



# CITY OF MERCED

City Council Chamber  
Merced Civic Center  
2nd Floor  
678 W. 18th Street  
Merced, CA 95340

## Minutes

### City Council/Public Finance and Economic Development Authority/ Parking Authority/Successor Agency to the Redevelopment Agency

---

Saturday, February 15, 2025

9:00 AM

---

#### A. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor SERRATTO called the Strategic Planning Session to order at 9:07 PM.

Council led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

#### B. ROLL CALL

**Present:** 7 - Mayor Matthew Serratto, Mayor Pro Tempore Sarah Boyle, Council Member Darin Dupont, Council Member Ronnie DeAnda, Council Member Michael Harris, Council Member Shane Smith, and Council Member Fue Xiong

**Absent:** 0

#### C. WRITTEN PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

#### D. PUBLIC COMMENT

Myles ACEVEDO, Merced - asked if the City of Merced has declared itself a sanctuary city and spoke on details of a sanctuary city.

Steven RUTH, Merced - asked Council for the process to add an item to to a Council agenda on Merced becoming a sanctuary city, asked on the process of adding items, and spoke on details of sanctuary cities.

UC Merced Student, Merced - spoke on sanctuary cities, statistics on crimes in Merced, local leaders, and leaders fighting injustices.

Ashley SUAREZ, Merced - spoke on prioritizing a Community Needs Assessment, concerns from residents, collaborating with Merced County, a variety of Housing Programs in the City, a potential Rental Registry Program, amend the First Time Home Buyer Program, details of long-term sustainable growth, and details of high frequency transportation.

#### E. BUSINESS

E.1. **SUBJECT:** Discussion on the City Council's Goals and Priorities

---

Related to any and all City Departments and/or Subjects That Fall Within the Subject Matter Jurisdiction of the City Council Including, but not Limited to, Policy Discussion Related to the Following: Public Safety, Economic Development, Parks and Recreation, Housing and Homelessness, and City Beautification

#### **REPORT IN BRIEF**

Discussion on the City Council's Goals and Priorities related to any and all City departments and/or subjects that will fall within the subject matter jurisdiction of the City Council, including, but not limited to, policy discussion related to the following: Public Safety, Economic Development, Parks and Recreation, Housing and Homelessness, and City Beautification as previously adopted by the City Council in FY 2024/2025.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

For discussion only.

City Manager Scott MCBRIDE and Mayor SERRATTO briefly discussed the purpose of the Strategic Planning Session and the meeting layout.

#### **Individual Council Priorities:**

Council Member DUPONT discussed the needs of sidewalks, safety of students, facilitating a grocery store in South Merced, marketing of the City, improving Economic Development, connecting business developers and property owners, cleanliness and safety of parks, investing in a Dog Park in South Merced, roads improvements, passionately talking about what the city is doing, Police and Fire stations, and additional mobile and pole cameras.

Council Member DEANDA discussed new housing, improving the flood issue on Childs Avenue and Canal Street, and additional grocery stores.

Council Member HARRIS discussed the timeline of Strategic Planning, focus on high priority items regardless of district, a long-term plan on fixing roads, prioritizing public safety, hiring a Fire Chief, creating a long-term plan on public safety, and to agree on high level priorities throughout the City.

Council Member SMITH discussed the priorities agreed on at the Strategic Planning Session is followed through, setting the agenda for the year, moving quicker on Council Goals and Priorities, a quicker staff productivity, reviewing and potentially revising current Goals and Priorities, planning and preparing for big lifts i.e. police and fire stations, focus on the work,

focusing on the Council tasks, improving public safety, and a growth in Economic Development and jobs.

Mayor Pro Tempore BOYLE discussed reviewing previous Goals and Priorities, focusing on transparency, creating a strategic plan for deficits in funding, fixing simple issues brought by the community, a tax measure for parks on the ballot, residential traffic calming measures, highlighting the Traffic Committee, lighting on bike paths, lighting on underpasses, developing a Street Vendor Ordinance, hiring an Economic Development Firm, ways to jump start our economy, sales tax generation, station locations for public safety, strengthening the Code Enforcement Department, and red light cameras.

