

*In-person participation by the public will be permitted. In addition, remote public participation is available in the following ways:*

*Submit a written public comment prior to the meeting: Public comments submitted to [cityclerk@atwater.org](mailto:cityclerk@atwater.org) by 8:30 a.m. on the day of the meeting will be distributed to the City Council and made part of the official minutes but will not be read out loud during the meeting.*

*Assistance will be provided to those requiring accommodations for disabilities in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Persons requesting accommodation should contact the City in advance of the meeting, and as soon as possible, at (209) 357-6241.*

## **NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ATWATER**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a special meeting of the City Council of the City of Atwater will be held on **Saturday, May 31, 2025 at 9:00 AM**, or as soon thereafter as may be held. This meeting will be held in the Jesse Frago Room located at the Atwater Community Center, 760 E. Bellevue Road, Atwater, California.

### **AGENDA**

#### **SPECIAL MEETING CALL TO ORDER:**

#### **ROLL CALL:**

Ambriz \_\_\_\_, Cale \_\_\_\_, Raymond \_\_\_\_, Rochester \_\_\_\_, Nelson \_\_\_\_

#### **STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP:**

1. Discussion and direction regarding goals, priorities and City-wide strategic planning.

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

Dated this 29<sup>th</sup> day of May 2025.



Mike Nelson, Mayor

pc: Mayor and City Council Members  
Merced Sun Star  
Atwater Times  
City of Atwater Website

# CITY OF ATWATER

## 2020-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN



### **Executive Summary**

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This document will serve as the City of Atwater's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan. Its purpose is to help the City prioritize its efforts, allocating both fiscal and human resources to achieve a shared Vision and Goals that also reflect community priorities and needs. RGS facilitated a planning session for the City Council and staff at a one-day, duly noticed meeting that was held Wednesday, March 13, 2019. The Study Session, which was open to the public, resulted in the development of a Mission Statement, a Vision Statement, a set of Core Values and six Goals to guide the City's future operations.

### **The Goals**

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At its Strategic Planning Workshop the City Council identified six Goals, each with equal priority. They are:

1. Ensure Financial Solvency
2. Ensure Safety of Staff and Our Community
3. Promote Transparency through Communication
4. Promote Economic Development
5. Optimize Organizational Structure
6. Improve Quality of Life

### **Implementation**

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The role of the City Council is to establish Goals based on community input and fiscal viability. The role of the City Manager is to develop Strategies to achieve those goals. Under the direction of the City Manager, City staff will develop specific tactics to implement the Council's plan.

The Strategic Plan is meant to serve as a living and working document, which will be updated by Council and staff on a regular basis.

## **Conclusion**

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The 2020-2025 Strategic Plan encompasses the Goals, suggested programs, projects and initiatives suggested by Council and staff over the course of its development. The Goals that are included represent **the highest priorities** for City Council. Should other sources of revenue be identified, the City may revisit this Plan and adapt it as needed. For now, by limiting the City's efforts to these key areas, the City of Atwater will be better positioned to achieve its long-term vision and maintain its fiscal viability.

# Mission, Vision and Core Values

The purpose of establishing the City's Mission, Vision and Core Values is to clearly define why the City was incorporated, how the City Council envisions its future, and to what principles Council and Staff will adhere as part of conducting its business.

## Our Mission

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*The Mission of the City of Atwater is to provide high quality, professional services and a safe family-oriented community where our residents may thrive.*

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## Our Vision

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*The City of Atwater is a regional leader in sustainable development offering a safe and welcoming community with a thriving downtown and stable economy that supports our growing population.*

## Our Core Values

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*Integrity*

*Respect*

*Collaboration*

*Customer Service*

*Transparency*

*Innovation*

*Diversity*

*Responsiveness*

# Goals

Each Goal is intended to focus the City's fiscal and human resources on areas of highest priority.

