



*City of*  
**EL CENTR** *the Heart of the Valley*

STRATEGIC PLAN **2022-2027**



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# Acknowledgments

## EL CENTRO CITY COUNCIL



**Cheryl Viegas-Walker**  
Mayor

**Tomás Oliva**  
Mayor Pro-Tem



**Sylvia Marroquin**  
Council Member

**Martha Cardenas-Singh**  
Council Member

**Edgard Garcia**  
Council Member

## MANAGEMENT TEAM

<b>Norma Wyles</b>	.....	<i>City Clerk</i>
<b>Marcela Piedra</b>	.....	<i>City Manager</i>
<b>Elizabeth L. Martyn</b>	.....	<i>City Attorney</i>
<b>Norma Villicaña</b>	.....	<i>Community Development</i>
<b>Adriana Nava</b>	.....	<i>Community Services</i>
<b>Richard Romero</b>	.....	<i>Finance</i>
<b>Cedric Ceseña</b>	.....	<i>Fire</i>
<b>Dulce Bedolla</b>	.....	<i>Human Resources</i>
<b>Brian Johnson</b>	.....	<i>Police</i>
<b>Abraham Campos</b>	.....	<i>Public Works</i>

# Introduction

As a community member, you may wonder why the City is working on another plan and how this plan is different from the others. Without a coherent overall strategy, a City has no road map to follow when pursuing opportunities and running daily operations. The consequences of not having a strategy can be severe due to lacking a coherent strategy. The implementation of plans allows for the continued growth and vitality of El Centro.

This Strategic Plan is for the planning period of 2022-2027. Its purpose is to strategically carry forth the long-term plans of the City such as the recently adopted General Plan 2040, which includes broad goals and objectives and the Vision 2050 Plan, which was adopted in 2015 and continues to be a blueprint for the City. Because the Strategic Planning period is only for five years, it prioritizes the most pressing goals, creates action items, and prioritizes funding to achieve these goals.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

In 2019, the El Centro City Council formed the Strategic Planning Task Force which consisted of the Mayor, Mayor ProTem, and City staff from the City Manager's office, Community Services, and Community Development. The Task Force began discussions for the creation of the Strategic Plan for the city.

From October 2019 to August 2021, City staff completed a wide array of public participation in order to prepare the Strategic Plan. Information was obtained from the El Centro City Council and the public at large as well as City staff from all levels. Information gathering was achieved through in- person community workshops, hosted virtual workshops on specific topics, such as downtown El Centro, hosted ad- hoc committee meetings, and dissemination of surveys asking probing questions about the community.

El Centro was also privileged to receive technical assistance from the Institute for Local Government (ILG). They assisted in hosting the workshops with the City Council and City staff.

A special thank you, to former Council Members Jason Jackson and Efrain Silva for their contributions to this plan.

The meetings below were held in order to prepare the Strategic Plan and prioritize Citywide goals.

- **February 26, 2020**

Strategic Planning Task Force Meeting

- **March 12, 2020**

Initial Meeting with ILG staff

- **July 29, 2020**

Planning Retreat Coordination Meeting with Task Force

- **August 26, 2020**

Strategic Planning Retreat with Council Members

- **October 21, 2020**

Strategic Planning Retreat with Department Heads/Supervisors

- **March 1, 2021**

Strategic Planning Task Force Meeting

# About El Centro

## LOCATION, COMMUNITY AND GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE

The community of El Centro is nestled along Interstate 8, approximately 120 miles east of San Diego, 60 miles west of Yuma, Arizona and 12 miles north of Mexicali, Baja California, Mexico. El Centro occupies a land area of approximately 11.019 square miles. In 2020, El Centro boasts a population of 44,322, however, during weekday, working hours, its population temporarily increases due to visitors conducting county business or those working in El Centro. El Centro is one of seven cities within Imperial County and each of the populations within the cities contribute to El Centro's local economy.

El Centro is the county seat and the largest city within Imperial County, one of the most developed agricultural regions in the country with an annual crop production of over \$2 billion. El Centro was incorporated on April 16, 1908, and its fate changed when it became the seat of Imperial County in 1907. As the county seat, El Centro is the administrative center and employment hub for the area, being the home for numerous county, state and federal offices.



State Courthouse Under Construction

Imperial County is widely known in California and the rest of the world as one of the most agriculturally productive areas of the world. In 2020, Imperial

County boasted an agricultural production value of \$2,026,427,000. The six (6) main commodities in Imperial County are cattle, alfalfa, leaf lettuce, sweet corn, Bermuda, and romaine lettuce. Nationally, Imperial County is known as a leader in the development of renewable energy resources. The County supports and encourages the development of renewable energy resources compatible with the protection of existing communities, agriculture, military operations, and sensitive environmental resources. Among the many attributes that make Imperial County attractive to both commercial and residential development is the abundance of inexpensive water, energy, and land. Additionally, the county serves as the Gateway to the United States for the City of Mexicali, Mexico, the capital of Baja California. Mexicali has a population in excess of 1,000,000, which contributes to El Centro's local economy.



