



City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL **DATE: JULY 15, 2025**
FROM: OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER **WARDS: ALL**
SUBJECT: ENVISION RIVERSIDE 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN FINAL REPORT & TRANSITION

ISSUE:

Close out of the Envision Riverside 2025 Strategic Plan and transition plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the City Council:

1. Receive and file the Envision Riverside 2025 Strategic Plan final report; and
2. Provide direction to staff to close out the Envision Riverside Strategic Plan and transition to the goals to be established under General Plan 2050.

BACKGROUND:

On October 20, 2020, the City Council approved the City Council Strategic Policy for the Riverside Envision Riverside 2025 Strategic Plan, revisions to the Plan, provided input on the Actions and Performance Metrics used to guide implementation of the Strategic Plan, and authorized the City Manager to update the Operational Workplan as needed.

The City Council Strategic Policy set forth the priorities and policy direction of the City Council to advance Riverside's potential and to frame the work efforts of City staff over the next five years.

The Operational Workplan set forth the envisioned actions to be carried out by City staff to implement the City Council Strategic Policy, as well as related performance metrics to track the trendlines of progress toward achieving City Council priorities.

The City Manager's Office worked with the Cross-Cutting Thread and Strategic Priority Teams to review and update the Operational Workplan and from time to time update the Strategic Plan.

The 2021 Annual Report highlighted progress made toward Strategic Priority Goals, Performance Measures and Action Items, and shows areas where we had work to do. The following table illustrates the scope of the Strategic Priorities, Goals, and Action Items, which are detailed in the Annual Report (attached). The Envision Riverside 2025 Strategic Plan Annual Report documents

efforts to execute the Strategic Plan in 2021. Teams led by the Assistant City Managers and Department Heads were formed to track progress toward Strategic Priority Goals and assess how the Cross-Cutting Threads were reflected in outcomes. These teams met regularly throughout the year to share ideas and provide updates on their efforts.

Strategic Priority	No. of Goals	No. of Action Items	No. of Performance Measures
Arts, Culture and Recreation	5	23	10
Community Well-Being	6	36	15
Economic Opportunity	5	26	13
Environmental Stewardship	6	32	12
High Performing Government	5	35	14
Infrastructure, Mobility & Connectivity	4	21	4
<i>Total</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>173</i>	<i>68</i>

The Annual Report for 2021 highlighted Cross-Cutting Thread achievements that included:

Cross-Cutting Thread	Achievement
Community Trust	Staff worked with Cal State San Bernardino's Institute of Applied Research to incorporate Community Trust questions into the upcoming 2022 Quality of Life Survey.
Equity	Parks, Recreation & Community Services Department launched Adaptive Sports and Adaptive Swim, providing opportunities to the disabled community to participate in sports and swim activities.
Fiscal Responsibility	The City adopted reserve policies for the General Fund and Measure Z in alignment with Government Finance Officer's Association (GFOA) recommended best practices.
Innovation	The Bourns Family Youth Innovation Center won the 2021 CPRS Award of Excellence for Facility Design.
Sustainability and Resiliency	The Riverside Water Quality Control Plant's fuel cell is powered by biogas and generated 50% of the power needed to operate the Plant.

Since the City of Riverside 2021 Annual Report, the City shifted from an annual report format to reporting Strategic Plan implementation on the City Website link, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and routine incorporation of Strategic Plan alignment in every Staff Report presented to the City Council, seven City Council Committees, and eighteen Boards and Commissions.

DISCUSSION:

The Envision Riverside 2025 Strategic Plan launched in October 2020 and will sunset in July 2025. The purpose of this report is to summarize the outcomes and highlights across six Priority Area goals and action items.

Throughout 2024, a total of 626 staff reports were presented to the City Council. Each report aligned with one or more strategic priorities from the Envision Riverside 2025 Strategic Plan. The Public Works Department submitted the most reports (102), followed by Community and Economic Development (82), Parks, Recreation, and Community Services (52), Finance (59), and General Services (47).

Each report was mapped to one or more of the six Strategic Priority Areas outlined in the Envision Riverside 2025 Strategic Plan. The following table summarizes the number of reports that supported each goal area in 2024. Because individual reports may align with multiple priorities, totals across strategic areas exceed the number of unique reports submitted.

