



## LA MESA PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA

### A Regular Meeting

**Date:** Wednesday, February 5, 2025, 6:00 p.m.  
**Location:** City Council Chambers, 8130 Allison Avenue  
La Mesa, California  
**Commissioners:** Chair Jerry Jones  
Vice Chair Jonathan Frankel  
Commissioner Lauren Cooper  
Commissioner David Harris  
Commissioner Andrew Torpey

The public may view the meeting in-person or live using the following remote options:

Teleconference Meeting Webinar

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84881824076>

Telephone (Audio only)

(669) 900-6833 or (253) 215-8782 Webinar ID: 848 8182 4076

Copy and paste the webinar link into your internet browser if the webinar link does not work directly from the agenda.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

- **In-Person comments during the meeting:** Join us for the Commission meeting at the time and location specified on this agenda to make your comments. Comments will be limited to three (3) minutes.
- **How to submit eComments:** eComments are available once an agenda is published. Locate the meeting in "upcoming meetings" and click the comment bubble icon. Click on the item you wish to comment on. eComments can be submitted when the agenda is published and until **24 hours prior** to the meeting. eComments are limited to 3700

characters (approximately 500 words). eComments may be viewed by the Commission and members of the public following the close of the eComment submission period (24 hours prior to the meeting). Email your comment to [planning@cityoflamesa.us](mailto:planning@cityoflamesa.us) if you have difficulty submitting an eComment. eComments will not be read aloud as a regular meeting item; however any member of the Commission or member of the public may do so during their respective comment time.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Public Comment will be limited to 3 minutes per item. The timer begins when the participant begins speaking. Time cannot be combined or yielded to another speaker.

Citizens who wish to make an audio/visual presentation pertaining to an item on the agenda, or during Public Comments, should contact the Community Development Department at 619.667.1176, no later than 12:00 p.m., the business day prior to the meeting day. Advance notification will ensure compatibility with City equipment and allow Commission meeting presentations to progress smoothly and in a consistent and equitable manner. Please note that all presentations/digital materials are considered part of the maximum time limit provided to speakers.

Agenda reports for items on this agenda are available for public review at the Community Development Department, 8130 Allison Avenue, during normal business hours.

Materials related to an item on this agenda submitted to the Commission after distribution of the agenda packet are available for public inspection at the Community Development Department, 8130 Allison Avenue, during normal business hours.

**ACCESSIBILITY:** The City of La Mesa encourages the participation of disabled individuals in the services, activities and programs provided by the City. Individuals with disabilities, who require reasonable accommodation in order to participate in the Commission meetings, should contact the Administrative Services Department 48 hours prior to the meeting at 619.667.1175, fax 619.667.1163, or [GSpaniol@cityoflamesa.us](mailto:GSpaniol@cityoflamesa.us).

Hearing assisted devices are available for the hearing impaired. A City staff member is available to provide these devices upon entry to City Council meetings, commission meetings or public hearings held in the City Council Chambers. A photo i.d. or signature will be required to secure a device for the meeting.

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**Pages**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

**1.1 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**1.2 ROLL CALL**

**1.3 INVOCATION**

**2. ADDITIONS AND/OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA**

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT - (TOTAL TIME - 15 MINUTES)**

Note: In accordance with state law, an item not scheduled on the agenda may be brought forward by the general public for discussion; however, the Commission will not be able to take any action at this meeting. If appropriate, the item will be referred to staff or placed on a future agenda.

4. **CONFLICT DISCLOSURES**

5. **CONSENT CALENDAR**

The Consent Calendar includes items considered to be routine. Unless discussion is requested by members of the Commission or audience, all Consent Calendar items may be approved by one motion.

5.1 **APPROVAL OF THE MEETING MINUTES OF THE PLANNING  
COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING HELD JANUARY 15, 2025**

4

6. **CURRENT BUSINESS**

6.1 **2025 PLANNING COMMISSION WORK PLAN**

7

7. **STAFF REPORTS**

8. **PROCEDURAL RULES FOR CONDUCT OF HEARINGS**

9. **HEARINGS**

10. **STAFF AND COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS**

11. **ADJOURNMENT**



## La Mesa Planning Commission

### Meeting Minutes

Date: January 15, 2025, 6:00 p.m.  
Location: City Council Chambers, 8130 Allison Avenue  
La Mesa, California

