

City of Phoenix District 8

**Councilwoman Kesha Hodge Washington**

# **Two-Year (2023-2025) Report**



# A Message from the Councilwoman

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

As I mark my second year serving as your councilwoman, I want to take a moment to thank you for the trust you have placed in me and to highlight some of the progress we have made together. Representing our district is an honor and a responsibility that I take to heart every single day. Since my swearing in on April 17, 2023, I have focused on the issues that matter most to our community: addressing homelessness, improving housing affordability, driving inclusive economic development, and pursuing initiatives that benefit our community. These accomplishments have only been possible because of your engagement, advocacy, and belief in what we can achieve together. I am excited for what lies ahead and deeply grateful to serve such a passionate and forward-looking community. [Click here](#) to stay connected to my office via social media or by subscribing to our monthly newsletter.

With gratitude,

*Kesha Hodge Washington*  
City of Phoenix, District 8 Councilwoman

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# ***Housing and Human Services***

Housing affordability continues to be one of the most pressing concerns facing our community. That's why I have actively supported and championed policies aimed at increasing the availability of affordable homes, protecting renters from unreasonable displacement, and streamlining the permitting and approval process for new housing developments. These efforts have not only accelerated the production of much-needed housing, but have also prioritized keeping long-term residents in their communities and maintaining neighborhood stability. Throughout this work, I have made it a priority to ensure that community voices remain central to the decision-making process, by partnering with those most affected to develop real solutions.

Here are some of the key accomplishments I've delivered for residents over the past two years:

## ***Eviction Legal Services Program***

### Phoenix spends \$1.3M to offer residents free eviction legal services

Council adds more vendors in program's first month



By Mark Carlisle  
Mail | X: @mwcarlisle  
Posted 1/31/25

I am proud to have championed the City of Phoenix's [Eviction Legal Services Program](#), which provides free legal representation to eligible tenants facing eviction. This critical initiative helps prevent homelessness, safeguard families from losing their homes, and ensure that residents—regardless of income—have access to legal support when navigating the complex eviction process.

## ***Housing Trust Fund***

I have also successfully advocated for increased funding for the City of Phoenix's Housing Trust Fund to respond to the affordable housing demands, prevent displacement, and accelerate housing development through public-private partnerships. The Housing Trust Fund equips the City with another tool in our growing toolbox to respond to the housing needs and prepare the City for possible reductions to state and federal funding.



# Housing and Human Services

## More Federal Resources

- As your Councilwoman, I have successfully petitioned our federal partners for an increased allocation of Housing Choice Vouchers to align with the needs of our community. The program helps thousands of low-income families afford safe, stable homes by partnering with landlords and working to expand access amid high demand.

## Policy Changes

- I supported the formal adoption of Accessory Dwelling Units, which provides flexible living options for families, seniors, and young adults, while supporting multigenerational living and economic resilience.
- I also supported reducing parking requirements for new multifamily housing developments near transit corridors to lower construction costs, promote affordable housing, and encourage walkable, sustainable communities.

3,368 

**NEW** dwelling units added across District 8 since taking office

## Key Projects in District 8

- I supported the development of the Girasol Apartments and the Horizon on Villa, both in the Edison-Eastlake area, which will add over 500 affordable units by 2027.
- I backed the construction of 10 new energy-efficient homes in the Garfield neighborhood, to complement the historic character of the area, with completion expected by the end of 2026.
- I worked to help secure funding for new developments at Soluna and Marcos de Niza communities, further expanding affordable housing options in District 8.





# Community Engagement

Community engagement is the cornerstone of building a stronger, more inclusive district. Over the past two years, I have prioritized open communication, fostering connections between residents, local organizations, and leaders. My goal is clear: to create a community where everyone's voice is heard and valued. By working closely with neighborhood associations, schools, and community groups, we have facilitated or supported hundreds of outreach events, ensuring that all residents have access to the resources, support, and opportunities they deserve. Through these efforts, we are not just engaging with our community—we are empowering it to thrive.

*Attended over*



*Community Events*

*Annual Holiday Party*



My annual holiday party is a joyful tradition that brings neighbors, local leaders, and community partners together to celebrate the season and strengthen the connections that make our community resilient. It is a meaningful opportunity to reflect on the past year, share gratitude, and build relationships that carry our work forward into the new year.