Strategic Plan Priority	 Arts, Culture and Recreation	 Community Well-Being	 Economic Opportunity	 Environmental Stewardship	 High Performing Government	 Infrastructure, Mobility and Connectivity
# of Reports in 2024	81	174	44	64	191	123

Some reports were relevant to a single ward, while others impacted multiple or all wards. In total, 424 reports had citywide implications, reflecting a broad, citywide focus. The breakdown of ward-specific reports is as follows:

Ward 1	Ward 2	Ward 3	Ward 4	Ward 5	Ward 6	Ward 7
72	40	52	34	31	28	22

The following tables provide a more detailed breakdown of the 2024 staff reports by individual goals within each Strategic Priority Area. These numbers demonstrate how staff work has directly supported specific objectives outlined in the Envision Riverside 2025 Strategic Plan.

Goal	1 - Arts, Culture & Recreation	# of Reports in 2024
1.1	Strengthen Riverside's portfolio of arts, culture, recreation, senior, and lifelong learning programs and amenities through expanded community partnerships, shared use opportunities, and fund development.	32
1.2	Enhance equitable access to arts, culture and recreational service offerings and facilities.	15
1.3	Improve parks, recreational amenities, open space, and trail development, and fulfill critical lifecycle and facility maintenance needs.	30
1.4	Prioritize safety at parks, trails, arts, cultural and recreational facilities.	15
1.5	Support programs and amenities to further develop literacy, health, and education of children, youth and seniors throughout the community.	17

Goal	2 - Community Well-Being	# of Reports in 2024
2.1	Facilitate the development of a quality and diverse housing supply that is available and affordable to a wide range of income levels.	29
2.2	Collaborate with partner agencies to improve household resiliency and reduce the incidence and duration of homelessness.	14
2.3	Strengthen neighborhood identities and improve community health and the physical environment through amenities and programs that foster an increased sense of community and enhanced feelings of pride and belonging citywide.	34

Goal	2 - Community Well-Being	# of Reports in 2024
2.4	Support programs and innovations that enhance community safety, encourage neighborhood engagement, and build public trust.	67
2.5	Foster relationships between community members, partner organizations, and public safety professionals to define, prioritize, and address community safety and social service needs.	17
2.6	Strengthen community preparedness for emergencies to ensure effective response and recovery.	39

Goal	3 - Economic Opportunity	# of Reports in 2024
3.1	Facilitate partnerships and programs to develop, attract and retain innovative business sectors.	19
3.2	Work with key partners in implementing workforce development programs and initiatives that connect local workers with high quality employment opportunities and provide access to education and training in Riverside.	6
3.3	Cultivate a business climate that welcomes innovation, entrepreneurship and investment.	25
3.4	Collaborate with key partners to implement policies and programs that promote local business growth and ensure equitable opportunities for all.	7
3.5	Lead public-private partnerships to build resources and grow the capacity of the local food system.	3

Goal	4 - Environmental Stewardship	# of Reports in 2024
4.1	Rapidly decrease Riverside's carbon footprint by acting urgently to reach a zero carbon electric grid with the goal of reaching 100% zero-carbon electricity production by 2040 while continuing to ensure safe, reliable and affordable energy for all residents.	6
4.2	Sustainably manage local water resources to maximize reliability and advance water reuse to ensure safe, reliable and affordable water to our community.	17
4.3	Implement local and support regional proactive policies and inclusive decision-making processes to deliver environmental justice and ensure that all residents breathe healthy and clean air with the goal of having zero days of unhealthy air quality per the South Coast Air Quality District's Air Quality Index (AQI).	6
4.4	Implement measures and educate the community to responsibly manage goods, products and services throughout their life cycle to achieve waste reduction outcomes.	9
4.5	Maintain and conserve 30% of Riverside's natural lands in green space including, but not limited to, agricultural lands and urban forests in order to protect and restore Riverside's rich biodiversity and accelerate the natural removal of carbon, furthering our community's climate resilience.	13
4.6	Implement the requisite measures to achieve citywide carbon neutrality no later than 2040.	19

Goal	5 - High Performing Government	# of Reports in 2024
5.1	Attract, develop, engage and retain a diverse and highly skilled workforce across the entire City organization.	28
5.2	Utilize technology, data, and process improvement strategies to increase efficiencies, guide decision making, and ensure services are accessible and distributed equitably throughout all geographic areas of the City.	20
5.3	Enhance communication and collaboration with community members to improve transparency, build public trust, and encourage shared decision-making.	83
5.4	Achieve and maintain financial health by addressing gaps between revenues and expenditures and aligning resources with strategic priorities to yield the greatest impact.	54
5.5	Foster a culture of safety, well-being, resilience, sustainability, diversity, and inclusion across the city organization.	12

