



City of Prescott

City Council - Study Session

June 23, 2026 | 1:00 PM
201 N Montezuma Street
Council Chambers, 1st Floor
Prescott, AZ 86301

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Rusing called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Cathey Rusing - Mayor

Lois Fruhwirth - Mayor Pro Tem (Participated Virtually)

Mary Frederickson - Councilwoman

Ted Gambogi - Councilman

Jim Garing - Councilman

Patrick Grady - Councilman

Jay Ruby - Councilman

3. DISCUSSION

- A. Presentation & Discussion Regarding the Rodeo/Fairgrounds Master Plan Project Update.

Robert Wadsack and Kala Ade with GH2 Architects provided a presentation on the Rodeo-Fairgrounds Master Plan update. They provided a preliminary overview of the project work up to this point.

Project Timeline:

- * October - pre-design
- * November & December - vision and alignment with stakeholder visioning meetings
- * December & January - project context and site assessment with facility and site assessment
- * February - program development with first community meeting
- * March - program development with stakeholder meeting
- * April through June - architectural vision and master plan development; community meeting; farmers market exhibit
- * Study Session
- * Still to come - World's Oldest Rodeo exhibit; community meeting; master plan completion and Council adoption

Community Engagement:

- * Facility and site assessments
- * Multiple community meetings
- * Stakeholder meeting
- * Farmer's Market exhibit

- * World's Oldest Rodeo exhibit
- * Over 170 responses were received at the recent community meeting and at least 60% of those were strongly in favor of the direction of the master plan

Important Themes:

- * Infrastructure and facilities modernization
- * Collaboration, coexistence and balanced use
- * Environmental stewardship and aesthetics
- * Site management, governance and leases
- * Parking, circulation and access
- * Preservation of historic and cultural identity
- * Community access and shared public space
- * Event management and noise control

Goal of the Master Plan:

- * Strengthening Core Operations
- * Control Flow of traffic around the site
- * Shuttle drop off
- * Parking improvements

Ms. Ade continued with an overview of the proposed updated layout for the property, stating that the Master Plan signals an intent to meld environmental considerations with the historic importance of the rodeo. Creating a modernized and flexible venue that will serve the community year round. This is the plan that was presented at the June community meeting and there will be updates based on feedback received at that time before the next meeting which will include additional environmental considerations.

Next Steps & Upcoming Meetings:

- * Budgeting cost estimates
- * Phasing
- * Refine circulation
- * Environmental considerations
- * Historical and archeological
- * World's Oldest Rodeo Meeting
- * August Community Meeting
- * 60-day Public Comment Period
- * Final City Council presentation and future adoption

Councilman Gambogi commented that traffic, parking and sound are the most important issues. He asked the consultants to address that.

Mr. Wadsack responded that they are aware of the issues that have faced the area and how important updates are. The proposal would be to install removable bollards around Fair Street (similar to those downtown) that would come up at a specific time and remain active for a specific amount of time. This would help address existing traffic issues. With regard to parking, the Plan proposes the following: 1) 1,059 gravel spots; 2) 248 unpaved spots; 3) 120 spots for trailer parking. Currently, the fairgrounds have approximately 1,000 spaces in total.

Mayor Rusing asked about the clustering of bathrooms in one building, as well as the pole barn space proposed.

Mr. Wadsack provided clarification and stated that while there will be one dedicated building as indicated in the conceptual plan, there will continue to be additional bathrooms where they already exist on the property. He added that the covered arena will replace existing warm up arena, intended for stalling and updated space.

City Manager Dallin Kimble added that the pole barn is on the east side of the property, while a multi-use pavilion would be located on the west side of the property which could potentially be used for weddings or smaller events.

Mayor Rusing also commented on the importance of spending the state allocated money for the improvements of the rodeo for it's enhancement.

Councilman Grady thanked the presenters for their time and stated that he is in favor of what he sees and appreciates the work that has gone into taking community input into consideration. He also asked if a traffic study was necessary, and commented that he was hoping to see landscaping proposals and asked if that is still to come. Finally, he asked about the Cooperative Extension enhancements within the proposal.

Mr. Wadsack stated that he would recommend a traffic study for this scale of Master Plan, and added that landscaping would be forthcoming following additional community meetings.

Ms. Ade added that with the addition of these facilities it will offer the opportunity to host 4H, youth programs and other rodeo events year-round as well.

Cooperative Extension Director Matt Halldorson stated that enhancements to their facility will include additional meeting space, enough office space for all staff which they don't currently have and a teaching kitchen. This would be very similarly modeled after what Pima County has.

Councilman Ruby stated that a lot of progress has been made on the Master Plan and this is something that is very important to Prescott so he is happy to see a stakeholder process that involves many people in the community. He did comment that he wondered why the northern portion of the parking area does not have the floodplain indicated, and what they plan to do with environmental remediation. Also, he commented that what is being planned leans into the potential for economic development in Prescott and he is glad to see the integration of that.

Mr. Wadsack responded that the area was mapped after what was provided from FEMA, and they did receive a presentation at the last Community Meeting where the environmental issues were addressed. These expanded on the bio-swale systems and will be shown in the next iteration of the Plan.

Mayor Pro Tem Fruhwirth commented on the fact that while about 63% were

strongly in favor of the proposal, she noted that there is still a high number of those in disagreement and asked if the primary reason is based on concern with sufficient contestant parking and space for Yavapai County Fair. If that is the reason, she would like to see that considered more in the ongoing work on the Plan. She also asked about the total space that the County has had access to in the past and would like to find the right solution to those concerns.

Mr. Wadsack responded that there will be trailer-defined parking in the next iteration. Things are still very much malleable and being worked on so there will be more specific work on that.

