

**Rio Salado Enhanced Services Commission
Minutes
October 28, 2025**



Minutes of the Rio Salado Enhanced Services Commission meeting that was held on October 28, 2025, 8:30 am in person at 31 E. 5th Street, Tempe, AZ 85281 in the CD – Conference Lobby Room and with a hybrid option by Microsoft Teams

Members Present:

Craig Hayton, Chairman, Com. Svcs. Director
Tara Ford, President, Director – Public Works
Yesenia Felix, Vice President Commission/Area 1 Rep
Lisette Camacho, Treasurer, Deputy City Manager
Jeff Tamulevich, Sec. of the Commission/CD Director
Nick Woodruff, Landowner Member/Area 2 Rep
Ted Rabban, Landowner Member/Area 3 Rep
Maggie Soffel, ASU Member
Barbara Haris, Public Member
Michael Martin, Downtown Tempe Authority Member
Mark Clouch, At-Large Residential Property Owner

City Staff Present:

Ryan Levesque, Dep. Comm. Dev. Dir. of Planning
Mike Baxley, Dep. Comm Dev. Dir of Building Safety
Shawn Wagner, Dep.Com. Svcs. Dir Parks & Rec
Alex Jovanovic, Dep Com Svcs Dir Parks & Rec.
Roger Hallsted, Administration Manager, Comm. Dev.
Ryan Lang, Administration Manager, Comm. Dev.
Sarah Adame, Executive Assistant, Comm. Dev.

Members Absent:

None.

Guests Present:

None

Meeting commenced at 8:30 am

Agenda Item 1 – Consideration of Meeting Minutes:

August 19, 2025, Regular meeting minutes

Mr. Craig Hayton called for a motion to vote on approval of the regular meeting minutes.

MOTION: Jeff Tamulevich, Sec. of the Commission/CD Director, motioned to approve.

SECOND: Nick Woodruff, Landowner Member 2, seconded the motion.

VOTE: Approved 9-0

AYES: Craig Hayton, Chairman, Com. Svcs. Director
Tara Ford, President, Director – Public Works
Yesenia Felix, Vice President Commission/Area 1 Rep
Lisette Camacho, Treasurer, Deputy City Manager
Jeff Tamulevich, Sec. of the Commission/CD Director
Nick Woodruff, Landowner Member 2
Ted Rabban, Landowner Member/Area 3 Rep
Maggie Soffel, ASU Member
Barbara Haris, Public Member

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Agenda Item 2 – Public Appearances

None.

Agenda Item 3 - Announcements

Jarett Brock has moved on and is no longer a sitting member on the board as Vice President Commission/Area 1 Rep. His replacement is Yesenia Felix.

Roger Hallsted is retiring as of October 31, 2025, and his replacement is Ryan Lang.

Barb Haris is resigning from the board. She will be replaced after the mayor's appointment of Pam Goronkin.

Agenda Item 4 - Budget Update – Roger Hallsted

Expenses year to date are higher than the average monthly expenditure rate

The Security portion of the budget is over 66% expended. The DTA Lake Security payment is paid in full at the beginning of the fiscal year, which is why expenses are so high. This is a normal expenditure pattern for the security payment. Our insurance payment has been paid but the rate has also increased year to date. A draft budget was created in preparation for FY2026-27. Staff explained in this new budget that he is accounting for another current full-time employee, and the electricity expenses to be decreased by a small amount. Overall, there is a 10% increase in the budget. Gave commission the option to review decreasing the less CFD fund balance adjustment in the new budget and suggestions of where the commission can review for cutbacks to the budget moving forward in this upcoming budget for FY 2026/27. The fund balance should be between 15 – 25% of the current year's budget.

Agenda Item 5 – Town Lake Operation – Craig Caggiano

The lake water quality level is at normal range for operations and activities. The water releases associated with recent rain did not impact the lake operations or recreations.

The Water quality is good for the next full body contact event scheduled for November and the lake water quality is within parameters.

Updates on the dam hydraulic cylinder maintenance, the rebuild of 8 cylinders associated with 4 gates is completed and a CIP is initiating to rebuild remaining 8 cylinders, associated with 4 gates.

Routine maintenance schedule:

- o Weekly water quality testing
- o Lake surface and adjacent aquatic areas (upstream and downstream) twice per week

East Control building (south of loop 202, north of the lake at confluence of Indian Bend Wash and Salt River) had additional security improvements installed to reduce impact of future vandalism or entry.

