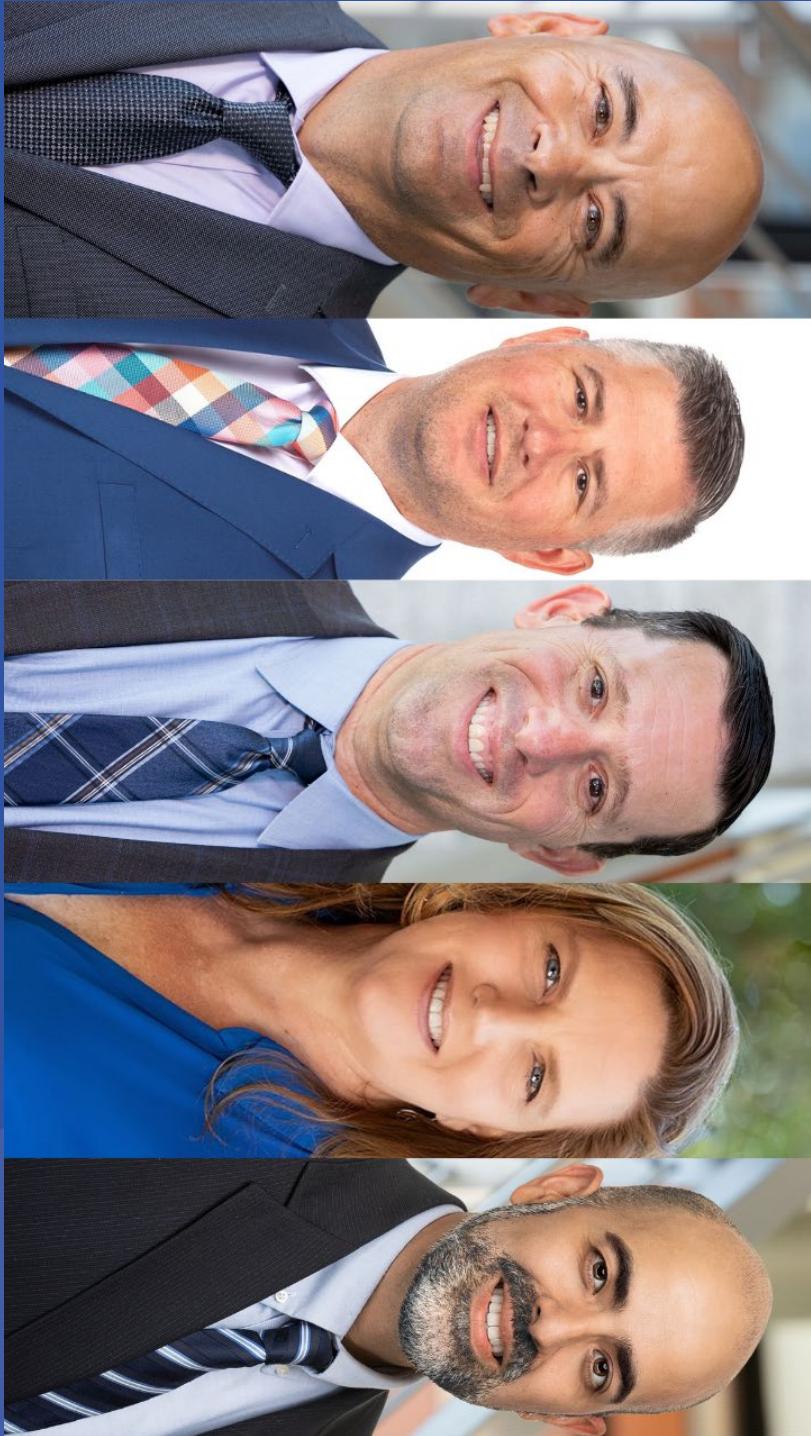
# Leadership Changes



Brent Stoddard



Ken Cost



# Leadership Changes

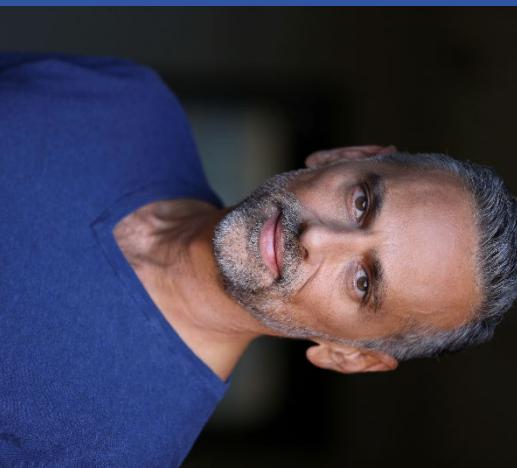
# Leadership Changes



Mesa Police Chief  
Dan Butler



Asst. to the City Manager  
Amanda Freeman

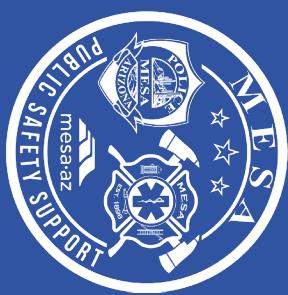


Arts and Culture Director  
Luis Ruiz



Chief Engineer  
Lance Webb

# Leadership Changes



Mesa Public Safety Support Director  
Kim Meza

Mesa Public Safety Support Dep. Director  
Forrest Smith





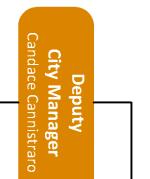
## Citizens of Mesa

Updated August 2025

### Mayor and City Council



Advisory Boards and Committees



### Thriving Community

### Jobs and Prosperity

### Quality Developments

### Safe Community

### Fiscal Responsibility

Parks, Recreation and  
Community Facilities

Andrea Moore

Arts and Culture

WACAN

Economic Development

Jaye O'Connell

Office of Urban Transformation

Jeff McVay

Falcon Field Airport

Connie Nystrom

Department of Innovation and Technology

Scott Corn

Transit

Jodi Sorrell

Facilities Management

Tony Weile

Library Services

Ruth Glase

Community Services

Polly Bennett

Water Resources

Chris Hassert

Energy Resources

Scott Bouche

Environmental and Sustainability

Equal Employment Opportunity Office (EEOO)

Planning (EP)

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)

Public Defender Program

Advisory Boards and Committees

Human Resources

Public Information and

Government Relations and

Minimada DeWitt

Human Resources

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Human Resources</

# Building a High-Performing Workforce

Hire the Best



Retain Talent



Demand Results



# First 100 Days

ASU Downtown – Post Office & Council Chambers

Culdesac

Legacy Park



# First 100 Days

51-55 E Main Street Site

City Facilities Master Plan

ASU Polytechnic Innovation Zone



# First 100 Days

## Center Street Project

## Natural Gas Pipeline Partnership

Heightened Code Enforcement Activity Against “Worst of the Worst” Neighborhood Blight



# First 100 Days

## VisitMesa Relationship

## Public Participation Enhancements for Budget and Utility Rates

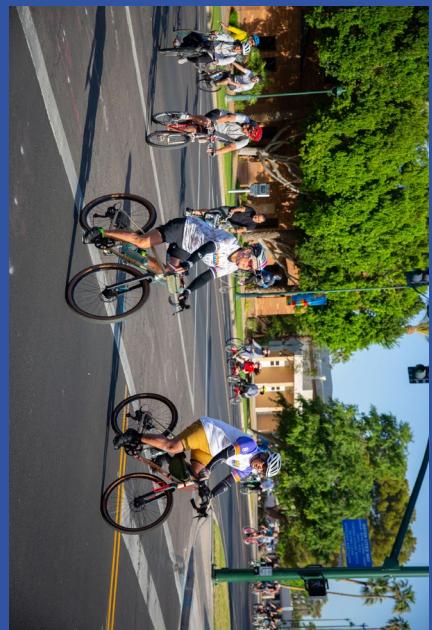
## Convention Center & Mesa Amphitheater Strategic Visioning



# First 100 Days

## Falcon Field Airport Long-Term Visioning

### Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety Enhancements



# First 100 Days

## Internal Process Improvements:

- Summer Schedule Revamp
- Committee Action added to Agendas
- Quarterly Bond Project Updates

# More to Come...

## Arts & Innovation District

## Fiesta & Riverview

### Strategic Redevelopment Sites

- Buckhorn Baths
- Urban Agriculture
- Transit-Oriented Development Opportunities at Stapley/Main, Alma School/Main, Mesa Dr/Main

