




COUNCIL PRESIDENT PRO TEM JOE LACAVA

FIRST COUNCIL DISTRICT

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: January 12, 2024
TO: Charles Modica, Independent Budget Analyst
FROM: Council President Pro Tem Joe LaCava 
SUBJECT: Revised Council District 1 Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Priorities
Stick to the Basics – Public Safety and Public Health

The 2025–2029 Five–Year Financial Outlook is published and contains no surprises. Upon swearing–in, this Mayor and City Council inherited a structural budget deficit veiled by the influx of one–time federal American Rescue Plan dollars. Those monies were used to protect San Diego’s renters, businesses, community organizations, and nonprofits and pull them from the devastating impact of COVID–19. Now is the time to address our fiscal reality. With a “Stick to the Basics” approach, we will fix the structural budget deficit and meet our obligations to serve all San Diegans.

“Stick to the Basics” means no new general fund positions or programs, **unless directly related to public safety and health**, should be funded in Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25). We must fill our over 2,000 already budgeted and approved vacancies in order to “Get it Done.”

My General Fund priorities for FY25 include:

Recruitment, Retention, and Hiring Process

Continuing the swift hire and deployment of budgeted and approved vacant positions, including Public Safety, Code Enforcement, Community Parks, and Engineers, will result in the provision of the services that our communities want and need.

The Personnel Department has made great strides since my September memorandum, and I acknowledge and support those continuing efforts.

Public Safety

Police

- Fill the 231 vacancies utilizing FY24 pay increases, incentives, and recruitment support.
- One FTE Police Sergeant position to supervise and coordinate the Police Cadet program.
- Recruiting, providing training, and purchasing uniforms and equipment for new Cadets.

Fire-Rescue

- Replace one helicopter with a Bell 412 helicopter for Air Operations Sector including non-personnel maintenance expenditures.

Lifeguard Division

- Fund Lifeguard III, 4 FTE
- Vessel Replacement Fund
Annual funding addresses safety, efficiency, and long-term fiscal responsibility and allows the Lifeguard Division to manage their assets effectively, prevent costly disruptions, and ensure compliance with evolving regulations, while maintaining public trust.
- North Pacific Beach Lifeguard Station
Replace the existing mobile shipping container and portable lifeguard tower with a new facility, including restrooms, clean drinking water, security, and locker rooms, to greatly increase rescuer effectiveness and beach safety.

City Facilities

- Expand FY24 security measures at the City Administration Building, Civic Center Plaza Building, City Operations Building, Evan V. Jones Parkade, and adjacent City facilities to ensure safety for all City employees and visitors.

Vision Zero

- Address the underlying safety concerns for motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists in the Fatal Fifteen intersections. Specifically, implement infrastructure improvements to the top five intersections with the worst collision track record and the projects identified by the Vision Zero Project Group.
- All upcoming infrastructure projects should reflect Class IV bikeways in consultation with corresponding Council districts.
- Fund the Safe and Sustainable Transportation for All Ages and Abilities Team to implement slower speeds near schools in accordance with AB43.

Public Safety Transparency

- Existing programs already underway need the following support to succeed.
 - Support a Privacy Analyst (1 FTE) to assist in the implementation of the TRUST Ordinance.
 - Support a paralegal (1 FTE) and an investigator (1 FTE) to facilitate the work of the Commission on Police Practices.

Public Health, Including Homelessness Services, Prevention, & Housing

Public safety, public health, and our moral compass demand that we meet the needs of our unhoused population and prevent homelessness. We must **continue current funding levels and aggressively pursue new sustainable funding** through county, state, and federal sources.

We must continue to diligently **scrutinize every Homelessness Strategies and Solutions Department and San Diego Housing Commission program to stretch and leverage limited resources to effectively serve as many individuals and families as possible**. As the City continues to build a system of care with the limited resources available, it becomes even more necessary to prioritize where that money goes using data-driven methods. This approach requires services for those who need them, housing for those who need it, and prevention for those who have a home.

