



COUNCIL PRESIDENT PRO TEM JOE LACAVA
FIRST COUNCIL DISTRICT

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: September 25, 2024

TO: Charles Modica, City of San Diego Independent Budget Analyst

FROM: Council President Pro Tem Joe LaCava 

SUBJECT: Council District 1 Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Priorities - **Protect the Basics**

The Fiscal Year 2025 budget was defined by tough conversations and tougher choices. I, along with my Council colleagues, recognized that this would be the new normal without additional revenue sources. Considering our fiscal reality, my final FY2025 budget memo was constrained, with a substantial number of critical priorities on pause, pending new funding.

For the last two budget cycles, my foundational philosophy has been ensuring the *basics* are funded at the levels our constituents expect and consistent with best practices. With the current fiscal information available, I remain firm in my perspective. For Fiscal Year 2026, without additional revenue, we must **Protect the Basics**.

This budget memo is submitted prior to the FY2024 Year-End Financial Performance Report, the First Quarter FY2025 Budget Monitoring Report, the updated Five-Year Financial Outlook, and the receipt of budget priority lists from every District 1 community.

As has become my template for the September budget memo, I have only included those priorities falling under **Protect the Basics**.

The needs of District 1 neighborhoods include the reasonable expectations of our constituents. These needs are detailed in Appendix I: District 1 Neighborhood Priorities, Appendix II: District 1 CIP Priorities, and, new this year, Appendix III: District 1 Constituent Budget Requests (Unfiltered). As the city secures grants, low-cost loans, and new revenue, District 1 needs must be funded.

Protect the Basics

Recruitment and Retention of City Employees

Our city employees are the backbone of our services. The Mayor and the Council have prioritized employees and recent salary adjustments have reversed prior staffing challenges. We must continue to fill existing vacancies across every department to ensure our teams are well-staffed. Therefore, creating new General Fund positions should be minimal in FY2026 and only for mission critical assignments.

Public Safety

Police

- Full staffing for sworn positions.
- Facility improvements to police stations, including Police Plaza.
- Increase police vehicle replacement fund by \$10 million.
- Install fire extinguishers in all patrol cars.
- No Shots Fired program.

Fire-Rescue

- Marine Safety Captain, 1 FTE
- Marine Safety Lieutenants, 3 FTE
- Update design, secure permits, and construct North Pacific Beach Lifeguard Station.

Homelessness Services, Prevention, and Housing

Responding to the homelessness crisis is one of the greatest challenges and priorities facing this City. Our budget must continue to reflect the severity and scale of the need. Our actions must protect vulnerable residents currently housed, assist those unsheltered living on our streets and open spaces, and create sustainable pathways to rapid, transitional, and permanent housing.

The FY2025 budget used one-time funds and painful sacrifices from both the San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) and Homeless Strategies and Services Department (HSSD) to protect core General Fund services. In FY2026, we must continue to aggressively and creatively pursue outside funding to achieve the goals of the Community Action Plan on Homelessness.

Exacerbating this situation is the looming closure (December 2024) of the Golden Hall and Rachel's Promise shelters and the transition of the Paul Mirabile Center. While shelter does not resolve homelessness, it is a critical piece of the continuum of care. These beds will be replaced, perhaps shifted to Safe Sleeping, in some manner in FY2025. I look forward to the results of SDHC's Request for Qualifications (RFQ) and HSSD's Request for Information (RFI) for new shelter opportunities using privately-owned buildings or land. As these options are identified, screened, and implemented, we must ensure adequate resources for site preparation, operation and maintenance, and staffing outreach workers and case managers.

Additional resources in prevention and diversion are needed. Data continues to demonstrate that more residents are experiencing homelessness for the first time than are being housed. According to the Regional Taskforce on Homelessness, August 2024 marks 29 consecutive months of this unsettling trend. Prevention and diversion are the most cost-effective tools that we have.

Shelter

- Identify and fund replacement beds if FY2025 only provides interim replacements, keeping outreach teams intact.
- Expand shelters to meet the goals of the Community Action Plan on Homelessness, using safe camping and safe parking as a last resort.
- Move quickly to identify, negotiate, fund, and prepare new shelters from the shelter RFQ and RFI and excess city land/facilities, if any.

