

2024/2025

MERCED CITY COUNCIL

GOALS AND PRIORITIES

GOVERNANCE

Foster community well-being, inclusive services, and enhanced quality of life in Merced.

Goal #1

Promote Ethical Leadership, Collaboration, and Transparency

1. Use council subcommittees to enhance collaboration and decision-making.
2. Maintain clear policies, procedures, and ethics guidelines to uphold transparency.
3. Conduct a mid-year review of council goals & priorities to ensure alignment with community needs.
4. Maintain public policy calendar to facilitate efficient governance and ensure timely consideration and discussion of important issues.
5. Enhance transparency through police dept. reports - statistics, CIP updates, ARPA expenditures.

Goal #2

Ensure Financial Stability and Sustainability

1. Continue adhering to a balanced budget, regularly reviewing and adjusting financial strategies aligned with long-term goals, and diversifying revenue sources to mitigate risks.
2. Develop robust financial reserves and contingency plans to buffer against economic uncertainties and unexpected expenses.
3. Continue collaborating with financial experts, conducting regular audits, and promoting transparency in financial reporting to maintain accountability.

Goal #3

Enhance Public Understanding of City Finances and Civic Affairs

1. Promote the City's newly launched platform to access financial information.
<https://www.cityofmerced.org/departments/finance/financial-analysis-tool>
2. Post educational videos to explain the City's financial reports.
3. Organize community events to discuss financial matters and answer questions to improve transparency and engagement.

Goal #4

Elevate Community Engagement Through Technology

1. Update website to Cityofmerced.gov to boost trust and credibility in digital government services.
2. Update City Website for enhanced accessibility, updated content, and user experience.
3. Explore adding a portal for public access to resolutions, ordinances, and other public documents.
4. Use Engage .CityofMerced.org as a resource to educate and solicit community engagement and feedback.
5. Update and rebrand City Seal to reflect community values, identity, and goals.
6. Prepare short informational "how-to" and "do-you-know" videos to explain city services and regulations.



QUALITY OF LIFE

Elevate the quality of life in Merced by enhancing amenities and improving services to drive positive growth and transformation throughout our community.

Goal #1

Develop a Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Master Plan

1. Engage in planning with stakeholders, including residents, community organizations, and experts.
2. Conduct a comprehensive assessment of existing parks, open spaces, and demographics to identify community needs and priorities.
3. Create a strategic plan for sustainable and equitable development that considers accessibility, environmental conservation, and social equity.
4. Promote PROS Master Plan to spread awareness of updated goals and priorities for parks, open spaces, and programs.

Goal #2

Enhance Park Accessibility, Sustainability, and Visitor Experience

1. Coordinate adaptive sports programs for diverse populations.
2. Plan specific needs-based sports days for diverse populations.
3. Prioritize well-maintained, greener, vibrant park spaces and pathways through enhanced maintenance efforts.
4. Improve coordination of facilities, including joint use contracts with schools to maximize activities and space utilization.

