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Budget Process Update

By Lou Fancher

City Manager Niroop Srivatsa at the council's April 8 meeting provided a report on the city's goals and priorities set by council for the upcoming fiscal year. The updated report for FY 2024-25 followed a workshop held on March 24, at which a number of objectives and challenges were discussed. Three priorities were established at that workshop:

1. Develop a Fiscal Sustainability Plan for Short-term and Long-term needs.
2. Wildfire Prevention and Preparedness/Responsiveness and Utility Safety
3. Mt. Diablo Corridor/ Downtown Enhancement Plan

"All three of them are reiterations of your current year's priorities," Srivatsa said. "We ask you to confirm these are indeed your priorities. Then staff can use your guidance to develop our budgets, look at the resources, and come back to you during the months of May and June for budget adoption."

David Clark offered public comment on the report, noting a missing element in the staff report about making Mt. Diablo Boulevard a "good street." On the overall enhancement plan, he asked for more specificity about elements such as signage or work on creek pathways, and a suggestion the work contributed by volunteers be mentioned in addition to staff time. A member of the public commenting virtually requested more details about making a main thoroughfare through the city, Mt. Diablo Boulevard, "multi modal." Pedestrian and vehicle traffic, parking, the pressure on emergency evacuation traffic, and other factors, he suggested, should be carefully and thoroughly evaluated.

Mayor Gina Dawson responded, saying the issues had been discussed at the workshop and providing updated information on each item. "We're not looking to throttle the downtown," she said.

The report coming back to the council received comments to add the missing details, clarify specific language referencing the Mt. Diablo corridor, as well as several minor, but important additions to the wildfire protection practices, partnerships, and priorities.

The council voted unanimously to adopt the report and approved staff moving forward based on the priorities. Details on FY 2024-25 and the complete staff report can be found online at the city's website.

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