



The City of



Economic Development

MEETING NOTES

San Diego Promise Zone

Economic Activity Meeting Notes

Thursday, February 27, 2025 | 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM | via Zoom

Economic Activity Goal: Increase Economic Activity

In Attendance:

Accessity (Juliet Terramin), **Akitso** (Anna Sotto), **Brown University** (Adamson Bryant), **California Coast Credit Union** (Angel Nolasco), **Central San Diego Black Chamber of Commerce** (Jacqueline Schliapnik-Garcia), **City Heights Community Development Corporation** (Natasha Salgado, Sylvia Ramirez), **City of San Diego - Economic Development Department** (Christie Marcella, Viridiana Quintana), **City of San Diego Promise Zone** (Amber Weber, Roosevelt Williams III, Daniel Hamilton, Domanic Riley, Donika Moreno, Oscar Silva, Brandon Tran), **International Rescue Committee** (Irene Bwayo), **Jewish Family Service San Diego** (Melina Mumtzis), **Klinedinst Attorneys** (Austin Evans), **Local Initiatives Support Corporation** (Ivonne Rojas), **Logan Heights Community Development Corporation** (Felix Lopez, William Burties), **Movement Matters Collective** (Brian Westpoint), **Mission Edge** (Ana Dominguez), **Office of Juan Vargas, 51st Congressional District** (Genevieve Fong), **Partnership for Environmental Progress** (John Tucker), **San Diego ART Matters** (Michael Angelo Camacho), **San Diego Black Business Network** (Prince Graham), **San Diego State University** (John McMillan, Mayra Salas), **Workshop for Warriors** (Lauren Welch)

Meeting Notes:

Introductions, Culture Share, and Agenda Review:

- Sylvia Ramirez welcomed everyone to the February Economic Activity Meeting and shared the agenda.
- The culture share for this month celebrated Black History Month by asking participants to name a BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) entrepreneur or businessperson whose story they found inspiring.

Partner Announcements:

- **Genevieve Fong:** The Office of Congressman Juan Vargas held a townhall on February 26, 2025, to address the ongoing situation with federal grants following the funding freeze. If you are a non-profit who has had their federal grants affected by the Executive Order placing a freeze on specific types of federal funding, then feel free to reach out to Genevieve Fong at genevieve.fong@mail.house.gov for more information on what you can do.

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[Newsletter](#) | [Website](#) | [Email](#) | (619) 236-6700 | 1200 Third Ave, 14th Floor, San Diego, CA 92101

- **Christie Marcella:** Christie has recently been brought on as a Deputy Director in the City of San Diego's Economic Development Department. She formerly worked at the Jacobs Center for Neighborhood Innovation and is intimately familiar with the Promise Zone, which she states is near and dear to her heart. With her passion for public service, we are happy to welcome Christie to the Economic Development Department.
- **Roosevelt Williams III:** FourM Education, in partnership with Workforce San Diego and ALVA Beauty Collective, is offering a cohort where 90% of tuition will be covered by Workforce with the remaining 10% covered by a scholarship. There are 6 seats available for cosmetology and 8 for barbering. The deadline to sign up for this opportunity is March 14. Please contact Stephany Meyers (info@fourmedu.com) if you or a young adult you know is interested in future workforce development opportunities from FourM Education.

Promise Zone Updates:

- The Promise Zone has recently revamped its website. The new website contains pages on how to become a Promise Zone partner and a page for each working group with resources specific to that working group. Please take a few minutes to check out the new site, let us know what you think, and send any suggestions you may have to the feedback form located on our new homepage.
 - We'd also like to recognize our Operations Associate, Donika Moreno whose hard work and persistence were critical in seeing this project to completion. Our new website wouldn't be possible without her.
 - Link to [Revised Website](#)
- The Promise Zone team has two open positions, the first is for a full-time Communications VISTA and the second is a Grants & Research VISTA. Both positions have a projected term of service of May 2025 - May 2026. If you know of any recent college graduates who would be great candidates, please let them know about the opportunity at the following links.
 - [Communications VISTA](#)
 - [Grants & Research VISTA](#)
- The 2025 Promise Zone Youth-Led Career Expo will be held on Tuesday, March 18 at the Balboa Park Club. We invite you to join us in making this year's career expo a success by either participating as an employer, sponsoring a cash gift or raffle prize, or simply spreading the word to 16 – 24-year-old youth job seekers that may be interested in exploring their career pathways. We expect over 200 young people who live or go to school in the Promise Zone to attend this event and we would like to make this meaningful and useful for them all.
 - Updates on the event after its completion will be available on the following webpage:
 - [Career Expo Webpage](#)
- The City of San Diego's Access 4 All initiative continues to seek input from Promise Zone residents about their internet quality and affordability, digital skills needs, and computer and tablet needs. If you would like to assist them, then you can take a digital survey at

the following link or forward it to others in your network if you've completed it previously: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DZMTTV9>.

CA Jobs First Presentation: John McMillan

John McMillan is the Assistance Vice President of Economic Development at San Diego State University's Division of Research & Innovation. In that role, he leads the Southern Border Coalition's California Jobs First (CA Jobs First) Initiative. He provided our Economic Activity Working Group members a brief overview of the history and intentions of the CA Jobs First as they relate to San Diego and the Promise Zone's economic future.

- The Southern Border Coalition is comprised of a collection of over a 100 San Diego and Imperial County community-based organizations (CBOs), educational institutions, labor unions, local governments, regional development entities, and indigenous tribes to help create and enact a sustainable and equitable economic development plan for the Southern border region.
 - You can find a list of current members [here](#).
- The original Regional Plan created by the Southern Border Coalition was accepted by the state in December 2024.
 - The regional plan consists of a three-part approach that can be envisioned as a house. This house is composed of:
 - Foundational Industries as the base: Housing, Digital Infrastructure, Community Infrastructure, and Non-Profits/CBOs.
 - Locally serving industries as the first floor: Community Health, Water, and Training & Workforce Development.
 - Tradeable Industries as the second story: Agriculture, Manufacturing, Life Sciences, Tourism, Transportation, Clean Energy, etc.
 - All three stories support a roof that will be the quality jobs that are attracted to the Southern Border region.
 - You can access a copy of that Regional Plan at this [link](#).
- CA Jobs First was originally called the Catalyst Project.
 - Also was formerly known as Community Economic Resilience Fund (CERF).
 - Project has been through numerous name and overall objective changes since it began as a state-level initiative in March 2024.
- The Southern Border Coalition has held 278 meeting since April of 2024 as they've worked to complete their planning phase.
 - The CA Jobs First initiative is now moving into the Catalyst Phase where they will be hiring three individuals as Industry Investment Coordinators.
 - Individuals will be placed under the two contracted regional support agencies.
 - San Diego Regional Economic Development Council
 - Imperial Valley Economic Development Council

- Individuals must be locals to the area that they will oversee.
 - Imperial County lacks qualified candidates and thus position was made entry-level.
 - Investment Coordinators in San Diego County must have 8 years of experience in a similar role.
 - These positions are grant funded. Grant funding for these positions will no longer be available on September 30, 2026.
- Catalyst Investment Fund is a \$9 million investment vehicle to support projects that are exploratory or last mile.
 - Ready to Go Projects can only be funded through State's Implementation Fund.
 - Will be releasing Request for Proposals (RFP) in the first week of March. This RFP will be open for 45 days and close on April 15.
 - Will be holding office hours for those interested in applying at the following [link](#).

Q&A

Amber Weber: "How do organizations sign up for the RFP?"

- **John:** "To sign up for the RFP you must complete either a member form that requires a formal commitment or a stakeholder interest form that doesn't."
 - [Coalition Member Commitment Form](#)
 - [Coalition Stakeholder Interest Form](#)

Roosevelt Williams III: "Why has the program been through so many name changes? Some residents are concerned by the lack of a consistent vision."

