

2026/2027

MERCED CITY COUNCIL GOALS AND PRIORITIES

The City of Merced is committed to fostering a safe, vibrant, and inclusive community where residents and businesses can thrive.

The City faces increasing demands related to infrastructure maintenance, housing affordability, public safety, and fiscal sustainability. Population growth, aging assets, grant dependency, and economic transition require strategic coordination and long-term planning.

This plan responds to: Infrastructure repair backlogs - Public safety staffing pressures - Housing supply constraints - Downtown revitalization needs - Community expectations for accountability

Strategic Priority Areas

- 1. Public Safety and Quality of Life**
- 2. Infrastructure and Transportation**
- 3. Economic Development**
- 4. Parks and Community Services**
- 5. Fiscal Sustainability**
- 6. Governance and Engagement**

Public Safety and Quality of Life

Enhance safety in neighborhoods, parks, and public spaces.

Lead Departments: Fire, Police, Public Works, Parks & Community Services

Key Focus Areas

- Fire Station 56 - Implement Finance Plan
- SAFER Grant Expiration
- Fire Station Upgrades
- Police Station Upgrades
- CAD and Radio System Upgrades
- Reduce Overtime Costs for Community Events
- Graffiti Abatement
- Continue Public Art Program
- Code Enforcement
- Animal Control

Objectives

Improve lighting and visibility – Complete the Safe Streets Project; identify funding to expand streetlight upgrades; pilot solar lighting in underserved areas (including bike paths); provide a Council update within 3 months.

Reduce vandalism and graffiti – Maintain graffiti abatement services; expand City-sponsored art as a deterrent; identify new locations for public art installations.

Strengthen emergency response – Maintain public safety staffing; implement ALS citywide by July 1, 2026; pursue funding for facilities and equipment; expand community engagement; evaluate and enhance patrol presence in parks and key areas (e.g., Park Rangers, Downtown patrols).

Performance Measures

- **Crime Statistics**
- **Lighting Coverage**
- **Graffiti Removal Response Time**

Infrastructure and Transportation

Maintain and Modernize Streets, Sidewalks, and Utilities

Lead Departments: Engineering, Public Works, Finance

Key Focus Areas

- Long Term Funding for Maintenance
- Pavement Rehabilitation Program Implementation
- Improve Drainage
- Maintenance - Address Potholes and Other Needs
- Water and Sewwer Line Projects
- Traffic Safety - Evaluate Traffic Safety Issues - M St. Corridor

Objectives

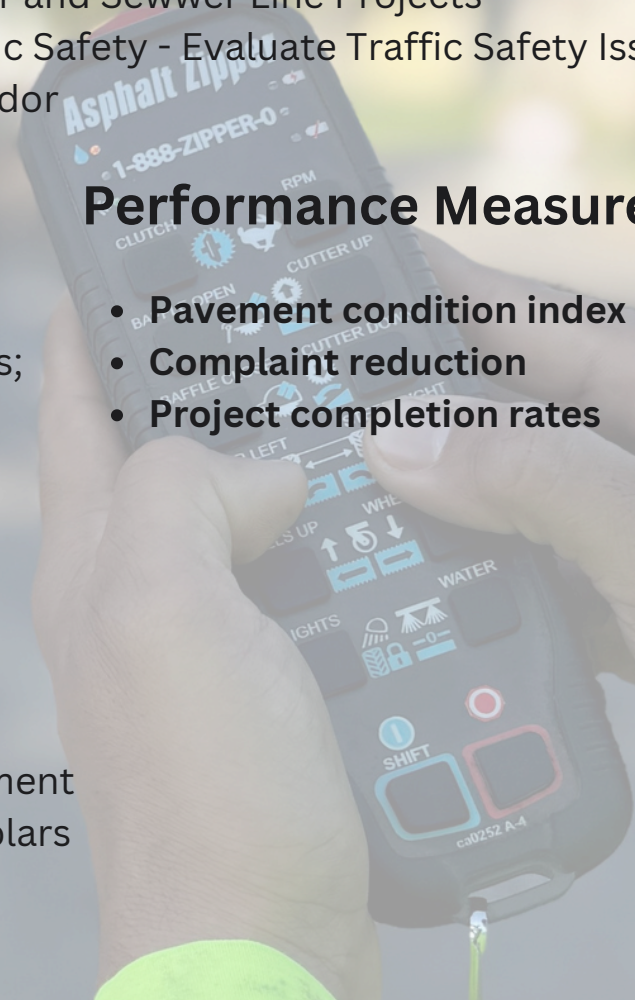
Reduce road and sidewalk deterioration: Maintain pothole reporting via the Merced Connect App; utilize Zipper for repairs; continue Capital Improvement Program projects; launch the traffic safety community portal; complete the countywide Pavement Condition Survey to guide future investments.