*Energize Eight Roundtables*



I organized a series of community-focused meetings across the District, where over 350 residents met with city staff to collaboratively explore solutions to local concerns.

*Coffee with Kesha*



I hosted Coffee Chats across the District where more than 150 residents engaged directly with myself in open, solutions-focused conversations to address issues and strengthen community connections.





# Community Engagement

## Inaugural 602 Day

On June 2, 2024, the City of Phoenix celebrated its first 602 Day – a new civic holiday honoring the city's original area code. Through a vibrant event hosted by my office at 24th Street and Broadway, the celebration united residents, businesses, and city officials to showcase local culture, support commerce, and build lasting community pride.

## Ceremonial Street Signings

I had the honor of leading street signings in District 8 to celebrate individuals and movements that have shaped our community, including Vernell Coleman, Michael Carbajal, Pastor C.R. McDuffy, Avenida de las Mujeres del Movimiento, and Mary Rose Wilcox, each honoring their significant contributions to our district's history and future.



“ District 8 has the kind of representation that everyone deserves from their council office.  
District 8 Resident, G.A.S. ”

## Community Support



**Constituent Cases  
Closed / Resolved**



**in Participatory Budget funds  
distributed for community  
programming/projects**





# Homelessness Solutions

The City of Phoenix has taken real steps forward in supporting our unhoused neighbors. I have worked closely with local service providers and housing organizations to expand shelter capacity, invest in mental health outreach, and create more pathways to permanent supportive housing. We still have more to do—but we are building a stronger, more compassionate response.

## *“On the Ground” Approach*



I participated in the clean up of “The Zone” and in the annual Point in Time Count, joining staff and volunteers across the City to survey and better understand the needs of our unsheltered neighbors as we work toward effective solutions to ending homelessness.

## *Investments in Shelters*

**1,150** 

**NEW** shelter beds funded across the City since taking office

*850 indoor beds, 300 outdoor beds, and more than 200 in the pipeline*

## *Provider Roundtable*



I also convened a roundtable with local providers that serve our unsheltered residents to gain a better understanding of their needs and their plans for continued operations when funding is curtailed.

PHOENIX

### Phoenix OKs stopgap funding to keep downtown homeless shelter open

Lux Butler Arizona Republic

Feb. 22, 2024 | Updated Feb. 26, 2024, 3:11 p.m. MT



I supported the funding needed to support continuation of vital shelter services, with stipulations aimed at enhancing transparency and accountability, and simultaneously calling for a comprehensive regional response. I also called for the audit of our service providers to identify any gaps and areas for improvements.



# Economic Development

Economic development goes hand-in-hand with opportunity and stability for our community. Over the past two years, I have supported small business opportunities, job training initiatives, and targeted investments in historically underserved areas of our district. My goal is clear: to build a more resilient local economy that uplifts everyone.



In collaboration with the Community and Economic Development Department and others, we have seen more than **\$1.5B** of capital invested into District 8, representing over **2,600** jobs.

## Health Research Investments

VALLEY

### Multi-million dollar deal approved for 7-story research center in Phoenix

The University of Arizona Health Sciences research center will focus on developing novel strategies for preventing and treating diseases.

I was proud to support the City of Phoenix's \$20 million investment in the Center for Advanced Molecular and Immunological Therapies (referred to as "CAMI"), a transformative research hub in District 8 that will drive innovation, create high-wage jobs, boost education and workforce development, and generate over \$3.9 billion in statewide economic impact. This investment further reinforces Phoenix's role as a national leader in bioscience and ensures long-term opportunities for our community and future generations.

## Partnerships



I deeply value strong partnerships with our local chambers of commerce — including the Greater Phoenix Chamber and the South Mountain and Laveen Chamber. They play a vital role in supporting small businesses, attracting new investment, and advancing inclusive economic growth across District 8. Working with multiple chambers broadens our reach, strengthens community connections, and helps ensure that economic opportunities benefit diverse neighborhoods and business communities.



# Economic Development

## South Mountain Retail Survey

I launched a retail and restaurant survey for South Mountain Village residents to understand community needs, which revealed strong demand for more grocery stores and diverse dining options. My office then worked with City staff to create a strategic plan aligning future developments with these desires to boost economic growth, attract retail, and improve residents' quality of life.