- **John:** Change to CA Jobs First was due to governor's office wanting program to more explicitly focus on jobs as priority area.
 - SDSU pushed back against singular jobs focus to no avail.
 - Program has been through numerous changes since it was first conceived.
 - Program has changed name 15 times since start; majority of these name changes were not revealed to the public.
 - Funding reduced from \$26M to \$15M.
 - Understands that continual changes have led to lack of trust with community.
 - Roosevelt would like to continue conversation about community outreach efforts offline.

Small Business Advisory Board Presentation: Austin Evans & Natasha Salgado

Austin Evans & Natasha Salgado are the chair and co-chair of the City of San Diego's Small Business Advisory Board (SBAB). The Small Business Advisory Board advocates for business owners across San Diego by advising the mayor's office on business-related policy decisions. As a former co-chair of the Economic Activity Working Group, Natasha was in a unique position to explain how the work of the Small Business Advisory Board could assist Promise Zone area businesses that often feel like the issues they face are overlooked by city government.

- The Small Business Advisory Board was originally established in 1982 as a part of the Boards & Commissions Department to better represent the voice of small business owners across the city.
 - Board was steppingstone of activation. Helped amplify the messages that small business owners wanted City leadership to hear.
 - Board receives recommendations from small business owners across the City as it plans its monthly agenda.
- Accessity, a local San Diego non-profit has member of its staff on Small Business Advisory Board.
 - Additional representatives come from local Chambers of Commerce and Business Improvement Districts.
 - Juliet Terramin who is a regular participant in Economic Activity meeting is also a member of the Small Business Advisory Board.
- Mayor typically wants to know what business needs in community are and relies on SBAB for this perspective.
 - SBAB also challenges existing business practices and policies on the behalf of small business owners who call in to report the problems they are having with those policies.
 - Example is that they held a meeting on February 25, 2025, and had a business owner call in to ask what the SBAB is doing to prevent the closure of brick-and-mortar stores across San Diego.
 - Records of this exchange can be found in their February meeting minutes located [here](#).
 - A second request is how they and the City of San Diego as a whole are holding contractors accountable.
 - Natasha suggests that contractor must give notice to affected business owners when they begin construction.
 - Many business needs are intersectional with other social issues.
 - Business owners require access to stable and reliable internet if they are to complete permit applications.
 - Language is also another barrier of entry for business owners completing required city business permits.
- The Small Business Advisory Board would like more input from council offices, especially from Council Districts 4, 8, and 9 as they cover a majority of the Promise Zone.
 - May invite council representatives to future SBAB meetings as building relationship with mayor and councilmembers is key for synergistic and effective business policies.
 - Austin added that the SBAB must capitalize on the relationships its built if it is to effectively advocate for San Diego business owners.
- If you'd like more information on the Small Business Advisory Board, you may visit their webpage at this address: <https://www.sandiego.gov/economic-development/business/starting/advisory>

Group 1: Strengthen the Business Base and Attract New Businesses to Vacant Land ([View Objective 1 Logic Model](#))

Attendance: Sylvia Ramirez, Domanic Riley, Daniel Hamilton, Brandon Tran, Prince Graham, William Burties, Adamson Bryant, Angel Nolasco, Irene Bwayo, Viridiana Quintana, John McMillan, Christie Marcella