Present: Chair Jerry Jones  
Vice Chair Jonathan Frankel  
Commissioner David Harris  
Commissioner Andrew Torpey

Absent: Commissioner Lauren Cooper

Staff: Director of Community Development Santos  
Assistant Planner Patrick Macpherson  
Administrative Coordinator Julia Carrillo

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#### 1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Jones called to order at 6:00pm

##### 1.1 **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

##### 1.2 **ROLL CALL**

##### 1.3 **INVOCATION**

#### 2. **ADDITIONS AND/OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA**

No additions or deletions to agenda

#### 3. **PUBLIC COMMENT - (TOTAL TIME - 15 MINUTES)**

Note: In accordance with state law, an item not scheduled on the agenda may be brought forward by the general public for discussion; however, the Commission will not be able to take any action at this meeting. If appropriate, the item will be referred to staff or placed on a future agenda.

No public comment



**4. CONFLICT DISCLOSURES**

No conflict disclosures

**5. CONSENT CALENDAR**

(Item 5.1)

The Consent Calendar includes items considered to be routine. Unless discussion is requested by members of the Commission or audience, all Consent Calendar items may be approved by one motion.

**5.1 APPROVAL OF THE MEETING MINUTES FOR THE PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2024**

**Moved by** Commissioner Frankel  
**Seconded by** Commissioner Torpey

Yes (4): Chair Jones, Commissioner Frankel, Commissioner Harris, and Commissioner Torpey

Absent (1): Commissioner Cooper

**Motion Approved (4 to 0)**

**6. CURRENT BUSINESS**

**6.1 2025 PLANNING COMMISSION WORKPLAN**

Will be brought back to Planning Commission on the next regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting (February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025) and tentatively scheduled to go to Council as a consent item on the second regularly scheduled meeting in February ( February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025).

**7. STAFF REPORTS**

**7.1 PROJECT 2023-2730**

CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION(S): (1) A RESOLUTION of the PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF LA MESA APPROVING PROJECT 2023-2730 (WOODLAND) – A REQUEST FOR A SPECIAL PERMIT TO ALLOW FOR A THREE FOOT HIGH RETAINING WALL WITH FILL THAT EXCEEDS THREE FEET WITHIN THE FRONT YARD SETBACK ON A VACANT LOT LOCATED ON WOODLAND DRIVE (499-523-35-00) IN THE R1R-P (SEMI-RURAL RESIDENTIAL/ SCENIC PRESERVATION OVERLAY) ZONE. (2) A RESOLUTION OF THE

PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVING PROJECT 2023-2730 FOR A SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THREE RETAINING WALLS OVER 3 FEET IN HEIGHT ON A VACANT LOT LOCATED WITHIN THE SCENIC PRESERVATION OVERLAY ON WOODLAND DRIVE (499-523-35-00) IN THE SEMI-RURAL RESIDENTIAL/ SCENIC PRESERVATION OVERLAY (R1R-P) ZONE

**Moved by** Commissioner Frankel

**Seconded by** Chair Jones

1) To adopt a resolution (**Attachment A**) approving the Special Permit, subject to the conditions of approval.

Yes (4): Chair Jones, Commissioner Frankel, Commissioner Harris, and Commissioner Torpey

Absent (1): Commissioner Cooper

**Motion Approved (4 to 0)**

**Moved by** Commissioner Frankel

**Seconded by** Chair Jones

2) To adopt a resolution (**Attachment B**) approving the Site Development Plan, subject to the conditions of approval.

Yes (4): Chair Jones, Commissioner Frankel, Commissioner Harris, and Commissioner Torpey

Absent (1): Commissioner Cooper

**Motion Approved (4 to 0)**

8. **PROCEDURAL RULES FOR CONDUCT OF HEARINGS**

9. **HEARINGS**

No hearings

10. **STAFF AND COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS**

No announcements

11. **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Jones adjourned meeting at 6:38pm



DATE: February 5, 2025

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Lynnette Santos; Director of Community Development

SUBJECT: 2025 Planning Commission Work Plan

City Commission 2025 Work Plans (2025 Work Plans) will be presented at City Council regular meetings in February. During last year's work plan discussion, the Planning Commission discussed further identifying action-oriented work plan recommendations that would align with the City's long-range vision and policies. Understanding that Commission work plans are intended only to be guidance documents which provide staff direction as workload, resources, and time permit, the Planning Commission discussed the idea of identifying more action-oriented goals for the Planning Commission Work Plan. As part of the 2024 Work Plan goal recommendations, the Planning Commission included the goal of holding a workshop to discuss potential ways that the Planning Commission could assist in advancing City goals with a focus on economic development and housing. This goal and the other goals identified in the 2024 Work Plan have been carried over to the draft 2025 Work Plan (Attachment A).

