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Draft FY26 City Budget Prioritizes Public Safety, Continues to Keep Neighborhoods Safe

AMID \$258 MILLION DEFICIT, EFFICIENCIES IDENTIFIED WITHIN SDPD ALLOW FOR PATROLS AND OFFICER RECRUITMENT TO CONTINUE

SAN DIEGO – In developing the draft Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 budget, Mayor Todd Gloria prioritized public safety by proposing ongoing investments in the San Diego Police Department (SDPD) to ensure that San Diego remains one of the [safest large cities](#) in the United States.

Today, May 6, SDPD will present its proposal as part of the City of San Diego's draft budget for FY26 that was [released on April 15](#).

Due to the citywide projected \$258 million deficit in the next fiscal year, the City's draft FY26 budget includes cuts to some service levels outside of public safety. Initial projections during budget development could have left SDPD with a 5% budget reduction – nearly \$35 million, which could have impacted emergency response times. However, Mayor Gloria's administration was able to minimize reductions, in part by identifying efficiencies within the Police Department's budget.

“San Diego is one of the safest big cities in the country – and that is no accident. It is a distinct choice that we will prioritize public safety,” said Mayor Todd Gloria. **“Even in the face of a difficult fiscal environment, my administration is making the strategic choice to invest in the people and resources that keep our neighborhoods safe. That is what San Diegans expect and deserve – and this budget delivers.”**

Overall, SDPD's FY26 budget proposal at \$702.3 million is an increase of 4% over the past year, largely due to salary and benefit increases that were part of negotiated contracts set into place in previous years, and that are key to ensuring the ongoing recruitment and retention of trained police officers and staff.

“This has been a tough budget season, no doubt about it, but where we've landed is significantly better than where we started,” said SDPD Chief Scott Wahl. **“The reductions we're proposing are far less than originally projected, and most importantly, they protect the core services our community counts on every day.”**

Among the significant efficiencies identified is the **repurposing** of SDPD's Northwestern Division in the Carmel Valley area. Northwestern is one of nine patrol divisions in SDPD. This repurposing would maintain officers assigned to patrol and respond to communities within Northwestern Division, but they would instead start their work day from the nearby facilities at Northern or Northeastern divisions, located just a few miles away.

The department's commitment to response times, public safety and crime prevention in northwestern communities – including Black Mountain Ranch, Carmel Valley, Del Mar Heights, Sorrento Valley and Torrey Highlands – will continue uninterrupted, just under a different operational model.

Consolidating the police staff from Northwestern results in the elimination of six leadership positions in SDPD, saving approximately \$1.7 million. Officers assigned to these communities will continue to patrol and respond. And, importantly, the Police Department plans to keep the Northwestern Division's front counter open for those who are seeking in-person contact.

Other identified efficiencies include the elimination of some vacant detective positions and removing a limited number of positions within the Patrol Operations Division. Responsibilities for these positions will be absorbed by other divisions and work will continue.

Additionally, overtime is proposed to be reduced by \$3 million. However, under a new model proposed by Chief Wahl, overtime will be more efficiently distributed department-wide through enhanced oversight from Commanding Officers and the creation of a new staffing unit. Patrol overtime will be prioritized to bolster staffing levels and meet response time standards.

SDPD will present its draft budget to the City Council's Budget Review Committee later today. To learn more, visit the City's [Fiscal Year 2026 Draft Budget webpage](#).



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