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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 20, 2015

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Press Release

City Council Approves Small Business Preference Program Improvements

SAN DIEGO --- San Diego City Council President Sherri Lightner announced that on Tuesday, October 20, the Council approved improvements to the Small Local Business Enterprise (SLBE) Program, which will increase the City's small and local business preference for goods, services, and consultant contracts. As former Chair of the Economic Development Committee, Council President Lightner has advocated for the program since 2011.

Businesses in San Diego have additional costs that impact their ability to be competitive in the marketplace. Some of these costs include wages, taxes, health benefits and insurance. By adopting these improvements, which are in line with industry standards across the state, the City could potentially increase awards with small business participation by over 100%. By improving the City's local business preference program, the City will continue to further promote local businesses and benefit from the economic activity that occurs as dollars recirculate in the local economy.

"It is important to provide opportunities for our small and local businesses in San Diego," stated Council President Sherri Lightner. "We know that small businesses are a huge economic driver in San Diego, and the City wants to support their continued success and growth."

Councilmember Myrtle Cole, the current Chair of the Economic Development and Intergovernmental Relations Committee and representative for District Four, heard the item in the September 24, 2015 Committee meeting and forwarded it to the full Council with a recommendation to approve.

"This is an improved policy that will stimulate economic development by expanding opportunities for small local businesses and ensure that all segments of the community have an opportunity to conduct business with the City," said Councilmember Cole.

The improvements include an increase in the current bid discount for goods and services contracts from 2% to 5% with a maximum cap from \$10,000 to \$50,000 for small, emerging

local businesses and firms with voluntary subcontractor participation. In addition, instead of preference points given during scoring, a preference percentage will be enacted that will ensure the preference for smaller firms is relative to the total points allotted for the proposals that are submitted for City projects. The changes will apply to all goods and services contract bids and proposals advertised by the City, and will go into effect by December 2015.

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