Figure 1- Geographic Location

These positive factors contributed to the unprecedented commercial and residential growth during the years 2005 to 2007. During these years, a regional mall was constructed within El Centro. The regional mall includes major retailers such as Macys, Dillard's, and JC Penney. During this same time period, two strip malls adjacent to the regional mall were constructed, which include stores such as Best Buy, Burlington, Petco, Marshalls, Ross, Michaels, and Ulta. An Olive Garden and Buffalo Wild Wings also opened its doors at the IV Commons shopping center. Over the last five years, a new group of stores and restaurants opened its doors. Those include Ashley furniture store, Pet Smart, a second Ross, Aldi food market, Grocery Outlet, CVS Pharmacy, Planet Fitness, Habit Burger, and Panera Bread. It is anticipated that commercial and residential development will continue within the next five years. This Strategic Plan incorporates goals and actions to facilitate further development of El Centro.

The system of local government for El Centro is council-manager form, which combines the strong political leadership of elected officials in the form of a council or other governing body, with the strong managerial experience of an appointed local government manager. The form establishes a representative system where power is concentrated in the elected council and where the council hires a professionally trained manager to oversee the delivery of public services. In council-manager governments, council members are the leaders and policy makers elected to represent various segments of the community and to concentrate on policy issues that are responsive to citizens' needs and wishes. The manager is appointed by the council to carry out policy and ensure that the entire community is being served. If the manager is not responsive to the council's wishes, the council has authority to terminate the manager at any time. In that sense, a manager's responsiveness is tested daily.

Table 1- El Centro 2020 Census Data

Total Population 2020	44,322	Percent
White alone, not Hispanic	3,877	8.70%
Black or African American alone, not Hispanic	725	1.60%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone, not Hispanic	69	0.15%
Asian alone, not Hispanic	593	1.30%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, not Hispanic	16	0.03%
Some Other Race alone, not Hispanic	149	0.33%
Two or More Races, not Hispanic	327	0.73%
Hispanic or Latino	38,566	87%

El Centro is a charter city that provides a variety of services to serve its residents and businesses. El Centro is a full service city, providing the following services:

- Police and Fire;
- Library;
- Parks and Recreation;
- Community Development which includes Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement;
- Public Works, which includes Water Distribution and Treatment, Street maintenance and lighting, and Engineering services;

The City contracts for solid waste collection and recycling services.

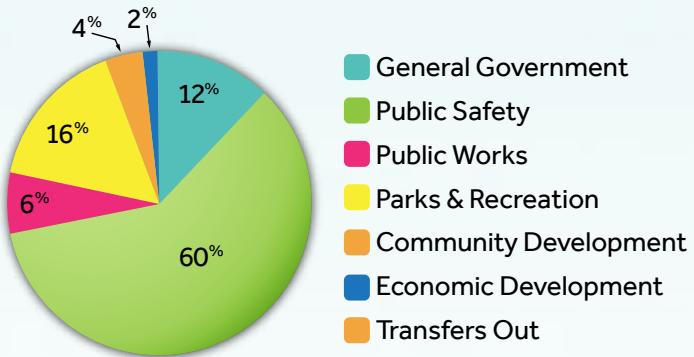
The fiscal year 2021-2022 budget authorized \$119.3 million in citywide expenditures, with \$30.7 million in expenditures planned in the General Fund.

Table 2– FY 2021-2022 Budget

<b>Operations</b>	<b>\$54.3 Million</b>	<b>45%</b>
<b>Capital</b>	<b>\$46.4 Million</b>	<b>39%</b>
<b>Debt Services</b>	<b>\$9.2 Million</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>Solid Waste</b>	<b>\$2.1 Million</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Transfers Out</b>	<b>\$7.4 Million</b>	<b>6%</b>

The City employs approximately 300 employees to provide daily services. Similar to other municipalities in California, public safety comprises 60% of the general fund budget, followed by general government and public works. Overall, salaries and benefits represent 81% of the general fund at \$25 million, much of which is attributed to CalPers costs of \$5.6 million.

### Department Allocations



## ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROGRESS FROM PREVIOUS STRATEGIC PLAN

Over the last five years, the City has worked extensively to beautify the community and to enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors. Improvements are visible across the spectrum of public facilities.

