



**COUNCILMEMBER SEAN ELO-RIVERA
NINTH COUNCIL DISTRICT**

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: January 6, 2021

TO: Councilmember Raul Campillo, Chair,
Economic Development & Intergovernmental Relations Committee

FROM: Councilmember Sean Elo-Rivera *S*

RE: 2021 Economic Development & Intergovernmental Relations Committee Priorities

The City of San Diego will be responding and recovering from the COVID19 global pandemic for the foreseeable future. This health crisis and the accompanying economic crisis has affected communities across the nation including San Diego. However, poverty and economic insecurity has plagued much of our community prior to this pandemic.

The City of San Diego is tasked with addressing a monumental budget deficit in Fiscal Year 2022, unless additional funds are secured. Data indicators such as unemployment rates, eviction rates, food insecurity rates provide a snapshot of the economic toll we are facing, they also give us specific areas to focus in on our recovery.

The Economic Development & Intergovernmental Relations Committee plays a crucial role in how the City attracts, cultivates, and leverages federal, state, and private funds to support our City through the response and recovery phases of this crisis. For example, investments in job training and business support will dictate whether small businesses in our community shutter their doors, or if we will exacerbate our City's homelessness emergency.

No matter our agenda for the coming Committee hearings, I strongly urge you to apply a racial equity lens to all committee work. The racial disparities in wealth and economic opportunity have been well-documented for decades yet little progress is being made in closing the gap. In fact, each economic downturn our nation experiences leaves behind a wider chasm. The reason is simple. Our economic system was designed to produce racial inequality. Creating a truly fair San Diego economy will require intense focus and intentionality. Accordingly, I request this Committee utilize a racial equity tool in determining our priorities and making decisions and offer our office's support to assist in that effort.

I look forward to supporting a robust conversation on how we respond, recover and build resiliency in our community. My priorities for this Committee reflect my values and represent the voices of the community members who have submitted their input to my office:

Economic Development

- **Develop Inventory of “Shovel Ready Infrastructure Projects”:** City of San Diego should work to identify and facilitate potential projects that would support needed infrastructure and job creation – water infrastructure, transportation, clean energy, etc. – that will likely be supported by additional stimulus packages from the Biden Administration. Identifying projects that would be enabled by public-private partnerships (philanthropy and businesses) and build long term career paths for San Diego residents.
- **San Diego Public Bank:** The Committee should discuss the benefits and challenges of chartering a public bank, procedures for establishment of a public bank, and to discuss the funding and commission of a feasibility study.
- **Immigrant Business and Training Opportunities:** The Committee should discuss opportunities to provide training, programs, and financing for immigrants interested in building their career or business. Multi-lingual and zero-interest loans should also be included in this discussion.
- **Sidewalk Vendor Ordinance:** The State of California approved SB946 in 2018, which allowed for cities to regulate sidewalk vending. Any ordinance would have a significant effect on many immigrant entrepreneurs, including many in Council District 9, and their input must be solicited. The Committee should docket at least one discussion for this subject, and engage in a robust outreach effort to sidewalk vendor businesses, particularly in communities of concern.
- **Revolving Loan Program -** Review existing revolving loan program for effectiveness, equity, and permanence. Ensure compliance for potential federal and state allocations through potential additional stimulus funds.

Workforce Development

- **Expand Childcare Access:** The Committee should review the current availability of quality childcare services to city employees and low wage workers. The Committee should identify policies and programs to streamline and support the creation of affordable quality childcare facilities throughout the City that provides access to lower income workers.
- **Worker Co-operative Development Program and Policies:** Worker co-operatives are a business model that provides much higher wages, improved business resiliency and retention, neighborhood investment, and offer opportunities for communities to build wealth. Worker co-operatives are also twice as likely to survive a recession. The Committee should discuss opportunities for the City to provide resources for the creation, development, and operation of worker-cooperatives, with a special focus on communities of concern.
- **Entrepreneur Support and Local Hire Program for Underserved & Underemployed Communities:** Residents in underserved and underemployed communities have been disproportionately victimized by the economic and health crises caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. An economic recovery strategy must include a Local Hire program for these communities that ensures investments and growth opportunities. The Committee should identify, and support policies and programs that support the goal of opportunity for all.
- **Regional Employment and Jobs Programs Review:** The Committee should discuss and receive updates from regional partners, including the San Diego Workforce Partnership and others to

understand current local economic trends, and provide input on opportunities and initiatives with a particular focus on efforts to reduce youth unemployment.

- **Youth Environmental Corp:** The Committee should consider development of a program that provides mentorship, training and support to youth in pursuing environmental and sustainability career paths in habitat preservation, clean energy technologies and other environmental stewardship leadership career paths.
- **End Drug Testing for City Employees:** The Committee should consider the financial and social benefits of prohibition of pre-employment drug testing for employment with the City of San Diego, and ongoing drug testing throughout employment without liability reasons.

Intergovernmental Relations

- **Develop Partnerships between the City, SDUSD, SDCCD, and Institutions of Higher Education:** The Committee should explore partnership opportunities, including joint convenings, with our educational institutions to protect students from economic adversity, leverage public resources, and maintain the health and well-being of our youth.
- **Expansion of Public Wi-Fi in City Facilities and Property:** The Committee should explore opportunities for free public wireless internet on city properties, a municipal broadband system, and corporate partnerships to deliver wireless internet access to low-income residents.
- **Operation Shelter to Home Exit Strategy:** The Committee should discuss and develop recommendations for an exit strategy for the Operation Shelter to Home Program including transportation, re-location of individuals, maintaining a minimum level of care, and funding sources.
- **Regional Report on Healthy Food Access and Food Insecurity:** One in six Americans are expected to experience hunger as a result of the pandemic. The Committee should discuss the scope and severity of food insecurity in the region and develop partnerships with community organizations, non-profits, and educational institutions to prevent any resident from experiencing hunger for a single night.
- **COVID-19 Outreach and Centralized Information Hub:** Residents and business owners would benefit with a centralized information hub that contains all information on COVID-19 infection and vaccine data, government assistance, City enforcement changes, new regulations, and upcoming City decisions related to the pandemic. The Committee should work with regional partners and the Department of IT to develop this portal, and to make it accessible in other languages.
- **City Communication Translation Services:** Multiple city functions are available only in English, excluding non-English speakers from many online payments, job and bid opportunities, crime reporting, public notices, and much more. The Committee should work with the Communications and IT Departments to identify which City services and communications could accommodate language translation services.

Arts & Culture

Beautification Projects and Public Art: The Committee should explore opportunities to eliminate restrictions on public art and allow for residents to define their public spaces. This discussion should also

include decriminalization of “unauthorized” public art through SDPD and the City’s Code Enforcement Division.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to working with you and Committee members on these important issues.

cc:

Mayor Todd Gloria

Honorable City Councilmembers

Andrea Tevlin, Independent Budget Analyst