



COUNCIL REPORT

DATE: January 28, 2025
CATEGORY: Consent
DEPT.: City Manager's Office
TITLE: **City Council Work Plan Process**

RECOMMENDATION

Approve the recommended process for reaffirming the City Council's Strategic Priorities and developing the Fiscal Years 2025-26 and 2026-27 Council Goals Work Plan.

BACKGROUND

In 2023, as part of the Fiscal Years 2023-24 and 2024-25 (FYs 2023-25) Council Work Plan process, the City Council reaffirmed its Vision Statement and seven Strategic Priorities for the future of Mountain View, which were originally created and adopted in 2021. Following a three-month development process, Council also adopted a two-year work plan with selected projects to advance the Strategic Priorities. Council's current Strategic Priorities and work plan are included as Attachment 1.

The next two-year work plan will cover Fiscal Years 2025-26 and 2026-27 (FYs 2025-27). Staff developed a proposed timeline and process for development of the FYs 2025-27 Council Work Plan and presented it to the Ad Hoc Council Goal-Setting Committee (Committee) on December 4, 2024 (Attachment 2). Staff has incorporated the Committee's input, as indicated in the sections below, and the resulting process is now before the City Council for consideration and adoption. **The first step in the process will be a meeting on February 25, 2025, during which Council will suggest potential projects for further analysis and deliberation for inclusion in the FYs 2025-27 Council Work Plan.**

ANALYSIS

The Council work plan establishes the City Council's top priority initiatives that, along with other special projects and ongoing core services, contribute to the City Council's seven Strategic Priorities. In the past, the City Council work plan has been comprehensive and robust, with a range of 40 to 70 projects since 2019 and an average of 51 projects per work plan cycle. Given the volume and breadth of projects taken in conjunction with the City's daily work and other

priority projects, it has been challenging to successfully initiate or complete every project within the two-year work plan time frame.

In fact, typically less than 50% of projects have been completed within the past two-year work plans. Even with relatively fewer projects (41 as adopted, 38 after further Council direction), the FYs 2023-25 Work Plan is estimated to close out the cycle with 42% of total projects and 52% of Category A projects completed.

It has become clear over the past several years that the existing volume of work plan projects, while laudable, is unrealistic to achieve in a two-year cycle. Table 1 below summarizes the high-level count of FYs 2023-25 Work Plan projects by status. Attachment 3 lists and provides the status of each project.

Table 1: Project Status: Category A and Total

Status	Cat. A Projects		Total Projects	
	Number	Percent ¹	Number	Percent ¹
Completed	8	35%	11	27%
Anticipated to be completed by June 30, 2025	4	17%	6	15%
In progress	9	39%	18 ²	44%
Deferred/removed	2	9%	6	15%
Total	23		41	

¹ Percents are calculated on the total number of 41 projects adopted, although four projects were later deferred or removed by Council direction. An additional two projects are now recommended for deferral by staff. The sum of percentages may differ from 100% due to rounding.

² Six of the 18 in-progress projects are anticipated to be completed within the first six months of the FYs 2025-27 Work Plan cycle.

The section that follows outlines an approach to developing a Council work plan for FYs 2025-27 that is focused on the City Council’s top priorities, is feasible to complete or substantially complete within the two-year work plan cycle and contributes to Council’s seven Strategic Priorities in a meaningful way.

FYs 2025-27 Council Work Plan Scope, Approach, and Considerations

Quality Over Quantity

For the upcoming two-year cycle, Council has expressed an interest in developing a work plan that emphasizes quality rather than quantity, focusing on successfully delivering a smaller number of high-priority projects in a timely manner that are important to Council and the community. Consequently, with the considerations and process described below, staff is recommending a target of up to 14 projects for the FYs 2025-27 Work Plan. Staff’s final

recommended number of projects will depend on the staff and financial resources anticipated to be needed for each project. For example, more projects may be possible if the projects take fewer staff hours to complete and/or engage staff that are not dedicated in large part to other proposed Council work plan projects or existing obligations, such as implementation of Housing Element programs. Conversely, fewer projects may be possible if the reverse is true.