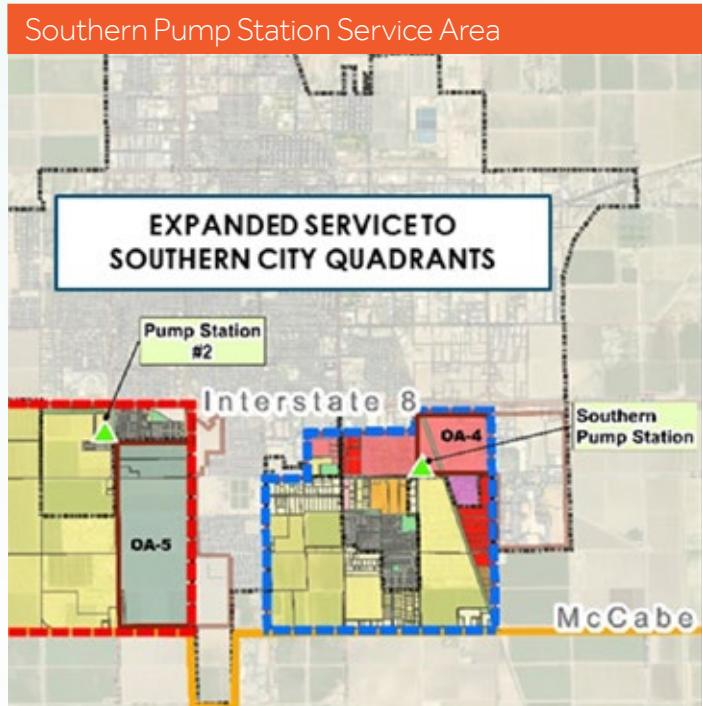
### PUBLIC WORKS, INCLUDING ROADS, WATER, SEWER, AND STORMWATER

About \$53 million has been invested in projects that maintain the City's infrastructure and improve regulatory compliance.

- \$15 million in energy efficiency improvements have been completed at the City's Wastewater Treatment Plant.



- \$8 million will be invested in the Southern Pump Station project, which will increase wastewater capacity to roughly 240 acres of land south of Interstate 8 specifically to areas along Dogwood Avenue, McCabe Road, and Farnsworth.



- \$50 million has been spent in transportation and mobility efforts. The much anticipated widening of La Brucherie Avenue was a major street improvement project. Many street overlay projects have been completed as well as the Dogwood Bridge widening and pedestrian improvements.



## POLICE AND FIRE

- Over \$30 million has been invested in the City's Police and Fire Departments by providing these Departments with equipment and technologies to effectively deliver public safety services.
- In 2018, the El Centro Fire Department established a partnership with AMR (American Medical Response), an ambulance service provider, by allowing them to co-locate at its three fire stations.
- In 2021, the conceptual design for a future police station was approved. The cost of the new police station is estimated to be \$40 million.



## HEALTH CARE

- The El Centro Regional Medical Center (ECRMC), the only City-owned hospital in the state of California, is investing \$125 million in a new three-story, 68,000 square foot building that will include ancillary services, patient rooms, medical imaging, and OB/Nursery Department. This expansion is expected to be completed in 2022.



## RECREATION

- Over \$52 million has been spent in the past five years by improving many City parks, such as Bucklin Park, Carlos Aguilar Park, McGee Park, and Swarthout Park.
- The City constructed and opened an \$18 million aquatic center facility in 2019.



- The completion of the El Centro Aquatic Center finalized a master plan that included other recreation facilities, such as the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Sports Pavilion, an indoor sports complex, and the Sidewinder Skate Park, and beautified the Adams Avenue corridor.

- With an investment of \$2 million from the City's Measure P fund, the City built First Responders Park which is the City's first inclusive and accessible park for children of all abilities. It includes play structures, outdoor fitness equipment, seating areas, and a memorial wall honoring first responders.



- A Veterans Memorial was built at Bucklin Park. The site is used throughout the year to honor and pay respects to those who served in the United States armed forces.



## LIBRARY

- A new 19,000 square foot library is under construction and is anticipated to be completed in 2022. This project represents an investment of \$17.4 million.



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND RETENTION AND ATTRACTION OF BUSINESSES

Over \$30 million has been invested in business development and city beautification efforts.

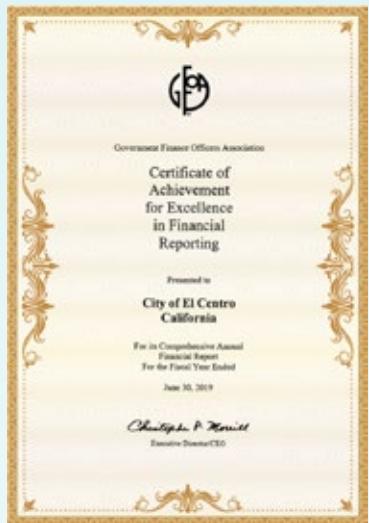
- The city has been successful in attracting national chains and is home to a Panera Bread, Habit Burger Grill, a second Ross, six Starbucks locations, Circle K, The Burrito Factory, Tractor Supply Co., and other corporate businesses.



- The City has supported local businesses by providing revolving loan funds at low interest rates.
- In 2021, the City Council approved the General Plan Update 2040, which updated the Land Use, Mobility, and new Environmental Justice Element. The updated General Plan will facilitate development and growth in El Centro.
- Clinicas de Salud del Pueblo, a local health care provider, invested approximately \$17 million in a new 44,000 square foot medical office building providing primary care services, dental, vision, and other health services.



## ADMINISTRATION



Overall, El Centro is a well operated and managed city with a strong City Council and proactive management. For 12 consecutive years the City has been recognized for its excellence in financial reporting by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA).

together keeping its community informed, providing sites for vaccine clinics, providing financial resources to individuals to pay their rents and utilities, and assisting small businesses with financial resources to reduce the negative losses of their closures.