Traditionally, this has meant pitting prevention against shelter. Though both are vital, the reality is that the region saw an increase of 1,699 homeless individuals from the 2022 Point in Time Count to the 2023 Point in Time Count. According to the December 2023 Regional Taskforce on Homelessness monthly report, twice the number of individuals became homeless for the first time compared to the number housed that month. This indicates that our safety net programs are insufficient. We must “turn off the faucet” of families falling through the cracks and onto our streets or we will continue to see increases and people will continue to suffer.

With the passage of the Encampments on Public Property Ordinance, we must deliver on our promise to provide viable alternatives to sidewalk, canyon, or park encampments. The FY25 budget must be data-driven and lean in on best practices. Shelter is only a step from the street to housing security and multidisciplinary outreach teams and housing specialists are the backbone of effective system-level improvement toward permanent housing. We must trust what is proven to work – that is good governance.

Prevention & Tenant Protections

- San Diego Eviction Prevention Program
Provide critical education to families and individuals at risk of being evicted.
- Housing Instability Prevention Program
Provide shallow subsidies for vulnerable low-income San Diego families and

unstable housing situations to keep them housed and prevent the slide into homelessness.

- **Tenant Termination Notice Registry**
Track landlord termination notices to implement the City of San Diego Tenant Protection Ordinance.
- **Housing Preservation Fund**
Preserve deed-restricted and naturally occurring affordable housing.

Shelters & Outreach

- **Shelters, Safe Parking, and Safe Camping**
Expand options consistent with the Comprehensive Shelter Strategy.
- **LGBTQ+ Youth Housing and Related Services for LGBTQ+ Community**
Meet the unique needs of this vulnerable cohort of homeless individuals.
- **LGBTQ+ Community Fund Pilot Program**
Serve LGBTQ+, Black, youth, and transgender and nonbinary communities with dedicated services and programs.
- **Multidisciplinary Outreach Team**
Fund outreach teams to provide a wide range of services, including medical and social services.

Post-hospitalization (aka Recuperative Care or Medical Respite)

- Support recuperative care beds and step-down facilities utilizing county, state, and federal funding in collaboration with our regional hospitals and managed care health plans.

Free4ME

- Continue menstrual equity program.

San Diego can and will be more than basic services. FY25 is a time to “Stick to the Basics” and balance our budget. Concurrently, we must identify savings and find new revenue to continue to grow stronger every day.

Collaborations with federal, state, and local partners, as well as grants, savings, and new and increased revenues – once secured – can address the critical, yet underfunded priorities that I have included in the attached appendices.

- Appendix I: Unfunded or Underfunded Critical Priorities
- Appendix II: District 1 Neighborhood Issues
- Appendix III: District 1 Capital Improvement Program Priorities

I look forward to robust discussions with the Mayor, my Council colleagues, and the community to forge a balanced budget that meets the many real needs of San Diegans.

Thank you, Mr. Independent Budget Analyst, for your time and attention.

cc: Mayor Todd Gloria
Chief Operating Officer Eric Dargan
Chief Financial Officer Matt Vespi
Matt Yagyagan, Interim Policy Director, Office of the Mayor

Appendix I: Unfunded or Underfunded Critical Priorities

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As our City confronts our fiscal outlook, far too many unfunded or underfunded critical priorities exist. These should be top of the list if and when the City identifies and secures additional revenue or if savings are achieved in other areas. Climate Action Plan implementation, arts and culture, neighborhood services like libraries and parks, and road infrastructure are all critical to achieving our goals and meeting our constituents' needs. We must continue aggressive efforts to identify grants, partners, and new revenue for these programs.