Staff requests that the Planning Commission review the draft 2025 Work Plan and discuss whether there are other goals that should be included. All work plan goals considered should be consistent with the goals of City of La Mesa Strategic Plan (Attachment B). Further, staff recommends that the Planning Commission identify a date in the upcoming year, during a regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting, for the workshop to be held.

Attachments:

Attachment A: Planning Commission Draft 2025 Work Plan

Attachment B: City of La Mesa Citywide 2023- 2028 Strategic Plan



## PLANNING COMMISSION

### Draft Work Plan 2025

Goals should be consistent with the City's goals:

- Maintain a community where residents and visitors feel safe
- Ensure a strong financial outlook through careful planning, sustainable service levels, and fiscal sustainability
- Promote a high quality of life that current and future generations can afford to call home
- Invest in infrastructure to serve the needs of the community
- Nurture an organizational culture where employees are recognized for the delivery of high-quality services to the community

**Staffing Department:** Community Development

GOALS	DUE DATE	TRACKING MILESTONES	STATUS
1. Interpret, administer and enforce LMMC 2.60.060 and 24.02.010	As needed	Regular Duties as identified in LMMC 2.60.060 and 24.02.010	Ongoing
2. Support of the City's Climate Action Plan (CAP) and the reduction of greenhouse gases and pollution.	As needed	In performing all actions and duties, seek and promote support of the City's Climate Action Plan (CAP) and the reduction of greenhouse gases and pollution.	Ongoing
3. Zoning Code Clean-up Amendments.	As needed	Review and comment on proposed zoning code clean up amendments in alignment with City Strategic Goals	Ongoing
4. Assist in the update of the Downtown Village Specific Plan.	2025	Review and provide comment as presented and provide recommendations to staff and/or Council as needed.	Pending
5. Assist the City in advancing goals with focus on economic development and housing	2025	Hold a workshop to discuss potential ways the Planning Commission can assist in advancing City goals with focus on economic development and housing	Pending
6. Support the Citywide Strategic Plan	As needed	Support and implement the Citywide Strategic Plan while performing all actions and duties.	Ongoing



## **PLANNING COMMISSION**

La Mesa Municipal Code (LMMC) Title 2 – Administration and Government

2.60.060 - Powers and duties.

The Planning Commission shall have, and is hereby vested with all the powers and duties provided by said act and amendments thereto, and such other powers and duties as may be conferred upon the Planning Commission by any and all laws of the State of California and the City Council.

2.60.140 - La Mesa relocation appeals board.

The planning commission shall also act as the "La Mesa relocation appeals board" and shall have the power when it acts in that capacity as provided by the by-laws for the relocation appeals board and shall carry out its duties and obligations pursuant to said by-laws. Said by-laws shall be adopted at the first meeting of the planning commission acting as the relocation appeals board and shall not thereafter be amended without the prior approval of the city council.

LMMC Title 24 – Zoning Ordinance

24.02.010 - Administration and enforcement agencies

B. Planning Agency. The city council, planning commission and community development department are hereby designated collectively as the planning agency. The planning agency shall perform all functions required by California state law. The specific duties and functions of the council, commission, and departments relative to this title are given below.

1. Perform all functions required by California law of a planning agency.
2. Furnish information and general assistance to the public in the administration of this title.
3. Maintain the Zone Map.
4. Review site development plans as to their compliance with the requirements of this title.
5. Review applications for adjustments in development regulations.
6. Interpret, administer and enforce this title.
7. Assist the planning commission in performance of its functions.

E. Planning Commission. The authority and functions of the planning commission in the administration of this title shall be to:

1. Review and approve plans, including site development plans when either required of or when appealed or referred to the commission, and to perform such other functions as provided by this title.
2. Resolve the question as to whether or not a proposed use is permitted in one or more zones in keeping with the general description and intent of such zones and the Land Use Element of the General Plan.
3. Consider appeals from any determination made in the administration or enforcement of this title.
4. Review applications for special permits, conditional use permits and variances.
5. Perform other functions as provided by state law.
6. Resolve questions or alleged ambiguity on appeal from the determination of the Community Development Department.