**City supporting restaurants by removing outdoor dining constraints.**

As the City moves forward with the Strategic Plan for the planning period of 2022-2027, it will seek to carry out the newly adopted Vision, Mission and Values keeping in mind the goals and priorities set forth by the City Council.

## THEMATIC STATEMENT

This strategic plan incorporates a thematic statement in both English and Spanish. In English it is, "El Centro - the Heart of the Valley" and in Spanish, "El Centro - El Corazón Del Valle." This plan represents the first time the municipality acknowledges the Spanish language that is prevalent within the community. The "heart" and "el corazón" in both English and Spanish were chosen, as the heart is a vital organ of the body that pumps blood and has a recognizable beat. Similarly, El Centro being centrally located and the largest center of commerce within Imperial Valley embodies the pulse and beat within the region. The "heart" figuratively represents "love" and as an administrative body, we do the work with "heart" and "corazón." To do something with "corazón" is to do the people's work with love.

# Vision, Mission, & Values

## VISION

We envision an El Centro that is a thriving and welcoming community, advancing partnerships that boost the economy and enhance sustainability.

*"El Centro, the heart of the Valley"*

*"El Centro, el corazón del Valle"*



## MISSION

Our mission is to deliver exceptional services and opportunities that enable a vibrant and resilient community for residents, businesses and visitors, while celebrating our rich culture and diversity.

# Vision, Mission, & Values

## VALUES

- **Compassion:** A positive response and desire to help, with an inner motivation to lessen or prevent suffering of others.
- **Economic Opportunity:** The creation of opportunities from which community benefits are realized. It is more than a jobs program; it is an investment in growing your economy and enhancing the prosperity and quality of life for residents.
- **Sustainability:** The ability to be sustained, supported, upheld, or confirmed. It improves the quality of our lives, protects our ecosystem and preserves natural resources for future generations.
- **Diversity and Inclusion:** The capacity to appreciate and value individual differences. Involvement and empowerment, where the inherent worth and dignity of people are recognized. A sense of belonging; promotes an inclusive environment that affirms the value of people.
- **Happiness:** Sense of well-being, or contentment. The state of being happy and peaceful. Feelings of joy and pleasure; tranquility and comfort.

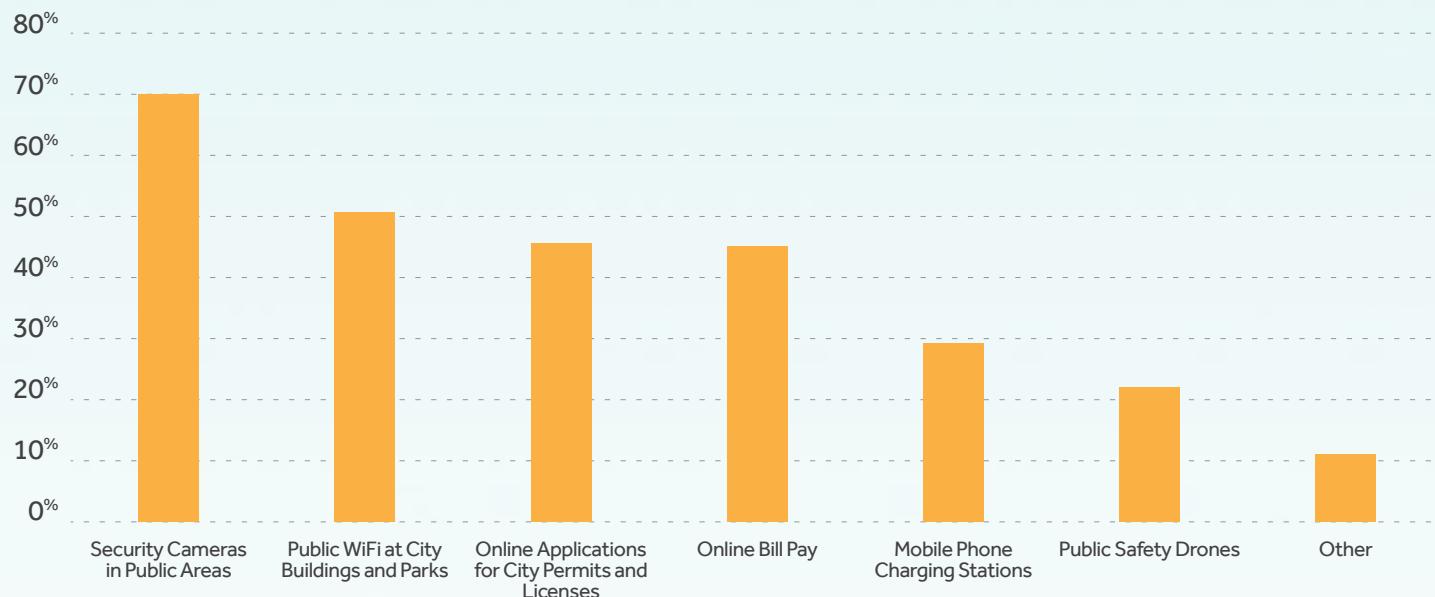
# Community Survey Results

The City of El Centro considers community participation crucial in the strategic planning process. A series of public community input sessions and online survey opportunities were made available during the outreach efforts. A total of 338 surveys

were received and the responses assisted the Task Force members to develop the goals and actions included in this Strategic Plan.