Prevention

- Expand funding for the Housing Instability Prevention Program.
- Continue the San Diego Eviction Prevention Program.

Housing

We have extremely limited voucher capacity (none in FY2025), which affects our ability to subsidize housing for both individuals and projects. I ask that SDHC, HSSD, and Government Affairs Department continue to engage with state and federal partners to expand the pool of resources to build and subsidize affordable housing, including:

- Acquisition Fund for existing housing for low- and middle-income multi-family complexes.
- Preservation Fund to acquire soon-to-expire deed-restricted units and naturally occurring affordable housing.
- Radical restructuring of current capital stacks and funding process.
- Incentivize inclusionary housing.
- Fund the Tenant Termination Notice Registry.

Recuperative Care

Every person deserves a safe and sanitary place to recover from illness or procedure after discharge from the hospital. We must provide recuperative care beds and step-down facilities to meet the need. With bold initiatives finally underway for mental health and addiction, we can achieve the same for Recuperative Care. Seek county, state, and federal funding in collaboration with our regional hospitals and managed care health plans.

Infrastructure

City residents expect us to provide and maintain essential infrastructure—sewer, water, streets, libraries, and more. City of San Diego asset-managing departments have completed comprehensive reviews of maintenance and repair needs. We have a clear picture of just how much funding is necessary to maintain and repair our city assets and we must properly budget for those costs.

Chollas Operations Yard

One of the largest City operations yards serves as the coordinating point for water, sewer, street, and stormwater across the City and accommodates operations staff, construction vehicles and materials, vehicle repair facilities, and more. This yard, which is centrally located and with no apparent place to relocate, is needed to serve City operations for decades to come.

- Fund Master Plan to maximize use of Chollas Yard to meet the City's current and future needs.

Stormwater

- Continue and expand maintenance of stormwater channels.
- Finalize studies and plans, secure remaining funds from contributing cities and agencies, and begin construction of the Los Peñasquitos Lagoon Restoration Phase 1 to reduce flooding and restore roadways in the Torrey Pines neighborhood of Sorrento Valley.
- Explore alternative pavement types to divert stormwater, including permeable pavement.

Sidewalks

- Fund sidewalk repair at \$10 million as the Transportation Department is fully resourced in-house to deliver.
- Build on the early success of the Safe Sidewalks Program.

Libraries

- Fund critical infrastructure needs identified in the Library Master Plan.

Streets

- Create a bike lane pothole team to prioritize pavement repair in bicycle lanes, recognizing that a pothole can do more damage to a bicyclist than a car.
- Fill the funding delta for FY2025 and FY2026 as called for in the Pavement Management Plan.
- Priority for street repaving and repairs on the following roads:
 - Carmel Valley
 - El Camino Real from Carmel Valley Road to High Bluff Drive
 - Carmel Creek Road from the Valley Centre Drive to Carmel Center Road

- Torrey Pines
 - Sorrento Valley Road from Sorrento Valley Blvd to Carmel Mountain Road
 - Boquita Drive from start to Cordero Road
 - Mercado Drive from Cordero Road to El Amigo Road
- Torrey Hills
 - Vista Sorrento Parkway from Carmel Mountain Rd to Sorrento Valley Blvd
- University City (District 1)
 - La Jolla Village Drive from the I-5 to Villa La Jolla Drive
- La Jolla
 - La Jolla Shores Drive from Avenida de la Playa to Horizon Way
 - Nautilus Street from Fay Avenue to West Muirlands Drive
 - La Jolla Mesa Drive from Colima Street to Deer Hill Court
- Pacific Beach
 - Grand Avenue from Quincy Drive to Mission Bay Drive
 - Cardeno Drive from Turquoise Street to Kaimalino Lane
 - Riviera Drive from Ingraham Street and Moorland Drive
 - Crown Point Drive from Ingraham Street to Lamont Street

Climate Action Plan

Climate action funding is embedded across multiple departments and is inextricably tied to our infrastructure needs and our city's resiliency. To achieve our mitigation and resiliency goals, we must increase investments in our Climate Action Implementation Plan. This includes new priorities slated for FY2026 as well as all unfunded priorities for FY2024 and FY2025, including:

- Fund and expand neighborhood shuttles, like the Beach Bug.
- Fully fund the projects listed in Coastal Resilience Master Plan.
- Increase tree planting and maintenance using the \$10 million grant and secure additional grant funding to expand canopy and the free tree program.
- Achieve Vision Zero goals for motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists in the most critical locations using Quick-Build solutions.
- Continuation of the public power feasibility study.
- Fund ongoing efforts to electrify and decarbonize municipal buildings.