## Microkiosks at PHX

I advocated for small business micro kiosks at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport, which create low-barrier opportunities for local entrepreneurs and foster diversity, innovation, and inclusive economic growth in a high-traffic, international hub.

## Mega Events help District 8

I worked to ensure that large events, like the NCAA Final Four and WNBA All Star, invested in our communities and benefitted District 8 residents.



## BIO International

I attended BIO International to help energize Phoenix's bioscience core by fostering partnerships, attracting innovation, and advancing our city's position as a hub for cutting-edge research and life sciences.

## Transit Holiday Bucks

My office partnered with Valley Metro to bring Transit Holiday Bucks, helping residents save on transportation costs during the holiday season while promoting the use of public transit and supporting businesses along the light rail Central expansion.



# Community Safety

Community safety is the foundation of a thriving and resilient district. Over the past two years, I have made it a priority to strengthen trust and collaboration between residents, law enforcement, and local organizations. Our shared goal is to create neighborhoods where every individual feels secure, supported, and seen. By partnering with neighborhood watch groups, schools, and violence prevention organizations, we have supported safety-focused events, workshops, and resource fairs. These efforts go beyond response—they are about prevention, education, and empowerment, ensuring safety is not just a goal but a shared responsibility and a lived reality.

## 100th Hawk



### Phoenix leaders commemorate 100th high-intensity activated crosswalk

KJZZ | By Kirsten Dorman  
Published December 5, 2024 at 5:00 AM MST



I helped activate Phoenix's 100th HAWK beacon at 18th Street and McDowell Road—a major milestone in our city's commitment to pedestrian safety and walkable communities. This achievement reflects years of collaboration to make our streets safer and more accessible for everyone, from students and families to seniors and people with disabilities.

“

*Kesha Hodge Washington and her staff totally took care of the problem...The children and elderly are walking, and the children are enjoying life again.*

*District 8 Resident, D.G.*

## Clean Energy, Clean Lungs



PHOENIX

### Arizona Coalition for Change news conference at the Arizona Capitol in Phoenix

Arizona Republic  
Updated Aug. 23, 2023, 10:41 a.m. MT

I proudly participated in the launch of the "[Clean Energy, Clear Lungs](#)" campaign by the Arizona Coalition for Change, which aimed to address air pollution's disproportionate impact in certain communities by promoting clean energy, reducing asthma rates, and advocating for environmental justice in Arizona.

”





# Community Safety



## GAIN Events and Cleanups

I actively participated in GAIN events and neighborhood clean-ups, working with residents to strengthen community ties, improve safety, and foster a sense of ownership and pride—actions that reduce crime and continue to create welcoming spaces in District 8.

In 2023 and 2024, Phoenix saw significant reductions in violent and property crime — driven largely by the 2024 Crime Reduction Plan, which highlighted the effectiveness of targeted enforcement, community engagement, and real-time response. Working with the Police Department, our office assisted several District 8 neighborhoods with obtaining targeted responses to hot spots in their community.



## Public Safety Townhall

I hosted a townhall with Interim Police Chief Michael Sullivan to listen to and address community concerns, receive feedback on the U.S. Department of Justice investigation, and discuss reforms within the Police Department.



## Policy Reform

Months later, I co-authored a [memo](#) with Mayor Kate Gallego and Councilman Kevin Robinson outlining additional reform needed. These reforms were designed to rebuild community trust, promote continuous improvement, and uphold the rights of all Phoenix residents.

Many of the reforms were derived from concerns and suggestions raised at the townhall and similar settings. These policy changes focused on accountability, transparency, and trust, including the prioritization of full staffing for the Community Assistance Program to support individuals in behavioral health crises, enhanced data collection on police actions, stronger internal investigations through new sergeant roles, and stricter investigative standards to ensure thorough reviews of misconduct.

"For me, reestablishing and strengthening community trust, along with ensuring constitutional policing, were at the heart of my input into this proposal," said Washington. "Some key excerpts from the reforms that I think will significantly impact our community trust, as mentioned, was more thoroughly documenting our police activity through enhanced data collection on stop searches and use of force. I think the transparency is important to rebuilding trust. It also helps to provide accountability and provide an objective record of community and police interaction"



# Education

Education advocacy is a vital pillar of my vision for a stronger, more equitable district. I have made it a priority to support students, educators, and families by championing policies and partnerships that expand access to quality education at every level. Over the past two years, I've worked closely with local schools, school boards, parent groups, and youth organizations to amplify educational resources and promote student success. These efforts are not just about improving education—they're about investing in the future of our community.