Participants were presented with the following five questions and below are their responses.

## What three technologies would you like the city to implement?



## What three investments you would like the city to make?



# What do you like about El Centro?

- Recreation Facilities
  - Small Town
  - Community
  - Stores/Restaurants
  - No Traffic/Short Drive



# If you were in charge, what would you change about El Centro?

- Homelessness
  - More Recreation/Community Facilities
  - Beautification/Cleaner City
  - Better Parks
  - More Community Events



# What are the most pressing issues/challenges El Centro will face in the next 2 to 5 years?

- Homelessness
  - Economy/Employment
  - Crime
  - Housing
  - Infrastructure
  - Drought/Climate Change/Heat





## GOAL #1

# Financial & Governance Stability & Sustainability

A financially resilient city is paramount to the delivery of high quality services. Financial resiliency better positions the City to withstand economic downturns with minimal impacts to service levels. The City intends to build on the status as the largest city in

Imperial County to retain, develop, and recruit quality employees. It is important that the City continuously strive to develop employee relations and provide an appealing workplace for current and prospective employees.

**Goal 1:** Foster fiscal health through disciplined long-term planning, cost control, heightened efficiency, increased revenue and cost recovery, while providing high quality services through a commitment to local government best practices.

<b>Action 1.1:</b> Review existing water, sewer, storm and solid waste rates to be sustainable and equitable.	<b>Lead Department</b> Public Works	<b>Status</b> Near Term
<b>Action 1.2:</b> Implement online applications for City permits and business licenses.	<b>Lead Department</b> Finance	<b>Status</b> Near Term
<b>Action 1.3:</b> Implement the City's cannabis program in a responsible manner to attain anticipated new revenue with a commitment to adapting where necessary to provide public safety and respond to Statewide trends.	<b>Lead Departments</b> City Manager Finance Community Development	<b>Status</b> Near Term
<b>Action 1.4:</b> Review the User Fee Study and revise as needed.	<b>Lead Department</b> Finance	<b>Status</b> Mid Term
<b>Action 1.5:</b> Explore the creation of assessment districts to provide utility services to areas lacking city water, wastewater or storm water service or infrastructure.	<b>Lead Department</b> Public Works	<b>Status</b> Mid Term
<b>Action 1.6:</b> Develop institutional knowledge "capture" techniques to document processes and procedures in anticipation of retirements and other turnover.	<b>Lead Department</b> Human Resources	<b>Status</b> Mid Term
<b>Action 1.7:</b> Align the provision of critical city services and Strategic Plan Implementation with current staffing levels.	<b>Lead Departments</b> City Manager Finance Human Resources	<b>Status</b> Ongoing

**Goal 1:** (continued)

<b>Action 1.8:</b> Pursue funding to improve and expand public infrastructure, while reducing costs to the community.	<b>Lead Departments</b> Public Works Community Development Community Services	<b>Status</b> Ongoing
<b>Action 1.9:</b> Review the landscape and lighting districts fees to be reflective of cost of service of maintaining the districts to City standards and community expectations.	<b>Lead Departments</b> Finance Community Services	<b>Status</b> Ongoing

Near Term (0-2 years for activity to be completed)

Mid Term (3-4 years for activity to be completed)

Long Term (5+ years for activity to be completed)

Ongoing (Current Standard practice and/or no end date for activity)



## GOAL #2 **Environmental Sustainability & Infrastructure**

El Centro's sustainability depend crucially on how it chooses to conserve and protect its infrastructure network, now and in the future. The focus is to

maintain and enhance City owned infrastructure to provide reliable and efficient services for existing customers and to serve anticipated growth.

**Goal 2:** Ensure the city's infrastructure is enhanced and maintained to support existing and future development through innovative and sustainable principles.

<b>Action 2.1:</b> Develop a Transportation Impact Fee (TIF) program to establish a funding mechanism for transportation improvements as illustrated in the Mobility Element of the General Plan.	<b>Lead Department</b> Public Works	<b>Status</b> Near Term
<b>Action 2.2:</b> Prepare for the relinquishment of Highway 86 while considering associated long-term costs to city.	<b>Lead Department</b> Public Works	<b>Status</b> Near Term
<b>Action 2.3:</b> Construct the Imperial Avenue extension between Interstate 8 and McCabe Road including Wake Avenue extension from Imperial Avenue to Cypress Avenue.	<b>Lead Department</b> Public Works	<b>Status</b> Near Term
<b>Action 2.4</b> Coordinate with the City of Imperial for improvements on shared roadways.	<b>Lead Department</b> Public Works	<b>Status</b> Near Term
<b>Action 2.5</b> Implement Mobility Element recommendations, such as pedestrian crosswalk treatment criteria, Local Road Safety Plan, neighborhood traffic calming program.	<b>Lead Department</b> Public Works	<b>Status</b> Mid Term
<b>Action 2.6:</b> Implement the "El Centro City-Wide Street Lighting Master Plan."	<b>Lead Department</b> Public Works	<b>Status</b> Mid Term
<b>Action 2.7:</b> Coordinate with the Imperial County Transportation Commission and Imperial Valley Transit on enhancements to the 7th Street Transfer Terminal.	<b>Lead Department</b> Public Works	<b>Status</b> Long Term
<b>Action 2.8:</b> Ensure that infrastructure is thoughtfully designed and maintained to meet the current and future needs of the community while minimizing negative financial impacts.	<b>Lead Department</b> Public Works	<b>Status</b> Ongoing
<b>Action 2.9:</b> Ensure compliance with State solid waste and recycling requirements.	<b>Lead Department</b> Public Works	<b>Status</b> Ongoing