## 1. Ensure the City's Continued Financial Stability

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The City Council, management team and community acknowledge and value the City's commitment to maintaining adequate reserves and working within a balanced budget. Strategies to support this Goal include the following:

- 1.1 Maintain sound, responsible fiscal policies regulating debt and establishing parameters for reserves.
  - 1.1.a. Set aside funds to achieve 10% of the General Fund in reserves.
  - 1.1.b. Adhere to adopted policies and procedures.
  - 1.1.c. Continue to review and update Master Fee Schedules and Rate Schedules on regular basis.
- 1.2 Prioritize use of discretionary funds based on the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan Goals.
- 1.3 Continue to seek local, regional and federal grant opportunities to support City projects, programs and initiatives.
- 1.4 Explore options to reduce pension liabilities.
- 1.5 Provide transparency in all activities related to municipal finance and ensure that financial records are accurate, reliable and timely.
- 1.6 Explore options for more effective service delivery mechanisms to reduce costs.

## 2. Improve Public Safety

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Public Safety continues to be a top priority for the City Council. In this context, Public Safety includes law enforcement, and the maintenance and improvement of infrastructure such as roadways and the water system. Strategies include the following:

- 2.1 Ensure adequate funding for appropriate levels of staffing and equipment for public safety personnel.
  - 2.1.a. Develop a program to replace aging equipment and vehicles.
  - 2.1.b. Explore potential public support for a public safety tax.
- 2.2 Support local and regional partnerships for mutual aid.
- 2.3 Continue to update emergency operations plan(s), and ensure appropriate staff training and engagement for implementation.
- 2.4 Support emergency preparedness throughout the community.
- 2.5 Maintain safe, well-lit streets, roads sidewalks.
- 2.6 Monitor treatment, storage and delivery systems to ensure safe, reliable delivery of water.
- 2.7 Develop an Active Transportation Plan.
- 2.8 Strengthen Code Enforcement.
- 2.9 Re-establish the Community Watch program.

### **3. Improve Internal and External Communication**

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The Council believes communication with residents and the business community is essential to the long-range viability of the City. Strategies include the following:

- 3.1 Proactively communicate positive news about the City to residents, businesses and surrounding communities.
- 3.2 Use social media to disseminate positive news, milestones and accomplishments throughout the community.
- 3.3 Promote regional interaction and coordination with surrounding communities and service providers including schools, economic development interests, transportation and non-profit agencies.
- 3.4 Conduct a Community Survey to identify residents' priorities.
- 3.5 Conduct a series of Town Forums to explore key community issues.

### **4. Optimize Organizational Structure**

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The Goal of Optimizing the City's Organizational Structure reflects the City Council's desire to ensure that City services are provided with competency, reliability and efficiency in the most cost-effective manner possible. Strategies include the following:

- 4.1 Perform an internal audit of all departments.
  - 4.1.a. Perform a cost/benefit analysis to determine the viability of City services.
  - 4.1.b. Review Staff work-load.
  - 4.1.c. Adjust the organizational structure as needed.
- 4.2 Conduct a survey of employees.
- 4.3 Hire a permanent Public Works Director.
- 4.4 Invest in professional development training for Staff.

## **5. Support Economic Development that Promotes a Jobs-Housing Balance.**

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The Goal to Support Economic Development that Promotes a Jobs-Housing Balance ensures that the City is committed to attracting new businesses that will provide well-paying jobs for our residents. Strategies include the following:

- 5.1 Implement permit streamlining to attract and support business activities within the City.
- 5.2 Focus efforts on manufacturing, community development, and construction.
- 5.3 Explore opportunities to hire an economic development manager.
- 5.4 Partner with local educational/academic institutions.
- 5.5 Explore opportunities for incubator business programs.

## **6. Enhance Quality of Life**

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Atwater's unique character and exceptional quality of life were repeatedly mentioned during this process as a key strength of the community. Strategies to support this Goal include the following:

- 6.1 Maintain and refresh parks and facilities to provide quality experiences.
- 6.2 Promote community partnerships and events.
- 6.3 Explore opportunities to create a "Splash Pad" facility.
- 6.4 Evaluate the cost of services for recreational programs and explore opportunities for cost savings, program "sharing" and partnerships with non-profit organizations.
- 6.5 Identify potential locations for a community dog park.
- 6.6 Support Community Clean-Up and other beautification events and opportunities.