# City Manager Conference Room

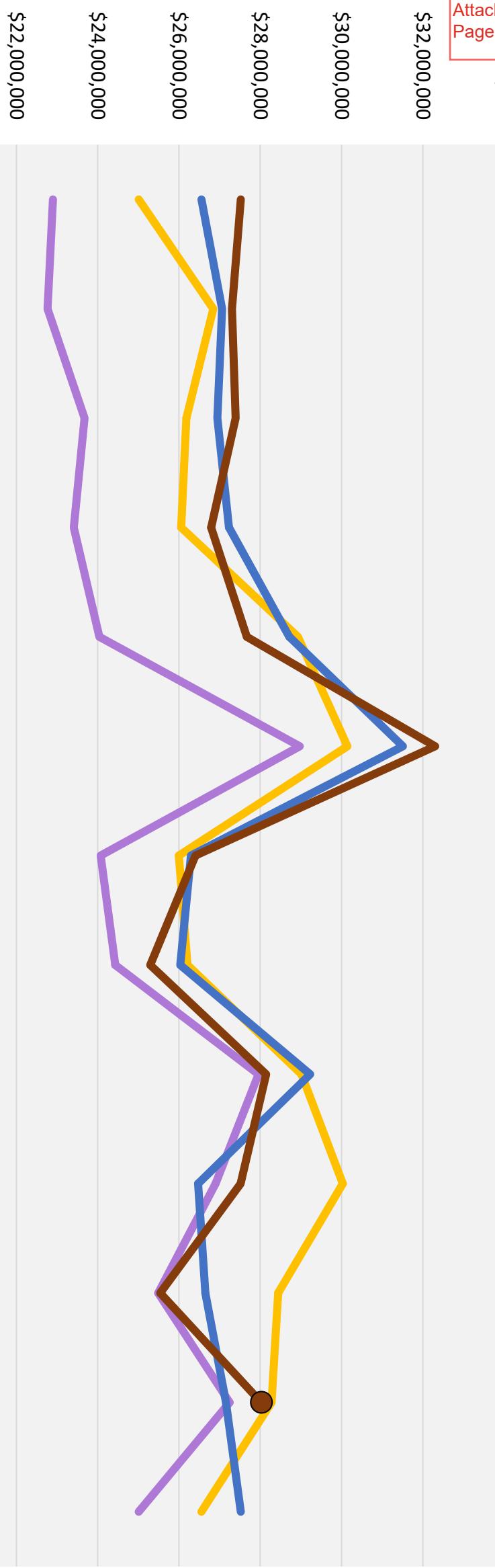


# Economic Update

Office of Management and Budget Director – Brian Ritschel

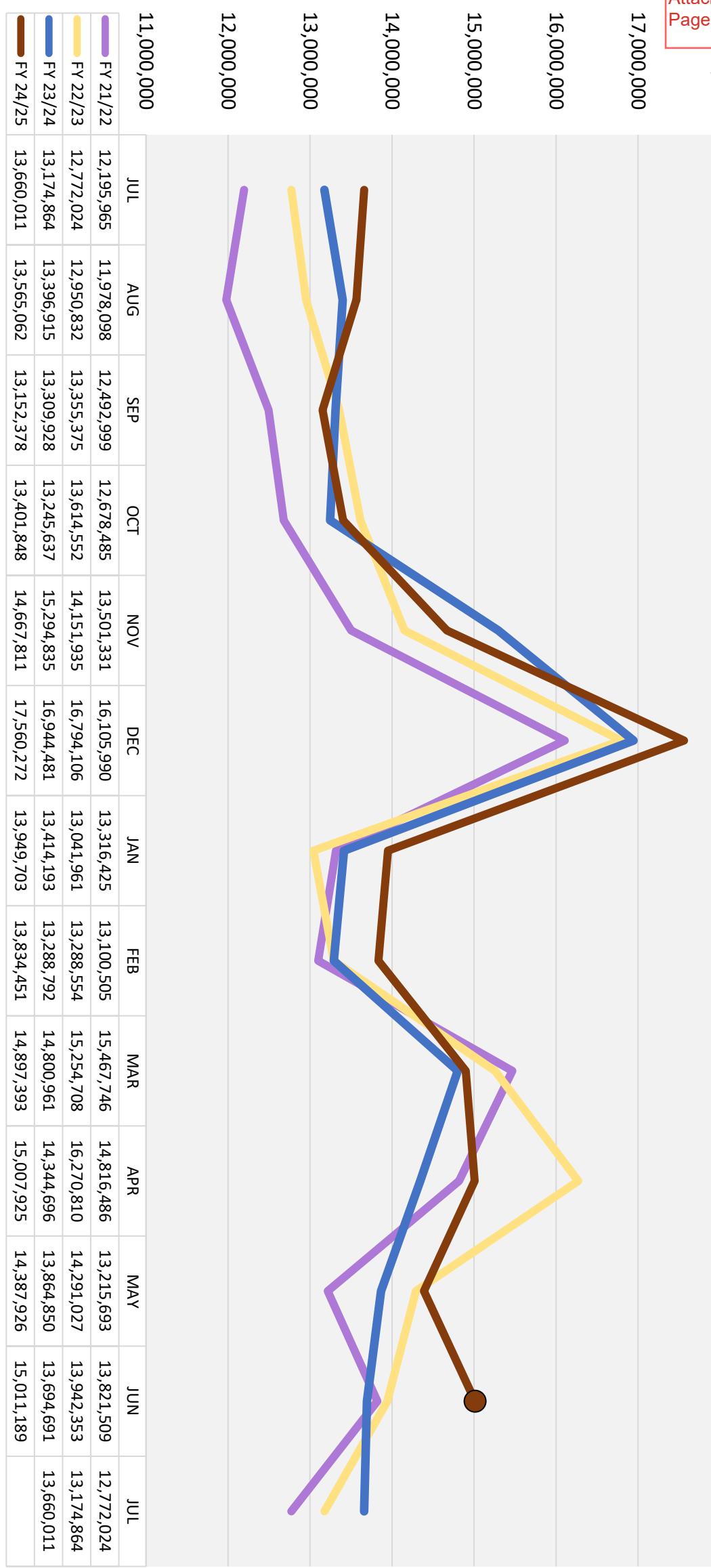
## Year Over Year - Consumer Activity by Month (source: Tax Revenue Summary Report)

### City Sales Tax



## Retail Category

### City Sales Tax - Year over Year - Consumer Activity by Month



## Contracting Category

### City Sales Tax - Year over Year - Consumer Activity by Month





## PRIVILEGE AND USE TAX BY CATEGORY (GENERAL FUND, STREET MAINTENANCE FUND, QUALITY OF LIFE FUND, & PUBLIC SAFETY FUND - 2%)