## Goal 2: (continued)

<b>Action 2.10:</b> Implement projects listed in Stormwater Capital Improvement Plan and Stormwater Master Plan to maintain the current system and support growth.	<b>Lead Department</b> Public Works	<b>Status</b> Ongoing
<b>Action 2.11:</b> Implement projects listed in Wastewater Capital Improvement Plan and Wastewater Master Plan to maintain the current system and support growth.	<b>Lead Department</b> Public Works	<b>Status</b> Ongoing
<b>Action 2.12:</b> Implement projects listed in Water Capital Improvement Plan and Wastewater Master Plan to maintain the current system and support growth.	<b>Lead Department</b> Public Works	<b>Status</b> Ongoing
<b>Action 2.13:</b> Implement 2015/2016 Pavement Management System Plan which consist of recommended street repair costs to the City's streets network.	<b>Lead Department</b> Public Works	<b>Status</b> Ongoing
<b>Action 2.14:</b> Promote connectivity to public amenities throughout the city by requiring new development to provide direct and safe bike/pedestrian connections to key destinations.	<b>Lead Departments</b> Public Works Community Development	<b>Status</b> Ongoing
<b>Action 2.15:</b> Install public bus shelters at transit locations.	<b>Lead Department</b> Public Works	<b>Status</b> Ongoing
<b>Action 2.16:</b> Implement improvements as documented in the ADA 2018-2020 Transition Plan.	<b>Lead Departments</b> Public Works Community Development	<b>Status</b> Ongoing
<b>Action 2.17:</b> Improve traffic signal performance through the installation of improved sensors, interconnection of signals, and other upgrades to reduce roadway congestion.	<b>Lead Department</b> Public Works	<b>Status</b> Ongoing
<b>Action 2.18:</b> Implement bicycle network connectivity and multi-use pathways for transportation, bicycle, and pedestrian improvements as listed in the Active Transportation Plan and the General Plan Mobility Element.	<b>Lead Department</b> Public Works	<b>Status</b> Ongoing
<b>Action 2.19:</b> Install sidewalks within gaps identified in the sidewalk network.	<b>Lead Department</b> Public Works	<b>Status</b> Ongoing
<b>Action 2.20:</b> Coordinate with schools on improvements to pedestrian and bicycle facilities used by students.	<b>Lead Department</b> Public Works	<b>Status</b> Ongoing

Near Term (0-2 years for activity to be completed)

Mid Term (3-4 years for activity to be completed)

Long Term (5+ years for activity to be completed)

Ongoing (Current Standard practice and/or no end date for activity)



## GOAL #3

# Community Health, Safety & Welfare

Public perception of safety and security influences the actions or choices by residents, businesses, and visitors.

Thus, efficient and effective use of public safety resources is essential in maintaining a community.

### Goal 3: Promote and protect the health and safety of our community through high-quality services.

<b>Action 3.1:</b> Procure and deploy technology needed to deliver essential services to enhance public safety.	<b>Lead Departments</b> Police Fire	<b>Status</b> Ongoing
<b>Action 3.2:</b> Collaborate with regional agencies and organizations to invest in and improve public health services and facilities.	<b>Lead Departments</b> Police Fire Community Services Community Development	<b>Status</b> Ongoing
<b>Action 3.3:</b> Continue participating in the Imperial County Continuum of Care; in addition to partnering with local, state, and federal organizations to address homeless population.	<b>Lead Departments</b> Community Services Police	<b>Status</b> Ongoing
<b>Action 3.4:</b> Partner with emergency assistance and disaster relief organizations to promote emergency preparedness.	<b>Lead Departments</b> Fire Police	<b>Status</b> Ongoing
<b>Action 3.5:</b> Incorporate into the City's Zoning Code design concepts that promote public and neighborhood security and safety.	<b>Lead Departments</b> Community Development Police	<b>Status</b> Ongoing
<b>Action 3.6:</b> Create and implement effective community policing programs and strategies, inclusive of youth programs, reserve officers, and volunteer police programs.	<b>Lead Department</b> Police	<b>Status</b> Ongoing
<b>Action 3.7:</b> Improve major thoroughfares by incorporating landscaping to soften hardscapes and provide shade for pedestrians.	<b>Lead Department</b> Public Works	<b>Status</b> Ongoing

