



City of East Palo Alto Strategic Plan

**FY 2025-2029 Strategic Priorities and
FY 2025-2027 Work Plan**



ADOPTED
June 17, 2025

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Introduction



The City of East Palo Alto is a vibrant and diverse community in the heart of Silicon Valley.

Since incorporating as a city in 1983, East Palo Alto has grown into a proud and active community of about 31,500 people. Our strong tradition of civic involvement and community leadership continues to shape our vision for an inclusive and just future.

East Palo Alto celebrates its cultural diversity and is committed to being a welcoming place for all. This Strategic Plan reflects those values, offering a clear path forward based on community input and careful planning.

The Plan focuses on seven main goals—called “Strategic Priorities”—that will guide the City’s decisions over the next four years. These priorities help make sure the City’s policies, programs, and services meet community needs and that both funding and staff time are focused on the most urgent challenges.

This document outlines the City Council’s Strategic Priorities for Fiscal Years (FY) 2025–2029 and includes a detailed **Work Plan for FY 2025–2026 and 2026–2027**. A second two-year work plan will be created later to cover the final years. The priorities and projects in this Plan are grounded in community feedback, budget considerations, and direction from the City Council.



Background to Strategic Planning

Strategic planning is a critical tool for shaping the City's future. It helps identify shared goals, outlines strategies to achieve them, and provides a clear roadmap for implementation. A strong Strategic Plan aligns City departments, clarifies priorities, and creates a shared sense of purpose. It also allows the City to monitor progress over time, make informed adjustments as needed, and maintain transparency with the public.

To ensure that City resources and efforts are focused on the highest community needs, the East Palo Alto City Council engages in a two-part priority-setting process:

1. **Establishing four-year Strategic Priorities** that reflect the long-term goals of the City, and
2. **Developing a two-year Work Plan** that includes specific projects designed to advance those priorities.

Together, these elements make up the City's Strategic Plan. Each project in the Work Plan is tracked over time to measure progress and ensure alignment with the Strategic Priorities.

The Strategic Plan is designed to address the City's most urgent and meaningful community needs while accounting for staffing capacity and budget constraints. The City has local authority over areas such as land use and zoning, public utilities, beautification and greening efforts, code enforcement, and City-maintained roads. However, many other issues fall outside the City's jurisdiction. As a result, the Work Plan focuses limited City resources on a defined set of high-impact priorities that reflect the community's input and values.

Terms and Definitions:

- **Strategic Plan:** A guiding document that sets the City's long-term goals and the strategies to achieve them. Typically covers a 2–5 year timeframe.
- **Strategic Priorities:** Long-term focus areas established by the City Council to guide decision-making over the next four years.
- **Work Plan:** A two-year list of projects and initiatives—beyond routine operations—intended to advance the Strategic Priorities.
- **Projects:** Specific efforts or actions the City takes to carry out the Strategic Priorities.
- **Metrics:** Measurements used to track the status and impact of projects and priorities, including timelines and key performance indicators.





The Strategic Plan Development Process

This Strategic Plan was developed through a collaborative, multi-step process that centered around community input and used data to guide decisions. The City conducted research, worked closely with project managers, and engaged residents and stakeholders to make sure the final priorities and projects reflect what the community said matters most.

Process Highlights

- **Environmental Scan:** Reviewed key City plans and documents, especially those shaped by strong public input.
- **Staff Input:** Gathered ideas and insights from City staff to help assess what’s possible based on staffing capacity.
- **Initial Round of Community Engagement:** Collected feedback to shape the first draft of the Strategic Priorities and project ideas:
 - Twelve focus group meetings with community groups and key stakeholders
 - Two pop-up workshops at the EPA Senior Center and Cardenas Supermarket
- **Strategic Planning Workshop/Retreat:** A joint community workshop and City Council retreat held on March 8, 2025 (10am-4pm), to discuss and refine priorities.
- **Draft Development:** Staff analyzed the draft priorities and projects, taking into account staffing, funding, and what’s realistically doable.
- **Second Council Study Session:** On April 22, 2025, the City Council reviewed the updated draft with public input and gave further direction.
- **Revisions:** Staff made updates based on feedback from the Council and community.
- **Second Round of Community Engagement:** Shared the draft priorities and Work Plan projects with the public and gathered more input:
 - Pop-up events at the Farmers Market and Cinco de Mayo Festival
 - Online survey with 183 responses in both English and Spanish
 - One in-person and one virtual workshop
 - Additional outreach across the East Palo Alto community for further input and recommendations
- **Third City Council Meeting on June 3, 2025:** City Council reviewed public input and made final refinements.
- **Fourth City Council Meeting on June 17, 2025:** The Council adopted the final Strategic Plan and approved the City budget.