- 6.7 Work with Merced County to address homeless issues and find effective solutions.

## Benchmarks

Over the next five years Staff will provide progress reports to the City Council and the community on the implementation of the Strategic Plan citing specific examples of fulfillment. Agenda items and staff reports will be tied to the achievements of attaining individual Goals.

## Summary and Recommendation

Following the adoption of the Strategic Plan, individual Departmental Implementation Plans will be developed and incorporated into this Plan as tactics to support each Goal and Strategy, including ongoing engagement and communications with the public. It is recommended that the City Council review the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan annually at minimum to gauge progress toward achieving its goals.

Approved by City Council March 25, 2019



## CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ATWATER

### RESOLUTION NO. 3419-23

#### **A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ATWATER ADOPTING THE 2023-2025 GOAL SETTING PRIORITIES PLAN**

**WHEREAS**, Amistad Associates is a management consulting firm that provides strategic planning to both private and public sector organizations; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Atwater and Amistad Associates entered into a Professional Services Agreement on February 27, 2023 to perform a Needs Assessment, collect data and facilitate a Goal Setting session; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council held a public vision/goal setting workshop on Friday, April 7, 2023; and

**WHEREAS**, staff facilitated the development of a 2023-2025 Goal Setting Priorities to assist staff in prioritizing the City Council goals to achieve a shared vision that also reflects community priorities and needs; and

**WHEREAS**, the 2023-2025 Goal Setting Priorities encompasses the goals, suggested programs, projects, and initiatives suggested by City Council and staff; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the City Council of the City of Atwater does hereby adopt the 2023-2025 Goal Setting Priorities Plan as described in "**EXHIBIT A**," attached hereto and made a part herein.

The foregoing resolution is hereby adopted this 28<sup>th</sup> day of August 2023.