Public Serving Facilities and Operations

Libraries

- Take the next incremental step to achieve the funding target of 6% of the General Fund as identified in Municipal Code section 22.0228.

Arts & Culture

- Take the next incremental step to achieve the target of Penny for the Arts as funded by the Transit Occupancy Tax.
- Fund the Black Arts & Culture District.

Parks and Recreation

- Fund dedicated electricians for lighting managed by Parks and Recreation.
- Expand routine trash collection and cleaning of comfort stations.
- Fund positions to meet the needs of new parks and joint use fields.
- Hire more Park Rangers for education and enforcement recognizing expanding roles in public safety, street vending, commercialization, and beach fires.
- Install recycling bins at shoreline parks and beaches.

Free4Me

- Continue funding of the successful Free4Me menstrual equity program at City recreation centers, libraries, pools, and public-facing facilities.

District 1 Neighborhood Priorities

In FY2025, I requested the incorporation of numerous neighborhood issues into the workplans of city departments. I have included a list of neighborhood non-CIP priorities. This list will be updated as I receive additional input from District 1 communities. Please find these priorities in Appendix I.

District 1 CIP Priorities

My office solicited feedback from planning groups, town councils, and community associations on CIP infrastructure priorities. This list will be updated as I receive additional input from District 1 communities. Please find these priorities in Appendix II.

District 1 Constituent Budget Requests (Unfiltered)

Residents of District 1 identify needs and priorities every day as they live, work, and play. I have included their list, unfiltered and unvetted. Please find these priorities in Appendix III.

I look forward to the discussions with the Mayor, my council colleagues, the Independent Budget Analyst, and our residents on how to fulfill promises made and grapple with our fiscal constraints to **Protect the Basics**.

Thank you, Mr. Modica, for your time and attention to my priorities.

CC: Mayor Todd Gloria
Chief Operating Officer Eric Dargan
Chief Financial Officer Matt Vespi

Appendix I: District 1 Neighborhood Issues

Solving neighborhood issues often falls within the annual workplans of city departments. I request the following issues in Appendix I be prioritized in department workplans to maximize existing resources as we fully staff those departments and resolve supply chain issues.

Police Department

Del Mar Mesa

- Install Smart Streetlights/ALPRs at:
 - Del Mar Mesa Road and Carmel Country Road
 - Del Mar Mesa Road and Del Vino Court

City Planning Department

Pacific Beach

- Explore the creation of a pedestrian-only promenade on Ocean Boulevard between Grand Avenue and Thomas Avenue.

La Jolla

- Prepare a Scripps Park Resource Land Management Plan and EIR.
- Update the La Jolla and La Jolla Shores Planned District Ordinances.

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.

Sustainability and Mobility Department

Pacific Beach

- Fund study on bike lanes on Garnet Avenue between Balboa Avenue and Ingraham Street.

Transportation Department

Pacific Beach

- Facilitate pedestrian and bicycle access on Garnet Avenue west of Ingraham Street.

- Improve Grand Avenue medians with new landscaping and beautification.
- Bike lanes: Campland to Crown Point (along Lamont Street and Pacific Beach Drive).

La Jolla

- Girard Streetscape, Phase 1. Continue collaboration on this community initiated and funded Private-Public project that requires no city funding. Community fundraising, supplemented by state and federal grants, will construct all public improvements. Private funds and MAD assessments will maintain enhanced features including plazas, enhanced street lighting, decorative sidewalks, benches, public art, and more.
- Conduct a comprehensive traffic circulation study of highly impacted beach areas (Windansea, Shores, Cove).
- Conduct a comprehensive traffic study at the Throat.

