

## What is next for the City of Phoenix?

By Cheryl Lombard, President & CEO, Valley Partnership

After a stretch of nearly 2 years straight of campaigns and elections, Phoenix now has a fully elected Mayor and City Council. While Mayor Kate Gallego and Council Members Betty Guardado and Carlos Gomez are sworn in and tacking their new roles, Phoenix voters are not quite done at the ballot box.

On August 27, 2019, Phoenix voters will consider ballot measures that will forever change our city: Prop 105 aims to put an end to light rail extensions while preventing the city from investing in any future rail projects; and Prop 106 puts an unprecedented cap on the types of investments Phoenix can make until pension debt is paid off.

The next 12 years it is anticipated that the Valley-region will grow by over 2 million people. Prop 105 threatens our region's plan – decades in the works – to manage this growth responsibly. As advocates for responsible development, Valley Partnership opposes Prop 105 because not only does it stop construction of the light rail extensions already approved by voters 3 times - - such as South Central/Downtown and the much-needed Capitol/I-10 extension – but jeopardizes our entire regional transportation system.

Furthermore, if Prop 105 passes, Phoenix and our region will lose billions of dollars in federal investment to other cities such as Los Angeles, Salt Lake City, or Austin, and it will put an end to a future connected commuter rail and the already planned expansion of light rail in Phoenix.

Affordable, varied, and reliable transportation options are key to the type of responsible development Valley Partnership advocates for, so we urge you to vote no on Prop 105.

Prop 106 caps budget growth for all city programs, except for police, fire, first responder protections, and city enterprise funds until pension debt is 90% funded. This concerning proposal has experts calling it deeply flawed with predictions it will lead to program cuts relied upon by all Phoenix citizens, while not actually meaningfully reducing pension debt.

Yes, we need to keep our commitments to our police and fire. Phoenix has taken steps to tackle pension debt, developing a plan to eliminate it while still providing crucial services that residents rely on such as maintain parks, libraries, and providing support for a growing homeless population.

Valley Partnership has concerns with Prop 106. It caps the budgets of almost all city departments, but for an emergency whereby 8 of 9 council members declare so for any one year. In other words, it is the city equivalent of forcing homeowners to pay off their mortgage in 1 year, ignoring all other crucial expenses such as food and water.

We question the need for either of these measures because we elected our Council Members to make these decisions based upon the current facts of any situation. This ballot box legislative action severely threatens the ability for our City leaders to make choices to continue to build a thriving community.

Invest in Phx is the organization formed and chaired by Councilmembers Laura Pastor and Debra Stark to fight these 2 ballot measures. A significant portion of business leaders, including Valley Partnership, and concerned citizens are joining the effort as they question the effectiveness of doing long-term budgeting at the ballot box. We urge you to do your own research by going to [investinphx.org](http://investinphx.org).