

March 12, 2025

Subject: **Request to Budget and Backfill ADA Technical Expert Position**

Dear Mayor Gloria and Members of the City Council,

The Accessibility Advisory Board wishes to express an urgent concern. The ADA Compliance and Accessibility Program is losing its technical ADA expert this summer due to retirement. It is imperative to include in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Budget the retention of this position as it is critical to ensuring the City of San Diego's compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as outlined in Title II of the ADA.

Residents, workers, and visitors living with disabilities deserve a dedicated advocate with specialized expertise in the ADA. San Diego's parks, public rights-of-way, transportation, and attractions are core to participation in our community. Mayor Gloria and City Councilmembers outlined in their FY 2026 Budget priorities a continued commitment to equity, accessibility, and inclusivity. We believe that to ensure this vision of an equitable San Diego, the ADA Compliance and Accessibility Program position must continue to be funded despite the current hiring freeze, particularly as this position will soon be vacated due to retirement.

We strongly urge you to prioritize backfilling the ADA expert position upon the June 2025 retirement of the current employee. The responsibilities of this position include, but are not limited to, conducting accessibility assessments, ensuring code compliance with ADA and California Unruh Disability Civil Rights Act standards, and providing essential support with accessibility code guidance to various city departments.

The absence of a qualified individual in this position could result in significant setbacks in the City's efforts to uphold ADA standards, potentially leading to non-compliance issues and putting the City at significant legal and financial risk. Furthermore, this position is indispensable in navigating the complexities of ADA and California Building Code regulations and ensuring that our city's infrastructure and services are accessible to everyone.

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While we understand the challenges posed by the current budget situation and hiring freeze, the importance of this position cannot be overstated. We respectfully request that you consider an exemption to the hiring freeze and include this critical position in the FY 2026 Budget to ensure the City of San Diego continues to lead by example in accessibility and equity for people with disabilities.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your positive response and are available to discuss this further at your convenience.

Respectfully,

Accessibility Advisory Board, City of San Diego

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