### Goal 3: (continued)

<b>Action 3.8:</b> Establish relationships with local organizations and/or correctional institutions to use labor to clean City streets, alleyways, and other public spaces.	<b>Lead Departments</b> Code Enforcement Public Works Community Services	<b>Status</b> Ongoing
<b>Action 3.9:</b> Implement innovative solutions and collaborate with organizations to end homelessness.	<b>Lead Departments</b> Police Code Enforcement Community Services	<b>Status</b> Ongoing
<b>Action 3.10:</b> Support El Centro Regional Medical Center (ECRMC) with its efforts to expand health care services and ensuring an effective affiliation with UCSD.	<b>Lead Departments</b> El Centro Regional Medical Center	<b>Status</b> Ongoing
<b>Action 3.11:</b> Collaborate with County and local organizations to improve public health and social services.	<b>Lead Departments</b> Fire Community Services Police	<b>Status</b> Ongoing
<b>Action 3.12:</b> Continue collaborating with community members to expand crime prevention activities and programs to reduce the fear and incidence of crime.	<b>Lead Department</b> Police	<b>Status</b> Ongoing
<b>Action 3.13:</b> Improve animal control services by updating and enforcing City ordinances and partnering with local agencies to enhance animal shelter services.	<b>Lead Department</b> Police	<b>Status</b> Ongoing
<b>Action 3.14:</b> Expand fire prevention strategies by increasing fire educational program outreach, disaster planning, and community preparedness.	<b>Lead Department</b> Fire	<b>Status</b> Ongoing

Near Term (0-2 years for activity to be completed)

Mid Term (3-4 years for activity to be completed)

Long Term (5+ years for activity to be completed)

Ongoing (Current Standard practice and/or no end date for activity)



## GOAL #4 **Recreation & Lifelong Learning**

El Centro is a vibrant and dynamic regional hub for shopping, restaurants, health care, and recreational and cultural activities for the 180,000 residents of Imperial Valley. The City has continued to grow in

the delivery of recreational and lifelong learning opportunities. The City intends to continue expanding and enhancing its recreational and cultural activities by being innovative and inclusive.

**Goal 4:** Offer opportunities for recreation and lifelong learning through innovative, inclusive programming, parks and facilities that serve all residents and visitors.

Action 4.1: Update the Parks & Recreation Master Plan to ensure it is reflective of community needs while maintaining flexibility for innovative future recreational projects.	Lead Department Community Services	Status Near Term
<b>Action 4.2:</b> Strengthen El Centro's portfolio of arts, culture, recreation, senior, and lifelong learning opportunities and amenities through expanded community partnerships, shared use opportunities, and fund development.	<b>Lead Departments</b> Community Services Library	<b>Status</b> Ongoing
<b>Action 4.3:</b> Secure public/private partnerships in parks and recreation and leverage resources and opportunities to help develop comprehensive cultural, recreational, and lifelong learning programs for all.	<b>Lead Departments</b> Community Services Library	<b>Status</b> Ongoing
<b>Action 4.4:</b> Update Joint Use Agreements with school districts and other organizations to ensure they are reflective of the community's needs and desires and maximizing financial resources.	<b>Lead Department</b> Community Services	<b>Status</b> Ongoing
<b>Action 4.5:</b> Improve parks, recreational amenities, open space, and trail development, and fulfill critical lifecycle and facility maintenance needs.	<b>Lead Department</b> Community Services	<b>Status</b> Ongoing
<b>Action 4.6:</b> Support programs and amenities to further develop literacy, health, and education of children, youth, and seniors.	<b>Lead Departments</b> Library Community Services	<b>Status</b> Ongoing

**Goal 4:** (continued)

<b>Action 4.7:</b> Provide a welcoming state of the art and user-friendly library facility to meet educational and recreational needs.	<b>Lead Department</b> Library	<b>Status</b> Ongoing
<b>Action 4.8:</b> Utilize standard research practices to identify economic and demographic factors for developing library pilot programs.	<b>Lead Department</b> Library	<b>Status</b> Ongoing

Near Term (0-2 years for activity to be completed)

Mid Term (3-4 years for activity to be completed)

Long Term (5+ years for activity to be completed)

Ongoing (Current Standard practice and/or no end date for activity)



## GOAL #5

# City Beautification, Engagement & Civic Pride

El Centro's unique character gives it its economic competitiveness in today's marketplace. Authenticity within the community is vital. Community pride and

sense of ownership add vibrancy to the city and has a positive impact on culture, health, and the economy.

**Goal 5:** Enhance the quality of life in El Centro by promoting community engagement and investing in new opportunities that foster civic pride and city beautification through community accountability.