City of

# La Mesa, California

CITYWIDE STRATEGIC PLAN 2023 - 2028



CITY OF  
**LA MESA**

*JEWEL of the HILLS*

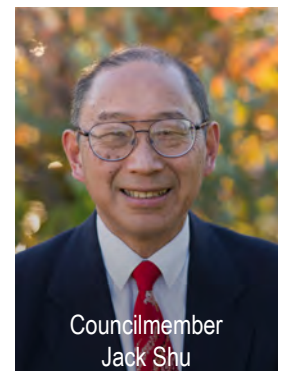
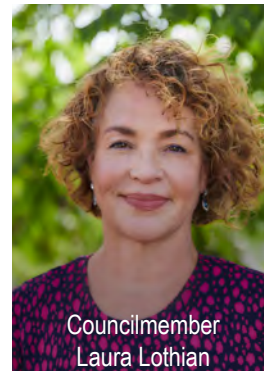
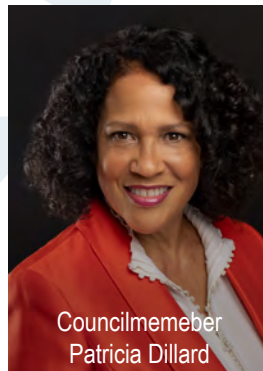
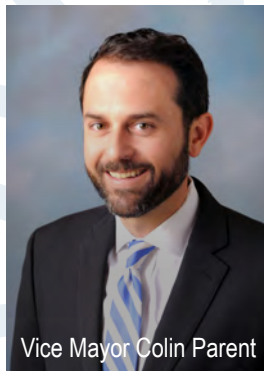


# Introduction

A well-designed strategic plan is like a reliable roadmap that points out a destination and provides a clear and concise path to reach it. The strategic plan establishes priority areas of focus for the City over the next five years, highlights specific strategies that will be executed to achieve desired outcomes, and establishes a framework to keep the public updated on the City's progress.

## A Message from the Mayor and City Council

La Mesa is a community we are all proud to call home. This strategic plan articulates the City Council's vision, mission and priorities to balance the needs of the community to retain a safe and healthy environment, preserve our small-town charm and provide inclusive access to high-quality public services. Our City Council, along with our dedicated City staff, is committed to carrying out these strategies over the next five years to achieve our vision of a thriving community where everyone feels at home.



## A Message from the City Manager



We are pleased to present our strategic plan to the La Mesa community. The City's Strategic Plan covers fiscal years 2023-24 through 2027-28 and serves as a roadmap to guide the work of the city. I look forward to working

with our City Council and staff to implement the established goals and strategies to deliver on La Mesa's promise as a place where our residents, business and visitors can thrive.

### City Executive Team

- Greg Humora, City Manager
- Amanda Lee, Assistant City Manager
- Lyn Dedmon, Assistant to the City Manager
- Rida Freeman, Director of Administrative Services
- Kerry Kusiak, Director of Community Development
- Susan Richardson, Director of Community Services
- Tammi Royales, Director of Finance
- Glenn Sabine, City Attorney
- Steve Swaney, Chief of Heartland Fire and Rescue
- Ray Sweeney, Chief of Police
- Michael Throne, Director of Public Works
- Megan Wiegelman, City Clerk

# Strategic Plan Overview

The Strategic Plan is a living document, featuring a framework that balances the needs of the community and the City's resource capacity.

A citywide Strategic Plan is fundamental to successful work planning. It is a policy document that reflects the priorities of the City Council. It informs budgeting and annual staff work plans. After adoption, staff integrates the policy focus areas into its operations and workplans. City staff also reports back regularly to City Council on progress.