### TAX REVENUE SUMMARY

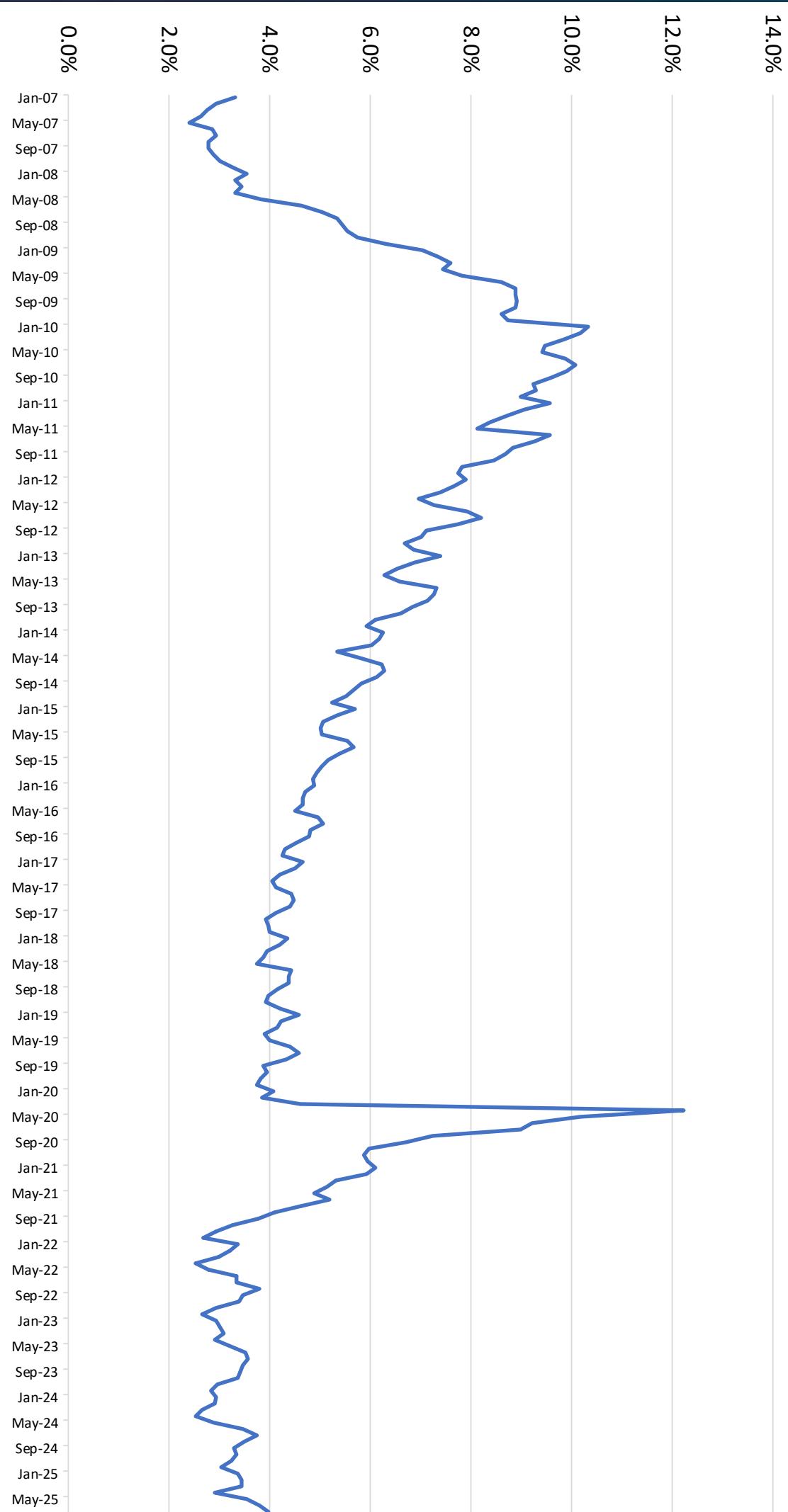
Consumer Activity - June 2025

June

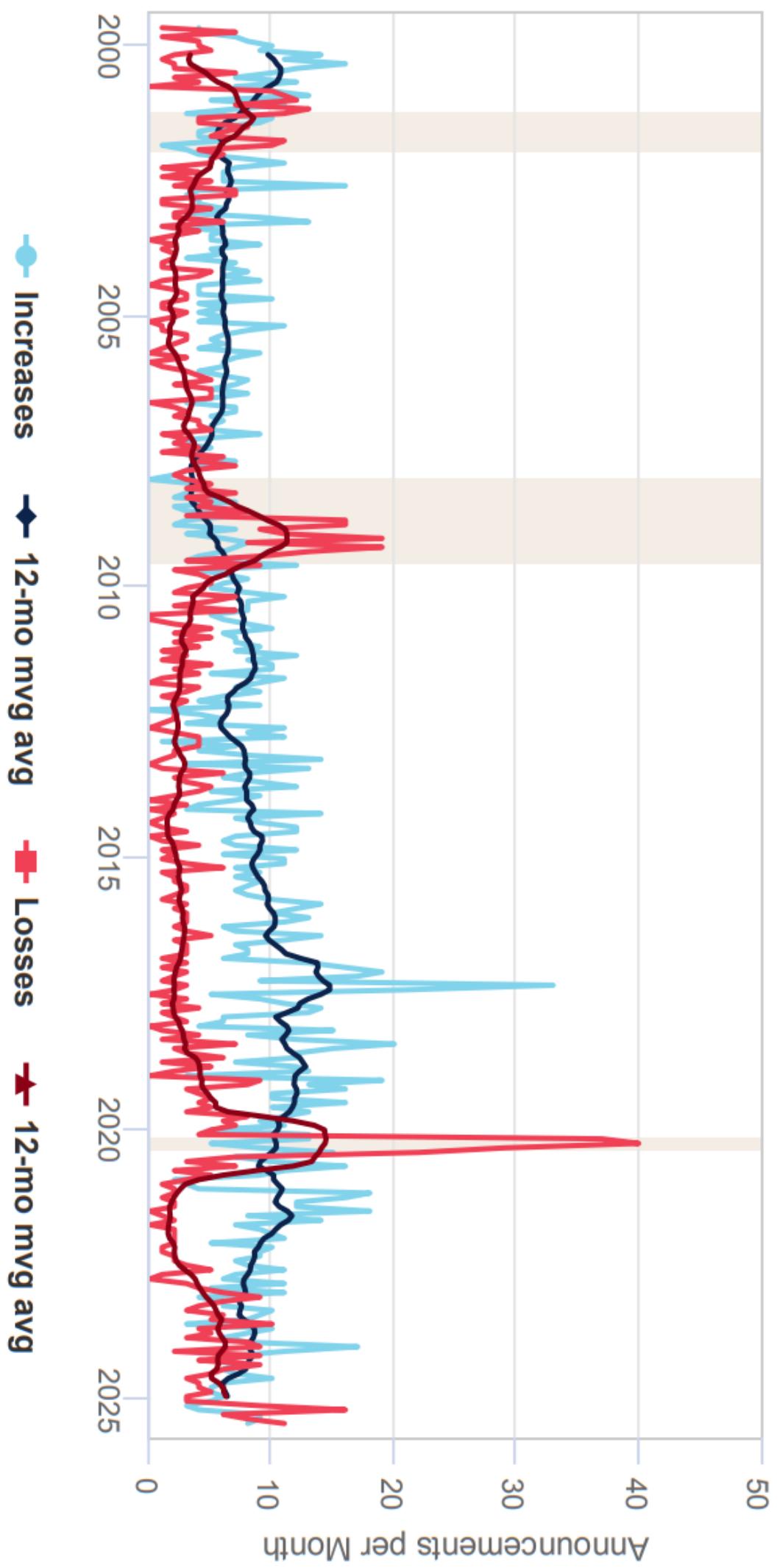
| Category                          | 2023                    |                         |                         | 2024         |               |           | 2025                     |                          |                          | Var from<br>FY23/24 | % of Total    |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|---------------|-----------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------|
|                                   | 2022/2023               | 2023/2024               | 2024/2025               | 2022/2023    | 2023/2024     | 2024/2025 | Var from<br>FY23/24      | % of Total               |                          |                     |               |
| Retail Sales                      | \$ 13,942,352.73        | \$ 13,694,691.37        | \$ 15,011,188.83        | 9.6%         | 53.6%         |           | \$ 169,720,116.57        | \$ 168,774,843.75        | \$ 173,095,967.61        | 2.6%                | 52.4%         |
| Rentals                           | 2,475,010.34            | 2,738,524.09            | 2,744,632.42            | 0.2%         | 9.8%          |           | 28,109,938.68            | 29,221,793.28            | 29,803,332.89            | 2.0%                | 9.0%          |
| Utilities                         | 1,861,320.02            | 2,084,718.52            | 2,261,574.24            | 8.5%         | 8.1%          |           | 19,981,726.15            | 21,608,740.19            | 23,860,968.28            | 10.4%               | 7.2%          |
| Restaurants & Bars                | 2,194,093.46            | 2,263,049.42            | 2,416,545.04            | 6.8%         | 8.6%          |           | 27,811,724.04            | 28,317,608.67            | 29,352,468.22            | 3.7%                | 8.9%          |
| Communications                    | 265,570.77              | 275,718.37              | 290,222.22              | 5.3%         | 1.0%          |           | 3,493,028.86             | 3,359,740.09             | 3,515,829.64             | 4.6%                | 1.1%          |
| Amusements                        | 240,367.94              | 265,923.74              | 268,885.89              | 1.1%         | 1.0%          |           | 2,716,015.24             | 2,861,320.81             | 2,938,891.88             | 2.7%                | 0.9%          |
| Publishing                        | 37,891.42               | 41,110.36               | 46,975.34               | 14.3%        | 0.2%          |           | 477,568.78               | 522,915.46               | 475,436.42               | -9.1%               | 0.1%          |
| Miscellaneous                     | 171,400.05              | 147,541.02              | 146,177.41              | -0.9%        | 0.5%          |           | 1,381,309.09             | 1,770,245.34             | 1,877,494.71             | 6.1%                | 0.6%          |
| Printing & Advertising            | 62,523.24               | 54,355.65               | 59,049.01               | 8.6%         | 0.2%          |           | 631,941.01               | 659,189.17               | 743,481.89               | 12.8%               | 0.2%          |
| <b>Sub-Total</b>                  | <b>\$ 21,250,529.97</b> | <b>\$ 21,565,632.54</b> | <b>\$ 23,245,250.40</b> | <b>7.8%</b>  | <b>82.9%</b>  |           | <b>\$ 254,323,368.52</b> | <b>\$ 257,096,396.76</b> | <b>\$ 265,663,871.54</b> | <b>3.3%</b>         | <b>80.5%</b>  |
| Contracting                       | \$ 5,088,318.79         | \$ 3,317,538.05         | \$ 4,675,311.97         | 40.9%        | 16.7%         |           | \$ 53,531,533.39         | \$ 47,454,484.23         | \$ 50,118,155.18         | 5.6%                | 15.2%         |
| <b>Sub-Total with Contracting</b> | <b>\$ 26,338,848.76</b> | <b>\$ 24,883,170.59</b> | <b>\$ 27,920,562.37</b> | <b>12.2%</b> | <b>99.6%</b>  |           | <b>\$ 307,854,901.91</b> | <b>\$ 304,550,880.99</b> | <b>\$ 315,782,026.72</b> | <b>3.7%</b>         | <b>95.6%</b>  |
| Residential Rental                | \$ 1,939,815.56         | \$ 2,274,044.50         | \$ 104,700.32           | -95.4%       | 0.4%          |           | \$ 23,280,802.87         | \$ 25,269,381.89         | \$ 14,394,434.89         | -43.0%              | 4.4%          |
| <b>Total</b>                      | <b>\$ 28,278,664.32</b> | <b>\$ 27,157,215.09</b> | <b>\$ 28,025,262.69</b> | <b>3.2%</b>  | <b>100.0%</b> |           | <b>\$ 331,135,704.78</b> | <b>\$ 329,820,262.88</b> | <b>\$ 330,176,461.61</b> | <b>0.1%</b>         | <b>100.0%</b> |
| Budget                            | \$ 22,375,212.00        | \$ 23,079,631.00        | \$ 26,016,579.00        |              |               |           | \$ 278,007,000.00        | \$ 283,786,999.83        | \$ 314,283,000.00        |                     |               |
| Above/Below Budget                | \$ 5,903,452.32         | \$ 4,077,584.09         | \$ 2,008,683.69         |              |               |           | \$ 53,128,704.78         | \$ 46,033,263.05         | \$ 15,802,461.61         |                     |               |
| Variance from Budget              | 26.4%                   | 17.7%                   | 7.7%                    |              |               |           | 19.1%                    | 16.2%                    | 5.1%                     |                     |               |