## Early Learning Nation



I participated in the Hunt Institute's prestigious Early Learning Nation Fellowship, where I joined over 100 elected officials nationwide to advance early childhood education, while gaining valuable insights and connections that I remain committed to applying to ensure all children in Phoenix have a strong foundation for success.

## Supporting our School Districts and Community Colleges

I proudly supported the Roosevelt School District's successful \$150 million bond campaign, reflecting our community's collective commitment to equitable education, modernized schools, and a brighter future for our students.



## Backpack Drives



I hosted and co-hosted Backpack Drives in District 8 that brought together community members and partners to provide students with essential school supplies, easing the burden on families and highlighting the power of collective support for our youth.



I also served on the South Mountain Community College President's Advisory Council, where I worked with college leadership to strengthen ties between SMCC and District 8. Together, we advocated for our community's educational needs, and helped shape programs that empower residents to succeed.



# Major Milestones

Over the past two years, I have been proud to deliver major milestones that are shaping a stronger, more equitable future for our district. From leading Phoenix's \$500 million General Obligation Bond and advancing the Gila Foothills Planned Unit Development, to securing transformational investments in public safety, housing, and innovation, I have driven projects that revitalize neighborhoods and create real opportunities for residents. These accomplishments reflect not just policy wins, but meaningful progress on the ground—ensuring that growth, investment, and improvements truly benefit the residents I serve.

## General Obligation Bond

"Without raising taxes, Phoenix voters made the right choice by approving the bond measures, paving the way for significant investments in our city and I want to thank them. I can't wait to see how the GO Bonds will bring to life many projects in District 8, like the Cesar Chavez Senior Center, renovation and expansion of the Children's Museum, the Community Assistance Program, construction of the Esteban Park Recreation Center, splash pads at Harmon Park, roadway safety and drainage improvements, additional affordable housing units and other citywide improvements," **Councilwoman Kesha Hodge Washington** said. Hodge Washington chaired the GO Bond campaign.

Within months of joining the Council, I was honored to lead Phoenix's 2023 GO Bond public information and outreach campaign. Phoenix voters overwhelmingly approved \$500 million in initiatives that will fund vital infrastructure, public safety, parks, housing, and more—revitalizing neighborhoods and advancing equitable growth citywide.

- \$214 million for fire, police, roadway and pedestrian infrastructure projects;
- \$109 million for library, parks and historic preservation projects;
- \$114 million for education, economic development, upgrades of city facilities for energy efficiency, and arts and culture projects; and
- \$63 million for affordable housing and a new senior center.

### Election 2023: Voters pass all Phoenix bond measures

By Lindsey Rages | Updated November 8, 2023 9:25pm MST | Arizona Politics | FOX 10 Phoenix |



This historic investment reflects our community's shared commitment to strengthening Phoenix for current and future generations, addressing long-overdue needs while creating new opportunities. From improving roads and fire stations to expanding affordable housing and enhancing public spaces, the GO Bond is transforming lives and laying the foundation for a more resilient, inclusive, and vibrant city. Stay up to date with the GO Bond projects progression [here](#).

# Major Milestones

## Gila Foothills Planned Unit Development

Wendy Riddell, zoning attorney for the project, and John Bzdel, one of the neighbors who was most critical of the development, both credited Phoenix City Councilwoman Kesha Hodge Washington for creating a plan that would require the developer to “earn” the additional units based on milestones that the community wanted to see.

I convened and worked with the Gila Foothills PUD stakeholders to craft a novel agreement that furthered the goals of all involved by including an incentive-based compromise. The Gila Foothills PUD will transform 290 acres in Laveen Village into a vibrant, mixed-use community featuring a resort, Level 1 trauma hospital, EV auto campus, retail, up to 2,200 housing units, and key amenities—including Laveen’s first South Mountain trailhead.