Del Mar Mesa

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

Parks and Recreation Department

La Jolla

- Increase cleaning, sanitation and trash pick-up for all Shoreline Parks and overlooks and comfort stations.
- Expand the gas tax median maintenance to include medians and parkways east of the Throat and the median west of La Jolla Shores Drive.

Pacific Beach

- More bike racks at beaches and the bay.

Parks and Recreation Department (daytime) and Police Department (after hours)

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.

Appendix II: District 1 Capital Improvement Program Priorities

Capital Improvement Projects take multiple years to fund and complete. There are several projects that are partially funded or funded through their next phase. I ask that these projects be prioritized to accomplish promises previously made by the city.

The list of Unfunded Projects is derived primarily from requests submitted by community planning groups. Not all District 1 community planning groups held their public budget meeting before the submittal of this memo.

Protect Funding/State Grants, Continue Work

Transportation Department

Pacific Beach

- Traffic circle on Foothill Boulevard at Vickie Drive (B18008).

La Jolla

- Widen and rebuild sidewalk adjacent to Coast Boulevard at Scripps Park (P24015).
- Complete Coastal Rail Trail segment along Gilman Drive (S00951).

Del Mar Heights

- Complete installation of traffic signal at Mercado Drive and Del Mar Heights Road (B22046).

Carmel Valley

- Complete traffic circulation improvements at Carmel Knolls Neighborhood Park parking lot (S16033).

Parks and Recreation Department

Pacific Beach

- Repair Crystal Pier (P24017).

La Jolla

- Repair handrails on Children's Pool Breakwater.
- Complete study and repair/replace handrails and steps for ocean access at Camino de la Costa viewpoint (B23067).
- Complete feasibility study to improve open beach access via pedestrian walkway at Spindrift/Marine Room (P24011).

Carmel Valley

- Construct the funded comfort stations at Solana Highlands (S16032), Carmel Knolls (S16033), Carmel Del Mar (S16034), Sage Canyon (S16035), and Carmel Grove (S16038).

Unfunded Projects

Police Department

- Police Plaza capital improvements.

Fire-Rescue Lifeguard Division

- North Pacific Beach Lifeguard Station¹

Transportation Department

Pacific Beach

- Install more traffic calming solutions at the Beryl Street and Lamont Street intersection.²
- Construction of main street neighborhood identifier sign.
- Reconfigure Grand Avenue/Mission Bay Drive per Balboa Trolley Station Plan.
- Crosswalk and pedestrian beacons on Ingraham Street at Fortuna Avenue.
- Install bike path lights on Rose Creek Trail.

La Jolla

- Resurface the La Jolla Shores Boardwalk.
- Resurface the Fay Avenue Bike Path.
- Replace and repair street lighting with lampposts and globes throughout La Jolla.
- Repair deteriorating sidewalks, curbs, and gutters throughout La Jolla.
- Enhance pedestrian safety throughout La Jolla:
 - Install and upgrade pedestrian signals on La Jolla Boulevard between Palomar Avenue and Colima Street.
 - Repair or replace crosswalks on La Jolla Shores Drive from Torrey Pines Road to Scripps, particularly on the west side.
 - 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 within Scripps Institute of Oceanography.
 - Install pedestrian-activated signal at La Jolla Shores Drive and Vallecitos.
 - Install stop signs and crosswalks at all intersections west of La Jolla Shores Drive.
- Install roundabouts:
 - Virginia Way and High Street

¹ Received second highest number of votes in 2024 Community Infrastructure Vote, hosted by Pacific Beach Town Council and Pacific Beach Planning Group.

² Ranked #1 highest priority at the 2024 Pacific Beach Community Infrastructure Vote.

- Prospect and Silverado, in front of the Museum of Contemporary Art
- Along La Jolla Shores Drive (3 or 4 roundabouts)

Torrey Pines

- Pedestrian, Street, and sidewalk improvements to create safe routes to Del Mar Heights Elementary School.³
 - Complete sidewalk improvements along Mercado Drive.
 - Create improvements to enable pedestrian access through City-owned parcel connecting Del Mar Heights Road and Boquita Drive.
 - Install ADA compliant sidewalk along the south side of Del Mar Heights Road connecting Mango Drive to Mira Montana.
- Resurface streets in the Del Mar Heights community south of Del Mar Heights Road.

