



## **SENIOR AFFAIRS ADVISORY BOARD**

### **Meeting Minutes**

WEDNESDAY, May 21, 2025

In Person Meeting: 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Location: **Park De La Cruz Community Center**

**3901 Landis Street**

**San Diego, CA 92107**

### **Agenda**

#### **Item 1: Call to Order and Roll Call**

Chair Gwenmarie Hilleary called the Senior Affairs Advisory Board meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.

Antoinette Alioto, Marissa Feliciano, Gwenmarie Hilleary, Jacqueline Jackson, Michelle Matter, William Peetoom, Bob Prath, JB Robinson, Mary Scott Knolls, Juan Sotelo, and Rosemary White Pope present.

#### **Item 2: Information Item: City Planning Department, Sean McGee, Principal Planner**

Sean McGee provided an overview of how the City's General Plan and Community Planning processes align with the City of San Diego Age-Friendly Action Plan. He began by outlining the mission and structure of the City Planning Department, which is responsible for long-range planning in areas such as homes, jobs, equity, environment, parks, and public spaces. The General Plan, known as Blueprint SD, is implemented through 52 Community Plans, each tailored to local needs and updated through community input.

He explained that the City's planning efforts are inherently aligned with several goals in the Action Plan, particularly those related to land use, housing, and mobility. One of the Action Plan's housing goals—ensuring that all residents have access to housing transition options—directly aligns with the 2021–2029 Housing Element Goals 1 through 3. He provided examples of implementation, including Housing Action Package 1.0, which introduced a Housing Accessibility Program, and Housing Action Package 2.0, which incentivizes Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). These policies are reflected in the University Community Plan Update (2024), which includes strategies to expand housing options for older adults, such as a diverse mix of unit sizes, accessible educational facilities, and site designs that support multimodal travel.

In terms of mobility, he highlighted how Action Plan goals intersect with the City's Mobility Element and are further implemented through improvements to the public right-of-way, pedestrian enhancements, and Complete Streets strategies. He emphasized that the Planning Department's work is closely tied to other City departments, particularly Development Services, which plays a larger role in permitting and accessibility reviews. Board members asked questions about aging in place, the availability of data to track progress on Action Plan goals, and enforcement of housing accessibility standards. He noted that while the Planning Department has a limited enforcement role, it coordinates with Development Services and other departments to ensure appropriate review of development projects.

Board members asked about the accessibility of public buildings (particularly the Southeastern Live Well Center), praised the City's use of universal design, the stressed the importance of monitoring federally required accessibility in housing developments. Sean encouraged advocacy through engagement with elected officials and noted that proposals such as incentives or rezoning could be explored further with legislators. He also addressed questions about changes to ADU regulations, parking policies and their impacts on older adults, code enforcement related to aging housing stock, and the incorporation of technology and smart infrastructure in community plans. He concluded by noting that mobility staff are best equipped to address questions related to adaptive technology, although each Community Plan includes mobility components that promote its use. Sean welcomed continued engagement and provided his contact information for follow-up.

### **Item 3: Non-Agenda Public Comment**

None

### **Item 4: Review and Approval of Minutes**

Chair Gwenmarie Hilleary introduced the item. Mary Scott Knolls requested a correction to Item 4. Bob Prath made a motion to approve the minutes with the correction. Antoinette Alioto seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Item 5: Officer Reports**

Gwenmarie Hilleary reported on the status of board member terms and shared updates regarding letters sent about upcoming expirations. To maintain continuity on the Board, member terms are staggered so that not all members term out simultaneously. Five members recently renewed their terms for an additional two years.

She also shared findings from the most recent Point-in-Time Count, which gathers data on individuals experiencing homelessness in San Diego County. While the City of San Diego saw a 14% decrease in overall homelessness, the number of older adults experiencing homelessness increased by 5% in the County. Older adults now make up approximately one-third of the region's homeless population, and notably, half of them are experiencing homelessness for the first time. Mary Scott Knolls underscored the importance of education and access to information to prevent evictions and suggested tracking reasons why older adults are becoming homeless.

