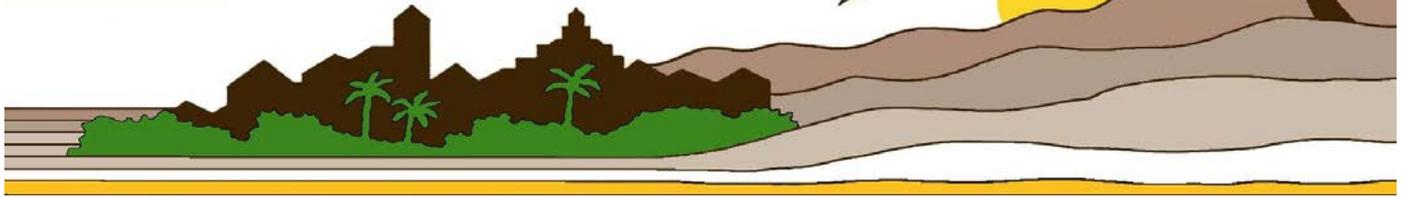


CITY OF MERCED

"Gateway to Yosemite"



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 7, 2017

Contact: City Manager Steve Carrigan (209) 325-9810

For questions regarding survey methodology, contact pollster Curtis Below at (510) 451-9521

MERCED RESIDENTS SUPPORT PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES RESIDENTS ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY

Merced, CA – A recently commissioned independent survey shows Merced residents are concerned about crime, poverty, and homelessness. Nearly 50% of residents believe that local parks are unsafe at night, and 62% believe that crime in general has increased over the last few years. As a result, many residents prioritized protecting, maintaining, and expanding public safety services as services the City should focus on.

The community survey was conducted October 24th through October 29th, 2017 by opinion research firm FM3 Research, who has extensive experience polling in the Central Valley.

Residents expressed strong support for the City's public safety services, with residents prioritizing services such as responding quickly to neighborhood fires, retaining qualified police officers, and preventing gang activity in the City.

"Over the last few years, we have taken the initiative on protecting our residents' safety, by expanding local neighborhood police patrols, responding quickly to 911 emergencies, and working hard to keep our children out of gangs," said Acting Merced Police Chief Christopher Goodwin. "We will continue to build on our success, and keep our neighborhoods safe, clean, and secure."

Residents expressed support for other public safety services, including improving 911 emergency response times and bringing the City's fire department in line with national best practices. Said Merced Fire Chief Michael Wilkinson, "National best practice standards recommend 7 fire stations for a city of our size. With only 5 fire stations located far from where they are most needed, our city isn't in compliance with recommended professional safety standards." He added, "We must work diligently to find the resources to ensure that everyone in Merced can receive fire and medical responses quickly."

"We look forward to continuing to discuss our vital community service needs and evaluating how best to maintain these services, particularly public safety and the growing challenge of addressing our

homeless and poverty situation,” said City Manager Steve Carrigan. “Over the coming months, we will continue to engage the community to develop long-term strategies that maintain the high quality services our residents expect and deserve.”

For the survey results, go to the City’s home page at www.cityofmerced.org.

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