Climate Action Plan

The FY24 budget process was a transformational shift in how the City addresses climate. As I requested in September 2022, for the first time, **meeting our climate action goals was included in all departmental budget planning and has become the standard operating procedure of every City department.** This inclusive approach kept us focused on our newly updated Climate Action Plan (CAP) targets and associated environmental justice. Prior to the release of the Mayor's FY24 Proposed Budget, the Sustainability and Mobility Department released the Climate Action Implementation Plan to guide budget and policy decision-making. This comprehensive document and the adoption of Council Policy 900-22 allow the City to objectively prioritize climate action.

In 2023, I requested that the Independent Budget Analyst (IBA) prepare a comprehensive list of unfunded operational and capital costs prior to the submittal of this memorandum. The IBA's published report¹ concluded:

Funding contained in the FY 2024 Adopted Budget related to the CAP is more than \$543 million, which is significantly above the amount called for in the CAIP. That noted, many CAP activities are not fully funded. The majority of the CAP funding gap, in both the operating budget and the CIP, directly overlaps with funding gaps for overall operational and infrastructure needs to support core services across the City, as well as consensus budget priority items for the City Council. These unfunded activities will be in addition to other yet-to-be estimated activities, including fleet electrification, building electrification, and additional mobility projects. Thus, if Councilmembers desire to see the CAP fully implemented and funded, the most crucial action is to solve the City's structural budget deficit and infrastructure funding gap. In the short term, Councilmembers wishing to prioritize CAP actions could also include in their memoranda those items which were requested but unfunded in FY 2024, particularly the unfunded requests highlighted for the Transportation, Stormwater, Parks and Recreation, and General Services departments.

¹ IBA Report 23-26, FY 2024 Climate Action Plan Expenditures, Funding Gaps, and Other Policy Considerations, page 12, https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/23-26_fy_2024_climate_action_plan_funding_gap.pdf

Lean years make for hard choices, yet our climate goals cannot sit by the wayside. We made commitments and set ambitious goals. We must align our budget with the Climate Action Implementation Plan timeline, and we should utilize the prioritization tools included in Council Policy 900-22.

The City must aggressively pursue Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Inflation Reduction Act monies, and all grants and cost-sharing programs in partnership with our regional partners, including the County, SANDAG, San Diego Community Power, and others. Additionally, the City's strategic decision to include climate in all department actions allows us to utilize the elective pay programs offered by the U.S. Department of Energy to significantly reduce the City's costs to infrastructure projects.

Climate Action Plan Infrastructure Priorities

Consistent with my climate priorities above, specific areas of focus as funding are identified:

Resiliency

- Create and restore salt marshland, tidal wetlands, and riparian habitats in line with our 2035 goal of 700 acres of new wetlands.
- Initiate permitting for the 225-acre (minimum) wetland restoration project in the northeast corner of Mission Bay.
- Full funding for the Los Peñasquitos Lagoon Habitat project, utilizing the fair-share contributions from other agencies in the watershed.

Transportation (1 vacancy - Traffic Engineering, 84 vacancies - Streets)

- Pilot new shuttles from high-usage transit stops to City facilities for City employees, contractors, and visitors.

Urban Forestry

- In addition to the police recommendations of the Community Forest Advisory Board, use the recent \$10M grant award from the U.S. Forest Service to expand tree planting and maintenance.
 - Fund tree planting in areas with low Climate Equity scores but not eligible for CalFire grants.
 - Increase tree care contracts to inspect, protect and care for street trees, including pest treatments.
 - Improve data collection to meet urban forestry goals.

Arts and Culture

My 2020 goal was to deliver on the promise of Penny for the Arts by fully funding the 9.52 percent allocation within five years. We made progress in FY22 and FY23. Although in FY24 we increased actual dollars, we reduced the percentage allocation. Considering the Five-Year Fiscal Outlook with FY25 budget deficits and no new revenue sources, I request that the goal of the **FY25 allocation be 5.25 percent of Citywide Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT)**. This will not meet my five-year goal; however, with projected increases in TOT revenue, net funding in FY25 should be greater than allocated in the FY24 budget. If and when additional revenues or fund sources are identified that reduce the existing burden on TOT revenue, allocate that funding up to the 9.52 percent goal.