Goal #3

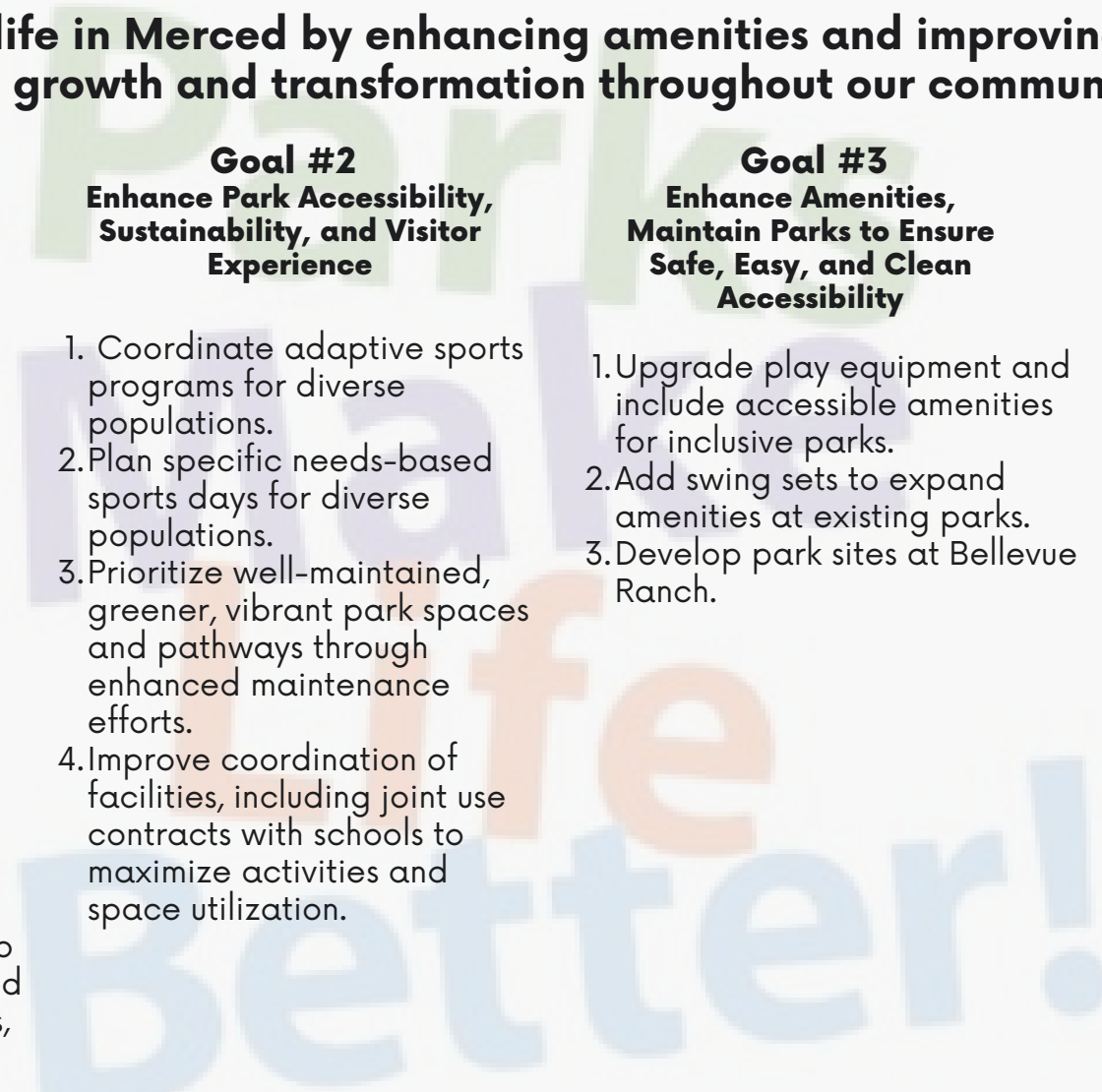
Enhance Amenities, Maintain Parks to Ensure Safe, Easy, and Clean Accessibility

1. Upgrade play equipment and include accessible amenities for inclusive parks.
2. Add swing sets to expand amenities at existing parks.
3. Develop park sites at Bellevue Ranch.

Goal #4

Enhance Youth Engagement and Community Well-Being

1. Foster youth leadership by reorganizing the Youth Council to focus on Parks & Recreation programs and practices across districts.
2. Expand recreation options to increase access to alternative recreation programs.
3. Improve coordination of facilities to maximize activities and space utilization.
4. Promote special events like the Gateway to Yosemite 5K/10K Run/Walk.
5. Maintain scholarship program.
6. Explore options for managing Applegate Zoo.





QUALITY OF LIFE

Promote inclusive communities through affordable housing, homeless support, street maintenance, and creek protection.

Goal #5

Housing - Continued Support and Implementation of Affordable Housing Initiatives

1. Support affordable housing development through targeted policies and initiatives focused on affordability across income levels.
2. Continue application process for the Prohousing Designation Program to foster a pro-housing environment, including local initiatives to support and expedite housing projects.
3. Complete the Housing Element via the Multijurisdictional Housing Element process and take action to rezone or amend zoning code to comply with State requirements.
4. Update the General Plan to integrate council directives regarding housing policies and newly introduced state programs.
5. Assess rent control policies to promote housing affordability and stability.
6. Explore potential rental inspection policies to uphold housing standards and safeguard the rights of residents in rental accommodations.

Goal #6

Maintain Coordinated Support for Housing Initiatives for the Homeless.

1. Explore alternative housing solutions to expand the number of available beds and advocate for increased voucher allocations to support vulnerable residents experiencing homelessness.
2. Explore options for an expedited response to areas requiring cleanup, including public facilities operated by utility providers.
3. Enhance public space management to ensure clean, safe access to public facilities and protection of community assets.