Parks and Recreation Department

Pacific Beach

- Construct public/joint use community pool.⁴
- Install fence at Fanuel Street playground.

La Jolla

- Extend railing along 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.
- Repair low masonry wall foundation and North Belvedere foundational platform at Boomer Beach or relocate North Belvedere to avoid impacts to sensitive coastal bluff.
- Add steps at bottom of staircase at La Jolla Cove Beach.
- Repair beach access stairs at South Casa Beach.
- Repair beach access stairs at Shell Beach.
- Repair beach access stairs at Whale View Point.
- Repair and replace seawall and improve access to Children's Pool through repairs to the Grand Stair and adding an ADA access ramp.

Mission Bay Golf Course

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

³ Highest priority from Torrey Pines Community Planning Group.

⁴ Received highest number of first choice votes and ranked as #5 overall at the Pacific Beach 2024 Community Infrastructure Vote.

Stormwater Department

La Jolla

- Evaluate, update, and repair storm water system throughout La Jolla.

Public Utilities Department

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.

Appendix III: District 1 Constituent Budget Requests

My office receives a substantial number of individual requests for community improvements which require funding. City Planning initiated an online survey for constituents to submit their ideas. Those requests filed via the City Planning survey that were also filed as an official position of the community planning group are listed in Appendix I or II. Below please find the remainder of those requests, neither filtered nor vetted.

Police Department

Torrey Hills

- Install Smart Streetlights/ALPRs at:
 - Vista Sorrento Parkway and Calle Mariposa
 - Vista Sorrento Parkway and Ocean Bluff
 - El Camino Real and Carmel Mountain Road
 - Carmel Mountain Road and Canter Heights Road

Parks and Recreation Department

La Jolla

- Replace aging playground equipment at Kellogg Park (reportedly will be funded by the Walter Munk Foundation).
- Transform the vacant Mount Soledad Presbyterian Church into a skate park, dog park, pickleball court, and recreational pathway.

Pacific Beach:

- Replace aging playground equipment at Fanuel Street Park.

Carmel Valley:

- Replace aging playground equipment at Ashley Falls Park.

University City (District 1 portion)

- Install a unicorn spring rider at Villa La Jolla Park.

Torrey Hills

- Replace existing water fountain to the east of the softball field at Torrey Hills Park with a filtered water bottle station and pet fountain.
- Install outdoor fitness equipment at five locations around the softball field at Torrey Hills Park.

Transportation Department

Torrey Hills

- Shave lifted sidewalks throughout Torrey Hills.

Carmel Valley

- Overlay Del Mar Heights Road from El Camino Real to Landsdale Drive.
- Overlay El Camino Real from SR-56 northbound to San Dieguito Road.
- Complete the Via de la Valle road widening project from San Andres Drive eastbound to the 14500 block of El Camino Real.
- Construct a signalized intersection at Via de la Valle and Via del Canon.
- Provide acceleration and deceleration lanes for the homes on the north side of Via de la Valle.
- Rebuild interfaces to reduce vehicle drag on the approaches and departures on all El Camino Real lanes on the south side of the City of San Diego bridge No. 57C-0665 over Carmel Creek, just south of SR-56.
- Fully fund and complete the roundabout at the intersection of Carmel Country Road and Carmel Mountain Road (B21102).
- Convert the eastbound lane of Village Center Loop Road in front of Canyon Crest Academy from on-street parking to a bi-directional, separated, and dedicated bike lane to provide safer bicycle access to nearby schools.

Torrey Pines (Del Mar Terrace neighborhood)

- Repave Del Mar Scenic Parkway.

Pacific Beach

- Improve bike access to the Balboa Avenue Trolley Station.

Pacific Highlands Ranch

- Install bike lanes on Village Center Loop Road.

La Jolla

- Install cross walk and flashing beacons at Azul Street and La Jolla Shores Drive.
- Expand landscape maintenance at the Throat to include continuous weed abatement on paved and unpaved medians along Azure Coast Drive.

Transportation Department - Utility Undergrounding

La Jolla

- Complete utility undergrounding projects.