**AYES:**       Cale, Ambriz, Raymond, Button, Nelson  
**NOES:**       None  
**ABSENT:**    None

**APPROVED:**

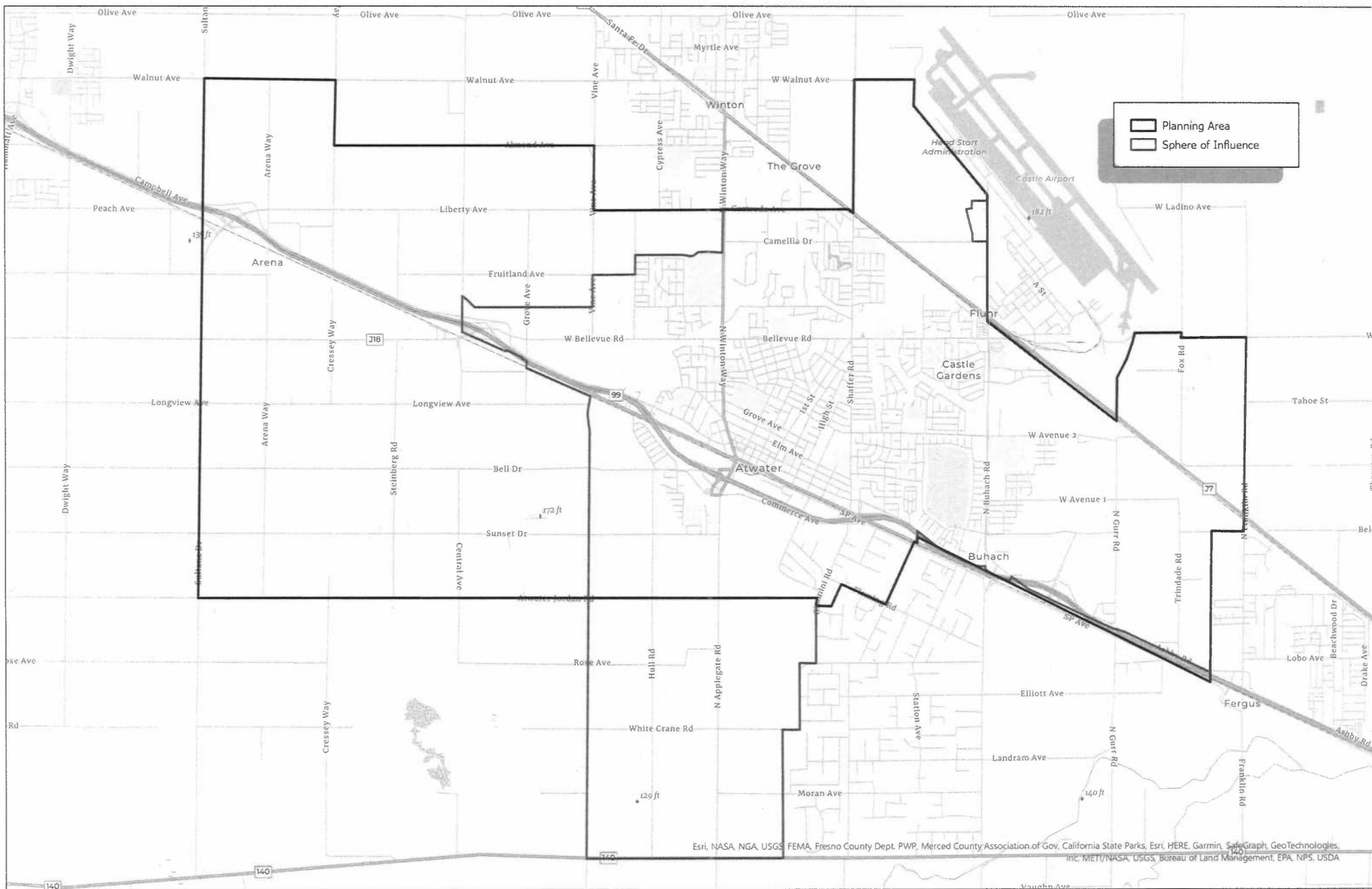
A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Nelson", written over a horizontal line.

**MIKE NELSON, MAYOR**

**ATTEST:**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kory J. Billings", written over a horizontal line.

**KORY J. BILLINGS, CITY CLERK**





## Goal Setting Priorities 2023-2025

- 1) Ensure Financial Solvency
- 2) Ensure Safety of Staff and our Community
- 3) Promote Transparency through Communication
- 4) Promote Economic Development
- 5) Optimize Organizational Structure
- 6) Improve Quality of Life

# City of Atwater

## Goal Setting Priorities 2023-2025

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### Priority

#### 1) Ensure Financial Solvency

### Outcomes

- The City Council, management team and community acknowledge and value the City's commitment to maintaining adequate reserves and working within a balanced budget.

### Strategic Tasks

1. Maintain sound, responsible fiscal policies regulating debt.
  - a. Adhere to adopted policies and procedures (i.e. recreation, non-profit, purchasing manual, personnel rules, travel, fee schedules, cost allocations)
  - b. Continue to review and update Master Fee Schedules and Rate Schedules on regular basis.
2. Prioritize use of discretionary funds based on the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan Goals (Recreation & Non-Profit's).
3. Continue to seek local, regional and federal grant opportunities to support City projects, programs and initiatives.

### Owners:

- City Manager
- Finance Director

# City of Atwater

## Goal Setting Priorities 2023-2025

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### Priority

#### 2) Ensure Safety of Staff and our Community

### Outcomes

- Public Safety continues to be a top priority for the City Council. In this context, Public Safety includes law enforcement, and the maintenance and improvement of infrastructure such as roadways and the water system.

### Strategic Tasks

1. Continue to update emergency operations plan(s) and ensure appropriate staff training and engagement for implementation. (Ambriz, Button, Cale, Nelson & Raymond)
2. Support emergency preparedness throughout the community. Staff training/drills.
3. Maintain safe, well-lit streets, roads and sidewalks.
4. Develop an Active Transportation Plan with circulation element.
5. Strengthen Code Enforcement. Addition of a Homeless Activities Response Team (HART) Officer. This goes along with Priority Number 6 (item 6).
6. Strengthen Traffic Enforcement.
7. Strengthen Neighborhood Community Watch Program.
8. Possible PD substation South of Hwy 99.
9. IT Cyber Security.