- **Irene Bwayo:** The International Rescue Committee Small Business Development Center (IRC SBDC) does one-on-one training for vendors seeking business licenses.
 - The IRC are willing to assist with researching vendor restrictions in the Promise Zone as it conducts its licensing program.
- **Sylvia Ramirez:** Are there any concerns with walkability in the Promise Zone? Or infrastructure in general?
 - **Viridiana Quintana:** Councilmember Vivian Moreno's office is already taking note of infrastructural issues in its part of the Promise Zone.
 - Currently focused on broken streetlights.
 - May be overlap between efforts, but also opportunity to collaborate.
- **Sylvia Ramirez:** Are there any events we should be looking forward to for this year's Buy Local campaign?
 - **William Burties:** Logan Height Community Development Corporation's Taste of Imperial will be held on August 1, 2025.
 - List of vendors who will be working at event is already finalized.
 - Some are brick-and-mortar outlets and others are street vendors.
- **Sylvia Ramirez:** Will we be getting an update on the La Via Verde shuttle that Chicano Park Museum and Cultural Center has planned?
 - **Domanic Riley:** It's possible that they will be able to present about the shuttle at our March Economic Activity meeting.
 - **Viridiana Quintana:** Could also utilize Entrepreneurship Zones as stops along shuttle route.
 - Waiting for update on status of Entrepreneurship Zones as they haven't been implemented yet.
- **Sylvia Ramirez:** Do we have any events for the Virtual Connection Hub? Additionally, if partners have events is there a place to submit them?
 - **Domanic Riley:** There's a link to submit events to the Promise Zone calendar if they're interested.
 - [Promise Zone calendar event link](#)
- **Sylvia Ramirez:** Any status update on vacant land for businesses in Promise Zone?
 - **Domanic Riley:** The Promise Zone has worked with the City of San Diego's IT Department to add a Promise Zone overlay to the City-Owned Land map.
 - Upon examination there is no readily available City-Owned Land for Promise Zone businesses to utilize.
 - [City-Owned Property Map](#)

- **Sylvia Ramirez:** We've added financial literacy to our primary objective. Are any partners doing anything related to financial literacy that they'd like to add to the Logic Model?
 - **Irene Bwayo:** The IRC SBDC holds financial literacy for interested patrons. Are willing to add their name to financial literacy activity on Logic Model.
 - **William Burties:** United Way is partnering with Logan Heights CDC (LHDCDC) for its Sparkpoint program that promotes financial literacy. Participants can win \$100 if they complete it.
 - Additionally, starting in April LHDCDC will be conducting a 5-Week Entrepreneurship Program. It will contain a Pitch Competition where 1st place winners will be awarded \$2500, 2nd place - \$1000, and 3rd place - \$500.
 - **Angel Nolasco:** California Coast Credit Union is also willing to support the new financial literacy activity as they are already involved in efforts to do so.

Group 2: Support Small Businesses, Entrepreneurs, and Self-Employed Residents ([View Objective 2 Logic Model](#))

Attendance: Amber Weber, Roosevelt William III, Donika Moreno, Oscar Silva, Anna Sotto, Michael Angelo Camacho, Juliet Terramin, Ana Dominguez, Melina Mumtzis, Jacqueline Schliapnik Garcia

- **Michael Angelo Camacho:** Suggested that Social Impact Investing can help bring more resources to Promise Zone art vendors.
 - San Diego Art Matters was willing to take on the responsibility for this activity.
- **Anna Sotto:** Is willing to work on a business assessment for Promise Zone restaurants and create a roadmap for them to help them qualify for the Storefront Improvement Program.
 - **Juliet Terramin:** Is willing to help Anna with recruiting clients. Also, suggests she reach out to City Heights CDC for additional help as they've run similar programs in the past.
- **Amber Weber:** If any other organization sees where they can fit into our existing Logic Model objectives then feel free to utilize the following [link to make a suggestion](#). The Promise Zone team is also willing to have one-on-one's if you'd like to discuss the Logic Model in more detail.

Wrap Up and Adjourn:

- Co-chairs thanked those who attended the meeting and encouraged them to leave any feedback through the Digital Comment Box: <https://forms.gle/FAbFjw4ZUuAd3UiY6>

Meeting Conclusion:

- **Meeting Day for Next Month:** Thursday, March 27, 2025, 10:00 am -11:30 am
- Digital Comment Box: <https://us16.list-manage.com/survey?u=e913b9d30ca18b3436360cf47&id=62c8f5dc2f>