Improve drainage systems: Identify funding for a Storm Drain Master Plan; prioritize Bear Creek improvements and related infrastructure investments.

Enhance pedestrian and cyclist safety: Partner with school districts on a citywide Active Transportation Plan (ATP); implement funded CMAQ projects (e.g., Melody Lane, M St. Frontage, Scholars Lane); advance remaining priority projects.

Performance Measures

- Pavement condition index
- Complaint reduction
- Project completion rates



Housing and Economic Development

Support housing development and sustainable economic growth.
Lead Departments: Development Services, Economic Development

Key Focus Areas

- TOD Projects
- Continued Investment in Affordable Housing
- Information on Housing Compliance & Future Planning
- Downtown Revitalization, Entryway - MLK, Rarking Enhancements, Roadway Abandonments
- Disposal of Surplus Property
- Forward Facing EV Chargers

Objectives

Encourage diverse housing development: Maintain infill incentives and pre-approved plans (ADUs, cottage homes, duplexes, triplexes); implement Housing Element zoning updates; leverage HUD and other funding programs; streamline permitting through Tyler; modernize engineering standards and city codes to accelerate project delivery.

Support workforce development and job creation: Maintain an inventory of available properties and respond to regional/state opportunities; strengthen partnerships with local businesses and workforce agencies; collaborate with UC Merced and Merced College; expand small business startup support and training.

Revitalize and strengthen Downtown: Partner with the Merced Downtown Partnership and Merced Main Street Association; implement Special Events Ordinance updates; evaluate parking and circulation improvements; maintain a safe, business-friendly environment; explore EV charging at city facilities to attract visitors.

Performance Measures

- **Housing units entitled or approved for development**
- **Development permits issued**
- **Annual GP and HE reports**
- **Events held with partners including workforce partners and educators**
- **New businesses opened or expanded**

Parks & Community Services

Strengthen community spaces and programming

Lead Departments: Parks & Community Services, Public Works, Engineering

Key Focus Areas

- Better Lighting for Public Safety
- Response to Cleaning and Maintenance
- Investment in Additional Park Amenities - restrooms, drinking fountains, courts
- Evaluate Concept of Park Rangers
- Applegate Zoo - Kiddieland Parking Area
- Bellevue Ranck Parks
- Creek Ambassadors - Cleanup

Objectives

Improve park facilities: Complete the PROS Plan (Spring 2026) to guide investments; pursue grants and funding for implementation; expand park lighting (including solar pilots); advance priority projects (Joe Herb Park, Applegate Park courts, CP42 North & South).

Increase community-led events: Promote use of City facilities; evaluate a large-scale event at Applegate Park; support Parks and Community Services staffing and programming.

Enhance maintenance accountability: Publish maintenance schedules; continue use of the Engage Merced App; implement CP42 maintenance and operations through JPA.

Performance Measures

- Park condition ratings
- Event participation
- Maintenance response time

Fiscal Sustainability

Ensure long-term financial stability

Lead Departments: Finance, City Administration

Key Focus Areas

- Increase Revenue - New Sources, Flexibility to Address All Needs
- Expand Grant and Unique Funding Opportunities

Objectives

Advance sustainable funding sources: Implement the SAFER grant transition plan; explore sustainable funding options, including community support and potential extension of County funding for Fire and EMS. Collaborate with educational institutions and community partners to identify and develop additional funding opportunities.

Increase diversified revenue: Advance the Station 56 finance plan (federal earmarks and HUD 108 loan); pursue annexation of county islands; explore extension of City-County property tax agreements; evaluate updates to code enforcement fines.

Performance Measures

- Reserve levels
- Revenue growth
- Grant success rate

Governance and Engagement

Promote ethical, transparent, and responsive government
Lead Departments: City Manager, City Clerk, City Attorney

Key Focus Areas

- Ethical Leadership
- Open - Transparent Government
- Public Engagement
- ERP Project Implementation and Modernization
- Merced Connect App - More Accountability and Responsiveness

Objectives

Improve public communication: Implement AB 707 and AB 827 requirements; provide fiscal and ethics training (AB 1234); expand community engagement and polling efforts.

Strengthen compliance systems: Improve records archiving; update the Legislative/Staff Report (LSR) process; enhance administrative report training; implement Project Champion oversight for capital projects.

Expand community participation: Expand use of social media platforms; provide training for boards and commissions; evaluate participation and effectiveness.

Performance Measures

- Public satisfaction surveys
- Complaint resolution time
- Meeting participation