Figure 1—Process Timeline



Summary of Strengths, Issues, and Needs

The City's Strategic Priorities and Work Plan are shaped by an understanding of East Palo Alto's strengths, issues, and needs. Key themes from community members, City Council, and City staff include:

Strengths

- Active and diverse community with a proud history
- Central location on the edge of the Bay
- Abundant natural resources and open space
- Improvements in public safety
- Progressive housing and social policies
- Support for small businesses, entrepreneurs, and economic development
- Strong City partnerships with community nonprofit organizations
- Enhanced transparency and performance in City government
- High levels of civic engagement and community input
- Dedicated and collaborative City staff
- Responsible financial management and strong budget reserves
- Great weather
- Surrounded by communities of wealth with abundant philanthropy
- A community that values self-determination and directs its own future

Issues and Needs

- Housing for various income levels / preventing displacement
- Limited development and need for business growth
- Need for local job opportunities and small business support
- Lack of retail shops, services, and community gathering spaces
- Infrastructure improvements (water, sewer, roads, parks, sidewalks)
- Improved code enforcement and public safety
- Traffic and pedestrian safety
- Environmental (brownfields) clean ups and beautification
- Climate resilience and emergency preparedness
- Strained working relationships among elected officials
- City staff retention, capacity, and workload
- Insufficient City funding and revenue sources



Previous City Priorities: Continuing Projects and Accomplishments

The FY 2025–2027 Work Plan builds on progress made through the City’s previous Strategic Priorities. Between FY 2023–2025, the City focused on seven key priorities:

1. Promote Housing, Economic, and Workforce Development
2. Implement the Comprehensive Transportation and Mobility Plan
3. Promote Health and Public Safety
4. Ensure Financial and Organizational Health
5. Improve the City’s Water Infrastructure
6. Develop and Implement a Comprehensive Facilities Master Plan
7. Enhance Community Services and Parks for Residents.

By June 30, 2025, the City expects to complete or operationalize 37 of the 93 projects from the FY 2023–2025 Work Plan. The remaining 37 projects will carry forward into the FY 2025–2027 Work Plan.

The new two-year Work Plan continues this momentum. It includes both carryforward projects and new initiatives under each of the updated Strategic Priorities. This approach helps maintain continuity, respond to changing community needs, and make the most of available resources.

Table 1—EPA Strategic Priorities (FY 2023-2025)

Priority	Total	Complete	Operational	In-Progress	On-hold
Priority A: Promote Housing, Economic and Workforce Development	18	6	3	9	0
Priority B: Implement the Comprehensive Transportation and Mobility Plan	18	6	1	11	0
Priority C: Promote Health and Public Safety	15	2	1	12	0
Priority D: Ensure Our Financial and Organizational Health	13	7	2	3	1
Priority E: Improve the City’s Water Infrastructure	8	2	1	4	1
Priority F: Develop and Implement a Comprehensive Facilities Master Plan	10	1	0	5	4
Priority G: Enhance Community Services and Parks for Residents	11	1	4	4	2
Total	93	25	12	48	8

Overview of the FY 2025-2029 Strategic Priorities



Civic Engagement

Provide diverse and inclusive opportunities for all EPA community members to participate in City meetings, have a voice in City affairs, and develop leadership skills for EPA youth.



Comprehensive Housing

Increase the City's housing stock at all income levels (from affordable to market rate), facilitate pathways to homeownership, and prevent displacement of existing residents.



Governance, Organizational Strength, and Fiscal Sustainability

Strengthen the City's internal capacity, transparency, and long-term financial health by improving core operations, investing in workforce and systems, and implementing data-informed strategies to ensure effective service delivery, accountability, and fiscal resilience.



Land Use, Economic and Workforce Development

Support balanced development that attracts investment, strengthens local businesses, reduces economic leakage, and expands access to quality jobs and services that meet local needs.



Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities

Invest in the modernization and expansion of the City's parks, recreation, and community facilities and services to increase residents' access to open spaces and recreational opportunities.



Public Health, Safety, and Quality of Life

Implement and enforce strategies to ensure public safety, improve the livability of neighborhoods, and prepare the City for disasters and emergencies.



