



## **2024 Legislative Platform**

### **PURPOSE**

The City of Merced's 2024 Legislative Platform confirms the City Council's position on current issues with the potential to directly or indirectly impact the City. The platform establishes guidelines for actively pursuing support or opposition of pending legislation. Below are the Guiding Principles which will allow City staff to address 2024 legislative and regulatory issues in a timely manner, without precluding the consideration of additional legislative and budget issues that may arise during the legislative session. Adoption of the Legislative Platform guides City officials involved in advocating City interests to Federal, State, and County governments, thereby precluding the need for the Council to reactively take individual positions on legislative issues that arise during the year.

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

The Legislative Platform will be implemented as follows:

1. The Office of the City Manager shall direct the scope and activities of any State lobbyist hired on behalf of the City, consistent with the Legislative Platform and other direction provided by the City Council.
2. On an annual basis, the Office of the City Manager will present a Legislative Platform outlining the City's position on various legislative issues to the City Council consideration and adoption.
3. The Mayor and City Council will be made aware of any legislative activities, proposed State or Federal legislation, and other policy-related matters that may have a direct and significant impact on the City's fiscal, operational, and environmental health and the overall quality of life enjoyed by residents and other stakeholders.
4. The Mayor and Council, through their involvement with the League of California Cities, Merced County Association of Governments may communicate with lawmakers at the County, State, and Federal level through correspondence, personal contact, or testimony.
5. Letters of Support
  - a. Letters of support or opposition, consistent with the adopted position in the Legislative Platform, may be prepared by staff, for signature by the Mayor on behalf of the City without taking the letter to the full Council, so long as the position letter represents the City Council's adopted position as stated in the legislative platform.
  - b. A summary of all position letters issued will be included in a regular legislative update distributed to Council outlining the need and citing the specific approved legislative policy used to expedite the City's position.
  - c. In cases where a pending legislative proposal falls outside of the scope of the approved legislative platform, that item will be placed on a future council agenda for review and consideration by the full Council.

6. The Council has the option of adopting any one of 6 positions on proposed legislation:
  - a. Support – A support position indicates to the legislature, regulatory agencies, and other stakeholders that the City is in favor of the legislation in question.
  - b. Support if Amended – A support if amended position indicates to the corresponding legislature, regulatory agencies, and other stakeholders that the City is in favor of the legislation in question if the requested changes are adopted.
  - c. Oppose – An opposed position indicates to the legislature, regulatory agency, and other stakeholders that the City is against the legislation in question.
  - d. Oppose Unless Amended – An oppose unless amended position indicates to the legislature, regulatory agencies, and other stakeholders that the City is against the legislation in question unless the requested changes are adopted.
  - e. Neutral – A neutral position indicates to the corresponding legislature, regulatory agencies, and other stakeholders that the City is impartial on the legislation in question and does not wish to take a position or has formally removed their prior adopted position due to changes being made to the legislation or proposal (e.g., a bill that the City had an “oppose unless amended” position on was amended to address concerns, therefore the City is formally withdrawing its opposition and moving to a “Neutral” position).
  - f. Watch – A watch is traditionally an internal position that indicates the City is monitoring the legislation. Should the bill be amended, the City reserves its right to adopt a position as indicated above.
7. The Legislative Platform is not intended to limit the prerogative of individual Councilmembers from expressing their individual support for or opposition to any Local measure, or State proposition, State or Federal legislation, or grassroots advocacy actions. However, in doing so, the Councilmember should clearly state that they are speaking for themselves, not on behalf of the Council or the City.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

- Building community is essential in supporting the health and wellness of residents within the City of Merced – an effort that the City Council is committed to across all service areas.
- In every way possible, the City of Merced strives to provide equal access to all its residents and supports services and programs that promote inclusivity.
- Serving the residents of the City of Merced is paramount to providing excellent customer service across all service areas.
- Maintaining City property enhances the quality of life for all residents. The City will elevate the standard of maintenance across all public resources.