## STRATEGIC PLAN FRAMEWORK



- **The vision** sets the focus for the future. It is an aspirational statement of where the organization wants to be.
- The City's **mission** is a statement of purpose of the organization. It fundamentally describes what that organization stands for and what it will do.
- **Organizational values** provide the basis for how the organization and its members will work to achieve the vision and drive how identified goals will be implemented.
- **Goal areas** will guide the direction and focus of the organization for the next several years. They are closely aligned with the vision and state the desired outcomes to be achieved. They help City leaders decide which of the many worthy projects should be done and when, within available resources.
- **Goal statements** elaborate what is to be achieved in each goal area.
- **Strategies** express how the City plans to accomplish its goals. They articulate the means to achieve desired outcomes for each strategic focus area. Strategies generally include broad areas to pursue, rather than individual projects.
- A **workplan** is the blueprint for carrying out the strategic plan. It contains the detailed steps that must be taken to assure that the goals and strategies are achieved. Workplans provide a framework for determining specific timelines, assignments, and resource allocations. They are designed to be a management tool to help the organization assure that goals are attained and are well suited to periodic check-in about progress, changes or challenges.

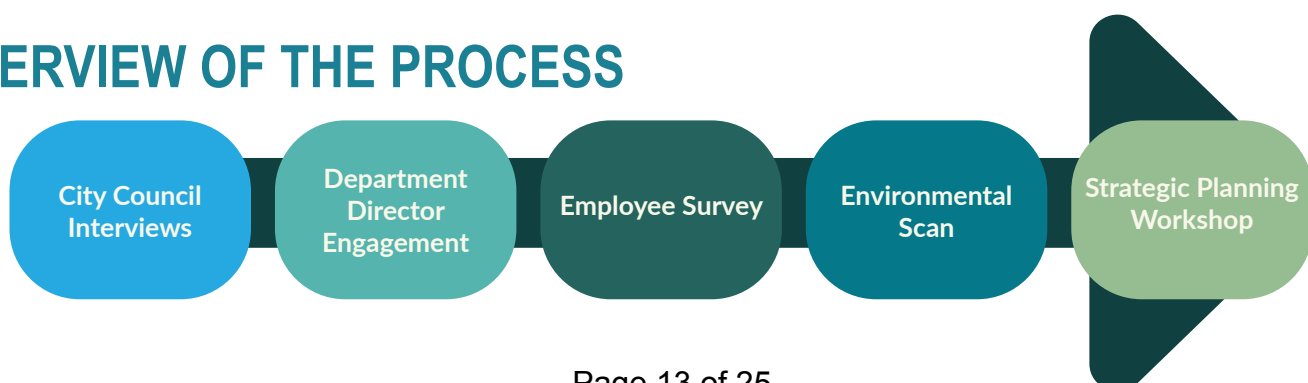




## Strategic Planning Process Overview

- **City Council Interviews.** Council members and the Mayor participated in interviews as a starting point for the process.
- **Department Director Engagement.** Department directors provided input thorough individual interviews and review of information gathered in the process.
- **2022 Employee Survey.** 115 City employees responded to a survey to provide input regarding strategic plan priorities. The survey was deployed from May 17 – June 6, 2022.
- **Community Input.** The City deployed a community opinion survey in 2021 and 2023 to seek feedback about City priorities. The community was also invited to participate in the City Council workshop held on June 10, 2023.
- **Environmental Scan.** An environmental scan is a document that provides an overview of factors (internal and external) that impact the community and the organization to set the context for the strategic plan and inform the discussion about goals and strategies.
- **Strategic Planning Workshop.** A City Council workshop was held June 10, 2023 to identify vision, mission, values, goals and strategies in the strategic plan.

## OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS



# Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, and Threats

Proposed strategic goal areas were informed by the strengths, challenges, opportunities and threats identified through engagement activities. The major themes are presented below.

## STRENGTHS

- Sense of community
- Small-town feel
- Downtown village
- Dedicated and responsive city staff
- Organizational and community resilience
- Public safety response
- High level of customer service
- Financial stability
- HOME Program
- Civic communications

## CHALLENGES

- Staffing challenges – workload exceeds capacity, employee morale
- Impacts of regional homelessness
- More housing units mean greater demand for government services and infrastructure
- Ensuring a mix of housing options without impacting community character
- Neighborhood traffic concerns – cut-throughs, calming measures needed
- Aging infrastructure

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Upgrade the City's technology
- Encourage a mix of affordable housing options
- Mitigate neighborhood traffic concerns
- Identify reliable revenue streams to maintain long-term financial health
- Improve government efficiency
- Implement parks improvements
- Expand economic development opportunities citywide; support local businesses
- Beautify the City
- Improve the development permit process