<b>Action 5.1:</b> Encourage and incentivize building rehabilitation and infill development of vacant and unused properties.	<b>Lead Departments</b> Community Development Community Services	<b>Status</b> Near Term
<b>Action 5.2:</b> Secure partnerships with local and regional business owners that produce events showcasing El Centro as a dining, shopping, and entertainment destination.	<b>Lead Department</b> Community Services	<b>Status</b> Near Term
<b>Action 5.3:</b> Prepare visual enhancement plans for visual enhancement areas identified in the Land Use Element of the General Plan. Plans would identify requirements for landscaping, promote public art, plan for gateway/wayfinding signage, and be compatible with planned transportation and utility improvements.	<b>Lead Departments</b> Community Development Community Services Public Works	<b>Status</b> Near Term
<b>Action 5.4:</b> Prepare a program to incorporate art into public projects, facilities, programs and private development to the extent possible.	<b>Lead Departments</b> Community Development Community Services Public Works	<b>Status</b> Near Term
<b>Action 5.5:</b> Develop a community/police outreach strategy to enhance community engagement, trust, and support.	<b>Lead Departments</b> Police City Manager	<b>Status</b> Near Term
<b>Action 5.6:</b> Prepare a unified and coordinated gateway and wayfinding program that incorporates design features that highlight El Centro's unique identity, including design themes developed for Visual Enhancement Areas.	<b>Lead Departments</b> Community Development Community Services Public Works	<b>Status</b> Mid Term

**Goal 5:** (continued)

<b>Action 5.7:</b> Re-imagine downtown El Centro as a vibrant shopping, dining and entertainment destination that provides high quality civic spaces for cultural events, public gatherings, and recreational uses with opportunities for businesses to thrive.	<b>Lead Department</b> Community Services	<b>Status</b> Ongoing
<b>Action 5.8:</b> Promote community outreach efforts, inviting the residents to provide suggestions and comments for how the City government can better serve the residents.	<b>Lead Department</b> City Manager	<b>Status</b> Ongoing

Near Term (0-2 years for activity to be completed)

Mid Term (3-4 years for activity to be completed)

Long Term (5+ years for activity to be completed)

Ongoing (Current Standard practice and/or no end date for activity)



## GOAL #6 Economic Opportunity

A diversified economy provides long-term economic stability and a range of employment opportunities. Thriving businesses provide employment opportu-

nities and the much needed revenue local communities need to enhance quality of life.

### **Goal 6:** Strengthen El Centro's resilience by diversifying the economy, recruiting new businesses, creating opportunities for business growth, retaining businesses, and maximizing efficiency.

Action 6.1: Update the Zoning Code to implement mixed-use zoning designation to facilitate residential development within existing commercial areas.	Lead Department Community Development	Status Near Term
<b>Action 6.2:</b> Update the Zoning Code to allow artisan/small manufacturing uses, maker-spaces, and other types of cultural production uses as permitted uses in downtown.	<b>Lead Department</b> Community Development	<b>Status</b> Near Term
<b>Action 6.3:</b> Update the Zoning Code to revise residential development standards to encourage infill residential development, innovative housing types, and mixed density development through modified parking and open space requirements.	<b>Lead Department</b> Community Development	<b>Status</b> Near Term
<b>Action 6.4:</b> Update Zoning Ordinance to facilitate "pop-up" shops, restaurants, and events on vacant lots, vacant store-fronts, and on public property with a special emphases in locations downtown.	<b>Lead Department</b> Community Development	<b>Status</b> Near Term
<b>Action 6.5:</b> Update the Zoning Ordinance to allow the expansion of home occupation uses and/or creating a second tier of home occupation permit, which would allow for more intensive commercial activity while still retaining residential as the primary use.	<b>Lead Department</b> Community Development	<b>Status</b> Near Term
<b>Action 6.6:</b> Update or replace the "Project Shape El Centro Downtown Plan" to promote innovative uses, relaxed development standards, streamlined permitting processes, and reduced fees to support entrepreneurship and cultural tourism, including public art.	<b>Lead Departments</b> Community Services Community Development	<b>Status</b> Mid Term
<b>Action 6.7:</b> Cultivate a business climate that welcomes innovation, entrepreneurship, and investment.	<b>Lead Department</b> All City Departments	<b>Status</b> Ongoing

**Goal 6:** (continued)

<b>Action 6.8:</b> Collaborate with key partners to implement policies and programs that promote local business growth and ensure equitable opportunities for all.	<b>Lead Department</b> All City Departments	<b>Status</b> Ongoing
<b>Action 6.9:</b> Facilitate development and investment in the community by fostering strong relationships between the City and business community.	<b>Lead Department</b> All City Departments	<b>Status</b> Ongoing
<b>Action 6.10:</b> Prioritize permit streamlining and provide an updated General Plan and other long-range plans that encourage growth opportunities and private development.	<b>Lead Department</b> Community Development	<b>Status</b> Ongoing
<b>Action 6.11:</b> Ensure a business-friendly environment that helps retain and recruit quality merchants.	<b>Lead Department</b> All City Departments	<b>Status</b> Ongoing
<b>Action 6.12:</b> Collaborate with community-based organizations and educational institutions to advance local workforce initiatives and provide resources, trainings and services to ensure that academic and career pathway programs are reflective of local industry workforce needs.	<b>Lead Department</b> Community Services	<b>Status</b> Ongoing

Near Term (0-2 years for activity to be completed)

Mid Term (3-4 years for activity to be completed)

Long Term (5+ years for activity to be completed)

Ongoing (Current Standard practice and/or no end date for activity)



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