




City of San Diego  
**MARK KERSEY**  
CITY COUNCILMAN, FIFTH DISTRICT

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** January 16, 2015  
**TO:** Andrea Tevlin, Independent Budget Analyst  
**FROM:** Councilman Mark Kersey   
**RE:** Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Priorities

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This is in response to Budget and Government Efficiency Committee Chair Todd Gloria's January 5, 2015 memorandum requesting Councilmember input in the development of the Fiscal Year 2016 Budget. As San Diego's trend of economic growth continues, restoring services to neighborhoods and addressing the infrastructure backlog to rebuild San Diego should be top priorities. I applaud Mayor Faulconer's commitment to dedicating 50% of new major revenues to infrastructure, and encourage a continued commitment to the multi-pronged approach of identifying needs while diligently chipping away at the backlog. To the extent that revenues are available, I respectfully put forward the following items, in no particular order, for consideration in the Fiscal Year 2016 Budget.

**Rebuild San Diego through Neighborhood Investment.** (\$5,427,000) The City of San Diego faces over \$2 billion in deferred maintenance. While the Council is making progress through historic monetary investment and the development of the City's first-ever Multi-Year Capital Improvement Plan, it will take the continued diligence of the Council to make our neighborhoods whole.

- **Continue the Condition Assessment Program.** (\$1,300,000) In order to fully understand the complexity of the infrastructure problem and gauge progress, the City should continue the condition assessment program. Allocating funds for facility and Park and Recreation asset condition assessments reflects good faith on the City's part to rebuild San Diego.
- **Improve Traffic Signal Optimization.** Traffic congestion is an issue that affects all districts. Every day, San Diegans are frustrated with traffic that results in less time with their families, and high gas consumption. To help residents and gain efficiency in

commutes, I recommend the City invest in advancing traffic signal optimizations along main corridors, particularly roads that connect to freeway ramps.

- **Safe Routes to Schools in Rancho Bernardo.** (\$50,000) Everyday, students walk along Paseo Lucido to and from Rancho Bernardo High School and Bernardo Heights Middle School and their homes. With no street lights along the path, walking to or from school in the dark can be dangerous for children. I thank the Council for supporting this priority and including street light design funding in a previous budget. The balance of project funding is requested to complete construction of this shovel-ready project.
- **Rue Chantemar Storm Drain Replacement Project.** (\$877,000) Highlighted in a Voice of San Diego article (“Where the City Crumbles in Scripps Ranch”), the corroded storm drain and resulting cliff is hazardous to children who play in the adjacent open space and is a looming liability. The project is in the design process, but still lacks funds for construction. Funding the repair of this project can prevent future injuries or additional damage to property.
- **ADA Compliance at Rolling Hills Park and Jerabek Neighborhood Parks.** (\$1,000,000) Jerabek Neighborhood Park and Rolling Hills Park are two of the most utilized parks in District Five. Play equipment is aging, and with replacement parts sparsely available, full replacement will be needed soon. However, in order to continue to provide a safe play environment for our children, parks must be brought up to current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. Historically, the Capital Outlay Fund has financed ADA projects. A portion of the recent SDDPC property dissolution revenues which were placed in the Capital Outlay Fund can be used for ADA compliance to make our parks safe and accessible to all residents.
- **Carmel Mountain Ranch / Sabre Springs Dog Park.** (\$200,000) The Carmel Mountain Ranch / Sabre Springs community is vibrant community with active families that make substantial use of the community’s parks. With no neighborhood dog park, fenced-in ball fields have increasingly become unofficial off-leash dog parks. Sabre Springs Park has a 0.4 acre area to the south of the fenced-in ball field that the community has identified as a potential dog park site. Funds are requested for a feasibility study and preliminary design.
- **Restore Transportation in the San Pasqual Valley.** (\$2,000,000) The San Pasqual Valley is home to the City’s last remaining dairy farm, a highly-used hiking trail system, and the San Diego Zoo Safari Park. Ysabel Creek Road is the main thoroughfare between Bandy Canyon Road, where farmers package their products, to San Pasqual Valley Road, where the Zoo Safari Park and the Archaeological Society are located. However, severe storms have moved much of the asphalt off the path, leaving the road dangerous and inconsistent with the City’s Street Design Manual. In order to avoid road hazards, people have been observed driving off the loosely-defined path onto the watershed property, potentially affecting water quality. Additionally, insufficient access is detrimental for local farmers who lease property in the valley. I request funding for an engineering analysis to determine options for restoring Ysabel Creek Road, and development of a CIP to begin restoring transportation access to the community.

**Continue Addressing San Diego Police Department (SDPD) Recruitment and Retention Challenges.** SDPD has seen substantial issues with recruitment and retention of officers. Every year, the City loses highly-experienced officers to retirement and other agencies. With staffing at historic lows per capita, it is imperative to increase officer compensation so the City can become a competitive recruiter, keep officers from leaving to other public agencies, and make San Diego an even safer place to live and work.