It was the input of the Ad Hoc Council Goal-Setting Committee to consider 10 to 14 projects as a target rather than a set number, recognizing that the final number could be slightly lower or higher depending on the scope and mix of projects.

Staff has identified a number of benefits to the proposed “quality-over-quantity” approach, including the following:

- Establishes a focus on high-visibility projects that can be clearly tracked and communicated to Council and the community, showing measurable progress toward achieving Council’s Strategic Priorities;
- Enhances staff’s ability to focus on and engage the community in a meaningful way and deliver results by concentrating on fewer, well-defined projects; and
- “Right sizes” the work plan to fit current staff and fiscal resources. The effort to right size is particularly timely given the City’s anticipated fiscal outlook, which will make it more challenging to add staff or other resources than in the past few years.

Council’s Work Plan Separate from Organizational Work Plan

The current FYs 2023-25 Council Work Plan includes projects initiated by Councilmembers as well as significant initiatives put forward by staff from other major plans, such as the Capital Improvement Program and Housing Element, or from other Council-adopted or department plans. Staff proposed the inclusion of these additional projects in the last planning cycle as a way to reflect the range of efforts supporting the Strategic Priorities and also account for the availability of staff capacity to support new projects.

The proposed approach for the FYs 2025-27 Council Work Plan, as suggested by the Ad Hoc Council Goal-Setting Committee, is to have **the Council work plan reflect *only* those projects suggested by Council for inclusion**. While this could mean that Councilmembers put forward potential projects that are not currently on any work plan, it does not preclude Councilmembers from identifying existing projects they wish to include in the FYs 2025-27 Council Work Plan. **More information about how Councilmembers will be asked to put forward potential work plan projects and how existing projects may be considered is outlined in the description of the February 25, 2025 meeting in the section on the work plan process later in this report.**

Big Picture Alignment of Work Plan Projects and Other City Efforts

In addition to the City Council work plan projects, the Strategic Priorities are supported by a multitude of other special projects and ongoing programs and services, including mandated and nondiscretionary activities.

In previous Council work planning processes, staff has used the image of an iceberg to demonstrate how staff resources are allocated, with Council work plan projects at the top of the iceberg, followed by other important, time-limited projects above the waterline, followed by the City's ongoing operations, which may be less visible below the waterline. **It is estimated that 85% of staff capacity is directed toward the ongoing activities below the waterline.**

The image below in Figure 1 further fleshes out this illustration, using the example of the Council work plan projects in furtherance of the Economic Vitality Strategic Priority. These projects—creating a vibrant downtown, developing a storefront activation program, and implementing the Economic Vitality Strategy—are at the tip of the iceberg. Listed next are other significant strategic initiatives, such as the Downtown Precise Plan update and implementation of the Castro Street Pedestrian Mall, which also support Economic Vitality. Finally, underneath the surface are a host of other ongoing programs and services which are supported through day-to-day staff operations across many City departments that are also essential to achieving Economic Vitality.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY: ECONOMIC VITALITY



Figure 1: EXAMPLE—Iceberg Illustration of Efforts Aligned with Council Projects to Accomplish Economic Vitality

As part of the adopted City Council work plan, staff proposes creating summary sheets for each Strategic Priority to show the broad range of activity and collaboration across departments and how other projects and ongoing work align with Council’s work plan projects to accomplish its high-level priorities. These summaries will be used in the City’s public communications throughout the FYs 2025-27 Council Work Plan cycle.

Capacity and Resource Considerations

As mentioned above, approximately 15% of the organization’s staff capacity is available to dedicate to special projects, including, most importantly, the City Council’s work plan projects. In developing the work plan, it is helpful to consider the ways new projects can have a downstream “snowball effect” on staff capacity, in which other new special projects, programs, and ongoing operational work are needed in order to accomplish and implement the intent of the priority project. Figure 2 below illustrates this effect, using the Implementation of the Castro Pedestrian Mall Council work plan project as an example.