Goal	6 - Infrastructure, Mobility & Connectivity	# of Reports in 2024
6.1	Provide, expand and ensure equitable access to sustainable modes of transportation that connect people to opportunities such as employment, education, healthcare, and community amenities.	17
6.2	Maintain, protect and improve assets and infrastructure within the City's built environment to ensure and enhance reliability, resiliency, sustainability, and facilitate connectivity.	107
6.3	Identify and pursue new and unique funding opportunities to develop, operate, maintain, and renew infrastructure and programs that meet the community's needs.	14
6.4	Incorporate Smart City strategies into the planning and development of local infrastructure projects.	5

Highlights

The Envision Riverside 2025 Strategic Plan guided City priorities across six strategic areas over the past five years. Of the 173 total action items identified, 62 were completed, 104 remain ongoing as part of multi-year or sustained efforts, and 7 were pivoted in response to evolving community needs, funding constraints, or strategic realignment. Attachment one showcases highlights in each area.

The table below summarizes action item progress by strategic priority area.

Strategic Priority Area	Completed	Ongoing	Pivoted
Arts, Culture and Recreation	7	16	0
Community Well-Being	17	17	2
Economic Opportunity	7	18	1
Environmental Stewardship	7	24	1
High Performing Government	15	20	0
Infrastructure, Mobility & Connectivity	9	9	3

Strategic Priority Area	Completed	Ongoing	Pivoted
Total	62	104	7

Arts, Culture and Recreation

The City made significant strides in enhancing access to arts, culture, and recreational amenities across Riverside. Strategic planning milestones included completion of the Parks Master Plan, Trails Master Plan and refresh, and initiation of the City's first Arts Master Plan. Inspired by the Envision Riverside Strategic plan, these planning documents laid the foundation for the long-term growth of public amenities.

Programming was significantly expanded across all age groups and abilities. The Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department (PRCSD) launched new aquatic, senior, and adaptive recreation programs, including youth and adult Adaptive Sports, and an Adaptive Swim program for individuals with physical, developmental, or cognitive disabilities. The Bourns Family Youth Innovation Center hosted dozens of Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) classes, with UCR students supporting initiatives such as "Girls Who Code". Library programming and hours of operation also grew, with the launch of book lockers at seven sites, a diverse array of reading and literacy campaigns, circulation of iPads and hotspots, and public art installations by local artists in every library branch.

Major capital projects included the opening of the \$43.3 million Main Library, The Cheech (the nation's first center for Chicano art), and the Bourns Family Youth Innovation Center. The Museum of Riverside design was completed, and the Eastside Library was fully funded and designed with construction set to begin in summer 2025. Additional investments included \$24 million for park upgrades, including projects like the Boardwell Gym, Tim Strack Park, and multiple playground replacements. The Library also received \$600,000 in one-time book funding and a \$500,000 annual increase for books.

Placemaking and public art also advanced, with the launch of a mural program, piloted utility box art, and studies such as the River District Feasibility Study and the Gateway Project. Public safety in community spaces was improved with the launch of the Park and Neighborhood Specialist (PANS) program, deploying 20 staff to patrol city parks, and the addition of eleven full-time security guards at libraries.

Looking forward, the City is poised to advance the next wave of capital projects which include Patterson Park, Gage Canal trail conversion, and Boardwell Gym, along with the César Chávez Community Center and Fairmount Park Armory restoration, which received \$2.5 million in federal funding.

Of 23 action items, 7 were completed and 16 are ongoing.

Community Well-Being

Quality of life improvements focused on community safety, housing access, and public health. Strategic planning efforts included approval of the City's Housing Element, launching an update to the General Plan, and the release of standard Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) plans at no cost to the public to encourage diverse housing solutions.

Housing production increased from 450 to 600 units annually, supported by ongoing efforts to deliver and preserve affordable housing. A total of 408 new affordable rental units were completed

citywide during the plan period and 281 more are currently in development. Affordable housing projects included Oasis Senior Apartments (95 units), Vista de La Sierra (80 units), Mission Heritage (72 units), and Entrada (64 units, including 8 for permanent supportive housing). Additionally, transitional housing options expanded with 49 beds at Project Legacy and 25 at Walden Homekey. Recuperative care capacity increased through 78 new beds across two sites. Another 34 affordable homeownership opportunities were added, including units at Collette Crossings and the Myers Veteran Project.