Citywide Neighborhood Services

Libraries (93 vacancies)

- Ensure every branch has a full-time Youth Service Librarian.
- Implement the Library Master Plan.
 - Create a library maintenance budget.
 - Increase the books and materials budget.

Citywide Infrastructure

City infrastructure is the most basic and essential service that a city can provide – roads, bike lanes, sidewalks, streetlights, and stormwater. Consistent lack of funding has contributed to enormous backlogs and accessibility barriers, with residents growing increasingly frustrated. My priority is to increase confidence in our City government by sticking to the basics and adequately funding infrastructure, filling budgeted vacancies, and demonstrating customer service improvements. We must fill vacant positions and work with departments to keep on top of baseline services, comply with legal requirements, and prevent backlogs. Our City has spent time and effort studying these issues and recommending solutions. It is time to invest in those fixes.

- Build on investment from FY24 to continue street repair work.
- Fund sidewalk replacement to the full level that the Department is resourced to deliver.
- Fund an in-house sidewalk maintenance team focused on sidewalk ramping.
- Fund expanded streetlight repair contract to reduce backlog.
- Fund protected Class I and IV bike lanes to increase biking safety.
- Address unfunded backlog of ADA Transition Plan projects.
- Prioritize addressing ADA complaint projects.
- Add 0.5 FTE Mini Street Sweeper for Bike Lane maintenance.
- Partner with regional partners to provide additional neighborhood shuttles, like the FRED and the Beach Bug.

Appendix II: District 1 Neighborhood Issues

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Addressing neighborhood issues often falls within the annual workplans of City departments. I request the following items be prioritized in department workplans to maximize existing resources. I encourage collaboration among City departments to identify opportunities to address multiple priorities in the same project.

City Planning Department (6 vacancies)

Pacific Beach

- Close Ocean Boulevard between Grand Ave. and Thomas Ave. to through traffic.

La Jolla

- Scripps Park Resource Land Management Plan

Del Mar Mesa

- Update and amend the Del Mar Mesa Specific Plan.
 - Reclassify the Camino Santa Fe (Little McGonigle Ranch Road) 2 Lane Collector to an Emergency Access Road and Public Trails Project connecting Carmel Valley Road at SR-56 with Del Mar Mesa. The access road can be used by Fire Station 47 to access the Del Mar Mesa community and meet recommended response times.
 - Reclassify portions of Carmel Mountain Road from a Modified Local Collector to a Local Collector.

Transportation Department (1 vacancy – Traffic Engineering, 84 vacancies – Streets)

Pacific Beach

- Install bike lanes from Mike Gotch Bridge, along Pacific Beach Dr. to Crown Point Dr., then south on Crown Point Dr. to Park entrance at Lamont St.
- Install continental crosswalks or beacons on:
 - Garnet Ave. at Kendall St.
 - Garnet Ave. at Morrell St.
 - Garnet Ave. at Noyes St.
 - Garnet Ave. at Pendleton St.
- Install 4-way stop signs at:
 - Hornblend St. and Cass St.²
 - Emerald St. & Fanuel St.
 - Hornblend St. & Fanuel St.
 - Emerald St. & Bayard St.
 - Emerald St. & Dawes St.

² Received highest vote of stop sign installations by Pacific Beach Planning Group.

- Restripe Garnet Ave. between Balboa Ave. and Ingraham St. adding bike lanes in both directions.
- Explore making Crown Point Dr. between Pacific Beach Dr. and Lamont St. one way.
- Facilitate pedestrian and bicycle access on Garnet Ave. west of Ingraham.
- Slow streets along PB Pathways with potential improvements such as new signage, in-pavement decals, bollards, or other quick-build improvements that will slow vehicle traffic.
- Construct a safe pedestrian and bicycle connection between Balboa Ave. Trolley Station and the Pacific Beach community to maximize transit access.