## City of Mesa Unemployment Rate

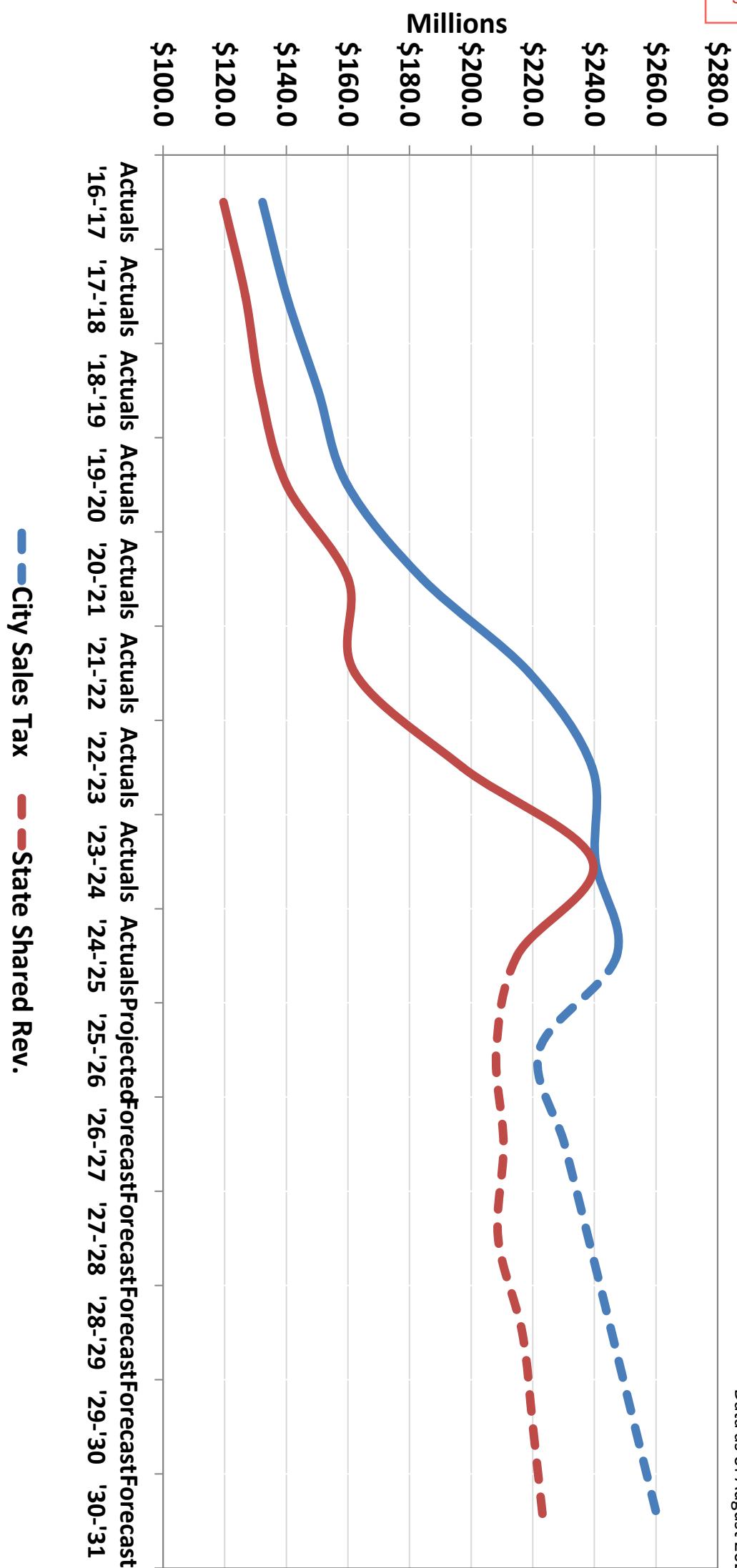
Source: Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity



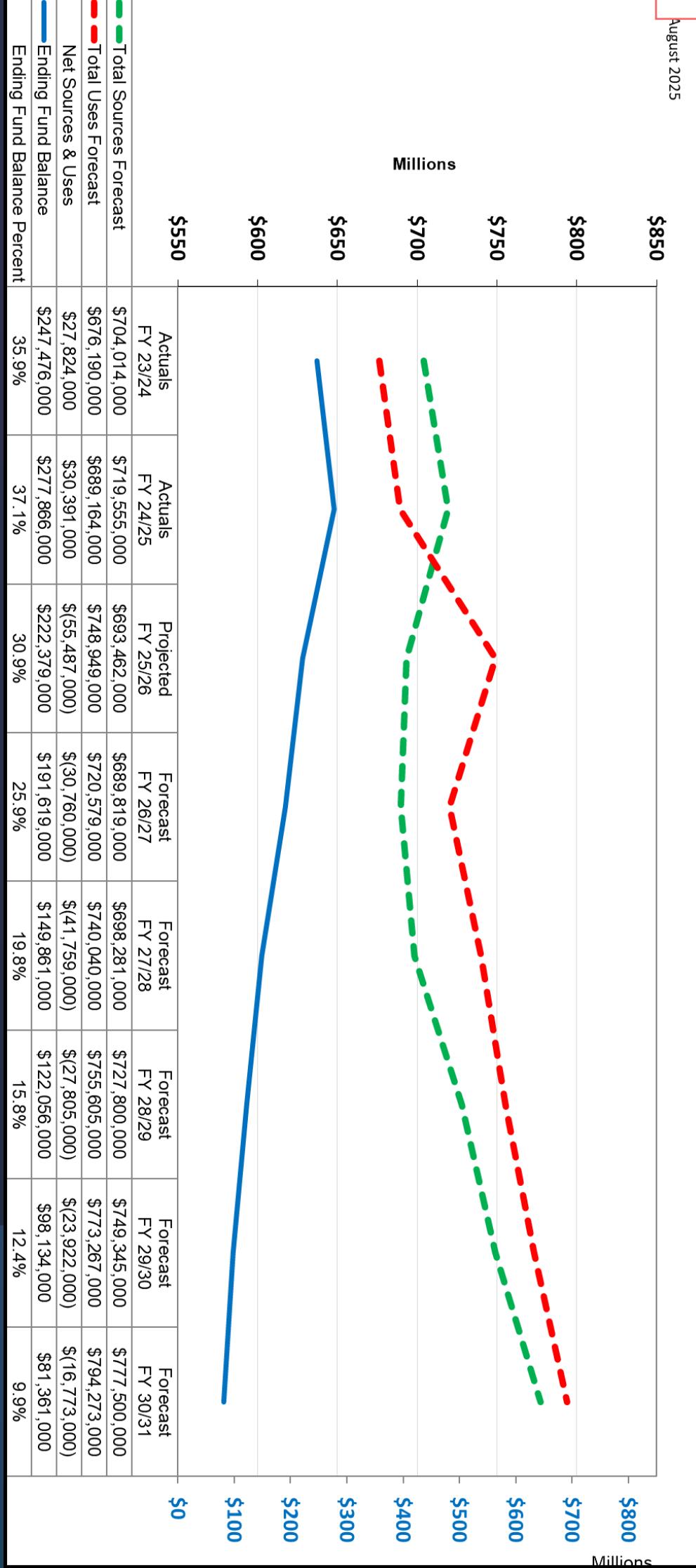
## Announcements of Job Increases and Losses - Arizona



Data as of August 2025



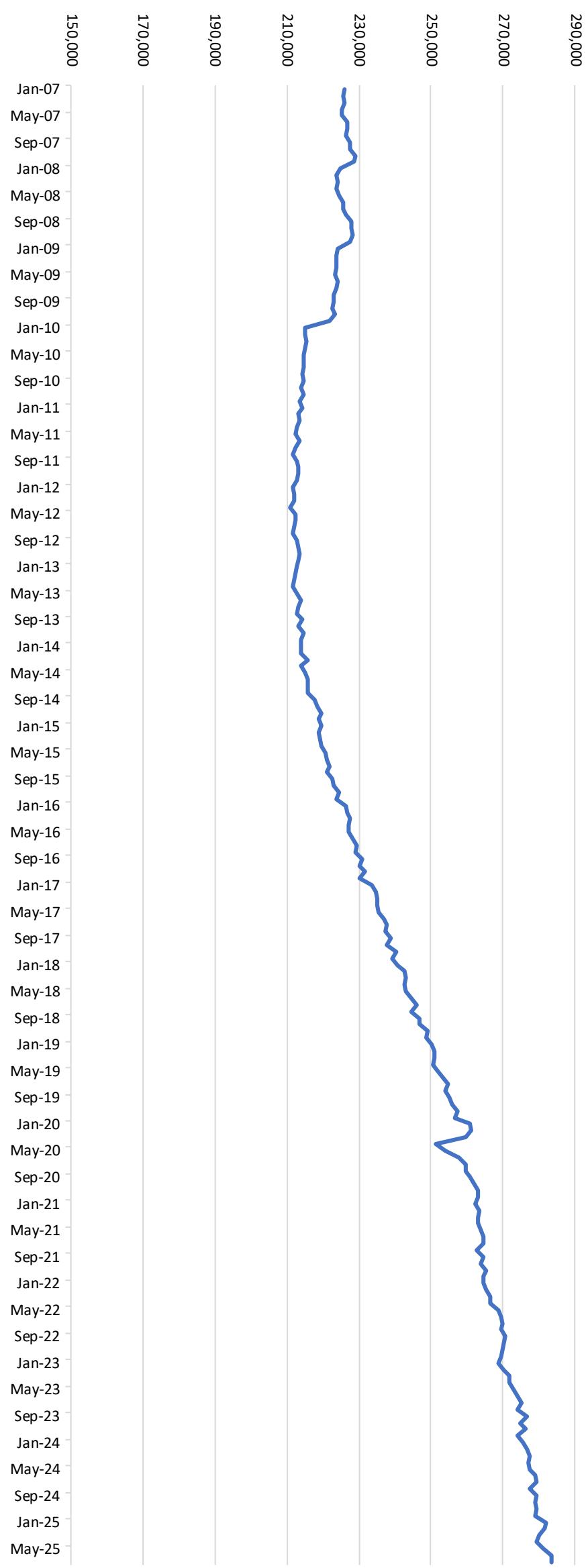
# General Government Funds Sources and Uses