The incentive structure for housing units was the first of its kind. The agreement allows for 1,200 units and allows an additional 500 contingent on the hospital. If the developer delivers at least 15 acres of retail and restaurants, it can develop 250 more housing units. If it designates age-restricted housing for those 55 and older, it could develop 150 more units. If platted for-sale townhomes are developed, it could add 100 units, reaching 2,200 units.

Phoenix Mayor Kate Gallego said she was not aware of another development with a similar incentive structure but said it could be a model for other developments moving forward to ensure both the neighborhoods and developers can benefit from projects.



By working closely with local stakeholders, I ensured that community voices were heard and reflected throughout the development process. This project is a major milestone in bringing new services, housing, and recreational opportunities to Laveen while honoring the needs and aspirations of the residents I serve.

The developer’s representative and residents, including JoAnne Jenson, praised Hodge Washington’s efforts.

“I really do believe that it’s going to enhance the quality of life in Laveen,” she said. “I’m very interested in the incentive program, which I think is very creative. And I imagined that it may be one of the first times we’ve seen it, but it may not be the last.”



# Major Milestones

## 3rd Street Pedestrian Bridge



I supported the successful application for a \$25 million RAISE grant to build the 3rd Street Rio Salado Bike/Pedestrian Bridge, which is part of the Rio Reimagined initiative. It has enhanced plans for safe, sustainable connectivity, while promoting equitable development and improved access to jobs, education, and recreation.

## Civilian Review Board

After an extended period of vacancy, nine members were appointed to the Civilian Review Board – a key step in enhancing police accountability – with members bringing diverse expertise to oversee investigations and provide policy recommendations, thereby fostering trust between law enforcement and the community.

## Ethics Commission

### After 6 years of attempts, Phoenix City Council approves ethics commission

KJZZ | By Kirsten Dorman  
Published December 14, 2023 at 5:35 PM MST



After a six-year delay, the Ethics Commission was fully seated, furthering public trust by enabling independent investigations into ethical violations, aligning the city with national standards of transparency and accountability.

## Phoenix Shade Plan

### Phoenix approves \$60 million plan to increase shade across the city

KJZZ | By Katherine Davis-Young  
Published November 14, 2024 at 2:04 PM MST



I voted for the Phoenix's \$60 million Shade Plan – a transformative investment to plant 27,000 new trees and build 550 shade structures across our city, especially in underserved neighborhoods. This effort is not just about fighting extreme heat; it's about improving public health, advancing environmental equity, and making Phoenix a cooler, more livable city.

## Heat Relief Plan

The City's Heat Relief Plan, through proactive measures like cooling centers, water distribution, and heat relief buses coordinated by the Office of Heat Response and Mitigation, significantly improved safety – particularly for the unhoused – contributing to Maricopa County's first decline in heat-related deaths in a decade in 2024.

## 187th City Park



Harvest Park, the first of three new parks planned for Laveen opened. Spanning more than 10 acres, it features a playground, a Bank shot court, two pickleball courts, a basketball court, amphitheater and more.



# Leadership

- Arizona Municipal Water Users Association (Secretary/Treasurer)
- City of Phoenix Audit Committee
- City of Phoenix Community & Economic Development and Housing Subcommittee
- City of Phoenix Transportation, Infrastructure and Planning Subcommittee
- National League of Cities
  - Community & Economic Development Federal Advocacy Team
  - Large Cities Council
- NewDeal Housing Taskforce (Co-Chair)

“ So proud to live in District 8 and have you as my Councilwoman, Kesha! Your leadership is making such a difference, and I love seeing all the progress and investment happening right here in our community.  
District 8 Resident, S.E. ”



## Frequently Requested Contacts:

Emergency Services: [911](tel:911)

City Services: [311](tel:311) or [PHX 311 Website](http://phx311.com)

Human Services: [602-262-6666](tel:602-262-6666)  
[Human Services Website](http://phx311.com/human-services)

PHX Cares: [602-262-6251](tel:602-262-6251)  
[Report a PHX Cares Case](http://phx311.com/phx-cares)

Non-Emergency Police: [602-262-6151](tel:602-262-6151)

Park Rangers: [602-534-9919](tel:602-534-9919)

If you have feedback or need support, contact my office at [602-262-7493](tel:602-262-7493) or [council.district.8@phoenix.gov](mailto:council.district.8@phoenix.gov)