**Increase Medical Aid Availability and Review Cross Staffing to Improve Fire-Rescue Response Times.** (\$6,819,733) The San Diego Fire-Rescue Department responds to approximately 130,000 incidents annually. Because of the high demand for service and the city's deficit of needed fire stations, the Department's first due unit to medical calls and small fires only meets national standards 69% of the time. Minor adjustments to staffing models can improve efficiencies and relieve stress on the first responder system.

Cross-staffing is the practice of using a single crew to staff both a fire engine and a specialty unit vehicle. The City currently employs cross-staffing in the HazMat and Bomb Squad units, which are used as regional assets to respond to hazardous materials and suspicious device incidents. When a HazMat or Bomb Squad incident occurs, an engine that could otherwise be used to respond to a life or property emergency at Station 44 in Mira Mesa or Station 1 in Downtown sits unavailable for use. Dedicated HazMat and Bomb Squad units can relieve the undue strain on stations in other neighborhoods, including Scripps Ranch, Carmel Mountain Ranch, Rancho Peñasquitos, and East Village,

In Fiscal Year 2015, the City piloted a Fast Response Squad program in the Encanto area. This two-person squad has the ability to arrive on scene to do initial triage and determine if a full engine and ambulance are necessary. While initial reviews for the Fast Response Squad at the densely-populated community of Encanto shows a need for a full engine company, the rural community of San Pasqual would greatly benefit from a Fast Response Squad of a dedicated ambulance. With a majority of calls being medical aids at the San Diego Zoo Safari Park and minor car accidents that do not require a full engine company, and with the community left without medical mutual aid from neighboring Escondido, responders are called from Fire Station 33 in Rancho Bernardo. On a good day with no traffic, Engine 33 can get to the Zoo Safari Park in 15 minutes, far exceeding the national response time standards. While Engine 33 is out on a 30-minute minimum call to the San Pasqual Valley, Rancho Bernardo residents are left waiting for life-saving services from Carmel Mountain Ranch or Rancho Peñasquitos. Placing a Fast Response Squad or dedicated ambulance unit at the Zoo Safari Park can relieve the stress on the first responder system in northeastern San Diego and keep residents and visiting tourists safe while visiting the world-famous destination.

**Increase Fire Safety throughout the Wildland-Urban Interface.** (\$1,000,000) San Diego has approximately 500 linear miles of Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). The WUI, combined with the ongoing drought and regular Santa Ana winds, has resulted in a sustained fire season. The Fiscal Year 2015 Budget increased the annual allocation for brush management; however, funds only covered the increase in cost of service. Additional funding is requested for brush management along the WUI to reduce fire risk and protect our neighborhoods.

**Strengthen the City's Operations through a Standing Council Charter Review Committee.**

(\$100,000) In recent years, the Council has held substantial discussions regarding review of the City Charter, Municipal Code, and Council Policies to improve efficiencies and services, resolve conflicts between State, Federal, and local regulations, and provide the public with better access to their government. While the Council continues work on Municipal Code and Council Policy revisions through the temporary Charter Review Committee, a commitment to long-term oversight through a standing Charter Review Committee, along with funding for a Committee Consultant dedicated to ensuring community input is needed to ensure changes that reflect the demands of the people of San Diego.

**Increase Government Transparency and Community Input through Open Data**

**Enhancements.** (\$250,280) The Council's establishment of the Performance and Analytics Department in the Fiscal Year 2015 Budget was a great step forward for government transparency and accountability. An open, efficient, and accessible government is critical to gaining and maintaining the public's trust. With hundreds of data sets in the City in various formats, an Open Data Manager could support the efforts of the Chief Data Officer to implement the goals put forward in the Open Data Policy, including the interfacing with departments to gather information and working with the public to identify high value data sets to make available on the web portal. While the data sets will be accessible to all and public innovation will result in everyday helpful apps, a Civic Technology Coordinator can analyze internally-beneficial data sets to develop apps and technologies that will increase city process efficiencies.

**Develop an Enhanced Citywide Strategic Plan.** (\$125,140) Through the tireless work of the Mayor and Council, the City of San Diego has gone from "Enron by the Sea" to a nationwide model for fiscal reconstruction. As we continue the path of financial prudence, an updated strategic plan with performance measures that reflect the public's best interest are necessary to ensure taxpayers funds are used wisely. An additional Citywide Strategic Planner will accelerate the pace of updating strategic and tactical plans to help continue the City's reputation for fiscal responsibility.

**Provide Dedicated Oversight of the San Dieguito River Valley Regional Open Space Park**

**JPA Contract** (\$80,000) The City of San Diego is currently negotiating a fifty year extension of the San Dieguito River Valley Regional Open Space Park ("Park"). If membership fees stay flat, the City will be investing \$12,700,000 to operate and maintain the Park over the 50 year term. An employee dedicated to contract fulfillment and trail maintenance standards review is critical to ensuring taxpayer funds are used consistent with intended uses while also protecting the underlying watershed.