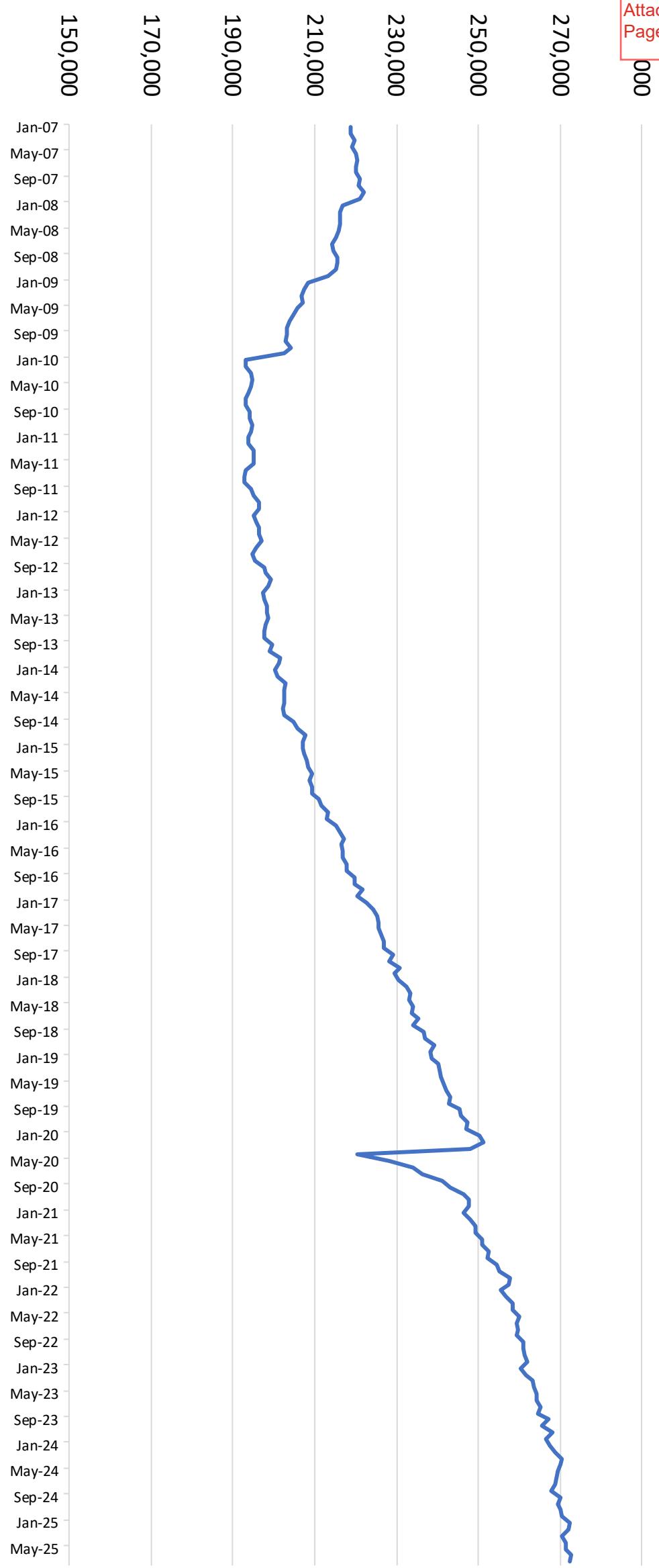
## City of Mesa Labor Force

Source: Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity



## City of Mesa Employment

Source: Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity



# Development Services Process Improvement Update and Land Use Planning

## City Council Strategic Session

**Nana Appiah**

Development Services Department Director

9/18/2025

# Development Services Primary Functions



Improve the City's Urban Form



Coordinate Land Use Planning and Administration



Guide Quality Development



Lead Coordination of Various City Departments



Perform Building Plan Checks and Complete Inspections

## Policy and Process Improvements

### List of City Council

#### Focus Areas

(Development Services)

- Improve Development Review Process to improve **efficiency**
  - Eliminate redundancies
  - Improve department review **coordination**
    - Create a cohesive structure
  - Use **data** for decision-making
  - Improve the **business environment** for development review applicants
  - Provide small **business assistance and support** (Ombudsman)

## Policy Issues

# Major Themes

- From Developer Feedback and Staff Evaluation (Align with City Council Focus Areas)

- Improve and expand administrative approvals for site plans and plats
- Revise stringent standards on major and minor site plan amendment approval process
- Streamline and adopt flexible infill and redevelopment standards
- Allow administrative approval/flexibility for parking standards
- Allow administrative flexibility for solid waste standards
- Minimize uncertainty in the Design Review Process
- Continue to publish review schedules

## Process & Personnel Issues

### Major Themes

- From Developer Feedback and Staff Evaluation (Align with City Council Focus Areas)

- Train staff to minimize providing new comments on resubmittals
- Improve review coordination among city departments
- Improve solid waste and fire responsiveness
- Enhance review meetings with applicants in addition to ensuring all needed staff attend meetings
- Improve junior staff autonomy to make review decisions
- Improve junior staff responsiveness
- Train staff to minimize making new comments on resubmittals

## Actions Taken - Process

# Actions Taken

- Improving Development Review Process (Efficiency)

- Project acceptance and review timeline status email
- One-stop shop for civil, utilities, transportation, and solid waste reviews
  - Enhanced review meetings with applicant-staff attend
- Ombudsman Services
- Small business assistance services
- Website improvement (workflows)
- Dashboard reporting real-time data on review timelines: ([\*\*Building Permits Dashboard\*\*](#))

## Actions Taken - Process

- **Actions Taken**
  - Improved Development
  - Review Process (Business Environment and Business Support)
- Stakeholder Engagement (Continued)
  - Developer Advisory Forum Annual Lunch
  - Developer Advisory Forum Yearly Awards Breakfast
  - One-on-one meetings with Key Development Community Stakeholders
- Quarterly meetings with Partner City Department Directors

## Actions Taken - Policy

# Actions Taken

## Improve Development Review Process (Quality Development & Urban Form)

- Increase focus on Long Range Planning Strategies
- Zoning Code Text Amendments:
  - Manufactured Home and RV Subdivision Text Amendment
  - Subdivision Text Amendment
  - Form-Based Code Text Amendment
  - Data Center Text Amendment
  - Etc.

## Actions Taken - Personnel

- Administrative restructuring to enhance staff empowerment and decision-making

### Actions Taken

- Improved Development Review Process
- (Coordination and Data Driven Decisions)

- Assistant Director of Planning-Current Planning/Development Review
- Assistant Director of Planning-Long Range Planning Initiatives
- Urban Design Planner (hiring)
- Transportation Planner (hiring)
- Administrative supervisor and team
- Project Managers
- Data management/workflows
- Ombudsman

## Proposed Actions - Policy

- Administrative Approvals - zoning code text amendments
  - Expand for minor and major site plan approval
  - Expand administrative site plan approvals
- Infill Ordinance zoning code text amendments
- Planned Area Development (PAD) zoning code text amendments
  - Use PAD to restrict uses
  - Minimize need for land use Development Agreements

## Proposed Actions - Policy

### Proposed Actions

(Align with City Council & Developer Focus Areas)

- Permit and Planning Entitlement- align expiration dates
- Building Code Update
- Cap on the number of review cycles prior to scheduling for a public hearing
- Review fees for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> reviews for unresponsiveness to review comments

# Long Range Planning Policy

## Placemaking Strategies

- City Entry/Gateway Plan
  - Identify Hierarchy
  - Develop Design Standards
  - Reinforce Community Identity
  - Create Sense of Place
- Wayfinding Plan
  - Guide and Highlight Key Destinations in the City
- Streetscape Design Standards and Guidelines
  - Establish Distinct Approaches for Key Corridors

# Long Range Planning Policy

## Corridor Planning

# Proposed Actions

(Align with City Council & Developer Focus Areas)

- Canal Master Plan
  - Establish a Long-term Vision
  - Transform Canals into Vibrant Public Spaces and Community Assets
- Active Transportation Plan
  - Collaborate with the Transportation and Other City Departments on Strategies to Create a Safe, Connected, and Accessible Network
  - Identify Walking, Biking, and Other Non-Motorized Travel

## Plans and Programs

# Proposed Actions

(Align with City Council & Developer Focus Areas)

- **MesaCONNECTED Plan** - Transit Oriented Development Plan Supporting High-Capacity Transit in West Mesa (Ongoing)
- **Rio Reimagined** - Local, State, Federal, and Tribal partners - Salt and Gila River Corridor Revitalization (Ongoing)
- **Redevelopment Plans Implementation** - As Part of Team (Ongoing)
- **Section 106 Programmatic Agreement** (3/2026)

# Summary of Continuous Improvement Initiatives

## Proposed Actions

(Align with City Council & Developer Focus Areas)

### ➤ Completed

- One-Stop Shop Review (Phase I)
- Ombudsman Services

### ➤ Ongoing

- Small Business Assistant
- Resubmittal Review Reduced
- Zoning Inspector (continuation)
- DICES Improvement (resubmittals)

### ➤ Stakeholder Engagement

- Development Advisory Forum Annual Lunch
- Development Advisory Forum Awards Breakfast

# Review Timelines



|  | Rezoning                   | Design Review Board    | Board of Adjustment    | Pre-Submittal          | Annexation                 | Administrative Review-Minor Site Plan/Design | General Plan Amendment                             | Land Division/ Subdivision/ Development | Commercial Plan Review       | Residential Plan Review | Residential Standardized Plot Plans |
|--|----------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|--|--|---|------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Timeline in this table is presented in calendar days.</b> |                            |                        |                        |                        |                            |  |  |   |                              |                         |                                     |
| <b>Gilbert</b>   | 14                         | 14                     | 14                     | 14                     | 30                         | 14   | 14   | 30                                      | 16                           | 8                       |                                     |
| <b>Gilbert</b>   | 41                         | 41                     | 30                     | N/A                    | 41                         | 31   | 56   | 41                                      | 15                           | 15                      | 6                                   |
| <b>Phoenix</b>   | 30-first rev.<br>15-resub. | 60                     | 28                     | 90                     | 30-first rev.<br>15-resub. | 30   | 35-Medium<br>45-Major                              | 30                                      | 30                           | 5                       |                                     |
| <b>Scottsdale</b>  | Custom Review Schedule     | Custom Review Schedule | Custom Review Schedule | Custom Review Schedule | Custom Review Schedule     | Custom Review Schedule                       | <b>(31)</b><br>10-admin +<br>21-substantive        | <b>(31)</b><br>21                       | 10-admin +<br>21-substantive |                         |                                     |
| <b>Chandler</b>  | 20                         | N/A                    | 20                     | 15                     | 20                         | 20   | 20   | 20 days                                 | 20-MF<br>10-SF               | 10                      |                                     |
| <b>Tempe</b>   | 19                         | 19                     | 19                     | N/A                    | 19                         | 19   | 19   | ±25/valuation                           | ±19/valuation                | N/A                     |                                     |
| <b>Queen Creek</b>   | 30*                        | N/A                    | 30*                    | 14*                    | 30*                        | 30*  | 30*- Pre-plat<br>22*- Final Plat<br>22*- Lot Split | 22                                      | 9                            | 5                       |                                     |
| <i>*+5d review</i>   |                            |                        |                        |                        |                            |  |  |   |                              |                         |                                     |

