



The City of



# Economic Development

## MEETING NOTES

### San Diego Promise Zone

#### Economic Activity Meeting Notes

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

**Economic Activity Goal:** Increase Economic Activity

#### In Attendance:

**Accessity** (Angela Zappia, Carla Panzera), **Akitso** (Anna Sotto), **Black Tech Link** (Elizabeth Cotton), **California Coast Credit Union** (Angel Nolasco), **California Office of Business and Economic Development – Go-Biz** (Danna Stroud), **Central San Diego Black Chamber of Commerce** (Jacqueline Schliapnik-Garcia), **City Heights Community Development Corporation** (Sylvia Ramirez), **City of San Diego - Economic Development Department** (Viridiana Quintana), **City of San Diego Promise Zone** (Amber Weber, Roosevelt Williams III, Daniel Hamilton, Domanic Riley, Oscar Silva), **Community Member** (Anna Gentry), **County of San Diego – Office of Equitable Communities** (Samantha Mendoza), **International Rescue Committee** (Irene Bwayo), **Jewish Family Service San Diego** (Melina Mumtzis, Citlaly Gutierrez), **Movement Matters Collective** (Brian Westpoint), **Mission Edge** (Ana Dominguez), **National University** (Danielle Stephen), **Partnership for Environmental Progress** (John Tucker), **San Diego Black Business Network** (Prince Graham), **San Diego Futures Foundation** (Bizhan Abdali, Teresa Valenzuela), **University of California San Diego** (Raquel Aparicio)

#### Meeting Notes:

##### Introductions, Culture Share, and Agenda Review:

- Sylvia Ramirez welcomed everyone to the March Economic Activity Meeting and shared the agenda.
- The culture share for this month was in recognition of Women's History Month and asked participants to consider, "What advancement since the success of the women's suffrage movement they thought had most benefited women living today?"

##### Partner Announcements:

- **Elizabeth Cotton:** Elizabeth is the CEO and Founder of Black Tech Link and has been the recipient of two grants from the California Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (Go-Biz). Through these grants she has been able to partially fund her export training program. Black Tech Link will be hosting two workshops in the near future for business owners interested in getting involved in Import/Export:
  - The Impact of New Tariff Policies on U.S. Export Competitiveness - April 9, 2025, from 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

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- Preparing for Government Contracting: Crafting the Perfect Capability Statement – April 17, 2025, from 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
- **Irene Bwayo:** The International Rescue Committee Small Business Development Corporation (IRC-SBDC) will be holding a Digital Accelerator Bootcamp exclusively for Promise Zone and Diamond Improvement District businesses and residents looking to start, grow, or manage their business. This bootcamp will be taking place virtually every Monday and Tuesday from 3:00 p.m. – 4:30 pm until April 22, 2025. For those who complete all courses they will receive a laptop, 1-year Microsoft Office subscription, and ongoing technical assistance.
  - On April 10, 2025, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., IRC-SBDC holding a beginner-friendly workshop on how to utilize ChatGPT to streamline childcare tasks for family childcare providers.
- **Donika Moreno:** The County of San Diego's Labor Standards and Enforcement department will be holding its third annual Cesar Chavez Week of Action from March 25 – 29. This weeklong series of events honors labor rights activist Cesar Chavez by educating workers, employers, and community members about labor rights and fair workplace practices. The theme of this year's week of action is "**Building Stronger Workplaces Together.**" Major events to look forward during the Week of Action are the Fair Chance Workshop and Job Fair at the Southeastern Live Well Center, a Community Breakfast to honor our workforce, a Vista District Business Walk, and a Health and Resource Clinic at the Employee Rights Center.
  - [Cesar Chavez Week of Action Calendar](#)
- **Domanic Riley:** San Diego & Imperial Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC) will be hosting its Elevate event on April 11. Elevate will be a day of learning, inspiration, connection and business growth that will consist of multiple speakers, 40 partner resources, and one-on-one sessions with experts in the field of business. With the help of these experts, thought leaders, and connectors, aspiring entrepreneurs and small business owners will be able to elevate their businesses' potential and propel their growth over the next year.
- **Domanic Riley:** The California Jobs First – Southern Border Coalition Request for Proposals (RFP) is now available for community-based organizations (CBOs), nonprofits, labor organizations, institutes of higher education, local governments, and for-profits to apply for up to \$50,000 in grant funding. The \$50,000 is intended to fund projects in the Implementation phase that are intended to create quality jobs, advance sustainability, promote workforce development, and prioritize disadvantaged communities across San Diego and Imperial County. The deadline to respond to initial questionnaire is April 3, 2025, and the submission deadline for project descriptions, alignment, and budget is April 28, 2025. Please utilize the links below if you'd like to apply.
  - [CA Jobs First – Project Registration Form](#)
  - [CA Jobs First Pre-Development Fund RFP](#)
  - [CA Jobs First – Southern Border Coalition Webpage](#)

