



PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: May 12, 2025

ITEM NUMBER: NB-1

SUBJECT: GENERAL PLAN CONFORMITY RESOLUTION FOR THE CITY OF COSTA MESA ONE-YEAR (FY 2025-26) AND FIVE-YEAR (FY 2025-26 TO FY 2029-30) CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS

**FROM: ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT/
PLANNING DIVISION AND PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

**PRESENTATION BY: RAJA SETHURAMAN, PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR AND
SCOTT DRAPKIN, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

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RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Planning Commission adopt a Resolution to:

1. Find that the project is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per CEQA Guidelines Section 15378 in that the City's Capital Improvement Program is a fiscal planning and budgeting activity, which allows the City to plan for future specific capital improvement projects and does not commit the City to implement any specific project or project design; and
2. Approve the General Plan Conformity Resolution (Attachment 1) for the City of Costa Mesa one-year (FY 2025-26) and five-year (FY 2025-26 to FY 2029-30) Capital Improvement Programs (CIP).

APPLICANT OR AUTHORIZED AGENT:

The City of Costa Mesa, Public Works Department, Engineering Division

BACKGROUND:

State Law Requirements

Government Code Section 65103(c), in part, requires the Planning Commission to review the proposed Capital Improvement Program (CIP) portion of the City's annual budget and report on its conformity with the 2015-2035 General Plan.

Government Code Section 65401 requires analysis of major capital improvement ("public works") projects recommended for planning, initiation, or construction during the ensuing fiscal year. All new projects added for the FY 2025-26 CIP fall into this category.

Government Code Section 65401 requires an annual programmatic level review of all major public works projects, whereas Government Code Section 65402 contemplates a project-specific consideration of General Plan conformity of a proposed project's location, purpose and extent. The General Plan conformity analysis provided herein addresses both Government Code sections.

DESCRIPTION

Government Code Section 65103(c) requires Planning Commission review of the proposed Capital Improvement Program (CIP) portion of the City's annual budget for conformity with the General Plan. The proposed CIP includes projects to implement various policies, objectives, and programs in the 2015-2035 General Plan. The CIP includes projects related to facilities, parks, parkways and medians, streets, and transportation projects.

The Planning Commission's scope of review consists of determination of General Plan Conformance for the projects within the CIP. Considerations such as selection of projects, budget allocations, prioritization and phasing, and project details fall within the City Council's scope of review and decision.

ANALYSIS

The City's CIP is an important fiscal planning tool for public infrastructure projects. The City's CIP includes a vision for short and long-range development, maintenance, improvement and building of new infrastructure assets to benefit residents, businesses, property owners and visitors. Although the City's CIP is updated annually, it also separately includes projects planned over the five-year timeframe and provides an overview of works in progress. The proposed CIP includes projects that implement various policies, objectives, and programs identified in the 2015-2035 General Plan. The proposed projects are generally in five categories: (1) Facilities, (2) Parks, (3) Parkways and Medians, (4) Streets, and (5) Transportation projects. The CIP projects planned for next fiscal year are listed in the attachment to this report - "FY 2025-2026

One-Year Summary of Capital Improvement Projects” (Attachment 2). CIP projects planned for the next five years (FY 2025-26 to FY 2029-30) are also listed in the attachment to this report – “Five-Year Capital Improvement Program” (Attachment 3).

The following paragraphs correlate the proposed project types with applicable General Plan goals, objectives, and policies for the upcoming one-year FY 2025-26 CIP:

- 1. Facilities:** Projects in this category include any public building or facility maintenance, improvements or reconstruction. Specific projects in this category include improvements to the Civic Center (i.e., City Hall), maintenance at the Corporation Yard, minor projects at various Fire Stations, and bond financing for the reconstruction of Fire Station No. 2. Planned improvements to fire and other civic administration facilities implement Safety Element Policies S-2.10 and S-2.12 to continue to maintain adequate police and fire facilities sufficient to protect the community. In addition, many of the proposed CIP projects include necessary maintenance of “community facilities” pursuant to General Plan Land Use Element Objective LU-5A, which states “ensure availability of adequate community facilities and provision of the highest level of public services possible, taking into consideration budgetary constraints and effects on the surrounding area”.
- 2. Parks:** Projects in this category include maintenance, improvements, or new construction at various City park facilities and in public right-of-way. Representative projects include Citywide Tree Maintenance, Park Parking Lot and Playground Rehabilitation, and Park Security Lighting Replacement. Projects within this category implement Open Space and Recreation Element Goal OSR-1 relating to providing the community with high-quality open spaces and recreational opportunities through the development of recreation resources; park facilities related projects also implement Open Space Recreation Element Policy OSR-1.11 relating to performing regular maintenance of facilities to ensure proper working order of all recreation facilities and equipment; and improvements that protect natural habitat per Conservation Element Goal CON-1.
- 3. Parkways and Medians:** Projects in this category include parkway and median landscape maintenance, curb and gutter installation, median repair or construction, and sidewalk repair or construction. Projects within this category implement Community Design Element Goal CD-1 to strengthen the image of the City as experienced from sidewalks and roadways as well as Objective CD-1A to contribute to City beautification by improving and enhancing the visual environment of Costa Mesa’s vehicular and pedestrian corridors.

- 4. Streets:** Projects in this category include any street maintenance or repairs (e.g. slurry seal, pavement rehabilitation, etc.) and parkway concrete repairs, such as sidewalks, curb ramps, curb & gutter, cross-gutters, etc. Some of these projects include the Citywide Street Improvements, Harbor Boulevard Rehabilitation, and Westside Street Improvements-Wilson Street. The projects within this category implement Safety Element Goal S-1 and more specifically Policy S-1.11, which calls for the improvement and maintenance of local storm drain main lines and infrastructure to reduce flood hazards. Other projects within this category implement Circulation Element Goals C-2 and C-6 to effectively manage and improve the roadway and highway system that includes policies to construct street improvements.
- 5. Transportation:** Projects in this category include any transportation-related improvements or maintenance including active transportation projects, traffic signal maintenance and improvements, bicycle facility and pedestrian improvements, intersection improvements, and general traffic related improvements. Proposed projects for the upcoming fiscal year include Adams Avenue Bicycle Facility from Fairview Road to Harbor Boulevard, Center Street Pedestrian Crossing and Circulation Improvements, Clean Mobility Options Program, and Fairview Road Active Transportation Improvements from Fair Drive to Adams Avenue. Projects within this category implement Circulation Element Goals and objectives such as Goals C-1, C-2, and C-6 which encourage a comprehensive transportation system that accommodates all users while maintaining the efficiency of the system, as well as ongoing funding and evaluation of the City's transportation network. These projects are also consistent with Growth Management Element Goals GM-1A and GM-2A, which encourage the City to provide and maintain a circulation system with acceptable levels of service and ensure coordination of land use and transportation planning policies. Goals C-7 through C-12 relate to enhancing and funding active transportation projects include policies related to improving and maintaining bicycle and pedestrian facilities consistent with the Active Transportation Plan (ATP).

As indicated above, the proposed projects in the one-year (FY 2025-26) and the five-year (FY 2025-26 to FY 2029-30) CIPs are consistent with and implement the goals, policies, and objectives of the General Plan. Based on the above information, staff recommends that the Planning Commission finds that the proposed one-year (FY 2025-26) and the five-year (FY 2025-26 to FY 2029-30) CIPs are in conformance with the 2015-2035 General Plan.

GENERAL PLAN CONFORMANCE

The Costa Mesa General Plan establishes the long-range planning and policy direction that guides change and preserves the qualities that define the community. The 2015-2035 General Plan sets forth the vision for Costa Mesa for the next two decades. This vision focuses on protecting and enhancing Costa Mesa's diverse residential neighborhoods, accommodating an array of businesses that serve both local needs and attract regional and international spending, and providing cultural, educational, social, and recreational amenities that contribute to the quality of life in the community. Over the long term, General Plan implementation will ensure that development decisions and improvements to public and private infrastructure are consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies contained in this Plan.

The City finds the proposed projects in the one-year (FY 2025-26) and the five-year (FY 2025-26 to FY 2029-30) CIPs in compliance with the City's General Plan. The following evaluation does not represent a comprehensive listing of every applicable goal and policy but rather references the most directly applicable:

- *The proposed improvements or reconstruction to buildings and facilities conform to Safety Element Policies S-2.10 and S-2.12 and Open Space, Recreation Element Policy OSR-2.4 and General Plan Land Use Element Objective LU-5A.* -

Proposed improvements to police and fire and other civic administration facilities are consistent with Safety Element Policies S-2.10 and S-2.12, Recreation Element Policy OSR-2.4 and Land Use Element Objective LU-5A as the improvements would allow the City to continue to maintain adequate police, fire, recreation and community facilities to serve the residents, businesses and visitors of Costa Mesa.