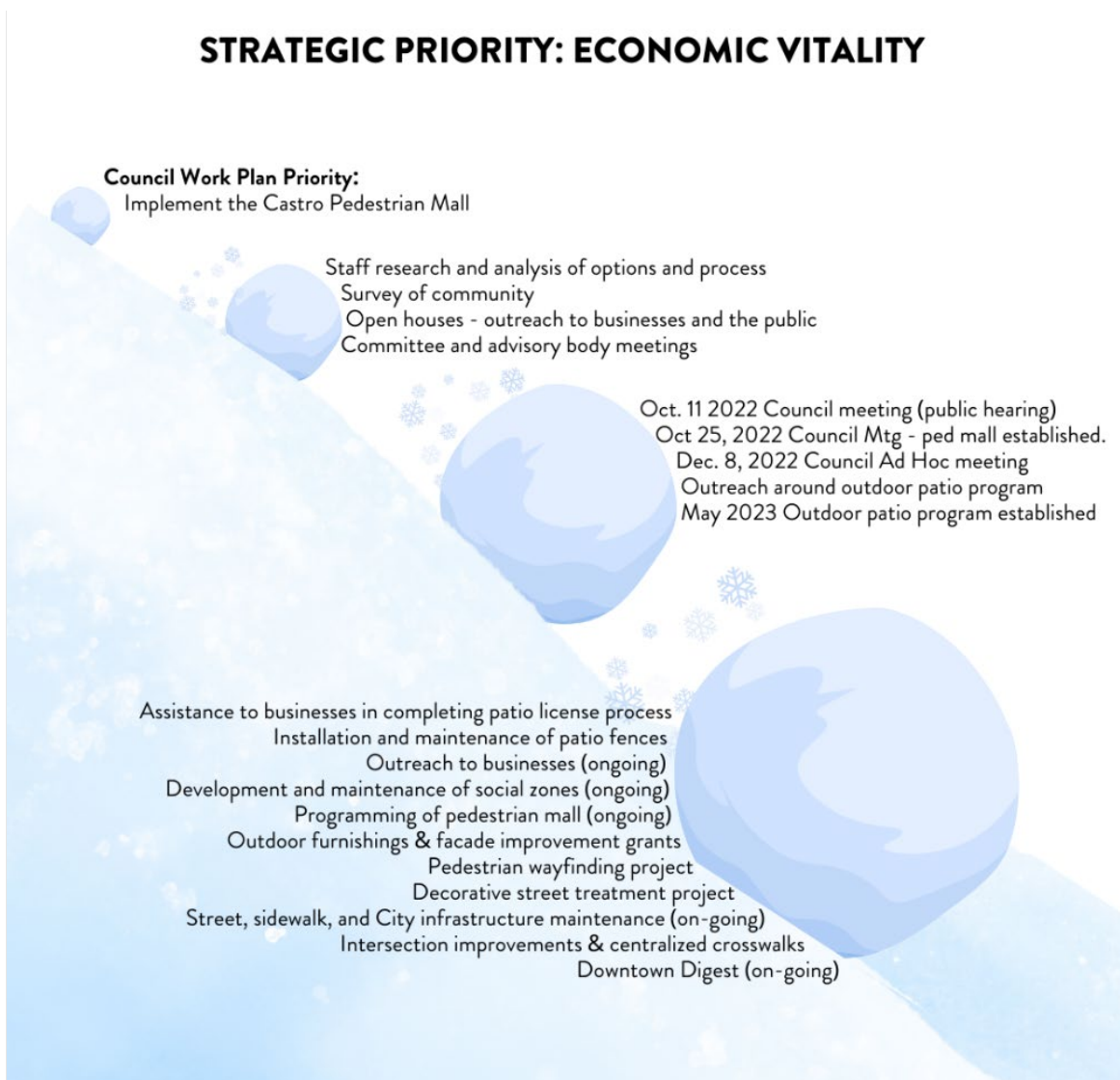


Figure 2: EXAMPLE SNOWBALL EFFECT—Additional Ongoing Activities Associated with Accomplishing a Council Work Plan Project