Public Infrastructure and Utilities

Maintain, modernize, and expand the City's physical infrastructure (streets, sidewalks, utilities) to support existing homes and businesses, and new development.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Civic Engagement

Provide diverse and inclusive opportunities for all EPA community members to participate in City meetings, have a voice in City affairs, and develop leadership skills for EPA youth.

NEW PROJECTS 1 | CARRYFORWARD PROJECTS 1

Carryforward projects have a “➔”. New projects have a “+”

CIV-1. ➔ Develop Recommendations for Establishing a Youth Commission or Alternative Youth Civic Engagement Program

CIV-2. + Implement Sister City and Cultural Exchange Initiative



Photo Credit: Treasured Visions.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Comprehensive Housing

Increase the City's housing stock at all income levels (from affordable to market rate), facilitate pathways to homeownership, and guard against the displacement of existing residents.

NEW PROJECTS 5 | CARRYFORWARD PROJECTS 3

Carryforward projects have a "➔". New projects have a "➕"

CH-1. ➔ Complete Construction of 965 Weeks/Colibri Commons

CH-2. ➕ Develop and Launch Home Repair Program

CH-3. ➔ Establish Rent Registry for Both Rent-Stabilized and Market-Rate Rental Units

CH-4. ➕ Research Feasibility of a Financial Empowerment and Foreclosure Prevention Program

CH-5. ➕ Research Feasibility of a First-Time Homebuyer Assistance Program

CH-6. ➕ Research Feasibility of a Residential Rental Inspection Program

CH-7. ➕ Update the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance

CH-8. ➔ Update the Zoning Code



STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Governance, Organizational Strength, and Fiscal Sustainability

Strengthen the City's internal capacity, transparency, and long-term financial health by improving core operations, investing in workforce and systems, and implementing data-informed strategies to ensure effective service delivery, accountability, and fiscal resilience.

NEW PROJECTS 5 | CARRYFORWARD PROJECTS 3

Carryforward projects have a "➔". New projects have a "➕"

GOV-1. ➔ Collaborate with the SMC Libraries to Identify and Implement a Comprehensive Funding Strategy for Library Construction

GOV-2. ➕ Conduct Council Term Limit Policy Research

GOV-3. ➕ Develop a 10-Year Fiscal Strategy and Address the Structural Deficit

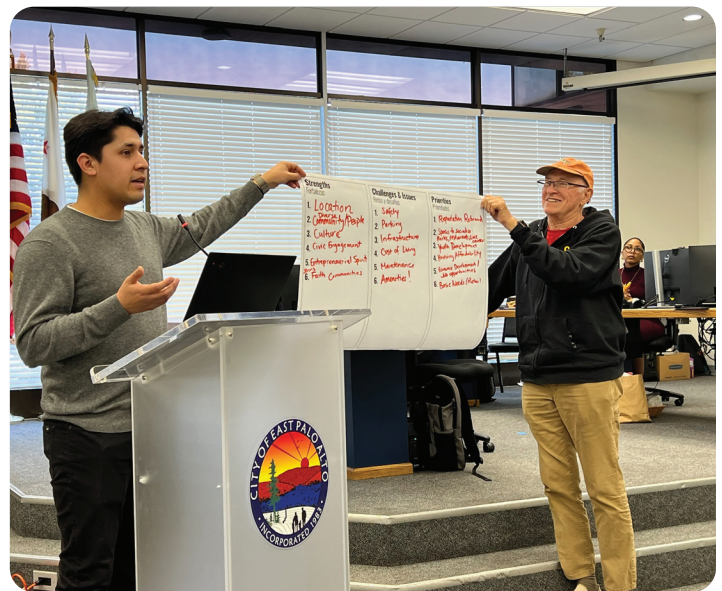
GOV-4. ➔ Develop a Citywide Information Systems Master Plan

GOV-5. ➕ Implement a Centralized Grants Management System

GOV-6. ➕ Prepare 2026 Ballot Measure to Raise Revenue for Infrastructure Improvements and Public Facilities

GOV-7. ➔ Update the City's Personnel Policies and Procedures

GOV-8. ➕ Upgrade and Launch New City Website



STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Land Use, Economic and Workforce Development

Support balanced development that attracts investment, strengthens local businesses, and expands access to quality jobs and services that meet local needs.