Council Member XIONG discussed focusing on Customer Service, updating the website, having public documents available, City Departments being fully staffed, moving away from contractors and consultants, installing more art murals, finishing the Parks Master Plan, park maintenance, installing lights in parks, public safety, roads and lights, red light violations, pedestrian collisions, curb extension, elevated crosswalks, bike lanes, Community Service Officers, focusing on transparency, obtaining security for events instead of Police Officers unless there is revenue, working with UC Merced and Merced College for internships, a citywide Community Facilities District, a grocery store in South Merced, an Economic Development Study, advocating for a Workforce Development Project, ways to gain funding from the High Speed Rail for roads, and details of becoming a sanctuary city.

Mayor SERRATTO discussed building on priorities that are completed, road improvement, homelessness, public safety, economic development, traffic safety, code enforcement and animal control, a Road Abandonment Program, details of traffic flow, conversations on the Tax Measure for the 2026 Ballot, a Safe and Clean Program, and proposed regulations for street vendors.

**Clerk's Note:** Council took a recess at 10:14 AM and reconvened at 10:26 AM.

**Staff Updates:**

Assistant City Clerk Jennifer LEVESQUE spoke on safety concerns for the City Clerk's office and training City Staff on Administrative Reports.

Director of Parks and Community Services Chris JENSEN spoke on details of the Parks Master Plan, maintaining park restrooms, increasing

leadership capacity, increasing the Youth Council capacity, issues with the lack of facilities management, improving recreation opportunities, and cost reduction on activities.

Chief Building/Construction Project Official Denise FRAZIER spoke on a Code Enforcement Task Force, Housing Division Plan Review, inspections for public housing, details of the new Tyler EPL Permitting System, hiring more staff, maintaining fees in-house, and proposed a Fee Study for Development Services.

City Engineer Daryl JORDAN spoke on the proposed Fee Study for Development Services, hiring additional staff, a Capital Improvement Projects software to assist in maintaining projects, additional in-house training, working with Merced County Associates of Government for payment development, and continue to repair roads.

Deputy Director of Public Works Juan OLMOS spoke on facility capacity, parks maintenance, and details of Community Park-42.

Finance Officer Venus RODRIGUEZ spoke on finding ways to increase revenue and efficiency, a potential Bi-Annual Budget, and details of the Tyler EPL process.

Director of Information Technology Jeff BENNYHOFF spoke on the Tyler process, network updates, and upgrading Merced Connect.

Deputy City Manager Frank QUINTERO spoke obtaining a database from inquiries for the City Manager's Department to track all divisions, the safety of the City Clerk's office, Administrative Reports, updating Personnel Policies, tracking services for Workers Compensation claims, the High Speed Rail, the General Plan update, and a new fixed-based office.

Interim Fire Chief Casey WILSON spoke on the priority of Fire Apparatus, the need of additional apparatuses, alternative response models, a Training Center, Station 56/ Emergency Ops Center, improving fire prevention and investigation, the growth of the Fire Prevention and Investigation Program, continue growing Advanced Life Support, and develop partnerships with agencies.

Chief of Police Steven STANFIELD spoke on reducing crime and improving the quality of life in Merced, develop a high performing organization, install additional cameras in parks, obtain a DART Liaison Officer, expand the Drone Program, expand the Red Light Program, reduce traffic collisions by five percent, reduce overall crime by ten percent,

obtain a POST Pellet B Testing Center, SWAT Training, Multi-Agency Training, Officer Training, hold Town Halls in areas of command, increase website engagement for community involvement, mobile police pop ups, and improve school safety.

City Attorney Craig CORNWELL spoke on details of the City Attorney Department's staffing, continuing efforts as a Counselor of Law, problem solving, and expose City to the true cost of legal services.

Deputy Director of Development Services Diana LOWRANCE spoke on certification for the Housing Element, Pro Housing Certificates, the General Plan update, a Stationary Plan, and turnaround time on processing.

City Manager Scott MCBRIDE spoke on having a strong financial stability, public safety facilities, facility financing, improving decisions with current resources, processing Final Map development, Council Subcommittees, maintain critical positions, and focusing on training.

Senior Manager Analyst Jennifer FLACHMAN spoke on enhancing community engagement, more educational videos, focusing on grant writing, leveraging relationships with media, and issuing Request for Proposals for grants.

Council and City Staff discussed all priorities and updates given at this meeting.

Council agreed on a Multi-Year Budget, a two-step process, improving roads, a Strategic Plan on City roads, combine City Council's and City Staff's Goals and Priorities, utilizing Subcommittees to work on Goals and Priorities, and improving City facilities for the 2025 Goals and Priorities.

## F. ADJOURNMENT

**Clerk's Note:** Council adjourned from the Strategic Planning Session at 12:24 PM.