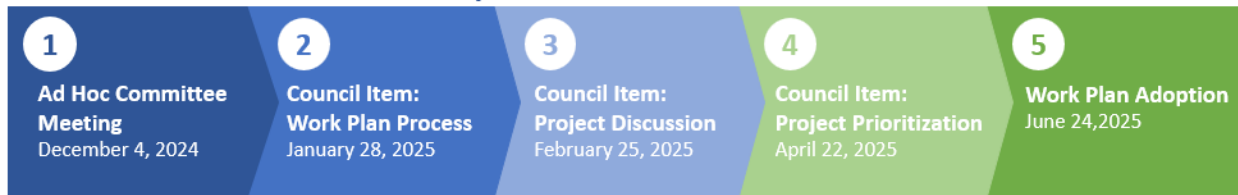
Work Plan Development Process

As in prior years, the development of the FYs 2025-27 Work Plan will consist of a series of Council meetings and will conclude in June 2025, with Council adoption of the work plan alongside the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Budget. Once adopted, work plan updates will be provided to the City Council to monitor implementation progress, receive recommendations from staff, and address changing community priorities as appropriate. **The timeline is similar to the FYs 2023-25 timeline, with an additional step proposed by the Ad Hoc Council Goal-Setting Committee. This step asks Councilmembers to use the template provided in Attachment 4 to submit a brief written summary of the projects (up to 3) they propose for the FYs 2025-27 Council Work Plan. These written summaries would be submitted in advance of the February 25 meeting and included in the meeting packet.** More information about this process follows the timeline.

Timeline

The proposed work plan development timeline is illustrated in Figure 3 and listed below.

FY 25-27 Council Work Plan Development Process



FY 25-27 Council Work Plan Check-In Process

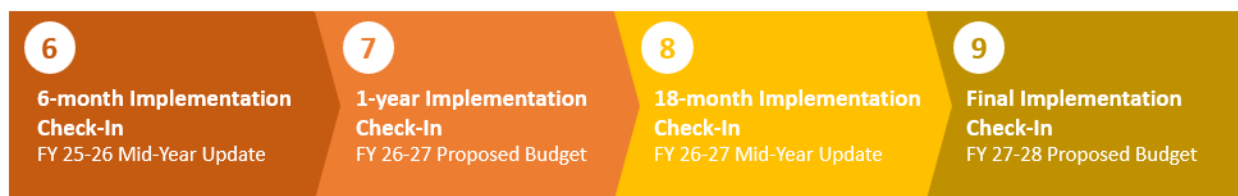


Figure 3: FYs 2025-27 Work Plan Process Timeline

- **December 4, 2024**—Committee meeting to review and discuss process recommendations, timeline, and analytical criteria.
- **January 28, 2025**—Council consent item to approve process and timeline recommended by the Committee.

- **February 12, 2025**—In advance of the February meeting, Councilmembers are asked to submit brief written descriptions (using the provided template) of the projects (up to three) that they are suggesting for inclusion in the work plan for discussion at the meeting.
- **February 25, 2025**—Council meeting to reaffirm the current seven Council Strategic Priorities, review current and planned projects, and identify potential new projects for staff analysis in advance of Council’s final selection in April.
- **March 2025**—Staff analysis of potential projects and Council advisory body input.
- **April 22, 2025**—Council meeting to review staff analysis of the potential projects identified in the February meeting and determine final project prioritization and selection.
- **June 24, 2025**—Council work plan adoption during Fiscal Year 2025-26 Budget Public Hearing.

Scope

In keeping with the quality-over-quantity approach, staff recommends that the final Council work plan have a targeted maximum of 10 to 14 projects, with the ultimate number of projects depending on the size of the project and available staff capacity within the lead departments. As described in the outline of the February meeting below, these projects would include Council’s new project ideas and may also include Council’s selection of certain existing projects. **The intent is to develop a concise, achievable, and impactful work plan which emphasizes projects that accomplish the seven Strategic Priorities while also being mindful of the downstream impacts (snowball effect) that new projects may have on staffing capacity for other essential projects and day-to-day City operations.**