Goal #7

Enhance and Sustain Creek Protection Efforts

1. Create 25th and R Street Creek Restoration Initiative.
2. Develop a comprehensive creek protection ordinance emphasizing "no camping" to safeguard creeks, mainly focusing on implementing a no camping ordinance along and in proximity to creeks, including areas under bridges.
3. Complete Department of Water Resources Creek Restoration assessment and improvement projects.

Goal #8

Arts and Culture Initiatives.

1. Continue to develop a list of city-owned properties suitable for site-specific public art projects.
2. Annually allocate funds to support city-sponsored public art projects and actively pursue grants to further artistic initiatives.
3. Cultivate art districts that spotlight the city's dynamic artistic and culturally diverse communities.
4. Explore opportunities with the California Arts Council to recognize Downtown Merced as a Cultural District formally.
5. Continue to establish Arts Districts and seek state grant or program funding to support these areas.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Promote economic growth and community vitality through entrepreneurship, attracting businesses tailored to local needs, and improving infrastructure and tourism.

Goal #1

Attract Businesses and Employment Opportunities

1. Meet with retailers and developers to promote the economic benefits of local business establishments.
2. Highlight business benefits: diverse customer base, local support, fostering partnerships to address community needs and align with goals of businesses and developers.
3. Strengthen the workforce through continued partnerships for skill enhancement.
4. Continued exploration of investment locations for industrial and technology parks to assess future development potential.

Goal #2

Support Airport Redevelopment

1. Ensure timely completion of Merced Yosemite Regional Airport Terminal Replacement Project. Seek additional funding for furnishings and interior enhancements.
2. With Renne Public Policy Group support, seek grants and state/federal representative backing for Airport Fuel Farm Replacement to meet regulatory timeline.
3. Finish airport rebranding project, unveiling new logo, collateral, and website upgrade.

Goal #3

Create a Tourism-Based Improvement District to improve marketing and tourism.

1. Collaborate with local business community and hotel association to create a TBID to strengthen local marketing initiatives and drive tourism growth.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Promote economic growth and community vitality through entrepreneurship, attracting businesses tailored to local needs, and improving infrastructure and tourism.

Goal #4

Consider an EIFD for improved infrastructure and investment options.

1. Develop Tax Increment Financing Districts (EIFDs) to fund infrastructure in designated areas using property tax growth to advance diverse projects without imposing new taxes.

Goal #5

Continue to Boost Downtown Vitality.

1. Foster collaborations with Workforce Development partnerships to enhance local workforce skills.
2. Establish apprenticeship programs for hands-on training and skill development.
3. Establish a vacant building ordinance to address maintenance, safety, and blight mitigation for vacant properties.

Goal #6

Explore Industrial/Tech Park investment for economic growth and innovation attraction.

1. Continue to explore potential locations for investment in industrial and technology parks.



PUBLIC SAFETY

Enhance community policing, emergency response, and engagement for a secure community.

Goal #1

Enhanced Community Policing Initiatives

1. Maintain area command community policing, offer academies and youth programs, and prioritize ongoing training for effective officer service.
2. Implement Traffic Management Initiatives with signal adjustments, education, school coordination, dead-end measures, and red light enforcement trials to curb speeding and improve safety.
3. Create a Real Time Information Center to improve law enforcement's crime prevention and response, enhancing community safety.
4. Explore options to address criminal drug activities within the community
5. Maintain Graffiti Abatement Program and evaluate the potential for this as a city-led service activity.
6. Launch a City Park Camera Initiative to boost surveillance in parks and high-crime areas, aiding proactive policing.

Goal #2

Foster Strategic Partnerships to Address Unique Needs of Vulnerable Youth Populations

1. Enhance community safety and support for at-risk youth through CalVIP, COMMVIP, and strategic partnerships.
2. Identify and explore community support providers to assist in implementing these goals.

Goal #3

Explore Sworn Versus Nonsworn Functions and Strategies

1. Explore opportunities to employ non-sworn personnel to provide administrative support, community outreach, evidence management, and crime analysis, among other duties.



PUBLIC SAFETY

Enhance community safety and well-being through integrated strategies, diversified services, and comprehensive support.

Goal #4

Plan for future police and fire facility and equipment needs.

1. Explore funding opportunities (grants, partnerships, capital budgets, long-term financing) for equipment and infrastructure acquisition.
2. Prioritize investments for critical needs like facility expansion, equipment replacement, and emergency response enhancement.
3. Explore funding opportunities to provide sustainability of staffing supported by FEMA's Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER).

Goal #5

Diversify services including medical transport and continued exploration of enhanced EMS and ALS systems.

