



City of Phoenix

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

To: City of Phoenix Planning Commission **Date:** September 29, 2026

From: Enrique Bojórquez Gaxiola
Planner III

Subject: ITEM NO. 2 (GPA-CC-SM-1-26-7-8) – RIO SALADO DISTRICT POLICY PLAN

The purpose of this memo is to present several modifications to the [Rio Salado District Policy Plan](#) for case GPA-CC-SM-1-26-7-8, following the September 8, 2026 South Mountain Village Planning Committee (VPC) meeting, where a recommendation of approval by a vote of 11-1 was provided per the [Addendum A](#) staff report with an additional action.

The additional action recommended by the South Mountain VPC has been incorporated to revision No. E below (fifth bullet point). In addition to the changes recommended by the South Mountain VPC, staff recommends two additional changes requested by the community to the plan, generally described as follows:

- Minor updates to the “Historic Factors” section to further clarify information.
- Revision to the language on one Government-led action related to service coordination for individuals experiencing homelessness.

Furthermore, since the [Addendum A](#) staff report was published, three additional letters in support have been received. The first letter contains a petition with signatures in support from the Ruiz Family, who has worked with staff to identify several revisions to the actions in the plan. The second letter is from Phoenix Community Alliance (PCA), a Downtown Phoenix organization, who supports several plan elements related to connectivity, economic development, and the establishment of an arts, culture, and nature district on the river. Finally, the third letter is from Local First Arizona who support the plan’s vision and emphasis on health, diverse housing, local businesses, economic development, and stronger connections to the river, while encouraging ongoing community input for the plan and future investments. This correspondence has been attached to this memo.

Staff recommends approval, per the modifications in CAPITAL/**BOLD** font below:

A. Page 38 – Update the “Barrios Unidos” reference in the Historic Factors section with the following text:

- **Change first paragraph to: Located in south-central Phoenix, several neighborhoods, or barrios, are situated between Washington Street (North), 24th Street (East), University Drive (South), and 7th Street**

(West). To the west of 16th Street are Cuatro Milpas, Green Valley, and El Campito, while to the east lies a barrio formerly known as Golden Gate. FOLLOWING THE WEST APPROACH LAND ACQUISITION, “BARRIOS UNIDOS” CAME TO REPRESENT THE REMAINING RESIDENTS AND THEIR SHARED COMMUNITY IDENTITY.

- **Change a portion of the last paragraph, first sentence to: “...the United Farm Workers to stay at the Santa Rita Center, also known as Santa Rita Hall, THE SOCIAL HALL FOR SANTA RITA CHAPEL OF SACRED HEART PARISH.”**

B. Pages 75 through 78 – Add the following text regarding considerations for residential uses on Catalyst Site 3 located east of 16th Street and Elwood Street to: “Given the existing condition of this inactive mining pit, future considerations for residential uses here include but are not limited to floodplain regulations, accessibility, aviation noise impacts, geotechnical challenges, and the process to fill and compact soil gradually over time to an elevation above the floodplain.”

A.

C. Pages 85 and 86 – Revise the 2050 Land Use Map accordingly per the approved General Plan Land Use Map Amendment, Case No. GPA-CC-SM-2-26-7-8.

D. Page 88 – Update the Land Use Building Typology table with the following provisions:

- **Low-Mid Density Residential:**
 - **Height: 1-3 stories, up to 4 with housing bonus***
- **High Density Residential:**
 - **Height: 2-4 stories, up to 6 with housing bonus***
- **Mixed Use Category:**
 - **Height: 3-5 stories, up to 7 with housing bonus***
- **Commercial Category:**
 - **Height: 1-3 stories, up to 6 with housing bonus***
- **Add footnote below the table with the following statement –**
**** Affordable housing bonus: To encourage more affordable housing, additional building height may be supported on new developments. Areas within adopted Place Type policies may defer to those existing policies on height and incentive standards.***

E. Pages 129 through 134 – Update the Government-led Actions with the following text and identifying relevant city departments for each action:

- ***Action No. 3: Rezone catalyst and “reimagined” properties and/or deploy an opt-in zoning approach to encourage new development in alignment with the community vision. Where added height, density or change of use is requested or where the City-owned land is utilized, or City assistance is provided to a project; when feasible, include affordable or workforce housing components, and opportunities for local business engagement or community spaces or uses.***
- ***Action No. 14: Continue and, where feasible, expand citywide programs that promote homeownership, housing preservation, renter stability, home repairs, and business assistance to support existing residents and locally owned businesses in the Rio Salado District. Explore displacement indicators as investment occurs and use the data to identify potential assistance programs and grants to support the area.***
- ***Action No. 26: Explore the feasibility of technical assistance, financial incentives, and/or public improvements to support new residential development that includes long-term affordable housing for a range of incomes, and home improvements that help existing residents remain in place. Where feasible on City-owned land, determine appropriate affordability terms through future Request for Proposals, rezonings, and development agreements.***
- ***Action No. 41: Continue to invest in permanent housing, plus develop and implement new housing models, including master leasing and coordinate existing outreach and improve connection to behavioral health supports, including substance use and mental health treatment. THIS INCLUDES OUTREACH COORDINATION WITH COMMUNITY AND CITY DEPARTMENT PARTNERS, WITH CONSIDERATION OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS, especially during major Rio Salado Habitat Restoration Area improvements for individuals experiencing homelessness.***
- ***Add new action: Encourage local business and developer outreach and engagement during the redevelopment of City-owned properties, SUCH AS ADVERTISING REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS through venues which will include the local development community and community partners. IN ADDITION, HOLDING PRE-SOLICITATION TEAMING SESSIONS AND EXPLORING OTHER WAYS TO CREATE SUBSTANTIVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL PARTICIPATION WHERE LEGALLY AND PROGRAMMATICALLY FEASIBLE.***