### **Promise Zone Updates:**

- On Monday, March 24, 2025, the Promise Zone welcomed part-time Employ & Empower intern, Damilare Shonuyi. Damilare is a senior at UCSD majoring in economics and will be with the team until June 30, 2025.
- The March 27, 2025 Economic Activity meeting was VISTA Leader Daniel Hamilton's last, as his service comes to an end on April 7, 2025. We'd like to thank Daniel for his recruitment efforts for our VISTA positions, for organizing activities for our VISTAs in honor of AmeriCorps Week, for supporting our tracking of hours volunteered for reporting requirements, and for all of his volunteer service and outreach within the Promise Zone.
- Our team has two open positions, an AmeriCorps VISTA Communications Associate and a Grants & Research Associate, which are both full-time for one year. Both positions are expected to begin in May.
  - [SDPZ We're Hiring Flyer](#)
  - [Communications VISTA Description](#)
  - [Grants & Research VISTA Description](#)
- On Tuesday, March 18, 2025 the SDPZ hosted its 3rd annual Youth-Led Career Expo. With nearly 200 youth in attendance, 57 vendors (a 43% increase in employer participation), and 44 volunteers. This year's expo provided hands-on career prep, professional headshots, resume reviews, and more. Huge thank you to our sponsors, volunteers, and working group members for making it all possible!
  - [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>.

### **Go-Biz Presentation: Danna Stroud**

Danna Stroud is the Associate Deputy Director of the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (Go-Biz). During this meeting she took the opportunity to go over how the State of California's Economic Blueprint influenced its approach toward the Southern Border Region of San Diego and Imperial Counties and the implementation of the California Jobs First (CA Jobs First) Initiative.

- Purpose of CA Jobs First is to invest in key sectors that will drive sustainable economic growth, spark innovation, and increase access to good paying jobs.
- More than 10,000 Californians have influenced the direction of CA Jobs First through their regional planning committees.
  - State has been divided into 13 regions that each have their own planning committee. San Diego County and Imperial County together make up the

Southern Border Region. Name of regional planning committee is Southern Border Coalition.

- Many Economic Activity members are involved in Southern Border Coalition including current Economic Activity co-chair, Danielle Stephen, and Brian Westpoint of Movement Matters Collective.
- Raquel Aparicio, our current SDPZ Jobs & Education Working Group co-chair, has also been involved and is a former colleague of Danna's when employed at Go-Biz during the initiative's development.
- Blueprint builds on \$286 million investment to local regions that began in October 2022 where \$65 million was invested to set the groundwork for the 13 regional collaboratives.
  - May 2023 - \$39 million was invested in pilot projects.
  - From Mar. 2023 to Sep. 2024 data-driven local plans were crafted throughout each region with the assistance of experts.
  - Mar. 2024 – California Jobs First council was created and \$14 million was invested in each region for Catalyst strategic projects.
    - Catalyst is only funding for planning stage. Regional committees must secure other sources of funding for implementation.
    - Other regions have completed their Catalyst strategic planning. Southern Border Region will be concluding its planning in April 2025.
  - Sep. 2024 to Jan. 2025, the state spent time defining its blueprint for strategic economic sectors in a unified set of state-wide goals.
    - First time in 30 years that there has been a unified state economic plan.
    - Was informed by and utilized the data of regional collaboratives.
    - Playbook identifies regional profiles and investment strategies to help unlock public and private investment funding.
- Economic Blueprint is composed of 10 Tradeable sectors divided into sub-sector categories indicated by current and future importance to the overall Californian economy.
  - **Anchor** industries are non-tradeable goods and services that are required for the successful development of other economic sectors.
    - Examples include Education & Skilled Workforce, Healthcare, Housing, Childcare, and Infrastructure.
    - The Southern Border Region has identified Education, Housing, Healthcare, Childcare, and Broadband as Anchor industries.
  - **Strengthen** represents industries that currently form the backbone of California's economy.
    - Examples are Film and Television, Tourism, and Financial Services.
    - The Southern Border Region has identified Strengthen as Tourism, Agriculture, and Manufacturing industries.
  - **Accelerate** are industries that are currently making great strides and with appropriate investment could help buoy California's economy in the near future.