Tempe Town Lake Marina electrical maintenance:

- o Repair and replacement of damaged boat power pedestals
- o Returning Marina electrical to original condition
- o Any improvements identified to be investigated

Agenda Item 6 – Community Services & Special Events – Craig Hayton, Shawn Wagner, and Alex Jovanovic

Arizona Cycle Boats was approved by Mayor and Council at the Oct. 16th meeting. It should be set up to start with guided tours and food around the lake early 2026.

The city is getting ready to update the special events city code and it should be posting soon. There will be some reengagement meetings with the community about the code and the changes coming soon.

November

11/1	Walk to Save Animals	Tempe Beach Park
11/1	Red Bull Chariot Race	6 th Street
11/1	Neighborhood GAIN	Various Parks
11/8	Collegiate Triathlon Championship	Tempe Beach Park
11/9	2 nd Sundays on Mill	Mill Ave.
11/11	Veterans Day Parade	Mill Ave. / Tempe Beach Park
11/14	ASU Lantern Walk	Hayden Butte Preserve (A Mtn)
11/15	ASU Homecoming	University Dr. & ASU Campus
11/16	Ironman Arizona	Tempe Beach Park / Streets
11/29	Fantasy of Lights Opening Night & Parade	Mill Ave.
11/29	Native Holiday Market	Arts Park
11/30 & 31	Mill Music Sessions	Hayden Flour Mill

December

12/5 & 6	Grass League GL Championship	Grass Clippings at Rolling Hills
12/5 – 7	Festival of the Arts	Mill Ave.
12/13	Fantasy of Lights Boat Parade	Tempe Town Lake

January

1/11	2 nd Sunday	Mill Ave.
1/17 & 18	Rock n Roll Running Series AZ	Tempe Beach Park
1/24	Unity Walk	Tempe Beach Park
1/24 & 25	Tempe Blooms	Mill Ave / Ragsdale-MLK Park

Parks and Recreation facility and maintenance crews have been very busy with helping clean up after the storms (microburst) with public and private properties throughout the city. The city infrastructure did not experience too much damage overall. Most of the damage occurred at Kiwana's Park and Mitchell School.

Agenda Item 7 – ASU Updates – Maggie Soffel

Novus Updates

- Salt & Straw is now open, showcasing their Halloween flavors.
- ASU is working on programming the park space. Sun Devil Athletics has been incorporating some of their events into that space:
 - Moonlite Madness was hosted there
 - The Hockey Team meet and greet event.
 - ASU's marching band makes a tour through the area on game days.
- The restaurants are starting to use the park area, and Catellus arranged for a band the weekend of October 17th to play. This created a nice pre-game experience.
- The community is starting to reach out for events.
- The park is open for reservations via the Novus website.

McCain Updates

- Architects are still working on schematic designs. Meanwhile, the asbestos removal is almost finished and moving to site prep and building demo. This should be completed this spring.
- Exhibits and programming are continuing to be developed in that space.

Rio Reimagined Updates

- Scoping of RIO vision plan is wrapping up by the end of the year. Directions by the leaders of the RIO communities, including Tempe, on whether to move forward with the scope of work is anticipated in early 2026.
- The Maricopa Association of Governments' active transportation planning study for the RIO study area is underway, with community engagement planned for this fall/winter of 2025.
- No updates for the new social impact organization for RIO. It's still in the early stages.

Agenda Item 8 – Downtown Tempe Update – Michael Martin

3rd Quarter Update:

- 169 street-level businesses are currently downtown. 8 new businesses opened in the last quarter, 4 businesses closed.
- 40% of open businesses are food/beverage
- 67% are independently owned
- 27 current street level vacancies
 - **New businesses:**
 - Arizona Pizza Co. (Marina Heights),
 - Gio's Coffee (414 S Mill Courtyard),
 - Prince St. Pizza,
 - Rite Yah Sah (Veteran's & College),
 - Last Rodeo Boots & Hats,
 - Willie's Taco Joint (in Vib Hotel),
 - Method Wellness & Fusion (above Devil's Hideaway, old Rula Bula),
 - Crystal Hoarder (inside Candle Chemistry),
 - Proof Bread,
 - Hayden House Cafe (Hayden Ferry Lakeside, was Silo)
 - **On Deck/coming soon:**
 - Rush Bowls, Green Corner (both on college),
 - Novel Ice Cream (Walker House)
 - Several others with letters of intent or signed leases that have requested not to be public yet.
- Military banners will be up in November, holiday lights will be installed on lampposts this year (instead of trees), new floral hanging baskets are being installed along Rio Salado, 5th Street

