




COUNCILMEMBER VIVIAN MORENO

**City of San Diego
Council District Eight**

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 13, 2025

TO: Council President LaCava, Chair, Rules Committee

FROM: Councilmember Vivian Moreno 

SUBJECT: 2025 Rules Committee Priorities

In response to your memorandum soliciting priorities for the Rules Committee in 2025, I urge your careful consideration of the following:

Development of a Council Procedure for Consideration of Additional Unclassified Positions

Each year, the City Council holds multiple public hearings to discuss the Mayor's proposed fiscal year budget. During these hearings the public and City Council are able to discuss any management positions that are proposed to be added in the next fiscal year. This process is transparent and allows the public to weigh the pros and cons of each additional position in the context of the full budget. However, throughout the year and after passage of the adopted budget, staff often proposes adding new unclassified positions. Sometimes, these are positions that were specifically not approved for inclusion in the budget during the Council's final budget approval, while other times, the positions were never proposed in the budget at all and are materially new positions for Council consideration. Adding supplemental, unclassified positions to the annual budget in this piecemeal fashion is not transparent. The Committee should coordinate with the Budget and Government Efficiency Committee to develop a Council Policy that restricts the addition of unclassified positions throughout the fiscal year other than during discussion of the Mayor's proposed budget or within the Mayor's mid-year budget, except in cases where the unclassified position is needed to meet the needs of an emergency.

Customer Service

High quality customer service is critical to ensuring San Diegans receive the city services they need. As such, the following issues should be discussed by the Committee in 2025.

- In 2022 the City Auditor released a Performance Audit of the City's Get It Done (GID) Application and Service Requests Management. Among other things, the Auditor found that a centralized, 3-1-1 phone-based intake option could improve the customer service experience, increase equity and access to city services, and decrease SDPD's call volume and wait times. The Auditor also found that the city is not meeting current demand for many types of service requests; continued process improvements and additional resources are likely needed to address service requests submitted through GID and a future 3-1-1 contact option. To ensure customer service equity throughout the city, a 3-1-1 phone-based system should receive serious consideration. The Committee received an update from the Performance and Analytics Dept. on this issue in 2023 and should receive another update in order to track the progress of the city's investment in phone-based call centers to enhance customer service in underserved areas where the digital divide exists.
- The Committee should receive an update on the GID app, including data on how many requests were made in 2024, how many requests were closed, with categories showing whether closed requests resulted in a successful resolution to the issue that was reported or whether it was closed due to lack of a resolution. The Committee should discuss strategies to enhance the GID app experience for users and any resources required.

Discussion of Proposed Ballot Measures for 2026

The Rules Committee oversees Elections and Ballot Measures. This Committee should begin discussing high priority measures that may need to be placed on the ballot in 2026, so as to ensure sufficient time is afforded for the development of language for those measures. Measures the Committee should provide initial consideration for include:

- **Transient Occupancy Tax Increase Ballot Measure:** The most recent Five-Year Outlook (FY26-FY30) shows that city expenditures beyond the Baseline require additional resources of \$329.3M in FY26 and decrease to \$276.3M by FY30. It is imperative that new revenue is identified to avoid long term cuts to public services, such as libraries, parks and public safety. According to the Outlook, Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) revenue is set to grow from \$176.4M in FY26 to \$214.2M in FY30. An increase to the TOT of 1 cent would produce additional revenue in the range of \$32M-\$39M annually over the course of the Outlook period. This Committee should consider development of a ballot measure for a general-purpose increase to the TOT for the 2026 ballot, which would provide the city with additional revenue into the future to continue providing high quality projects and service to the people of San Diego.
- **Storm Water Fee Ballot Measure:** Last year, this Committee discussed placing a measure on the ballot that would provide revenue for storm water projects and upgrades. Although the measure did not advance to be placed on the 2024 ballot, I believe this should be under consideration for the 2026 ballot to ensure that even in difficult budget years, the city has a reliable source of revenue to build proper storm water infrastructure that helps prevent catastrophic flooding events, as we saw in areas such as Southcrest in 2024.

Translation Services

Continued investment and enhancements to the city's translation services is vital to ensure access to City Council meetings by members of the public who speak languages other than English. The Committee should receive an update from the City Clerk's Office and Council Administration to discuss what resources are needed to build upon the current translation services offered to the public at Council meetings.

Centralized Response to Public Records Act Requests

The city's method of responding to public records act requests is inadequate. According to a December 28, 2022 report by the Union Tribune, the city *"has paid more than \$240,000 in attorney fees and court costs since the start of 2021 for rejecting California Public Records Act requests,"* and that *"[t]he city routinely settles allegations after signs that the judges in these cases agreed that records had been wrongly withheld or that evidence showed the city had falsely claimed the records didn't exist."* This is not the right way to handle requests from the public on how the city is conducting its business. The public has a right to know what the city is doing and should not have to go to court to obtain public records. This Committee should request a plan to centralize the city's responses to public records act requests and discuss potential changes that could enhance the public's access to city government.

Open Government and Transparency

The city must do all it can to ensure residents have direct access to city services, public meetings and public documents. The Committee should receive an update regarding any steps that can be taken to expand access to City Hall to San Diegans, including the need for additional investments or required legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit priorities for the Rules Committee in 2025. I look forward to a productive year.