



PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: APRIL 27, 2026

ITEM NUMBER: NB-1

SUBJECT: GENERAL PLAN CONFORMITY RESOLUTION FOR THE CITY OF COSTA MESA'S ONE-YEAR (FY 2026-27) AND FIVE-YEAR (FY 2026-27 TO FY 2030-31) CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS

FROM: PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

PRESENTATION BY: RAJA SETHURAMAN, PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

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RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Planning Commission:

1. Find that the project is categorically 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. Adopt the General Plan Conformity Resolution (Attachment 1) for the City of Costa Mesa's one-year (FY 2026-27) and five-year (FY 2026-27 to FY 2030-31) Capital Improvement Programs (CIP).

APPLICANT OR AUTHORIZED AGENT:

The City of Costa Mesa, Public Works Department.

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 and an annual programmatic review of major capital improvement ("Public Works") projects recommended for planning, initiation, or construction during the ensuing fiscal year. All of the new projects added for the one-year (FY 2026-27) CIP fall into this category, 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 a number of projects to implement various policies, objectives, and programs in the 2015-2035 General Plan. The CIP includes projects related to facilities, parks, 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.

GENERAL PLAN CONFORMANCE ANALYSIS:

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 to 2035 General Plan sets forth the vision for Costa Mesa over the next two decades, with a focus on protecting and enhancing residential neighborhoods, accommodating a range of businesses that serve local and regional needs, and providing cultural, educational, social, and recreational amenities that contribute to the quality of life in the community. Over time, implementation of the General Plan ensures that development decisions and improvements to public and private infrastructure remain consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies contained in the plan.

Pursuant to Government Code Section 65401, the proposed one-year Fiscal Year 2026 to 2027 Capital Improvement Program and the five-year Fiscal Year 2026 to 2027 through Fiscal Year 2030 to 2031 Capital Improvement Program have been reviewed for

consistency with the City's General Plan. The proposed CIP includes projects in the categories of energy & sustainability (5-year only), facilities, parks, streets, and transportation. Collectively, these projects are consistent with and implement the General Plan by maintaining and improving public facilities, supporting public safety, enhancing parks and open space, strengthening neighborhood and corridor aesthetics, and improving circulation for vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians. The analysis below does not identify every potentially applicable General Plan goal, objective, and policy; rather, it addresses those most directly related to the proposed CIP categories and projects.

1. Facilities Projects

Facilities projects include public building and facility maintenance, improvements, and reconstruction, such as Civic Center improvements, Corporation Yard maintenance, minor projects at various Fire Stations, and bond financing for the reconstruction of Fire Station No. 2. These projects are consistent with Safety Element Policies S-2.10 and S-2.12 because they allow the City to continue to maintain adequate police and fire facilities sufficient to protect the community. These projects are also consistent with 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." By maintaining and improving civic and public service facilities, the proposed projects further the City's objective of preserving essential community infrastructure and supporting public services.

2. Parks Projects

Parks projects include maintenance, rehabilitation, improvements, and new construction at City park facilities and within the public right of way. Representative projects include Citywide Tree Maintenance, Park Parking Lot and Playground Rehabilitation, Park Security Lighting Replacement, Fairview Park Master Plan Implementation, and Fairview Park Vernal Pools Restoration. These projects are consistent with Open Space and Recreation Element Goal OSR-1, relating to providing the community with high quality open spaces and recreational opportunities, and Policy OSR-1.11, relating to "performing regular maintenance of facilities to ensure the proper working order of all recreation facilities and equipment." In addition, habitat restoration and environmental enhancement projects are consistent with Conservation Element Goal CON-1, which seeks 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." Accordingly, the proposed parks projects implement the General Plan's policies related to recreation, maintenance of park facilities, and resource conservation.

3. Street Projects

Street related projects include street maintenance and repair activities such as slurry seal, pavement rehabilitation, and repairs to medians, parkways, sidewalks, curb ramps, curb and gutter, and cross gutters. These projects are consistent with Community Design Element Goal CD-1 and Objective CD-1A, which seek to strengthen the image of the City as experienced from sidewalks and roadways and “contribute to City beautification by improving and enhancing the visual environment of Costa Mesa’s vehicular and pedestrian corridors.” Examples include Citywide Street Improvements, Harbor Boulevard Cornerstone Bike Trail, and Newport Boulevard Improvements. In addition, these projects further Circulation Element Goals C-2 and C-6 by maintaining and improving the roadway and highway system through construction and repair activities necessary to support safe and efficient circulation throughout the City. To the extent storm drain and related infrastructure improvements are included, such projects also support Safety Element policies aimed at minimizing risks to life and property and maintaining infrastructure in a manner that reduces flood hazards.

4. Transportation Projects

Transportation projects include traffic signal maintenance and improvements, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, intersection improvements, neighborhood traffic improvements, and other mobility related upgrades. Representative projects include Adams Avenue Multipurpose Trails, Center Street Pedestrian Crossing and Circulation Improvements, Clean Mobility Options Program, and Mesa Del Mar Multimodal Access. These projects are consistent with Circulation Element Goals C-1, C-2, and C-6 because they support a comprehensive transportation system that accommodates all users while maintaining the efficiency of the system and providing for the continued 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. In addition, projects that improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities implement Circulation Element Goals C-7 through C-12, which relate to enhancing and funding active transportation improvements and maintaining facilities consistent with the City’s Active Transportation Plan.

Overall, the proposed one-year Fiscal Year 2026 to 2027 Capital Improvement Program (Attachment 2) and the five-year Fiscal Year 2026 to 2027 through Fiscal Year 2030 to 2031 Capital Improvement Program (Attachment 3) are consistent with and implement the goals, objectives, and policies of the 2015 to 2035 Costa Mesa General Plan. Therefore, staff recommends that the Planning Commission find that the proposed CIP is in conformance with the General 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 the 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 2026-27) and the five-year (FY 2026-27 to FY 2030-31) 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 REVIEW:

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 Sections 65401 and 65402, the capital improvement projects contained in the one-year (FY 2026-27) and the five-year (FY 2026-27 to FY 2030-31) CIPs are in conformance with the General Plan. Staff requests that the Planning Commission adopt the General Plan Conformity Resolution for the City of Costa Mesa’s one-year (FY 2026-27) and five-year (FY 2026-27 to FY 2030-31) Capital Improvement Programs.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft Planning Commission Resolution
2. Proposed One-Year FY 2026-27 Capital Improvement Program
3. Proposed Five-Year FY 2026-27 to FY 2030-31 Capital Improvement Program