- **Add new action: *Coordinate implementation efforts in the Rio Salado District and South Central corridor to promote a continuous development pattern, served by comparable access to infrastructure, programs and services. This includes identifying cross-boundary projects in future infrastructure needs assessments and related funding requests.***
 - **Add new action: *Create an interactive online tool that is easy to use by the public and reports on progress related to the actions in the Rio Salado District Policy Plan. In addition to this tool, informing a wider audience by updating the RIO PHX project website and providing an annual implementation update through an existing public forum (such as the Village Planning Committees).***
- F. Add a new section to the plan that discourages displacement and encourages affordable and market rate housing, recognizing that long-term affordability is an important objective as redevelopment occurs, and encourages use of existing preservation and other long-term affordability tools within or near the district when feasible.**
- G. Add a new section to the plan that acknowledges existing sources of aggregate and clarifies policies on these areas, consistent with the “Sources of Aggregate” section in the 2025 General Plan.**

Enclosure:

Correspondence (5 pages)

South Phoenix Community Support for the Rio Salado District Policy Plan

September 8, 2026

GPA-CC-SM-1-26-7-8

To the South Mountain Village Planning Committee and City of Phoenix Planning Staff:

We support the restoration of the Rio Salado, improved public access, and thoughtful investment in the surrounding area. We appreciate the work City staff and departments have done in response to feedback from South Phoenix community members. The latest revisions address the concerns raised around affordability, displacement, public accountability, and meaningful opportunities for local participation in redevelopment.

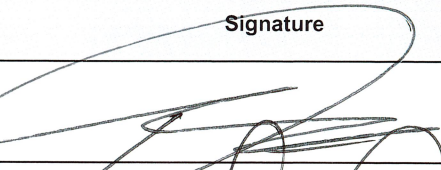
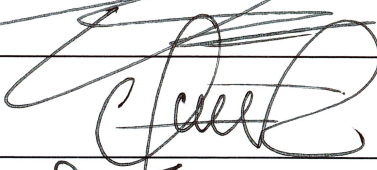
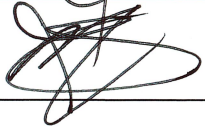
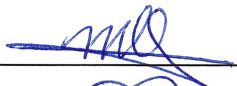
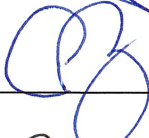
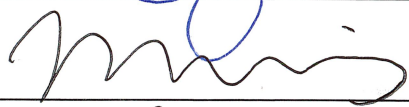
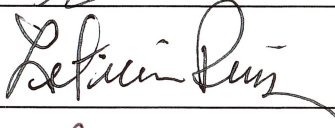
For these reasons, we respectfully ask the South Mountain Village Planning Committee to RECOMMEND APPROVAL of the Rio Salado District Policy Plan. We appreciate the City's responsiveness and continued engagement with the South Phoenix community throughout this process.

Fernando Ruiz *frui2@projectamericas.com*

Respectfully,
South Phoenix community members and supporters

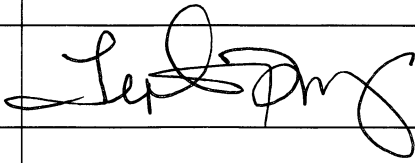
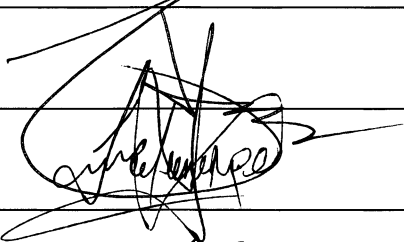
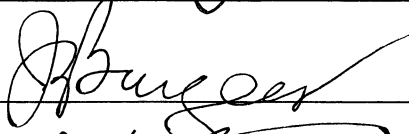
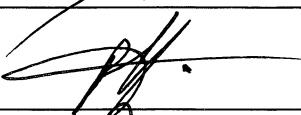
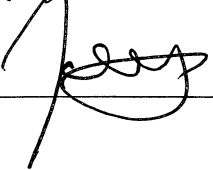
Rio Salado District Policy Plan - Community Support Signatures

By signing below, I support the attached South Phoenix Community Support for the Rio Salado District Policy Plan (GPA-CC-SM-1-26-7-8).