The City also advanced homeless prevention and supportive services. Over the five-year period, more than 1,100 households were assisted through homelessness prevention programs. In recent years, 946 individuals were served with shelter and case management, 812 were reached through street outreach, and 84 individuals experiencing homelessness were permanently housed with wraparound services. Youth homelessness reached functional zero, and emergency rental assistance was provided to 195 low-income households. A 23-bed non-congregate shelter was also rehabilitated and placed into service.

Public safety was significantly enhanced through the launch of the Real Time Crime Center (RTCC), which uses AI, integrated crime data, and real-time surveillance feeds to support law enforcement operations. The RTCC has improved situational awareness, resource deployment, and case resolution for detectives and officers.

To support long-term community health, the City secured \$18 million in contributions to launch a five-year Riverside Blue Zones initiative, focused on improving life expectancy and community wellness. Police and community engagement programs were maintained and expanded, including the Public Safety Engagement Team, School Resource Officers, Citizens' and Teen Academies, and initiatives such as You Are Not Alone, Blue Elf, and Opportunities with Education.

Of 36 action items in this area, 17 were completed, 17 are ongoing, and 2 were pivoted. The pivoted items included a proposed Urban Design Studio, which was deferred due to staffing and funding limitations, and the integration of happiness-related indicators into health assessments, which was not pursued given health assessments are already triggered under CEQA, when a project has the potential to expose people to substantial concentrations of pollutants that could cause health risks.

Economic Opportunity

This strategic area focused on fostering innovation, business growth, and inclusive economic development. The City launched its Economic Development Framework and advanced initiatives to revitalize key corridors, support local businesses, and attract industry-leading employers. Significant planning work progressed for areas like Arlington Village, Midtown Riverside, the Arts & Culture District, and the Innovation District. Innovation efforts also included the groundbreaking of the Northside Agricultural Innovation Center, the first of its kind in the United States, focused on agricultural technology and workforce training.

Riverside made national headlines in the green technology sector. Ohmio opened its U.S. headquarters, an all-electric, autonomous shuttle manufacturing facility. Voltu committed to launching its manufacturing facility in the city, and GreenPower—now the largest all-electric bus manufacturer in the U.S.—consolidated all its manufacturing to Riverside. The California Air Resources Board (CARB) opened its Southern California headquarters, bringing more than 400 jobs and establishing the largest LEED Platinum, Net Zero Energy building in the nation. Additionally, Hyundai Rotem secured sites to manufacture 180 hydrogen-powered trains to support the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

The City continued to streamline development processes and improve customer experience. This included a refresh of the Streamline Riverside initiative and the launch of tools like the Rivy Chatbot, a public-facing development portal with real-time status updates, and the initiation of a self-certification program. Riverside also introduced a concierge service to assist with the development process and created an Adaptive Reuse Ordinance to establish alternative standards for the use of existing buildings. The Public Works Department and Riverside Public Utilities implemented a voluntary expedited plan check process to support private investment.

Of 26 action items, 7 were completed, 18 remain ongoing, and one was pivoted. One item originally planned as a collaboration with a City DEI Officer to develop a workforce roadmap was addressed through the work of a consultant.

Environmental Stewardship

Sustainability and environmental planning advanced through the adoption of the Integrated Resources Plan, Urban Water Management Plan, Zero Emission Vehicle Transition Plan, and launch of the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan. In addition, the General Plan 2050 endeavor will include elements on Conservation and Open Space.

Through a food recovery partnership with Feeding America, over 8 million pounds of food were diverted in both 2023 and 2024. Organic waste diversion and the Biogas to Energy project supported waste reduction and energy goals. CARB's facility enrolled in the 100% Renewable Energy Tariff, contributing to its LEED Platinum and Zero Net Energy certification. The renewable power mix increased from 37% to 69%. Expanded rebates for HVAC and heat pumps, along with clean power investments, reinforced long-term environmental commitments.

The City secured a \$30M Transformative Climate Community Grant in the Eastside which included planting 2,000 trees, no cost solar for 100 homes and drought tolerant landscaping. The City also received a \$1M citywide tree inventory grant. More than 30 zero emission vehicles were purchased and introduced into the fleet. Completion of the 7-Oaks Dam Water Recharge project increased ground water recharge to 26 billion gallons of water each year with under aquifer levels increasing for the first time in decades.

Of 32 action items, 7 were completed, 24 are ongoing, and 1 was pivoted due to cost limitations in expanding air quality monitoring and a better understanding of the number of existing air quality monitoring devices throughout the City.