JB Robinson provided an update on Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) incentive programs and reviewed proposed changes to current regulations. He noted that the City is working to align local policies with state mandates, however, some community members have expressed concerns that ADU development is increasingly driven by potential profit rather than its original intent to support housing for older adults or extended family. JB emphasized the importance of maintaining affordability at the center of ADU-related policies. Bob Prath added that suggestions on ADU regulations have already been submitted to the Mayor's office. He urged the City to implement reasonable rules that avoid unintended negative consequences, especially as there is growing momentum around ADU development. He highlighted that 30% of new housing construction in San Diego consists of ADUs and pointed to an AARP survey that found 30% of ADUs provide financial stability for older adults. He also noted that 80% of parcels in San Diego are zoned for single-family use, which remains a key factor in housing discussions.

Bob Prath also raised an emerging concern about crypto ATM machines and potential elder abuse. Older adults may not fully understand these machines, leading to financial exploitation. Councilmember Campbell is pursuing an ordinance that would require warning labels on machines to inform users and deter abuse.

#### **Item 6: City Staff Liaison Report**

Kristi Fenick shared that an upcoming speaker from the County will address emergency preparedness, specifically focusing on plans for evacuating homebound individuals and outlining the coordination among state, city, and county agencies. Gwenmarie Hilleary emphasized the need to identify and reach older adults who may need evacuation assistance, while Antoinette Alioto asked whether the speaker could also address any budget cuts impacting evacuation services for older adults.

Kristi announced she would not be attending the next meeting, but another City staff member will be present. She added she will confirm a speaker from Development Services for July or August and encouraged Board members to send topic suggestions in advance to help shape the presentation. Gwenmarie Hilleary shared that Aging & Independence Services (AIS) offered to speak at a future meeting.

Kristi also noted that the Mayor personally reviews the minutes from Board meetings and is interested in the discussions and recommendations. She reminded members that their input reaches beyond the room and encouraged continued advisement on key issues. She presented certificates of appreciation from the Mayor's Office and expressed gratitude for the Board's efforts.

#### **Item 7: Old Business: Blue Envelope**

Gwenmarie Hilleary (GMH) followed up on the Blue Envelope program, which has recently been reinvigorated. She proposed organizing a meeting to explore opportunities to expand the program's scope to include individuals with diabetes and other specific health needs. The meeting would serve to evaluate which elements of the program have been effective and identify areas for improvement. GMH also suggested integrating promotional efforts through the Board's website and leveraging senior centers to help encourage participation. The intent is for older

adults to be able to self-identify for the program and for local police departments to be made aware and engaged in supporting its success. Juan Sotelo offered to attend the proposed meeting.

#### **Item 8: Old Business: County Aging Road Map**

The Board discussed formal participation in the County Advisory Group. While Bob Prath is already a participant, the opportunity is open for other Board members to attend and engage with the group. Antoinette Alioto expressed interest in serving as the official representative and offered to report back to the Board. A motion was made by Mary Scott Knolls and seconded by Jacqueline Jackson to have Antoinette serve in this capacity. The motion was approved unanimously.

#### **Item 8: Board Comments, Announcements, Topics for Future SAAB Meetings**

Bob Prath shared information about the upcoming AARP Scam Jam focused on elder abuse prevention, scheduled for June 20 from 10:00 AM to 12:30 PM at the Southwest Live Well Center. The event will be co-sponsored by members of the San Diego City Council. He emphasized that while older adults may fall victim to online scams less frequently, the financial and emotional toll is often far greater when they are targeted. Kristi Fenick will distribute event details to the Board.

Rosemary White Pope announced that the Fourth District Senior Resource Center will host a Juneteenth event at the George Stevens Senior Center on June 19 from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM, where an information and resource table will be available for older adults and their families.

Gwenmarie Hilleary reported that Meals on Wheels is facing potential federal funding challenges. Bob Prath provided background on funding sources for congregate sites and home delivered meals. Antoinette Alioto will be attending the national Meals on Wheels conference in August and plans to bring back insights and updates to the Board.

#### **Item 11: Adjournment**

William Peetoom made a motion to adjourn the meeting. JB Robinson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 1:35 p.m.