#### Owners:

- Public Works Director
- Police Chief

# City of Atwater

## Goal Setting Priorities 2023-2025

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### Priority

#### 3) Promote Transparency through Communication

### Outcomes

- The City Council believes communication with residents and the business community is essential to the long-range viability of the City.

### Strategic Tasks

1. Proactively communicating positive news about the City to residents, businesses and surrounding communities. Spotlight on Districts. Possible creation of a Public Information Officer (PIO) Position or dedicated employee in the CM Office. (Possible use of an intern from UC Merced or Stanislaus)
2. City information transmitted in both English and Spanish. (Newsletter, Flyers, Social Media, etc.) (Possible assistance from Merced County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce).
3. Promote regional interaction and coordination with surrounding communities and service providers including schools, economic development interests, transportation, and non-profit agencies.
4. Conduct a Community Survey to identify residents' priorities. (Utilize outreach identified by the GP Consultant).
5. Conduct a series of Town Hall Forums to explore key community issues.
6. Better communication to the public utilizing the "Report an Issue" button, on when an item has been addressed. Share pertinent issues reported with the City Council.

### Owners:

- City Council
- City Manager
- City of Atwater Executive Team & Staff
- IT

# City of Atwater

## Goal Setting Priorities 2023-2025

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### Priority

#### 4) Promote Economic Development

### Outcomes

- The Goal to Support Economic Development that Promotes a Jobs-Housing Balance ensures that the city is committed to attracting new businesses that will provide well-paying jobs for our residents.

### Strategic Tasks

1. Implement permit streamlining to attract and support business activities within the city. Online Applications for building permits, applications, housing – infrastructure. (Cloud permit) (Raymond)
2. Focus efforts on manufacturing, community development, and construction.
3. Explore opportunities to hire an Economic Development Manager. With the hiring of a Senior Planner and City Engineer, the Community Development Director can focus more on Economic Development.
4. Explore opportunities for incubator business programs. (Trade Shows)

### Owners:

- City Manager
- Deputy City Manager/Community Development Director
- IT

# City of Atwater

## Goal Setting Priorities 2023-2025

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### Priority

#### 5) Optimize Organizational Structure

### Outcomes

- The Goal of Optimizing the City's Organizational Structure reflects the City Council's desire to ensure that City services are provided with competency, reliability and efficiency in the most cost-effective manner possible.

### Strategic Tasks

1. Perform an internal audit of all departments.
  - a. Perform a cost/benefit analysis to determine the viability of City services.
  - b. Review staff workload.
  - c. Adjust the organizational structure as needed.
2. Conduct an employee survey regarding employee retention.
3. Invest in professional development training for Staff.

### Owners:

- City Manager
- Deputy City Manager/Community Development Director

# City of Atwater

## Goal Setting Priorities 2023-2025

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### Priority

#### 6) Improve Quality of Life

### Outcomes

- Atwater's unique character and exceptional quality of life were repeatedly mentioned during this process as a key strength of the community.

### Strategic Tasks

1. Maintain and refresh parks and facilities to provide quality experiences.
2. Promote community partnerships and events. (Examples; Historical Society, Old Town Atwater, 4<sup>th</sup> of July Committee & Civic Groups)
3. Evaluate the cost of services for recreational programs and explore opportunities for cost savings, program "sharing" and partnerships.
4. Identify potential location for a community dog park.
5. Support Community Clean-Up and other beautification events and opportunities. Promote District outreach. Utilize resources such as "Love Atwater".
6. Work with Merced County to address homeless issues and find effective solutions. Mental health and housing for homeless programs, possible mobile services.
7. Youth Entertainment / Programs
8. Identify City Vision or Brand (LOGO)

### Owners:

- City Manager
- Public Works Director & Recreation
- Police Chief