Councilwoman Frederickson asked about the potential for bollards on Gail Gardener as well as Fair Street. She also asked about whether the multi-use building would be multiple stories.

Mr. Wadsack responded that those sets would not be up at the same time. For example, during arrival the ones on Fair Street would be up and toward the end of the rodeo night the Fair Street bollards would go down and then potentially go up on Gail Gardener.

Ms. Ade added that this will be discussed at the next community meeting. There is the potential for two stories, with the intent of being flexible.

Mr. Halldorson added that they have heard how important a family resource center is for the community as well, and they would like to have one included in the extension as well, for everyone in Yavapai County.

Councilman Garing echoed other Council comments about needing more detail regarding the multi-use facility and the covered arena. He also asked if there has been a survey on cultural resources, if not, he strongly recommends that be done ahead of time. The surrounding neighbors are not in favor of any expanded use, and he wants to ensure their concerns regarding the impacts address that issue.

Mr. Wadsack stated that there is nothing in the current plan that would address archeological but it could be part of next steps.

Mr. Kimble discussed the fact that there will be many more steps in this process, before anything is constructed, there will be additional conversations related to archaeological and water lines, equipment barn, etc. The lease is also a place where Council and the city could take a look at uses and how that contributes to the property as a whole, but that will come after the Master Plan process itself.

Member of the public Carter LaBarge addressed the Council regarding the comments provided at the recent community meeting and asked if they were provided to the Council. This meeting should include the comments of the taxpayers and that is critically important to this process. If they don't have it, the process should be stopped. Financial projections should be included in the Master Plan discussions as well.

Member of the public Earl Duque addressed the Council as a member of the Steering Committee. He believes they are making meaningful progress toward a property that meets the needs of its many users. We can preserve the history of the rodeo while still keeping in mind the importance of the surrounding neighborhoods, environmental considerations are being incorporated into the plan and this is an opportunity to create something uniquely Prescott. As the Plan moves forward, there does need to be additional clarifications on the multi-use facility, buckle club doesn't appear on the drawings, site plan should clearly identify pedestrian areas and landscaping, manure and composting area should be properly engineered.

Member of the public Deborah Thalasis addressed the Council and asked if a shuttle drop off is still in play. She did review the comments from the open house and ran it through AI, the first open house was year round community use was one of the biggest needs and the second open house showed that the Master Plan has gained much more support. She thanked the Council and staff for allowing the community to have input, however, she expressed her concern that the Council is being asked to approve buildings on paper without policy discussions related to those matters. She stated that homes in this area are being purchased by young families because they are more affordable, and she thinks that is an important policy discussion to have as well.

Mr. Kimble confirmed that the drop-off is still in consideration.

Member of the public Truly Bracken addressed the Council and thanked Mr. Kimble for recognizing and addressing the environmental issues, and for the fact that the environmental team will be part of the process moving forward as well. During the earlier rezoning process, the manure composting was discussed and the environmental team is on board with the Rodeo's proposal as long as it is properly placed and maintained.

Member of the public Marty Siegel addressed the Council as a resident of the Gail Gardener neighborhood, she discussed the Earth Day events where the neighborhood group hosted a booth to discuss the environmental concerns which will take collaboration to address. They feel the creeks and lakes must be protected while also supporting the Rodeo events. She submitted a petition to the Council supporting the group's efforts to address the environmental issues.

Member of the public Kathleen Yetman addressed the Council and stated that this process is a meaningful representation of the Council and staff's commitment to agricultural needs in the community. She thanked Scott Balk for his work in managing the project and partnership in the Community Compost Program. The Farmer's Market is such an important gathering space for the community every Saturday and she looks forward to seeing how it all works out.

Member of the public Matthew Halldorson addressed the Council regarding the Cooperative Extension which is a nationwide service, and has been active in Prescott since 1919 and have been at the Rodeo Grounds for 20-years. He handed out information to the Council with the extensions annual report and discussed the work they do for the community.

Member of the public Levi Darby addressed the Council as the Director of the Yavapai County Fair. He expressed his frustration with the managing of the fairgrounds. He feels the Rodeo should be managing it, this is the Rodeo Grounds. GH2 should be studying the Fair in September because it is bigger than the Rodeo as it relates to traffic and parking. Things continue to get bigger, the community will never stop complaining and can never be made happy. What goes on in the multi-use building is none of anyone's business.

Member of the public Rosalie Darby addressed the Council as the GM for the Yavapai County Fair, which serves the whole community. They service 4H and FFA, as well as all youth in Yavapai County which is the third-largest county in the state. This Master Plan doesn't provide enough space to meet the needs of the Fair. The Steering Committee has been productive in trying to make things work. The grounds were donated in 1913 for the purpose of the Fair and the Rodeo before any family lived there, there is a lot of time over analyzing and surveying losing the culture of what this is about.

Councilman Gambogi asked for someone to address composting and why you can't mix manure with it after the session is over.

Councilman Ruby asked the City Attorney to address the property and legal standing. There are a lot of different facets of the community using this property, so it is truly a Community Grounds.

City Attorney Joseph Young responded it is city property, and he doesn't know what happened in 1913 or 1920, but there is no specific deed restriction. The lease dictates what the use of the property is.

This item was for discussion only, no formal action was taken.

4. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, Mayor Rusing adjourned the meeting at 2:27 p.m.

Cathey Rusing

CATHEY RUSING, Mayor

ATTEST:

Sarah M. Thornhill

SARAH M. THORNHILL, City Clerk



CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Voting Meeting of the City Council Voting Meeting of the City of Prescott, Arizona held on June 23, 2026. I further certify the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Sarah M. Thornhill

Sarah M. Thornhill, City Clerk