



Legislation Text

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Planning Commission Staff Report

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SUBJECT: Annual Review of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), Determination of Whether the Individual Projects are Consistent with the General Plan Maps, Policies, and Principles and Recommendation to the City Council Regarding the Consistency with the Merced Vision 2030 General Plan

ACTION Adopt a finding that the CIP is consistent with the General Plan

SUMMARY

The City of Merced's 2023-24 Fiscal Year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) identifies the proposed major projects or purchases over the next fiscal year. A function of the Planning Commission is the annual review of the CIP to determine whether the individual projects are consistent with the General Plan maps, policies, and principles. The Draft Project List for the 2023-2024 Capital Improvement Program document is provided at Attachment A. These are part of the City Manager's budget recommendation which will be considered by the Merced City Council. They are anticipated to take action on the entire 2023-24 Budget at their regularly scheduled meeting of June 20, 2023.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission recommend to the City Council that the Draft 2023-24 Capital Improvement Program is consistent with the "*Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*" and related master plans.

DISCUSSION

Background

Pursuant to California Government Code Section 65401, the CIP "shall be submitted to the county or city planning agency for review... as to conformity with the adopted general plan..." The Planning Commission fulfills the role of the "planning agency" for this purpose. The 2023-24 Budget and CIP were introduced to the public at the City Council meeting of May 15, 2023. The City Council will continue to take public comments and may make updates at their meeting scheduled for June 5, 2023, and the final action is anticipated on June 20, 2023. A Planning Commission finding of CIP consistency with the Merced Vision 2030 General Plan will facilitate the CIP adoption by the City Council.

In prior years, the Planning Commission has been asked to take action on a five-year CIP. At this time, the Commission is only being requested to consider the one-year CIP that coincides with the 2023-24 budget. California Government Code Section 65401 only requires a one-year period. Currently, the City is utilizing the services of an Interim City Engineer. When a permanent City Engineer is fulfilling the role, they may consider going back to a five-year CIP. However, for this year, the only materials available at the time of preparation of this staff report is the one-year CIP.

What is a Capital Improvement Program (CIP)?

The Draft Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is a list of physical improvements that the department heads and City Manager believe the City should fund and build during the CIP period. Projects are considered in light of the General Plan, Public Facility Financing Plan, the City's overall priorities, the expressed needs of citizens, the merits of each specific project, financial constraints, and Federal and State restrictions on the use of inter-governmental funds.

Department heads try to minimize expenditures by prioritizing and coordinating projects whenever possible. Also, City Staff tries to minimize the City's share of construction costs whenever feasible through Federal, State, or County participation.

The CIP is one of the best devices for implementing the General Plan and other goals and policies of Merced. It can be effective for guiding development, particularly in relation to urban expansion policies.

Benefits of Capital Improvement Programming

- Implements the City's General Plan (particularly the circulation, land use, and public facilities elements);
- Encourages early review of priorities;
- Provides opportunities for coordination among projects with respect to location, function, and timing;
- Utilizes public input to assist with sites for needed projects and where advance acquisition should occur;
- Provides for long-range financial planning.

Role of the Planning Commission

Ultimately, the City Council is responsible for selection of the Capital Improvement Program projects and their prioritization. The Planning Commission's role is to determine whether the projects are consistent with the General Plan text, maps, and policies. The Commission should limit itself to this review; however, feel free to suggest deleting, modifying, or adding projects. The Commission is not asked to prioritize the projects.

General Plan Consistency

The General Plan is a document that looks ahead 20 years or more and establishes broad policies relating to growth. Although the General Plan identifies major infrastructure needs, such as major roadways, sewer trunk lines, new fire and police stations, etc., the General Plan does NOT contain a comprehensive detailed list of projects that the City will build over the life of the plan. Therefore, one would not find most of the projects listed in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) specifically

mentioned in the General Plan.

Roadway projects are an example of a typical CIP project. These projects are consistent with the General Plan Circulation Element or are depicted on the Circulation Map. The same nexus is found in the case for new fire stations and parks, which are discussed in the Public Facilities and Open Space Chapters. Other examples are the location of individual traffic signals, generally not included in the General Plan, but does NOT conflict with any adopted policies, text, or maps in the General Plan. Improvements or upgrades to existing facilities, which are prevalent throughout the CIP, would be viewed in the same manner.

The General Plan has many policies, however, which are supported through the implementation of the proposed CIP projects. Examples include:

- T 1.2 - Coordinate circulation and transportation planning with pertinent regional, state and federal agencies.
- T 1.4 - Promote traffic safety for all modes of transportation.
- T 2.6 - Maintain and expand the community's existing bicycle circulation system.
- T 2.7 - Maintain a pedestrian friendly environment.
- T 3.4 - Reduce rail system impacts on circulation in the urban area.
- P 1.1 - Provide adequate public infrastructure and municipal services to meet the needs of future development.
- P 1.2 - Utilize existing infrastructure and public service capacities to the maximum extent possible and provide for the logical, timely, and economically efficient extension of infrastructure and services.
- P 2.1 - Maintain and enhance public protection facilities, equipment, and personnel to the maximum extent feasible within the resource constraints of the City to serve the City's needs.
- P-3 Water - Ensure that adequate water supply can be provided within the City's service area, concurrent with service expansion and population growth.
- P-4 Wastewater - Provide adequate wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal capacity for existing and projected future needs.
- P-5 - Provide effective storm drainage facilities for future development.
- P-6 -Establish programs to recover recyclable materials and energy from solid waste generated within the City.
- OS 1.5 a - Preserve and enhance water quality.
- OS 3.1 - Provide high quality park and open space facilities to serve the needs of a growing population.
- OS 3.2 - Maintain and expand the City's bikeway and trail system.
- OS 3.3 - Maintain the City's existing high-quality open space facilities.
- S 3.2a - Maintain essential services in the event of flooding or dam failure.
- S 4.2 - Maintain a reasonable level of accessibility and infrastructure support for fire suppression, disaster, and other emergency services.

City staff has reviewed the list of CIP projects against the policies, text, and maps in the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*. It has been determined that the projects are consistent and do not conflict with any parts of the General Plan. Based upon these findings, the Planning staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt a finding of General Plan consistency for the Capital Improvement

Plan (Attachment A).

ATTACHMENTS

A. City of Merced 2023-24 Capital Improvement Program