Process

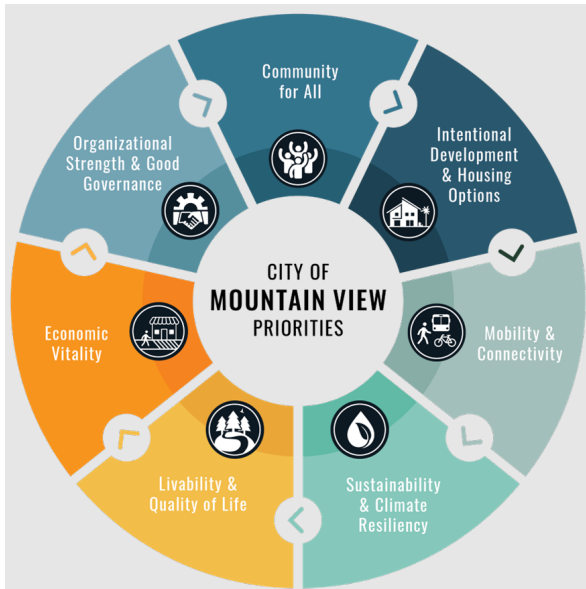
This section describes key elements of the proposed process for how Council will put forward, prioritize, and approve projects for the FYs 2025-27 Work Plan. Staff will prepare an analysis to support Council’s deliberations at the February and April Council meetings as summarized below.

February 25, 2025 Council Meeting

At this meeting, staff recommends that each Councilmember suggests up to three potential projects for analysis and consideration for inclusion in the FYs 2025-27 Work Plan for Council discussion. As described below, this could include new projects or projects on the existing FYs 2023-25 Council Work Plan. Councilmembers are asked to provide a brief written description of their items in advance (by February 12, 2025), so they can be included in the packets for the February 25 meeting. A template worksheet for the project description is included in this report

as Attachment 4. Councilmembers submitting existing projects need only note the name of the project. A description is not necessary.

Councilmembers will also have the opportunity at the meeting to reaffirm or suggest changes to the current seven Council Strategic Priorities. The Strategic Priorities are listed below in Figure 4 and further described in Attachment 1.



- Community for All
- Intentional Development and Housing Options
- Mobility and Connectivity
- Sustainability and Climate Resiliency
- Livability and Quality of Life
- Economic Vitality
- Organizational Strength and Good Governance

Figure 4: Current Council Strategic Priorities

FYs 2023-25 Council Work Plan

The status of FYs 2023-25 Council Work Plan projects is an important consideration for determining the FYs 2025-27 Work Plan. As summarized in Table 1 above and in Attachment 3, 17 of the original 41 projects in the current work plan are either completed or anticipated to be completed by the end of the fiscal year; 18 projects are in progress; and six projects are not started and can be considered to be deferred or removed, either by Council action (four projects) or staff's recommendation (two projects).

Staff is suggesting that the FYs 2025-27 Council Work Plan be built “from scratch” with no current projects automatically included in the new work plan and with the following approach for considering the remaining projects in the current work plan:

- **In-Progress Projects:** Staff will continue to work on all 18 in-progress projects (listed in Table 2 below and in Attachment 3), six of which are anticipated to be completed by the end of calendar year 2025. (Table 2 is annotated to show which of the in-progress projects

are anticipated to be completed by the end of 2025 (i.e., the first six months of the FYs 2025-27 Work Plan cycle.)

It is not necessary for Council to include these projects in the next Council work plan in order for work on the projects to continue. However, staff will consider the projects in the new work plan to be the priority, which could impact the pace at which these current, continued projects are pursued. If Councilmembers wish staff to pursue any specific current projects at the quickest possible pace, they may want to submit these projects (up to three) for inclusion in the work plan. This is in keeping with the approach of having the new Council work plan reflect the highest priority for accomplishment during the upcoming two-year work plan cycle.

Table 2: In-Progress Projects from the FYs 2023-25 Council Work Plan

Moffett Boulevard Precise Plan*	Steven’s Creek Trail Extension
Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan*	Transportation Demand Management Ord.
Biodiversity Strategy*	Downtown Precise Plan
Urban Forest Plan*	R-3 Zoning Standards
Dark Skies Ordinance*	Low- and Middle-income Homeownership
Historic Preservation Ordinance*	Affordable Housing at VTA Evelyn Site
Race, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan	Active Transportation Plan
Decarbonization Strategy	Citywide Travel Demand Update
Climate Vulnerability Assessment	Micromobility Guidelines

* Projects with an asterisk (*) are anticipated to be completed within the first six months of the FYs 2025-27 Work Plan.

