



**DATE:** September 17, 2024

**TO:** Mayor and Members of the City Council

**FROM:** John R. Gillison, City Manager

**INITIATED BY:** Matt Marquez, Director of Planning & Economic Development

**SUBJECT:** Consideration to Receive and File the Economic Development Strategy Annual Progress Report for 2023. (CITY)

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the City Council receive and file the Economic Development Strategy Annual Progress Report for 2023.

**BACKGROUND:**

In the last decade, the Inland Empire has experienced remarkable growth, with increases in population, employment opportunities, and investment in multiple industries. The region's strategic location, between major metro areas and connections to the rest of the country and the world, has been a key driver of this growth. Rancho Cucamonga, with its skilled workforce, high-quality-built environment, and expanding economy, is a key player. The Economic Development Strategy (EDS), adopted in October of 2023, is a five-year work plan that will guide and support the City in establishing and sustaining Rancho Cucamonga as the cultural and economic hub of the Inland Empire. This strategy is not just a plan, but a call to action for all who contribute to the City's future success.

The EDS was developed to guide the City's economic development activities over a five-year period. The document identifies goals and strategies that will serve as a roadmap for City staff and civic leaders. The EDS primarily provides direction to the City's Economic Development Division, but success of the EDS depends on the coordination and communication with other City departments, public agencies, and partner organizations.

The EDS was informed by a review of regional, state, and global trends, as well as a detailed analysis of the City's demographic, economic, and market conditions. Although the nature and extent of future market conditions is unknown, the EDS provides foundational approaches to economic development in Rancho Cucamonga that will serve the City during the life of the document and beyond.

Sections in the EDS describe the strengths, challenges, and opportunities to grow the City's economy; key industries to expand in the city; and the goals, strategies, and actions of the EDS. The final section of the EDS includes a five-year work plan that organizes tasks according to a timeline, assigns the city department that will lead the activity, and identifies assisting potential partner departments, agencies, or organizations.

## **ANALYSIS:**

The EDS builds on PlanRC, the City's General Plan, that was adopted on December 15, 2021. The General Plan lays out a series of strategies to chart a path towards building a 21st century world-class community that is grounded in the foundational core values of Health, Equity, and Stewardship. The vision of PlanRC is to create a city for people—a city of great neighborhoods, natural open spaces and parks, thriving commercial and industrial areas, and walkable and active centers and districts, all connected by safe and comfortable streets. Through the implementation of PlanRC, the City will develop to be more welcoming and accessible to both residents and visitors.

To meet the vision and core values of PlanRC, five Big Ideas were identified:

1. **Design for People First** – Focus should be on people and development must be human scale and inviting.
2. **Provide Connectivity and Accessibility** – Provide a range of travel options including new opportunities for walking, bicycling and transit.
3. **Create Destinations** – Places to congregate, gather and socialize.
4. **Establish Rancho Cucamonga as the Cultural and Economic Hub of the Inland Empire** – A downtown area, or several major activity centers, with varied cultural opportunities and public art.
5. **Address Environmental Justice** – Everyone in the city has a fair and just opportunity to thrive and no one, especially those with the least means, shoulders the additional health burdens of environmental degradation and pollution.

The EDS is intended to fortify linkages with PlanRC and its Big Ideas, to emphasize that economic development activities are shared across all departments in the City. The goals identified in the EDS are as follows:

1. **Grow and Diversify the City's Economy**
2. **Enhance the Quality of Life**
3. **Expand Retail, Entertainment, and Hospitality**
4. **Foster Growth of Local Businesses & Workforce**

These goals and corresponding strategies identified in the EDS were designed to address specific economic development objectives and ensure community vitality so that it can continue to provide high-quality public services and amenities.

Achievable and measurable action items were designed to serve as a guide for the City over the life of the Plan. The EDS is meant to be fluid and reviewed annually to determine if there is a change in priorities or if resources need to be shifted. The strategies and action items in the EDS can be implemented in a variety of ways and in a series of actions over the five-year life of the plan. Each action item was assigned a timeline for implementation, and the subject Annual Progress Report provides a summary of wide-ranging measures undertaken in 2023 that moved

the needle in implementing the EDS in the first year since its adoption.

Implementation highlights for each of the EDS goals are identified in the Annual Progress Report followed by the action items they support. As mentioned earlier in this report, action items were assigned a timeline for implementation and can be referenced in the EDS (Exhibit A to this staff report). This Progress Report will focus on those action items with a one-year timeline. Embracing the opportunity for flexibility in the Progress Report's format, it has been developed in an easy-to-read format that allows it to also serve as a report card to the residents of Rancho Cucamonga on the City's progress in implementing the EDS.

The Annual Progress Report was presented to the Economic Development Subcommittee on August 19, 2024 and Planning Commission on September 11, 2024.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

None

**COUNCIL MISSION / VISION / VALUE(S) ADDRESSED:**

As part of the implementation of the General Plan, this item supports the City Council's vision of creating an equitable, sustainable, and vibrant city, rich in opportunity for all to thrive by building on our foundation and success as a world class community.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment 1 - Economic Development Strategy Annual Progress Report 2023 & Appendix