



## Legislation Text

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*Report Prepared by: Christopher Jensen, Director, Parks and Recreation*

**SUBJECT:** High Speed Rail Updates

### **REPORT IN BRIEF**

Parks & Community Services Director Christopher Jensen will provide ongoing updates as available on High Speed Rail as it relates to the acquisition of the Merced Senior Community Center and the McCombs Youth Center.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Information only-no action required

### **DISCUSSION**

The High Speed Rail Authority (HSRA) is the lead agency overseeing the development of High Speed Rail (HSR) in the State of California. The HSRA has hosted several community based workshops to engage and inform residents of the timeline, station layout, track location and positive impact HSR should have on for the State, the Central Valley, and the City of Merced. Within the path of HSR's segment in Merced includes the Merced Senior Community Center and the McCombs Youth Center. Both of these facilities are owned by the City of Merced but operated through contracted service or lease agreements with outside organization's, Boys and Girls Club of Merced County and Merced Senior Inc.

The plan initiated in 2023 by Parks & Community Services was to develop a new Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan that would prioritize a feasibility analysis and suggested relocation plan for both the McCombs Youth Center and the Merced Senior Community Center as a result of HSR's development. The Department was awarded \$150,000 earlier this year to carry out the new master planning process over the next 18 months.

Although always supportive of HSR's development, including the Merced Station, the City was unaware of the potential advanced timeline recently made possible by the infusion of federal funding to the project. What was thought to be a 5-7 year timeline was expedited to a 18 month- 2 year timeline in November by the HSRA. In an effort to adjust to this new timeline City staff hosted a series of conversations with the HSRA about the relocation and timeline concerns. Part of the outcome from those meetings was to delineate the difference between ownership of the buildings and operation of the buildings as it relates to the assistance available through HSRA and the HSR project for relocation.

It has been communicated to staff that the HSRA is willing to work with both outside organizations immediately to determine relocation needs and assistance that can be offered for those needs. There are a variety of services that can be offered but considerations are made on a case-by-case basis by

the HSRA. Staff will work to ensure both agencies have the most appropriate contact information to assist with the potential for relocation.

Parks & Community Services is wrapping up the up the Request for Proposals for a Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan this month and hopes to have the services retained of a contacted facilitator by July. The department will work in collaboration with the facilitator to gather community input on the amenities that a new community center and recreational facility should include. Participation in this process by both Merced Senior Inc. and the Boys and Girls Club of Merced County is encouraged.

Over the next several months, Parks & Community Services staff will work with community partners to generate an approximate social value of both Merced Senior Community Center and McCombs Youth Center. The outcome of these meetings will assist in developing a more reflective property appraisal.