- **Deferred Projects:** The FYs 2023-25 projects in Table 3 below and in Attachment 3 are considered as deferred or removed, either by prior Council direction or by staff’s recommendation. Staff proposes that work on these projects will not be conducted during FYs 2025-27 unless a Councilmember wishes to submit one or more of these as part of their three proposed projects for the FYs 2025-27 Council Work Plan.

Table 3: Deferred Projects from the Fiscal Years 2023-25 Council Work Plan

Project	Status
Downtown Office Cap	Removed by Council ¹
City Charter Amendment	Deferred by Council
Municipal Code Amendment	Deferred by Council
Castro Grade Separation	Deferred by Council
Public Services Study	Staff recommendation to defer ²
Gateway Park Revitalization	Staff recommendation to defer ³

¹ At the November 7, 2023 Council Study Session on the Downtown Precise Plan, Council directed staff to delay or remove this project. In the Council work plan update in April 2024, this project was removed.

² Staff recommends deferring a Public Services Study in light of the timing of housing development and the opportunity to analyze public service needs as part of an update of the 2030 General Plan.

³ Staff recommends deferring the revitalization of Gateway Park and will review this item for consideration after the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan is finalized.

Other Projects

For reference, staff has compiled a comprehensive list of other current and planned projects and initiatives (Attachment 5). This list will illustrate the breadth and volume of work already under way to support each Strategic Priority. **As such, the list can assist Council in its deliberation by both identifying any significant gaps that could be filled by a potential new project and providing a picture of staff's overall capacity to take on new projects.**

Suggested February Meeting Process

The suggested process for the February meeting is as follows:

- Staff will present the current seven Council Strategic Priorities for Council reaffirmation or amendment;
- Councilmembers may submit a brief written description of up to three potential projects in advance of the meeting, using the template in Attachment 4, for inclusion in the meeting agenda packet (this step was suggested by the Ad Hoc Council Goal-Setting Committee);
- At the meeting, Councilmembers are invited to discuss their proposed new project ideas or prioritization of existing projects (up to three);

- Councilmembers can ask questions of their colleagues to clarify the meaning and scope of any proposed new projects and of staff regarding resource capacity and other considerations;
- Staff will track the list of projects discussed in real time and help Council identify any possibilities for project consolidation; and
- The Mayor will take a straw vote on each project discussed to determine which projects have majority Council support to move forward to staff analysis. (This step was suggested by the Ad Hoc Council Goal-Setting Committee to focus staff's follow-up analysis on those projects that are more likely to be supported by Council as part of a cohesive Council work plan for FYs 2025-27.)

The potential projects receiving majority support will be analyzed by staff and shared with the City's advisory bodies, as described below, and brought back for Council consideration at its April 22 meeting.

April 22, 2025 Council Meeting

The suggested process for the April Council meeting is as follows:

- The Council report will provide staff's analysis of the potential projects moved forward by Council during the February 2025 meeting using the analysis criteria below along with a synthesis of advisory body input, any questions regarding project scope, and findings regarding project feasibility, resource impacts, and trade-offs.
- Staff will identify projects that are recommended for inclusion in the Council work plan as well as projects, if any, that are not recommended due to capacity constraints, with the goal to arrive at a target of 10 to 14 work plan projects.
- If necessary, staff will support Council in discussion of tradeoffs and priorities to determine any changes to the recommended list of projects. The Committee suggested that any prioritization needed at this stage be achieved through Council dialogue rather than through a dot voting procedure.
- Council will provide direction to staff for further analysis if necessary and will vote on a motion to determine the projects for inclusion in the work plan, which will come back to Council for formal approval in June along with the adoption of the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Budget.

Analysis Criteria

Staff will use the following criteria to analyze the projects proposed by Council during the February 25 meeting. As noted above, the results of this analysis will be provided to Council for its April 22, 2025 meeting.