## **POLICY STATEMENTS**

### **Administration**

- Oppose State or Federal efforts to “borrow” local revenues and encourage the State to find other methods of balancing its budget.
- Local land use control – limit loss of local land use control

- Support local government action, rather than the imposition of state, federal or regional unfunded mandates upon local governments, as well as federal mandates placed on the state.
- Oppose any amendment to the redistribution of sales and use taxes which will negatively affect the city and its ability to provide city services and thereby cause a negative fiscal impact.
- Support efforts that allow local jurisdictions to operate under its police powers to reasonably control the use of property in the interest of the health, safety, and welfare of the community.

### **Economic Development**

- Support economic development initiatives that preserve and enhance a positive business climate and maintain and grow the business tax base.
- Maintain an equitable program for the continued disbursement of sales and use taxes which reflect local impacts on various communities.
- Oppose policies requiring a single power source.
- Support legislation that allows local governments to continue to retain full authority to reject projects or to condition project approvals and impose mitigation measures.

### **Streets, Transportation, Infrastructure, and High-Speed Rail**

- Oppose measures to withhold funding dedicated to transportation funding unless proposed housing goals are being met.
- Support legislation that would increase funding for local, sub-regional or regional transportation projects.
- Support protection of dedicated transportation-related tax revenues.
- Support commuter public transportation hubs to be in areas where there will be a large public benefit.

### **Community Development/Housing**

- Oppose measures which would undermine established general plan, zoning, and housing documents.
- Oppose measures which undermine the planning vision of local government and contradict the expectations of our community, which includes projects mitigation their impacts.
- Support measures that allow enhanced public space management to ensure clean, safe access to public facilities.
- Support measures that promote a local approach to affordable housing

## **Water and Wastewater**

- Support and monitor legislation that would increase the availability of, and funding for, water conservation, water reuse technologies, water recycling, local water storage and other water supply technologies such as the Groundwater Replenishment System project
- Support the availability of funding for wastewater service providers and biosolids producers to address PFAS and other contaminants of emerging concern.
- Support measures/funding that allow/provide for increased capacity and wastewater treatment

## **Parks and Recreation**

- Support legislation and funding opportunities that help cities build better, stronger communities by providing funding to improve air, water, parks, open space, natural resources, historic preservation, the arts and cultural resources.

## **Public Safety**

- Recruitment and Education - continue to engage in the development of modernized educational requirements for CA law enforcement. Support all efforts to develop and recruit diverse police candidates.
- Increase in Crime - prioritize policies that protect the public and ensure well-resourced public safety officers are given the tools to be successful in protecting our communities (i.e., real time crime centers). Work with coalition partners to continue educating the public on the impacts of Proposition 47 and work collaboratively towards a legislative solution.
- Peace Officer Mental Health and Wellness - support funding for programs to improve peace officers' mental health and wellness and supports regular mental health and wellness checks for peace officers.
- Mental Health Crises - support improving law enforcement's response to those in crisis – especially individuals with severe mental illness and substance abuse disorders, respond using highly trained co-deployment teams with capabilities that match the need.
- Training - Improve subject matters and modalities for training and support increased funding for law enforcement training.
- Fentanyl – The ongoing fentanyl crisis continues to impact communities across California, the consequences of which are devastating. CPCA will prioritize support for legislation that increases accountability of those responsible for the sale and distribution of fentanyl, public awareness of the crisis, resources for law enforcement to address the impacts, and treatment and services for those addicted to this deadly substance.

- Addressing Threats Against Schools, Places of Worship, and More – Ongoing threats made against schools, religious institutions, hospitals, city council meetings, and other fixed targets have continued to demand a swift law enforcement response whenever they occur, especially in the face of recurring mass shooting events. However, California Penal Code does not qualify a threat against a school, building, or a place of worship as a “criminal threat.”
- Community Service Officers: Introduction of Hearsay Testimony – Agencies who have hired non-sworn civilian community service officers (CSOs) to handle low-level calls are facing issues as those CSOs are not included in existing law that allows sworn officers to introduce hearsay statements at preliminary hearing.

## **Finance**

- Support policies that encourage fiscal responsibility at the federal, state, and local level
- Support enhancement of municipalities flexibility to finance public projects economically and efficiently.
- Oppose efforts that reduce local revenues or future opportunities for local revenue.