## Summary of Staff Recommended Action



Pursue related code amendments



Improve coordination among departments



Continue strong coordination with ED and the  
brokerage community



Improve staff training for DSD, Solid Waste, and  
Transportation staff to improve decision making



Develop onboarding program for new developers

Thank you



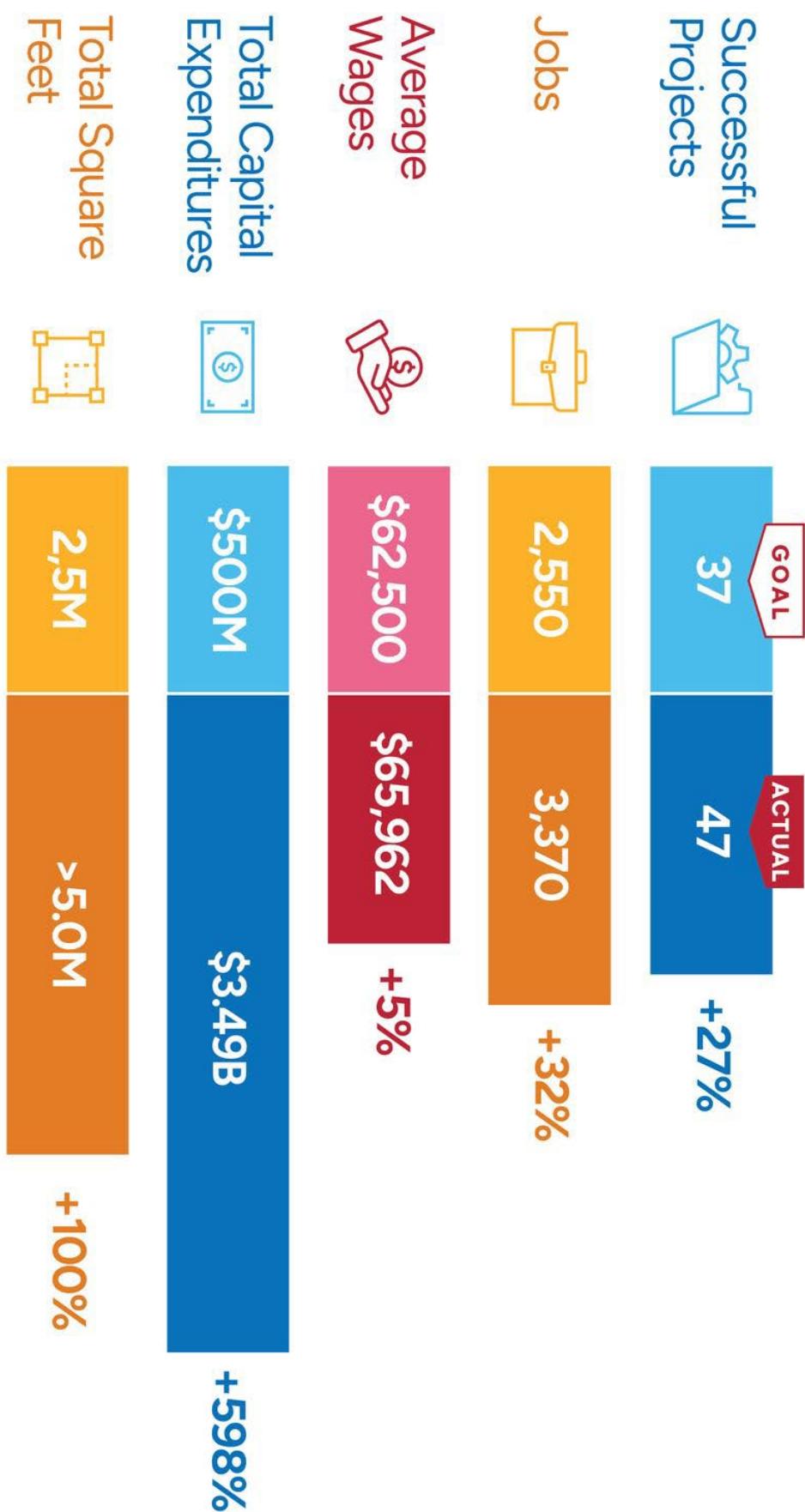


# The View From Here

## Office of Economic Development FY 2025 Highlights and Look Ahead

Mesa City Council  
**Strategic Planning Session**  
**Sept. 18, 2025**

# Business Attraction Successes



# Business Attraction Successes

Hilo Industries      Niagara Water  
BEMO      Nucleus Radio Pharma  
Crawford Mechanical Services      KoMiCo Urbix  
GOOGLe      IS Clinical  
Jerit Automation      Metso Outotec  
Hims & Hers  
Avanti Windows & Doors

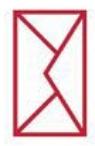
# Small Business & Entrepreneurship



**150+ BUSINESSES RECEIVED**  
\$278,000+ WORTH OF ONE-ON-ONE PROFESSIONAL ADVISING AND CONSULTING SERVICES



MESA HUUB DIGITAL PLATFORM REACHED A MILESTONE OF **1,000 PARTICIPATING BUSINESSES**



THE BUSINESS ADVOCATE HAD **8,500 SUBSCRIBERS** WITH 47% AVERAGE OPEN RATE



MESA BUSINESS BUILDER @ THE STUDIOS HOSTED

**5,400+ ATTENDEES IN YEAR ONE**



# Marketing Results



# Retail Strategy Update

- Retail development plays a vital role in economic growth and community well-being.
- Mesa has realized success in business growth and population growth.
- Need to better align retail offerings with the city's increasing income and evolving community needs.
- Promote Mesa as a retail destination both locally and nationally (B2C).
- Recruit retailers and retail development (B2B).

# The Solution/Strategy – B2C

- Developed and launched a consumer-facing campaign showcasing Mesa's unique attractions, personifying fun and vibrancy.

## “More to Mesa.”

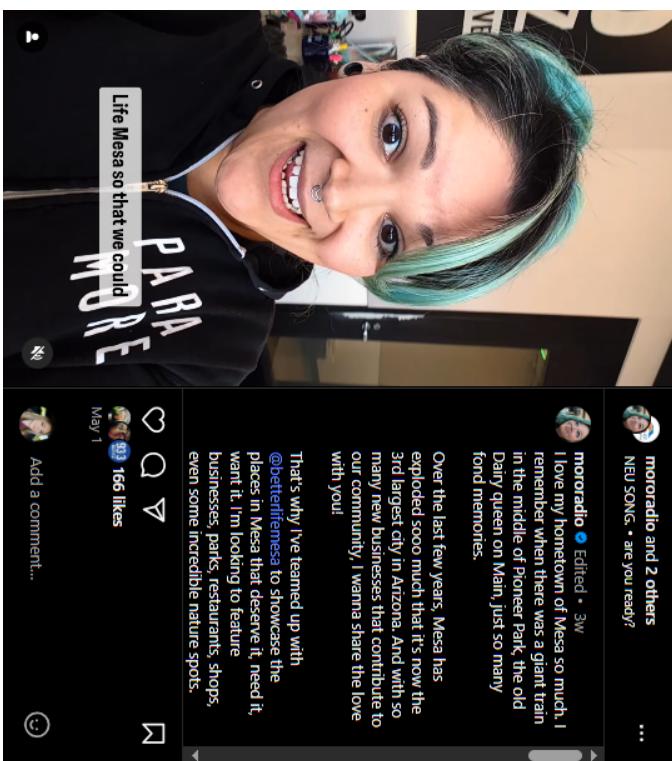
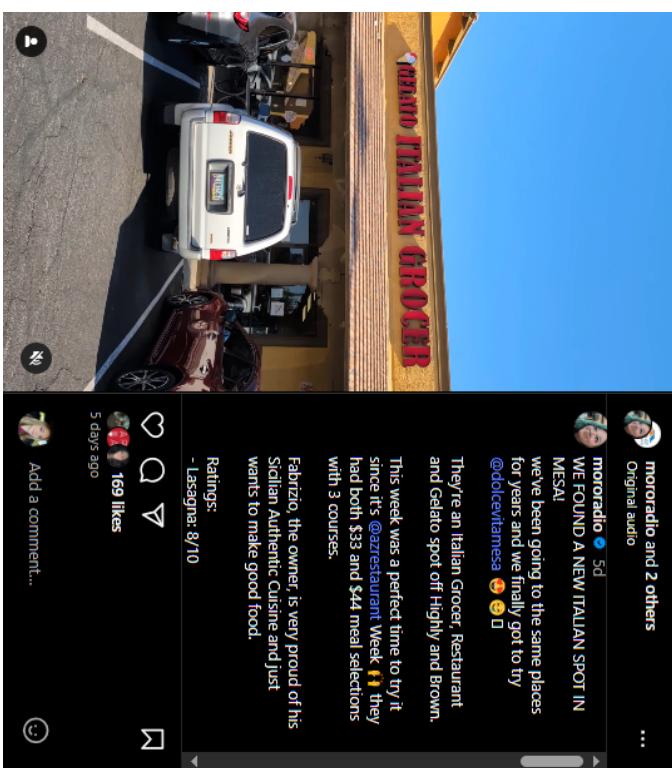
- Implemented a regional multi-channel media plan leveraging digital ads, social media, broadcast advertising, out-of-home advertising, and influencer marketing.
- Promoted and supported local events and engagement opportunities to increase foot traffic and community awareness.

