



STAFF REPORT

City Council

Meeting Date:

4/28/2026

Staff Report Number:

26-071-CC

Informational Item:

Annual City Council priority setting workshop final report

Recommendation

This is an informational item and does not require City Council action.

Policy Issues

City Council's annual priority setting workshop provides direction to the city manager on aligning resources and work plans for the next year.

Background

City Council held its annual priority setting workshop March 21 with City staff and the community. The staff report is available in Attachment A and the presentation is available in Attachment B. City Council received updates on accomplishments and challenges, employee engagement, financial outlook and budget balancing strategies, community input, Environmental Justice (EJ) Element progress, and Menlo Park centennial celebrations. City Council established five top priorities for fiscal year 2026-27.

Analysis

This staff report provides a high-level overview of outcomes from City Council discussions.

Environmental Justice Element priorities

EJ Element program EJ7.L indicates City Council will consider community-identified environmental justice priorities at the annual workshop. Staff presented information on the top three community priorities to advance EJ. City Council subsequently considered and accepted the EJ annual progress report March 24.

City Council discussed multiple aspects of EJ priority 2 to promote access to high quality and affordable food, including identifying and supporting activities related to food access that are already underway in Belle Haven,. Staff will incorporate feedback into ongoing EJ implementation. Next steps include continuing coordination with a full range of community-based organizations active in Belle Haven, identifying opportunities to strengthen existing programs, and exploring potential new partnerships to expand affordable food access. Staff will return to City Council in early fiscal year 2026-27 for consideration of utilizing the EJ Element Implementation Fund to advance EJ priority 2 programs.

Top priorities for fiscal year 2026-27

Through discussion, City Council maintained four top priorities from the prior fiscal year and added a fifth priority for fiscal year 2026-27, listed in alphabetical order:

- Climate action – mitigation, adaptation and resilience

- Downtown vibrancy
- Housing
- Public safety (newly added priority)
- Safe routes

A prior priority of emergency and disaster preparedness was removed for the next fiscal year based on progress with the overall program. City Council expressed interest in holding a study session on public safety, which is tentatively scheduled for May 12. City Council discussed economic development as a component of the downtown vibrancy priority, greater focus on infrastructure versus education for the safe routes priority (specifically related to Safe Routes to Schools), and future consideration of a priority related to quality of life.

City Council discussed further defining a priority including the following elements:

- Identification of topics as top priorities to focus energy/effort
- Elevation of core services to top priorities
- Evolution of top priority topics over time
- Responsiveness to public input on top priorities
- Greater public education on priority topics
- Consideration of a policy with a definition of priority as part of future priority-setting

Next steps

A series of next steps include, but are not limited to:

- Fiscal year 2026-27 budget development (including capital improvement program) based on top priorities and EJ Element
- Fiscal year 2026-27 work plan development
- Continued updates on City Council priorities webpage (Attachment C)

Impact on City Resources

There is no impact on City resources associated with this update.

Environmental Review

This action is not a project within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines §§15378 and 15061(b)(3) as it will not result in any direct or indirect physical change in the environment.

Public Notice

Public notification was achieved by posting the agenda, with the agenda items being listed, at least 72 hours prior to the meeting.

Attachments

- A. Hyperlink – March 21 Staff Report #26-038-CC:
www.menlopark.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/agendas-and-minutes/city-council/2026-meetings/20260321/c1-20260321-cc-priority-setting.pdf
- B. Hyperlink – March 21 City Council workshop presentation:

www.menlopark.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/agendas-and-minutes/city-council/2026-meetings/20260321/city-council-workshop-presentation-2026.pdf

C. Hyperlink – City Council priorities webpage: www.menlopark.gov/priorities

Report prepared by:

Stephen Stolte, Assistant City Manager