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Meeting Objectives

Meeting Purpose

- To review community outreach for a vision for the future
- To review and discuss the draft vision statement

Agenda

- General Plan Vision Statement Development
- Draft Vision Statement
- Commission Discussion
- Next Steps

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What is a Vision Statement?

- **Ideal future** aspirations to work towards
- Identifies **important topics** to the community
- **Positive** statement
- **Inspiration** for decision-makers and the community
- **Comprehensive, long-term, and visionary**
- Provides the **foundation** for general plan goals, policies, and programs

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Outreach Conducted

- Community Open House #2
- Vision, Assets, Issues, and Opportunities Survey
- Community Advisory Focus Group Meeting #3 and #4
- Public Comments on Public Review Draft Vision

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Community Open House #2

Wednesday, January 28, 2026, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.

- **Activities covered:**
 - Merced's strengths, issues, and opportunities
 - What residents would like to see in the city's future
 - Lessons learned from the past
- Over 50 attendees
- Activities available in English, Spanish, and Hmong

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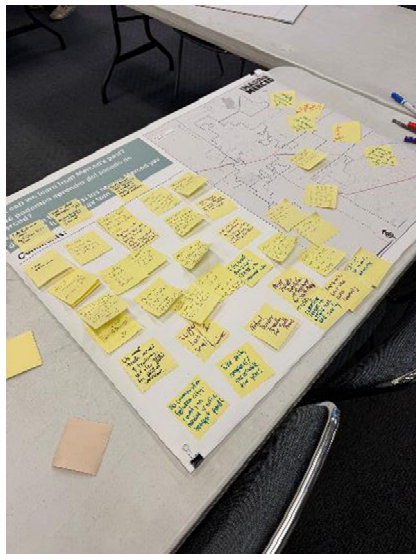
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Community Open House #2



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Community Open House #2



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Vision, Assets, Issues, and Opportunities Survey

Digital/Online Version of the Open House Exercises

- Mirrors activities for community members who were unable to attend Community Open House #2
- Available in English, Spanish, and Hmong
- Survey closed on **March 16th, 2026**

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CAFG Meeting #3

Wednesday, February 25, 2026, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

- Similar discussion questions to those from Community Open House #2 activities
 - *What can be improved in the city?*
 - *What are Merced's strengths?*
 - *What new opportunities does the city have?*
 - *Lessons learned: What can we learn from Merced's past? What do you hope to see in Merced's future?*

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CAFG Meeting #4

Wednesday, May 27th, 2026, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

- Presentation and discussion on initial options for draft vision statement
- **Revisions/refinements from CAFG on draft vision:**
 - Emphasize healthy communities for all residents
 - Emphasize diverse housing options
 - Prioritize mixture of uses in neighborhoods to strength community connections
 - Minor word swaps

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Development of the Vision Statement

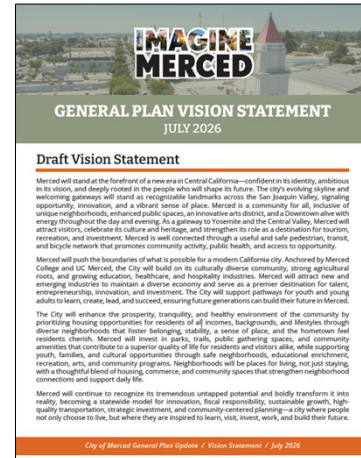
- Consider all feedback heard through visioning outreach
- Draft a **vision statement** for the General Plan that:
 - Summarizes the community's shared aspirations and expectations for the future of the city,
 - Uses quotes and phrases directly from community comments, and
 - Guides the direction of all goals, policies, and programs in the General Plan

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Public Comments on Public Review Draft Vision

- Draft vision statement released to public on July 1st
- **Public comments on PRD vision statement:**
 1. Place greater emphasis on:
 - Downtown as the cultural, civic, and economic heart of the community
 - UC Merced and Merced College as educational anchors for economic growth and opportunities for youth
 2. Emphasize active transportation and street design improvements
 3. Acknowledge residents as stakeholders
 4. Condense draft vision statement



*Released in English,
Spanish, and Hmong*

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Draft Vision Statement (Paragraph 1)

Merced will stand at the forefront of a new era in Central California—confident in its identity, ambitious in its vision, and deeply rooted in the people who will shape its future. The city's evolving skyline and welcoming gateways will stand as recognizable landmarks across the San Joaquin Valley, signaling opportunity, innovation, and a vibrant sense of place. Merced is a community for all, inclusive of unique neighborhoods, enhanced public spaces, an innovative arts district, and a Downtown alive with energy throughout the day and evening. As a gateway to Yosemite and the Central Valley, Merced will attract visitors, celebrate its culture and heritage, and strengthen its role as a destination for tourism, recreation, and investment. Merced is well connected through a useful and safe pedestrian, transit, and bicycle network that promotes community activity, public health, and access to opportunity.

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Draft Vision Statement (Paragraph 2)

Merced will push the boundaries of what is possible for a modern California city. Anchored by Merced College and UC Merced, the City will build on its culturally diverse community, strong agricultural roots, and growing education, healthcare, and hospitality industries. Merced will attract new and emerging industries to maintain a diverse economy and serve as a premier destination for talent, entrepreneurship, innovation, and investment. The City will support pathways for youth and young adults to learn, create, lead, and succeed, ensuring future generations can build their future in Merced.

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Draft Vision Statement (Paragraph 3)

The City will enhance the prosperity, tranquility, and healthy environment of the community by prioritizing housing opportunities for residents of all incomes, backgrounds, and lifestyles through diverse neighborhoods that foster belonging, stability, a sense of place, and the hometown feel residents cherish. Merced will invest in parks, trails, public gathering spaces, and community amenities that contribute to a superior quality of life for residents and visitors alike, while supporting youth, families, and cultural opportunities through safe neighborhoods, educational enrichment, recreation, arts, and community programs. Neighborhoods will be places for living, not just staying, with a thoughtful blend of housing, commerce, and community spaces that strengthen neighborhood connections and support daily life.

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Draft Vision Statement (Paragraph 4)

Merced will continue to recognize its tremendous untapped potential and boldly transform it into reality, becoming a statewide model for innovation, fiscal responsibility, sustainable growth, high quality transportation, strategic investment, and community-centered planning—a city where people not only choose to live, but where they are inspired to learn, visit, invest, work, and build their future.

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Critical Upcoming Dates

- **City Council Public Hearing: Vision Statement**
 - City Council Chambers
 - Monday, September 21st at 6:00pm
- **Begin policy document updates**
 - Phase 4 of project
 - Early October 2026 through 2027