La Jolla

- Repair, replace and install stop signs and crosswalks in La Jolla Shores beach area.
- Maintain landscaping in gas tax median at the throat (Aztec contract compliance).
- Strengthen weed abatement measures on all La Jolla streets, medians, ROW, and sidewalks.
- Comprehensive traffic circulation study of high-impact beach areas (Windansea, Shores, Cove).
- Comprehensive traffic study at the Throat.
- Replace pedestrian signals at the Bird Rock roundabouts to increase pedestrian safety and visibility.

Carmel Valley

- Implement recommendations in the Carmel Valley Livability Study.

Torrey Pines

- Perform a Safe Streets Study for Del Mar Heights Corridor and subarea and implement recommendations:
 - Develop a cohesive network of complete streets with an emphasis on active transportation.
 - Improve bike and pedestrian quality and connectivity, potentially increasing the percentage of bicyclists and pedestrians within the Torrey Pines community.
 - Educate and encourage the community to use active transportation for trips in the immediate vicinity and surrounding communities.
 - Work with the surrounding Del Mar and Carmel Valley communities to develop a cohesive, active transportation plan along the corridor and across communities.

- Build recommended traffic calming/street improvement recommendations from the Safe Streets Study. Said improvements will likely be phased and may include, but are not limited to, center medians along Del Mar Heights Road, traffic calming devices, safety islands for pedestrian crossings, safety barriers for oncoming vehicular traffic, and corridor beautification that serves calming traffic.

University City

- Install Class IV bike lanes along Villa La Jolla Drive from La Jolla Village Drive to Gilman Drive.

Parks and Recreation Department (447 vacancies)

La Jolla

- Increase cleaning, sanitation, and trash pick-up for all Shoreline Parks and comfort stations.
- Replace beach signage to reflect updated beach fire regulations.

Pacific Beach

- Replace beach signage to reflect updated beach fire regulations.

Multiple Departments

La Jolla

- Intensify security and code enforcement of overnight parking, vehicle habitation, sidewalk vending, and beach fires in all La Jolla beaches and shoreline parks.

Miscellaneous

Pacific Beach

- Install Pacific Beach “entrance signs”:
 - Northbound at the Ingraham St. bridge.
 - At westbound Balboa Ave.
 - Southbound on La Jolla Blvd.
 - At northbound Mission Blvd. after the I-5 offramp.

Appendix III: District 1 Capital Improvement Program Priorities

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This appendix reflects the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) priorities of District 1 community and advocacy groups. Significant work by community members went into identifying these needs.

Fire-Rescue Lifeguard Division

- North Pacific Beach Lifeguard Tower.³

Police Department

- Police Plaza Capital Improvements–design phase.

Transportation Department (1 vacancy – Traffic Engineering, 84 vacancies – Streets)

Pacific Beach

- Traffic regulating/calming measures on Beryl St. between Foothill Blvd. and Soledad Mountain Rd. (recent improvements may suffice.)
- Traffic regulating/calming measures on Lamont St. between Diamond St. and Kate Sessions Park.
- Traffic circle on Foothill Blvd. at Vickie Dr.
- Crosswalk with pedestrian beacons, a pedestrian refuge island, and curb extensions on Soledad Rd. at Los Altos Way.⁴
- Repair and improve the sidewalks along the entire length of Garnet Ave.
- Realign Pacific Beach Drive.
- Crosswalk and pedestrian beacons on Ingraham St. at Fortuna Ave.
- Reconfigure Grand Ave./Mission Bay Dr. per Balboa Trolley Station Plan.
- Streetlights on Rose Creek Trail.
- Sidewalk along the west side of Mission Bay Dr. starting at Bluffside Ave. to Garnet Ave.⁵
- Sidewalk on the south side of Bluffside Ave.
- Street Repaving
 - Ingraham St. from Riviera Dr. to La Playa Ave.
 - Worst 5% of streets in Pacific Beach per the latest city street conditions survey which began March 2023.⁶
 - Grand Ave. from Rose Creek to Mission Bay Dr.
 - Riviera Dr. between Ingraham St. and Moorland Dr.