CARRYFORWARD PROJECTS 5

Carryforward projects have a “➔”. New projects have a “+”

LU-1. ➔ Conclude Measure HH Pilot Evaluation and Initiate Ongoing Workforce Development Program

LU-4. ➔ Implement Program to Distribute Community Resource Funds Grants for Small Business Assistance

LU-2. ➔ Create an Economic Development Strategic Plan Focusing on Small and Micro Businesses

LU-5. ➔ Renovate the Cummings Loft Property into a Small Business Incubator

LU-3. ➔ Design and Implement a “Pop-Up”/ Sidewalk Vending Policy and Program



STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities

Invest in the modernization and expansion of the City's parks, recreation, and community facilities and services to increase residents' access to open spaces and recreational opportunities.

NEW PROJECTS 5 | CARRYFORWARD PROJECTS 6

Carryforward projects have a "➔". New projects have a "✚".

PR-1. ➔ Complete Construction of Tenant Improvements at City Facilities

PR-2. ✚ Conduct a Comprehensive Evaluation of Senior Service Agreements in East Palo Alto

PR-3. ➔ Construct Access Improvements at Rutgers Street Entrance to the Bay Trail

PR-4. ➔ Create a Pilot Dog Park

PR-5. ➔ Establish a Joint Use Agreement with RCSD for Shared Recreation Sites

PR-6. ✚ Expand EPACENTER Services and Programs Through City Funding

PR-7. ➔ Finalize Architectural Design for the New East Palo Alto Library

PR-8. ✚ Implement Priority Projects from the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan

PR-9. ➔ Negotiate with County to Finalize Acquisition of Beech Street Property

PR-10. ✚ Plan for Development of New Civic Center Facility

PR-11. ✚ Expand Access to YMCA Programming and Services for the Greater East Palo Alto Community.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Public Health, Safety, and Quality of Life

Implement and enforce strategies to ensure public safety, improve the livability of neighborhoods, and prepare the City for disasters and emergencies.

NEW PROJECTS 4 | CARRYFORWARD PROJECTS 5

Carryforward projects have a "➔". New projects have a "➕"

PH-1. ➕ Expand Parking Enforcement Capacity

PH-2. ➔ Implement a Crime Data Analytics Platform for the Police Department

PH-3. ➕ Implement a Shopping Cart Abatement Program

PH-4. ➔ Launch a Residential Parking Permit Program

PH-5. ➕ Launch Emergency Preparedness Program

PH-6. ➕ Maintain Senior/Disabled Individuals' Emergency Contact Database

PH-7. ➔ Strengthen the Clean City Program to Reduce Illegal Dumping

PH-8. ➔ Update the Environmental Justice Element of the General Plan

PH-9. ➔ Update the Safety Element of the General Plan



STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Public Infrastructure and Utilities

Maintain, modernize, and expand the City's physical infrastructure (streets, sidewalks, utilities) to support existing homes and businesses, and new development.

NEW PROJECTS 2 | CARRYFORWARD PROJECTS 14

Carryforward projects have a “➔”. New projects have a “+”

PI-1. ➔ Assess Utility Operations and Prepare Transition Plan for Post-Lease Operations

PI-2. ➔ Build Sidewalk and Pedestrian Safety Improvements on East Bayshore Road

PI-3. ➔ Collaborate with City of Palo Alto to Replace the Newell Street Bridge

PI-4. ➔ Collaborate with SFCJPA to Construct San Francisquito Creek Flood Protection Upgrades

PI-5. ➔ Collaborate with SFCJPA to Implement the SAFER Bay Project

PI-6. ➔ Conduct a Siting Study to Identify Locations for Additional Water Storage Tanks

PI-7. ➔ Construct a Bicycle and Pedestrian Overcrossing on University Avenue at US 101

PI-8. ➔ Construct Full Trash Capture Devices to Meet Stormwater Compliance Requirements

PI-9. ➔ Construct Mini Roundabouts to Replace Temporary Traffic Circles on Pulgas Avenue

PI-10. ➔ Create a Financing Strategy for Water Infrastructure Upgrades

PI-11. ➔ Design Roadway Improvements on Woodland Avenue

PI-12. ➔ Develop an Asset Management Database

PI-13. + Develop Citywide Sewer Infrastructure Master Plan

PI-14. + Install Citywide Lighting Improvements - Phase II

PI-15. ➔ Install New Traffic Signal and Complete Safety Upgrades on University Avenue at Runnymede

PI-16. ➔ Modernize Equipment and Complete Rehabilitation of the O'Connor Pump Station



Photo Credit: Climate Resilient Communities.



ADOPTED
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