# B2C Campaign Platform

▪ Welcome to Arizona

## INSTAGRAM VIDEOS (Influencers)

### ▪ Mo! (from 93.3 radio)



<https://www.instagram.com/reel/DJ9hXabJ>  
<https://www.instagram.com/p/DJInkgBxQ>  
[https://www.instagram.com/\\_KCr/?igsh=cDA1aDdhcmY0OTM0](https://www.instagram.com/_KCr/?igsh=cDA1aDdhcmY0OTM0)

# B2C Campaign Platform

## INSTAGRAM GOALS

- Highlight Mesa's diverse retail scene
- Drive traffic through timely content
- Support small business visibility
- Provide a landing site for consumer campaigns

## INSTAGRAM PAGE RESULTS FROM CAMPAIGN

- 90 followers on 4/16/2025
- 1,772 followers as of 8/28/2025

**969%**  
increase in 4 months!



@BetterLifeMesa

# The Solution/Strategy – B2B

- Developed and launched a B2B-facing campaign emphasizing Mesa's unique opportunities with the message

## “Mesa. More Than A Market. A Movement.”

- Developed high-quality sales, presentation materials, ad campaigns.
- Developed a quarterly newsletter to include news, updates, retail market insights, available properties, etc.

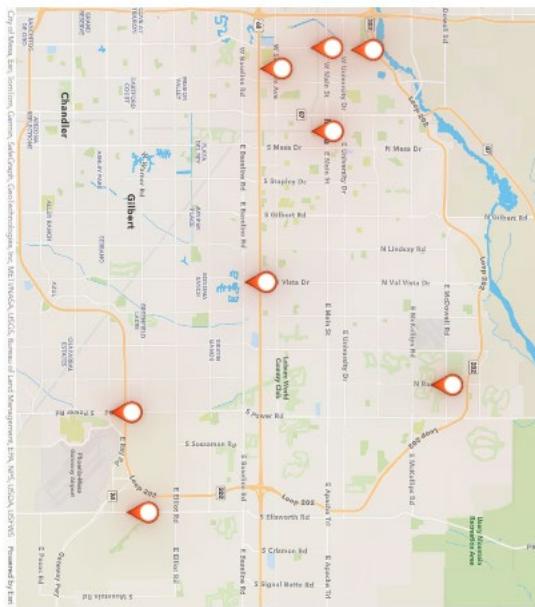
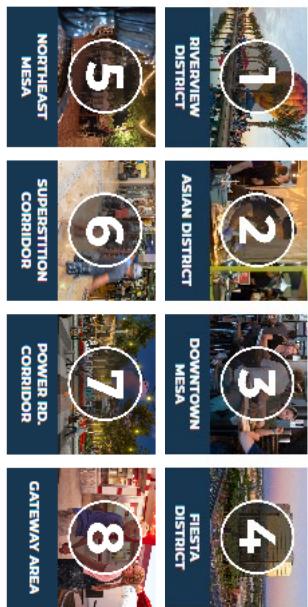
# B2B Campaign Platform

## PRINT COLLATERAL

## PRINT AD

## DIGITAL ADS





### Mesa's Retail Development Opportunities

Retailers, brokers, developers - Mesa has a place for you!

Mesa is a big place. So naturally our neighborhood areas are as diverse as you'd expect for a city of more than 500,000 people. Take a deeper look - Mesa's retail corridors offer easy access to everything you can imagine, from entertainment and sports districts to family-focused, master-planned communities to upscale luxury and transformed historic settings. Whether you are a large or small retailer, a broker, developer, or shopping center owner, Mesa has a place for you and we are an eager partner to help your business thrive in our community.



CONTACT US



# B2B Campaign Platform

[www.MesaAzRetail.com](http://www.MesaAzRetail.com)

▶ HOME PAGE

◀ DISTRICT PAGES ▶

### Riverview District

Retailers, brokers, developers - Mesa has a place for you!

The spring training home of the Chicago cubs, the Riverview District, is a year-round sports, entertainment, and shopping district. Growing with the new developments of UNION and Wingline, Riverview is home to major employers, lifestyle amenities, events, and activities, and is a premier recreation destination from morning to night. Riverview is truly the gateway to the East Valley at the intersection of Loops 101 and 202, pulling from Mesa, Tempe, Scottsdale, and Phoenix.



CONTACT US

2020 2025 2030

| Population        | 199,942  | 204,653  | 210,208  |
|-------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Income            | \$91,901 | \$66,989 | \$37,360 |
| Race Distribution | White    | Black    | Hispanic |
| Age               | 33       | 36       |          |
| Med. Age          | 34       | 36       |          |

| Population        | 199,942  | 204,653  | 210,208  |
|-------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Income            | \$91,901 | \$66,989 | \$37,360 |
| Race Distribution | White    | Black    | Hispanic |
| Age               | 33       | 36       |          |
| Med. Age          | 34       | 36       |          |

Loop 202/101 interchange to Dobson Rd. - 114,000  
Loop 202/101 interchange to 7th St./Rio Salado Pkwy - 116,000  
Dobson Rd./Rio Salado Pkwy - 41,500

### Retail Opportunities & News



Mesa RiverView



Chicago Cubs lead MLB in Spring Training Attendance

- High visibility at SEC of Loop 202 and Dobson Road
- More than 1M SF of leasable space anchored by Walmart, Home Depot, Ross
- Adjacent to Chicago Cubs Spring Training Facility
- READ MORE HERE



# Office of Economic Development

## Fiscal Year 2026 Look Ahead

# Our Mission

## CITY OF MESA OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

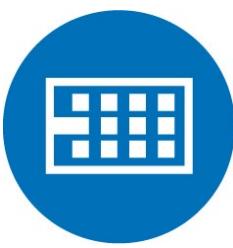
Mesa's Office of Economic Development (OED) works to enhance Mesa's economy by:

- promoting a culture of quality
- supporting the creation of higher wage jobs
- promoting direct investment
- increasing prosperity of our residents

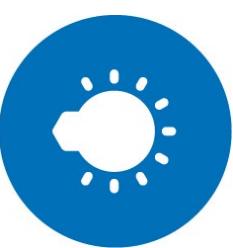
*Advancing Business. Growing Quality Jobs.*



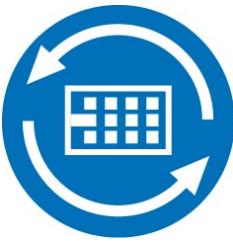
# Lines of Service



Business Attraction,  
Retention &  
Expansion



Entrepreneurship /  
Small Business  
Development



Redevelopment /  
Revitalization



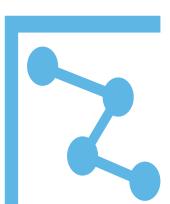
Workforce  
Development /  
Talent Attraction

## Support Services



Marketing & Communications

Data & Research



# Industries of Opportunity

## INDUSTRIES / SECTORS

- Healthcare / Biotechnology / Medical Devices / Pharma
- Aerospace / Aviation / Defense
- Technology / Semiconductors / Climate Tech / Electric Vehicles
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Education
- Retail / Tourism / Hospitality



# OED Goals

1

## Grow Mesa's economy

Attract new and expand existing companies in Mesa to create and retain quality jobs.

2

## land, grown and prosper

Increase Mesa's visibility and improve Mesa's image to create additional momentum and reach new audiences in key industry segments and critical talent pipelines.

3

## Build a resilient community

Increase capacity for attracting quality development citywide and for driving equitable economic development.

# Challenges and Opportunities

## DEFINING SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

- Power Capacity and Distribution
- Industrial Inventory
- Policies Affecting Market Stability and Certainty
- Targeted Lead Gen / Partnerships / New Markets
- Signature Projects and Continued Focus on High Quality, Impact Efforts
- Continued Coordination between DSD, OED, OUT, and others
- Elevating Mesa's Story and Wins

# FY26 Action Items – Attraction

## Strategic Realignment



### International Strategy



### Supply Chain Clusters



### Bio and Pharma Opportunity Analysis



### Accelerate Retail Lead Gen

## Marketing & Business Development



### Retool & Relaunch Broker Roadshow



### Partner Communications and Regional Collaboration



### Expand CRE Relationships

# FY26 Action Items – Small Business

## Program Innovation

-  Creative Skills Workshops
-  Capital Assets Workshop
-  Mid-Size Business Scaling

## Events & Engagement

-  Increased Event Offerings
-  New Event Programming
-  Partner Awareness Campaign

## Specialty Spaces & Marketing

-  MBB @ The Studios Open Hours
-  Expanded Outreach

# FY26 Action Items – Redevelopment

## Tool Creation & Refinement



## Project Focus Areas



# FY26 Action Items – Retail

## Enhanced Consumer Campaign



Outreach to New Audiences



Themed Storytelling



Strategic Efforts



Elevated Experiences



Partnerships with Developers and  
Property Owners on Vision,  
Concepts, and Targeted Outreach

## Business Development

# Y26 Action Items – Marketing & Business Development

## Brand Launch & Digital Presence

## Storytelling & Engagement

-  Launch OED Brand Refresh
-  Launch Updated Website
-  Enhanced Tradeshow Marketing & Prospect Mining
-  Narrative-Driven Social Media
-  Update Company Executive Video & Quote Testimonial Library