- Examples are Green Tech such as solar, Agricultural Tech, Aerospace & Defense, Pharmaceuticals/Biotech, and Hardware & Software Development.
- The Southern Border Region has identified Accelerate as Solar, Defense, and Biotech.
- **Bets** are emerging or theoretical fields that could potentially produce dividends in the future but require more research and development in the current day.
  - Some examples are Artificial Intelligence, Quantum Computing, and Robotics.
  - The Southern Border Region has identified Bet as Robotics and Offshore Wind Production.
- The four pilot sectors for CA Jobs First are Agricultural Tech, Life Sciences, Semiconductors, and Space Defense & Satellites.
  - Regional collaboratives are tasked with creating replicable models for sector development in these fields.

#### Q&A

**Elizabeth Cotton:** "Is the State looking for additional ideas or projects for Bet industries or are they more focused on Accelerate industries?"

- **Danna:** "State looking at industries listed under Bet but are currently focusing their efforts on Accelerate. State is also keeping its eye on industries it'd like to Strengthen. Currently looking for investment opportunities for four pilot sector industries before re-focusing on Bet."

#### Objective Wordsmithing Open Forum:

The goal of the objective wordsmithing open forum was to discuss whether the Economic Activity's current objective to *"Increase and Improve Access to Capital and Education Around Financial Literacy"* matched the Working Group member's current capabilities as well as the group's overall goal to increase Economic Activity. A secondary question of whether having two sub-objectives under the primary objective was effective given the potential for confusion that having sub-objectives can engender.

- The Current Sub-Objectives for Economic Activity were:
  - Strengthen the Business Base and Attract New Businesses to Vacant Land
    - **Initial Proposed Revision:** *"Strengthen existing businesses, attract new industries, and create an environment conducive to business."*
  - Support Small Businesses, Entrepreneurs, and Self-Employed Residents
    - **Initial Proposed Revision:** *"Support emerging small businesses, entrepreneurs, and the self-employed by increasing financial education and digital literacy."*
- No other Promise Zone Working Group has sub-objectives and instead has multiple primary objectives.



- All current working group members agreed that creating two primary objectives is best and not to have sub-objectives, as it brings Economic Activity more in line with the standards adopted by other Working Groups.
  - The two, initial proposed revisions were seen as being too similar. Final revised objectives are better differentiated in comparison, as first is action-based and second is focused on education.
  - Final revised objectives will be presented to Working Group during April meeting.
- Concern was raised that we may be leaving behind increasing and improving access to capital by adopting the initial revised objectives.
- Jacqueline Schliapnik-Garcia appreciated the addition of creating an environment conducive to business, as this is what she hears most from prospective business owners.
  - Domanic Riley mentioned that safety is a key element of creating an environment conducive to business and is a part of the first revised objective.
- A discussion about whether to be specific or broad related to how to support small business ensued. Although it was agreed that digital literacy and financial education are important and essential, so are resources related to business education, including how to hire employees, compliance, business loans, marketing and branding.
  - There was also discussion about whether supporting emerging businesses is a significant enough distinction to base an entire objective around. Starting a business and maintaining one take different skills, and businesses that have been in operation for 10 to 15 years are very different from a new entrepreneur.
  - It was suggested to remove “emerging” from the objective and add “supporting” businesses through technical assistance, as this will ultimately strengthen them.
- Group came to consensus to have objectives be broad, and logic model activities be more specific.
  - Will need to have individuals with financial background in both rooms, as many proposed activities under new objectives will require their expertise.
  - There was some concern that focus on digital literacy efforts would be lost if goals were too broad, but this can be included as a specific activity in the logic model.
    - Jacqueline mentioned that the Diamond Business District has done three courses on digital literacy. Many business owners need help in that aspect from beginning to end.
    - Advertising has changed to be primarily digital and brick-and-mortar storefronts are out of reach for many potential business owners who are not tech-savvy enough to create virtual businesses.
    - Teresa Valenzuela brought up the digital divide and how it can create have and have-nots.
- John Tucker summarized that to solve for the goal of Increasing Economic Activity, two ways are business sustainability and business development.

- Financial education and digital literacy fall under both of these approaches.
- Create hand-off process where one portion of group assists new business owners, and another portion is tasked with existing business owners.
  - Black Tech Link's focus on import-export education was given as an example of advanced digital literacy for business owners.
- The Promise Zone would not be a continuum of care, but a communication hub for businesses and non-profit service providers.
  - Irene agreed with John's suggestion, as knowing where resources are located is important for businesses looking to increase cash flow and develop skills required to identify potential sources of investment capital.

**Breakouts: Logic Model**

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

**Attendance:** No Breakouts Took Place During This Meeting.

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

**Attendance:** No Breakouts Took Place During This Meeting.

Organizations may enter their submission into the logic model at [this Google form](#).

**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, April 24, 2025, 10:00 am -11:30 am
- Digital Comment Box: <https://us16.list-manage.com/survey?u=e913b9d30ca18b3436360cf47&id=62c8f5dc2f>