- *The proposed improvements, maintenance and development of park facilities conform to Open Space and Recreation Element Policies OSR-1 and OSR-1.11 and Conservation Element Goal CON-1.* - The proposed improvements to park facilities are consistent with Open Space and Recreation Element Policy OSR-1 because the projects would develop and provide the community with high-quality open spaces and recreational opportunities. The maintenance and improvements to park facilities would also ensure proper working order of all recreation facilities and equipment, consistent with Open Space and Recreation Element Policy OSR-1.11. Improvements proposed in Fairview Park Master Plan Implementation and Fairview Park Mesa Restoration & Cultural Resource Preservation are specifically consistent with Conservation Element Goal CON-1 to "provide residents with a high-quality environment through the conservation of resources, including land, water, wildlife, and vegetation; and the protection of areas of unique natural beauty".

- The proposed maintenance and construction projects related to the parkways and medians conform to Community Design Element Policies CD-1 and CD-1A.

The proposed parkway and median projects would enhance the image of the City as experienced from sidewalks and roadways, as well as contribute to City beautification by improving the visual environment of Costa Mesa's vehicular and pedestrian corridors, both of which are consistent with General Plan Policies CD-1 and CD-1A from the Community Design Element.

- The proposed street and storm drain improvements, repair and maintenance conform to Safety Element Policy S-1 and S-1.11 and Circulation Element Goal C-2.

The programs for street and storm drain projects would minimize injury risk, loss of life, property damage and environmental degradation consistent with Safety Element Policy S-1. The storm drain improvements would also strengthen and maintain the infrastructure in a manner that decreases flood hazards as stated in Safety Element Policy S-1.11. In addition, the street repair projects would allow the City to develop while maintaining an effective and efficient vehicular circulation network, as stated in Circulation Element Goal C-2.

- The transportation-related projects conform to Circulation Element Goal C-1, C-2, C-6, and C-7 through C-12. - The transportation-related projects would implement the "complete streets" policies on the City's roadways including to plan, develop and implement a comprehensive transportation system that serves all users and modes of travel such as bicycling, walking and driving. As such the proposed transportation-related projects would be consistent with Circulation Element Goals C-1, C-2, and C-7. In addition, pursuant to Circulation Element Goals C-6 and C-12, the City continues to monitor and evaluate opportunities to secure funding to enhance the circulation system and implement the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

The CIP is a fiscal planning and budgeting activity, which allows the City to plan for future specific capital improvement projects. It does not commit the City to implementing any specific project or project design. Therefore, the determination of General Plan conformity for the CIP is not a "project" and is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per CEQA Guidelines Section 15378. Notwithstanding, specific CIP projects are evaluated for CEQA compliance prior to project approval and implementation. Most are categorically exempt under CEQA Guidelines Sections 15304 (Minor Land Alterations) and 15301 (Existing Facilities) however, certain major projects may require preparation of a project-specific environmental analysis, which is undertaken at the project design phase.

ALTERNATIVES

The Planning Commission may comment on the projects identified in the one-year (FY 2025-26) and the five-year (FY 2025-26 to FY 2029-30) CIPs as to their conformance with the General Plan. Any comments will be forwarded to the City Council for consideration. Other than adopting a General Plan Conformity resolution, there are no other viable alternatives that would comply with State law.

LEGAL REVIEWS

The draft Resolution and this report have been approved as to form by the City Attorney's Office.

CONCLUSION

For the purposes of Government Code Section 65401 and 65402, the CIPs contained in the one-year (FY 2025-26) and the five-year (FY 2025-26 to FY 2029-30) CIPs are in conformance with the General Plan. Staff requests that the Planning Commission approve the General Plan Conformity Resolution (Attachment 1) for the City of Costa Mesa one-year (FY 2025-26) and five-year (FY 2025-26 to FY 2029-30) Capital Improvement Programs (CIP).

ATTACHMENTS

1. Planning Commission Draft Resolution
2. Proposed FY 2025-26 CIP
3. Proposed Five-Year CIP