# FY26 Action Items – Workforce Development

## Continued Collaboration and City of Mesa Workforce Strategy Update

### Services to Community

Community &  
Human Services  
Education &  
Workforce  
Job Seeker  
Resources

### Services to Businesses

Economic  
Development

Business  
Resources

Department and Community Partnerships



# AEDO Reaccreditation



ACCREDITED  
ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT  
ORGANIZATION  
*International Economic Development Council*

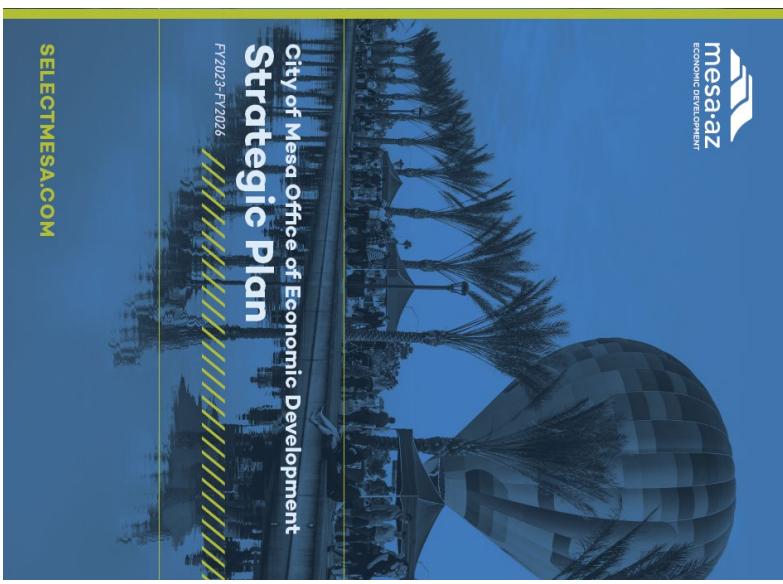
Accredited Economic Development Organization (AEDO)  
Recertification Process - Document Review and Site Visit  
Spring 2026

# Mesa Economic Development Strategic Plan FY 2027-2029

## RFP for Economic Development Strategic Plan

### Deliverables:

- Three-year plan with goals, objectives and recommended tactics for FDI, domestic attraction, redevelopment, entrepreneurship / small business, and workforce development.
- Analysis of Mesa's Industries of Opportunity and Emerging Industries including Supply Chain Analysis
- Business Development Tactics: Target prospect list
- Recommended Performance Metrics to align with Plan



Completion by May/ June 2026





# DISCUSSION

# Stay Connected With Us

- SelectMesa.com
- MesaBusinessBuilder.com



Mesa-Economic-Development



BetterLifeMesa



MesaBusinessBuilder

# Mesa.AI



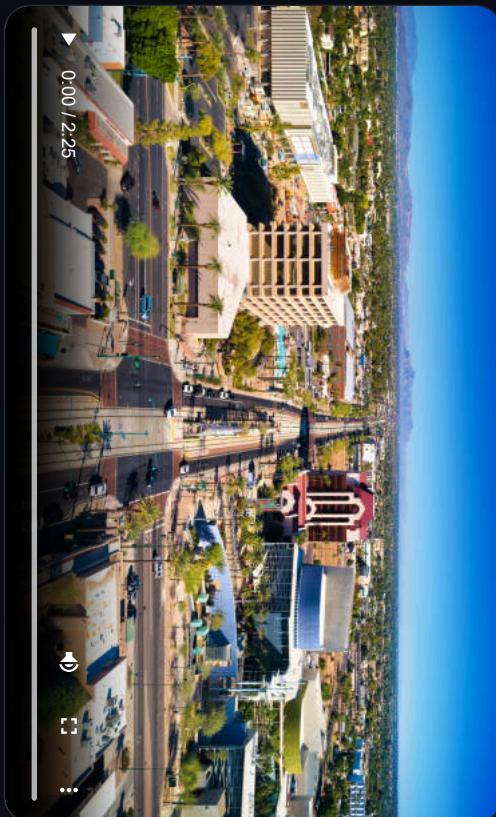
**AI-Powered. People-Driven.**

The Future of Public Service.

CITY COUNCIL BRIEFING • SEPTEMBER 18 2025

# Behind the Scenes

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# What Is Artificial Intelligence?

## 01 Human-like Processing

The capability of computer systems to perform tasks that traditionally require human intelligence.

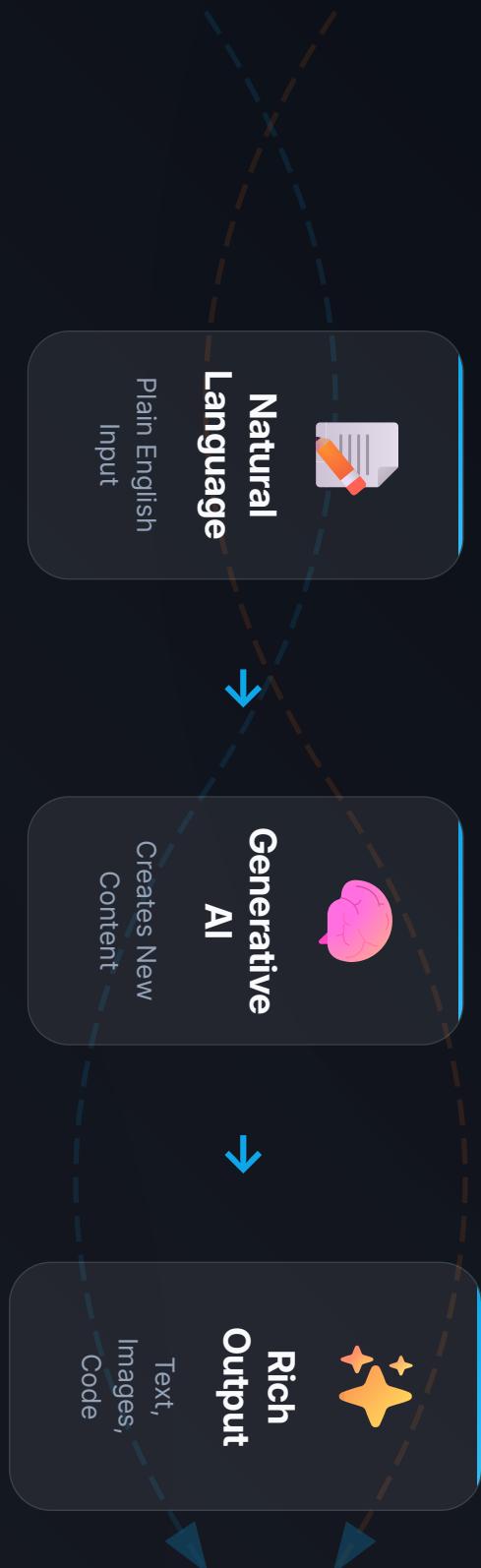


## 02 Continuous Learning

AI systems utilize techniques like machine learning to improve performance over time based on data and training.

# The Generative AI Revolution

AI isn't new — but this changes everything



# The Mesa.AI Approach

Strategic principles for responsible AI adoption



## Human-Centred Enhancement

Encourage thoughtful, safe use to enhance — not replace — human decision making.



## Purpose-Driven Implementation

Don't use AI just for AI's sake — it must demonstrate efficiencies, cost savings, or both.



## Governed & Accountable

AI use governed by management policy with key principle: we remain responsible for our work!



## Strategic Guidance

Internal Mesa.AI taskforce provides strategic guidance on AI policy, usage, and projects.

# Staff Productivity & Internal Tools

esa has already begun — real results, real impact



PILOT PROGRAM

## AI Sandbox

50 STAFF MEMBERS  
28 DEPARTMENTS

Piloting practical use cases  
across the organization



94% FASTER

## Permit Inspection Scheduling

BEFORE  
~30 min  
AFTER  
< 2 min

End-to-end process  
transformation



BETA

## Conversational Podcasts

AI-generated audio content for  
staff training and communication

# Citizen & Business Experience

esa has already begun — 24/7 accessible, inclusive engagement



## "Mesan" AI Assistant

24/7 ACTIVE

~1,500 content areas

Web + voice interface with smart handoffs

CURRENTLY TESTING ON:

Falcon Field Website

Economic Development Website



## Custom Voice Menus

VOICE AI

Phone Tree with AI-powered customized voice options for streamlined citizen access.

# Operations & Safety

esa has already begun — smart systems, safer processes



## Smart Parking

COMPUTER VISION

Live availability; promotes nearby businesses/events.



## HazMat Intake

AUTOMATION

License scan auto-populates forms (faster, safer, accurate).



## Police Reports

ONLINE APPLICATION

24/7 community reporting system.

# Scale & Stewardship

Here we go from here — strategic roadmap for growth



## Monitor & Adapt

- Continue monitoring rapid AI developments
- Stay ahead of emerging technologies



## Scale & Leverage

- Scale learnings from early AI initiatives across the organization
- Leverage use cases from the AI Sandbox



## Invest & Learn

- Be ready to fund AI Innovation
- Learn lessons early



## Resident-Focused

- Focus on improving resident experiences with Mesa

- Deliver measurable public value

# Future Opportunities

here we go from here — expanding AI impact across Mesa



## Citizen Services

**Public Chatbot**

City-wide AI assistant for all services

**Digital Twin**

Virtual city modeling and simulation

**Plan Review Assist**

AI-powered development services support



## Staff Empowerment

**Data Conversations**

Natural language queries with city data

**Expanded IT Self-Help**

AI-powered technical support



## Smart Operations

**One-on-One Interviews**

AI-assisted citizen engagement

**Real-time Translation**

Expanded multilingual services

**And More!**

Continuous innovation pipeline

# Mesa.AI Starts Today

Questions & Discussion