High Performing Government

This strategic priority focused on strengthening internal capacity, modernizing financial practices, and increasing transparency across City operations. Riverside invested in its workforce by expanding training opportunities and increasing tuition reimbursement for professional development. Employee engagement remained a priority, with annual Town Halls bringing the City team together to share organizational updates and gather valuable feedback from staff.

The City also formed high-impact partnerships at no cost with institutions such as the Harvard Bloomberg City Leadership Initiative, Accelerator for America, and UC Riverside. These collaborations helped pilot service improvement initiatives, launch Economic Development Centers of Excellence, and apply university research to real-world civic challenges. The City Council also adopted a comprehensive Community Engagement Plan aimed at deepening outreach and building public trust.

In the financial arena, Riverside adopted General Fund and Measure Z reserve policies consistent with Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) best practices, increased General Fund reserves, and created Infrastructure Reserve Funds to support long-term capital needs. Fees and charges across water, electric, and refuse services were updated, and the SHARE utility assistance program was expanded. The City also launched annual reporting of Financial Health Indicators to track fiscal performance and benchmark Riverside against peer cities.

To promote transparency, the City enhanced its public-facing data through tools such as the One Stop Shop portal, which allows customers to track development proposals in real time. Additional dashboards were deployed across departments, including Finance, the City Clerk's Office, and the Real Time Crime Center.

Grants acquisition emerged as a major area of success. In 2023 alone, Public Works secured over \$100 million in grant awards, contributing to a citywide total of more than \$200 million in funding. Riverside's competitive grant success rate rose to 80%. Among these was a record-breaking \$30 million Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) grant supporting the Eastside Climate Collaborative. This initiative includes solar installations and water-wise landscaping for 100 homes and the planting of 2,000 trees. To sustain future success, the City hired its first Grants Administrator, created a consultant bench for grant support, and implemented a citywide grant management system.

Of 35 action items, 15 were completed and 20 are ongoing.

Infrastructure, Mobility and Connectivity

This priority area saw substantial improvements to both physical and digital infrastructure, increasing connectivity, safety, and sustainability across the city. Technology upgrades included upgrading and replacing more than 200 public safety cameras, 2,000 obsolete City computers, and the 15-year-old City network. 911 system hardware was also modernized, active-active disaster recovery architecture was implemented, and internet service was upgraded to improve both internal operations and public-facing digital services. An Infrastructure Reserve Fund was also established to assist in future infrastructure imp

Significant capital improvement projects were undertaken during the strategic plan period. From 2020 through 2024, the City paved or resurfaced 120 miles and applied slurry seal to an additional 44 miles. The Paving Moratorium was extended from 3 to 5 years to protect newly paved streets. Traffic system upgrades included the replacement of 260 traffic controls and secured funding to replace the remaining 160. The City also refinanced its 2013 Certificates of Participation to reduce annual debt service through 2033.

Mobility enhancements included advancing the Vine Street Mobility Hub, maintaining 156 miles of bike lanes, and securing funding to build an additional 225 miles through grant awards and a new Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Mitigation Bank. Water and environmental infrastructure improvements included completing Phase 1 of the Wood Streets Sewer upgrades, initiating the Van Buren Sewer project, and launching design and permitting for the Water, Parks, and Habitat Project which aims to restore 400 acres of wetlands and environmentally clear \$1 billion in capital improvements. The City also implemented the award-winning Phoenix Storm Drain diversion system and partnered on the 7 Oaks Dam recharge project to capture up to 28 billion gallons of stormwater annually.

Key planning documents were completed to improve project delivery and grant competitiveness

including the Pedestrian Target Safeguarding Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Complete Streets Ordinance, Trails Master Plan, and Local Roadway Safety Plan. The Urban Forestry Policy Manual was updated to prioritize tree species that enhance carbon sequestration and energy savings, supported by a \$1 million grant to inventory the tree canopy in GIS. New programs were also introduced, including the adoption of the VMT/LOS Traffic Impact Guidelines and Mitigation Bank, the Riverside Clean Air Carshare Program.

Of 21 action items, 9 were completed, 9 are ongoing, and 3 were pivoted due to project reprioritization or funding limitations.

Next steps

The City Manager's Office will ensure progress is made in the following areas:

1. General Plan 2050 creation and implementation, which will serve as the City's strategic priorities;
2. Review, update and implement the "Book of Work" (work plan); and
3. Staff Reports going forward will transition from Strategic Plan alignment to referencing General Plan alignment.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

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Approved by: Mike Futrell, City Manager
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Attachments:

1. Envision Riverside 2025 Strategic Plan
2. Final Strategic Plan Report Summary
3. Presentation