- **Events**
 - 2nd Sundays on Mill, first of the season on November 9 from 10 am - 3 pm. Theme is Multiculture, featuring 9 cultural performances, over 75 local makers/artists, free mini golf, a Kid's Market, Dreamy Dubs VW car showcase, art projects, live music & free bike valet from Tempe Bicycle Action Group.
 - Fantasy of Lights Street Parade +Tree Lighting will be on Saturday, November 29 from 4 - 8 pm (ASU v UA game is on Friday this year). Parade steps off at 6 pm, Tempe Sister Cities is the Grand Marshal, tree lighting ceremony approx. 7 pm & Photos w/ Santa until 8 pm
 - Fall Tempe Festival of the Arts, December 5-7, 2025 - over 300 artists, Arizona Wine & Spirits Tasting presented by BMW, live music & more.
 - Fantasy of Light Boat Parade, Saturday, December 13 from 4 - 9 pm at Tempe Beach Park featuring 40+ boats, holiday market, love music & entertainment, Santa, beer garden, food trucks and fireworks
 - Tempe Blooms, January 24-25, 2026 - all over downtown - so much bloomin' fun! Blooms won the Award of Excellence from the International Downtown Association at the annual conference in Washington DC in September.
 - Always find the Inside Scoop of what's happening downtown at www.downtowntempe.com
- **Mill Ave Construction**
 - Work on Varsity Tavern SE 5th Street and Mill corner began October 6th and will run through approximately mid-November.
 - Work on the 3rd St SE corner will begin approximately October 6th and will wrap up the week of the 27th.
 - 4th Street is OPEN!
- **UPCOMING WORK**
 - The last corner of the project, NE corner of 5th and Mill, will most likely begin mid-November once they are finished with the SE corner.
 - Gateway signage will be installed between University Dr. and 7th on Mill and will require a 4-day closure of Mill between 7th and Uni. Pushed to approximately March.
 - If all goes well, hard scape will be finished by Christmas (aside from gateway sign) with only finishing touches such as trees, mulch, sealing around pole bases, cleaning, installing artwork etc. left until the end of February.
 - Full Mill Ave paving will fully end the project next summer 2026.

Agenda Item 9 – Public Works/Transportation Updates – Tara Ford / Eric Iwersen

Mill Avenue is going well and is ahead of construction. There will be a brief pause at the beginning of the year when the work is done. After the pause, Public Works will come back to complete a full Mill Ave overlay, repaving the street. However, during this project's excavating, there have been and will continue to be a lot of discoveries that are aging and need to be re-reviewed and reconstructed for stability and future use. The paving of the street is anticipated to be complete by the summer of 2026.

Agenda Item 10 – Public and Private Development Update – Jeff Tamulevich, Ryan Levesque, and Mike Baxley

Building Safety has been handling a certain number of issues with various buildings/structures around the city due to the storm (microburst) including finding alternative housing for some residences that lost their homes. Expected to be a long-term process to resolve the damage.

Private Development currently doesn't have any active cases in this area but are working with Novus. Novus is working to add another component to the corridor located on the NW corner of Rio Salado and Rural Road. This is the east section of the development area phase that will revoke the original PAD of that site and incorporate it into the master plan of the Novus Corridor. This process will create more future projects in this east section of the Novus Corridor.

New high rise broke ground in the area of 7th street and College right next to the current high rise that is being built called "Astris."

Upcoming soon, a Downtown Historic Core plan study which will evaluate both the historic element assets in the downtown and create ideas and visions on how Tempe can grow.

The city is taking some time to clean up the Flour Mill and are assessing the equipment inside the mill. The city is working on some great ideas on how it could be used in the future.

Announcements

Next meeting is the 4th quarter meeting and the annual meeting on January 20, 2026.

Meeting adjourned at 9:36 am

Prepared by Sarah Adame and Ryan Lang
Reviewed by: Ryan Lang and Jacob Payne



Jeff Tamulevich
Community Development Director
Secretary of the Commission