³ Ranked as High Priority by Pacific Beach Planning Group.

⁴ These first four were all ranked as High Priority by the Pacific Beach Planning Group.

⁵ The subsequent six were ranked as Medium Priority by the Pacific Beach Planning Group.

⁶ Repaving Ingraham from Riviera to La Playa and repaving worst 5% of streets received highest votes of street repaving by Pacific Beach Planning Group.

La Jolla

- Widen and rebuild the sidewalk adjacent to Coast Blvd. at Scripps Park.
- Completely resurface pathway at La Jolla Shores Boardwalk.
- Repave with concrete, ROW, widen sidewalk, add bike lane at Neptune Pl.
- Replace and repair street lighting throughout La Jolla.
- Repair deteriorating sidewalks, curbs, and gutters throughout La Jolla.
- Enhance pedestrian safety throughout La Jolla including installing and upgrading pedestrian signals on La Jolla Blvd.
- Install mid-block crosswalk with Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons and other ancillary improvements at the northern end of La Jolla Shores Drive to facilitate pedestrian access to Scripps Institute of Oceanography.
- Girard Streetscape, Phase 1. Fund the public portion (street lighting, storm water, curbs, street trees) in this unique Private-Public project that also enjoys state funding. Private funds will provide plazas, enhanced street lighting, decorative sidewalks, benches, public art, and more.

Carmel Valley

- Resolve right-of-way acquisition and extend Village Center Loop Road northerly to Carmel Valley Road (P24007).

Del Mar Mesa

- Restripe Carmel Mountain Road, eliminate the center turn lane, add sharrows and trailhead on-street parking, and reduce posted speed limit.

Torrey Pines

- Add pedestrian, street, and sidewalk improvements to create safe routes to Del Mar Heights Elementary School
 - Install ADA compliant sidewalk along the south side of Del Mar Heights Road connecting Mango Drive to Mira Montana Dr.
 - Sidewalk improvements along Mercado Drive.

Parks and Recreation (447 vacancies)

La Jolla

- Extend railing along the boardwalk at Point La Jolla (Coastal Commission recommendation).
- Rebuild crumbling walls at La Jolla Shores Boardwalk.
- Repair and restore park area at La Jolla Hermosa Park.
- Add steps at bottom of staircase at La Jolla Cove Beach.
- Improve open beach access via pedestrian walkway at Spindrifft/Marine Room, building on the FY23 seed funding.

- Repair handrails and steps for ocean access at Camino de la Costa viewpoint, utilizing \$2 million state grant.

Torrey Pines

- Crest Canyon Passive improvements: Prepare a General Development Plan for a one-to two-acre public park in partial fulfillment of the 17 acres called for in the Community Plan. Improvements could include lighting, signage, exercise stations, seating, dog and people water station, trail improvements.

Mission Bay Golf Course

- Use golf enterprise funds to install netting/barrier along the westerly edge of the Mission Bay Golf Course to protect the adjacent McEvoy Fields and Pacific Beach Tennis Club.

Stormwater (16 vacancies)

Pacific Beach

- Drainage improvements between Olney St. and Campland entrance.

La Jolla

- Evaluate, update, and repair stormwater system throughout La Jolla.

Torrey Pines

- Street & Drainage Improvements in Sorrento Valley.

Public Utilities (418 vacancies)

Del Mar Mesa

- Extend existing recycled water/purple pipe at Carmel Country Road and Del Mar Mesa Road, including water meters and a circulation loop connecting at Carmel Mountain Road. Provide recycled water to the Del Mar Mesa parkways and park.

Engineering and Capital Projects (109 vacancies)

Pacific Beach

- Comprehensive assessment of Crystal Pier to determine needed repairs to extend the life of the pier.