1. Explore adding medical transport services with local medical offices as a "proof of concept."
2. Continue to plan for the response for future county-wide RFP for EMS and ALS.
3. Explore partnerships to enhance EMS response capabilities.
4. Develop targeted recruitment, competitive compensation, professional development, and retention programs to support these services.

Goal #6

Address homeless and hard-to-reach individuals' needs comprehensively.

1. Continue developing partnerships to serve homeless and hard-to-reach individuals.
2. Seek partners to focus on outreach efforts with a focus on mental health services, temporary housing access, and job training.

Goal #7

Enhance Code Enforcement Efforts

1. Enhance community through compliance, revitalization, partnerships, data-driven decisions, outreach, MercedConnect, and training.
2. Enhance weed abatement efforts to ensure public safety by reducing seasonal fire hazards.



COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

Strategically invest in community development, including CIP initiatives, to enhance Merced's quality of life.

Goal #1

Improve Mobility, Road Safety, and Public Transit

1. As part of City Standards Update, consider adding alternative options to enhance traffic calming.
2. Participate in the update of the Countywide ATP plan and seek funding opportunities for enhanced pedestrian and bicycle safety, especially near schools - seek input from the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee and public on priorities.
3. Continue to utilize the Traffic Committee to evaluate community requests for traffic calming and safety measures.
4. Implement Red Light Camera program to improve roadway safety.
5. Invite The Bus to provide an update on public transit.

Goal #2

Street Maintenance and Repair Initiative

1. Continue to identify areas needing repair, prioritizing based on traffic volume, pavement condition, and safety concerns.
2. Continue proactive maintenance measures such as pothole patching, crack sealing, resurfacing, and targeted repairs to address critical infrastructure deficiencies.
3. Provide information on road funding options and seek community input to prioritize investment and formation of roadway Capital Improvement Projects.
4. Enhance city staff capacity for ongoing maintenance efforts.

Goal #3

City Facilities, Equipment, Financing, and Maintenance

1. Conduct a City Council study session to discuss facility needs and implementation options, including financing.
2. Explore and discuss equipment - large capital expenditures needs and funding options.
3. Consider a city facility use and needs study to set priorities and guide future actions and investment.
4. Complete update of City-Wide Community Facilities District (CFD) to modernize and streamline implementation for development projects.



COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

Strategically invest in community development, including CIP initiatives, to enhance Merced's quality of life.

Goal #4

Continue progress on Capital Improvement Projects and Community Involvement

1. Prioritize completing ARPA-funded projects - Downtown One Way, Bob Hart Square, CP 42.
2. Add gateway enhancement as a feature of Bob Hart Square project.
3. Create procedures in the CIP process to solicit community input and provide for Council priority options.
4. Funding Tool Kit - provide education on funding sources used to implement CIP projects.

Goal #5

Community Planning and Environmental Projects

1. Consider options to utilize greywater systems on new residential and commercial development projects to help with water conservation.
2. Continue to explore providing services and possibly annexing county pockets and fringe areas, especially disadvantaged communities.

Goal #6

South Merced

1. Continually assist the South Merced Subcommittee in addressing needs and priorities to enhance the South Merced community.
2. Consider adding a Public Facility Finance Program reduction to help attract a South Merced Grocery Store.
3. Maintain ongoing efforts to seek community enhancement grants such as the Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) grant.
4. Promote and continue community cleanup efforts.

COUNCIL PRIORITY CIP PROJECTS BY DISTRICT

District 1

1. Stowell School Crosswalk and Sidewalks
2. Golden Valley High School - ped crosswalk & Hawk Signal
3. Coffee and Campus Pkwy ADA and Ped Crossing
4. CP 42 Playground
5. CP 42 Lighting
6. Baker Drive
8. Gilbert Macias Park - Handball Court - Grafitti Wall
9. Joe Herb Park Improvements

District 2

1. Diego Rivera Park Playground - Swings
2. Childs and N St. Signal Split Phase

District 3

1. Applegate Park Basketball Court Renovation

District 4

1. Rahilly Park Improvements
2. Lake and Yosemite Ped Improvements
3. Parsons Ave. - Bear Creek Ped Bridge

District 5

1. Fahrens Park Parking Lot Expansion
2. Speed Table Bike Crossing - Donna Drive
3. Stephen Gray Park - Add Dog Park Feature

District 6

1. General Vang Pao Park

FUNDING SOURCES

1. CDBG - Community Development Block Grant
2. C- Measure C
3. V - Measure V
4. Y - Measure Y
5. Other Grants - CMAQ, ATP, SRS, First 5