Printed Name	Signature	Date
Israel Diaz		Sep, 8, 2026
Marcos Carbajal		Sep 18/2026
Nobia Carrillo		9/8/26
Monica Ruiz		9/8/26
Armando Ruiz		9/8/26
Armando Ruiz Jr.		9/8/26
Alexis Ruiz		9/8/26
Paulo Zavaleta		9/8/26
Leticia Ruiz		9/8/2026
Reanna Loera		9/8/2026
Clarissa Morales		9/8/2026
Mauricio Rojas		Sep 8, 2026

Rio Salado District Policy Plan - Community Support Signatures

By signing below, I support the attached South Phoenix Community Support for the Rio Salado District Policy Plan (GPA-CC-SM-1-26-7-8).

Printed Name	Signature	Date
Tepili del Rosario Ruiz		9/8/26
Xochitl Ramirez		9-8-26
Samantha Miranda		9-8/26
Fernando Ruiz		9-8-26
Lucy Lopez		9-8-26
Xocoyatzin Ruiz		9/8/26
Rosana Burgess		9/8/26
ENRIQUETA SOSA		9/8/26
Ramos Rivera.		9/8/26
Patricia Sosa		9/8/26



September 15, 2026

Chair and Members
Phoenix Planning Commission

The Honorable Kate Gallego, Mayor
Members of the Phoenix City Council
200 West Washington Street
Phoenix, Arizona 85003

RE: Support for the Rio Salado District Policy Plan (RIO PHX), Case GPA-CC-SM-1-26-7-8

Dear Commissioners, Mayor Gallego and Councilmembers:

The Members of the Phoenix Community Alliance support adoption of the Rio Salado District Policy Plan. The district begins at Downtown's southern edge, so the future of the district and the future of Greater Downtown Phoenix are connected.

Three elements of the plan speak to priorities our Members have long advocated for.

Connectivity and shade. The plan calls for shaded active transportation corridors, a circulator linking river-adjacent neighborhoods to the Rio Salado Habitat Restoration Area, and a pedestrian bridge at 3rd Street joining the north and south banks. Our Members advocate for multi-modal connections that are safe, reliable and accessible for people of all ages, and for the heat mitigation that keeps them usable through more of the year.

Catalytic sites and economic growth. The City-owned 30-acre site south of the river, the Arizona Fresh redevelopment, and the transition of underused industrial land give the private sector a clear picture of the City's intent well ahead of a request for proposals. That predictability helps attract investment and jobs to this part of Phoenix.

Arts, culture and placemaking. An arts, culture and nature district on the river, public art in private development, and a district identity built with the people who live there draw residents and visitors, and give the district a character worth protecting.

This is the first plan in the RIO PHX series, so the framework adopted here will shape how the rest of the corridor is planned. It rests on three years of engagement that reached more than 1,000 individuals, more than 500 survey responses, and over 50 community meetings.

We respectfully urge your approval, and we offer Phoenix Community Alliance as a partner in carrying the plan into implementation.

Sincerely,

Diane Haller
Chair

Brent Stockwell
Advocacy Director

cc: Joshua Bednarek, Director, Planning and Development Department, City of Phoenix



1505 E. Missouri Ave, Suite 100, Phoenix, AZ 85014 | 602-956-0909

September 25, 2026

City of Phoenix Planning & Development Department
200 West Washington Street, 3rd Floor
Phoenix, AZ 85003

Re: Rio Salado District Policy Plan

Dear Mr. Enrique Bojórquez Gaxiola,

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the Rio Salado District Policy Plan and General Plan Land Use Map. We support the Plan's vision for a vibrant, connected community that brings together residents, nature, recreation, housing, and economic opportunity. We are encouraged by the Plan's emphasis on community health, diverse housing, local businesses, economic development, and stronger connections between residents and the Rio Salado. And we appreciate the City's continued community engagement as the Plan moves forward.

We were particularly encouraged by the recent recommendation of the South Mountain Village Planning Committee, which voted 11-1 to recommend approval of the Rio Salado District Policy Plan and 12-0 to recommend approval of the associated General Plan Land Use Map Amendment. We understand these recommendations incorporated community input and additional direction regarding local business engagement, redevelopment, and expanded residential options.

As the Rio Salado District develops, we encourage the City to ensure that investment creates meaningful benefits for existing residents, locally owned businesses, and the broader community. Most importantly, we encourage the City to continue listening closely to the residents, businesses, and community organizations who know the area best. Ongoing community input can help ensure that the Plan reflects local priorities and delivers meaningful benefits for the community.

We greatly appreciate the opportunity to provide input on the Rio Salado District Policy Plan and the City's ongoing work to engage the community. We look forward to seeing the Plan continue to move forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kimber Lanning".

Kimber Lanning
CEO
Local First Arizona