- **Strategic Priorities:** Assess each project for its alignment with and advancement of the City Council's Strategic Priorities.
- **Discretionary or Nondiscretionary:** Identify whether the project is at the full discretion of the Council or if state or federal law makes the project nondiscretionary, mandatory, or time sensitive.
- **Fiscal Impact:** Estimate the costs and anticipated revenues and whether new one-time or ongoing funding will be needed.
- **Staff Capacity:** Identify the staff resources involved to lead and support the project, including whether additional staff resources will be needed on a limited-period or permanent basis.
- **Legal Impact:** Determine the level of legal assistance required to analyze legal impacts or develop new legislation.
- **Dependencies:** Identify whether this project is required by a grant or is an action item from another City plan or strategy or would in turn enable or impede other projects. (This criterion was added by the Ad Hoc Council Goal-Setting Committee.)
- **Duration and Timing:** Estimate the anticipated duration and time frame of the project and identify any urgency or timeliness concerns driving project prioritization.

Council Advisory Body Participation

Staff proposes that Council advisory bodies (CABs) be consulted in the development of the work plan, similar to the process used to develop the FYs 2023-25 Council Work Plan. Staff plans to present to each CAB at their regular meetings in March or April 2025 and facilitate a structured discussion about the work plan development process, seeking feedback about their perspective on the Strategic Priorities and Council's potential project list. In their advisory role, CABs can provide high-level input on identified potential projects, identify critical issues, and help inform prioritization. Input gathered from CABs will be summarized and provided to Council for consideration during the project prioritization discussion in April 2025.

NEXT STEPS

The next step in the Council work plan process is a meeting on February 25, 2025, at which Councilmembers will put forward potential projects for discussion and analysis. Following review and input from the CABs and analysis by staff, staff will bring a recommended set of work plan projects to Council on April 22, 2025 for prioritization, as needed, and approval. Formal adoption of the work plan is scheduled for June 24, 2025 along with adoption of the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Budget.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with approving the process for setting the FYs 2025-27 Council Work Plan. If the Council work plan ultimately approved includes projects that cannot be accomplished with existing staff and funding, budget appropriations would be recommended as part of the adoption process for the FY 2025-26 Budget.

LEVINE ACT

California Government Code Section 84308 (also known as the Levine Act) prohibits city officials from participating in any proceeding involving a “license, permit, or other entitlement for use” if the official has received a campaign contribution exceeding \$500 from a party, participant, or agent of a party or participant within the last 12 months. The Levine Act is intended to prevent financial influence on decisions that affect specific, identifiable persons or participants. For more information see the Fair Political Practices Commission website: www.fppc.ca.gov/learn/pay-to-play-limits-and-prohibitions.html

Please see below for information about whether the recommended action for this agenda item is subject to or exempt from the Levine Act.

EXEMPT FROM THE LEVINE ACT

General policy and legislative actions

CONCLUSION

This item outlines a proposed process for reaffirming the existing seven Council Strategic Priorities and developing the FYs 2025-27 Council Work Plan. The theme of the proposed process is “quality over quantity” to develop a focused and achievable work plan with a target of 10 to 14 of the City Council’s highest priority projects to accomplish over the two-year goal cycle. The major steps in the process include a Council meeting in February at which Councilmembers will propose potential projects and a Council meeting in April at which Council will consider staff’s analysis and recommendations, prioritize projects as necessary, and approve work plan projects.

The work plan will come to Council for formal adoption in June as part of the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Budget adoption.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Select a different number of projects and process for Councilmembers to propose and prioritize potential work plan projects.
2. Make amendments to the project analysis criteria.
3. Make other amendments to the work plan setting process.
4. Provide other direction.

PUBLIC NOTICING—Agenda posting.

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LW-ASR/MS/4/CAM
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- Attachments:
1. Council Strategic Priorities and Fiscal Years 2023-25 Work Plan
 2. Ad Hoc Council Goal-Setting Committee December 4, 2024 Memorandum
 3. Fiscal Years 2023-25 Council Work Plan Status
 4. Councilmember Potential Project Submittal Template
 5. Comprehensive List of Other Projects