## THREATS

- Local sales tax expires in 2028
- Impacts of the post-Covid economy
- Rising home prices
- The labor market
- Increase in regional homeless population
- State mandates related to housing
- Natural disasters
- Economic recession





## Vision

La Mesa is a  
**THRIVING  
COMMUNITY**  
*where everyone feels at*  
**HOME**







## Mission

*Our mission is to reliably deliver*  
**HIGH-QUALITY  
PUBLIC SERVICES**  
*that enhance the quality of life*  
**FOR ALL.**





# Organizational Values

WELCOMING

ACCESSIBILITY

ACCOUNTABILITY

EXCELLENT  
CUSTOMER  
SERVICE

INTEGRITY



# Our Goals

Five multi-year goals have been established. These identify outcomes to be achieved through an associated set of strategies.



## SAFE COMMUNITY

*Maintain a community where residents and visitors feel safe.*



## FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

*Ensure a strong financial outlook through careful planning, sustainable service levels, and fiscal sustainability.*



## LIVABILITY

*Promote a high quality of life that current and future generations can afford to call home.*



## INFRASTRUCTURE AND AMENITIES

*Invest in infrastructure to serve the needs of the community.*



## HIGH-PERFORMING ORGANIZATION

*Nurture an organizational culture where employees are recognized for the delivery of high-quality services to the community.*





# Safe Community

*Maintain a community where residents and visitors feel safe.*

## Our Strategies

- Maintain a low crime rate using effective community policing
- Implement the Vision Zero Plan to increase safety for all
- Improve residents' capacity to prepare and respond to emergencies or natural disasters
- Increase public safety presence
- Promote a safe community where all feel welcome and included





# Financial Sustainability

*Ensure a strong financial outlook through careful planning, sustainable service levels, and fiscal responsibility.*

## Our Strategies

- Evaluate City services for efficiencies to establish sustainable service levels and practices
- Evaluate staffing levels and the allocation of limited resources
- Prepare for an extension of Proposition L (sales tax proposition to maintain essential City services)
- Increase reliable revenue sources that will grow with expenditure trends
- Consider impacts of development on City infrastructure and services





# Livability

*Promote a high quality of life that current and future generations can afford to call home.*

## Our Strategies

- Maintain a system of services, regional shelters and housing for La Mesa's homeless population and increase resources for the HOME program
- Ensure an adequate supply of housing that is affordable and accessible to current and future generations
- Implement the City's Climate Action Plan to enhance livability, support climate adaptation, and achieve sustainability goals
- Enhance the Downtown Village and other economic centers as thriving destinations for residents and visitors
- Preserve La Mesa's character through purposeful and thoughtful design standards
- Ensure all residents have equitable access to City services and spaces
- Ensure the City is visibly clean, to allow residents, businesses, and visitors to enjoy attractive community spaces
- Grow special events and cultural activities to promote and celebrate community





# Infrastructure and Amenities

*Invest in infrastructure to serve the needs of the community.*

## Our Strategies

- Ensure City streets, facilities and public green spaces are well maintained
- Support infrastructure improvements that promote all modes of mobility
- Continue Civic Center improvements
- Pursue capital resources to fund public amenities
- Improve communication with the public regarding street and facility improvements and impacts
- Develop a roadmap to enhance technology resources citywide
- Develop and enhance parks, trails and recreational facilities to better serve residents





# High-Performing Organization

*Nurture an organizational culture where employees are recognized for the delivery of high-quality services to the community.*

## Our Strategies

- Continuously improve and modernize City service delivery
- Create opportunities for training and professional growth for employees at all levels
- Leverage a data-driven approach to ensure City activities are strategic and outcome focused
- Enhance communication tools to improve information sharing and promote accessibility to city services and programs
- Cultivate an organizational culture of success that demonstrates teamwork and customer service
- Address concerns about staffing capacity and succession planning, to improve service delivery and morale
- Increase employee engagement and recognition to ensure employees feel supported and valued



# Conclusion

This Strategic Plan is designed to guide the work and future of the City of La Mesa. It reflects the guidance and input of the City Council, staff, and the community.

The plan articulates the vision for the City and establishes a set of goal areas and strategies to guide the work of the City of La Mesa over the next several years.

An accompanying strategic plan status report will provide a periodic update to the public on progress related to the goal areas.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this important initiative and everyone who will help make the vision a reality.







CITY OF  
**LA MESA**  
*JEWEL of the HILLS*