



The City of



Economic Development

MEETING NOTES

San Diego Promise Zone

Healthy Communities Meeting Notes

Thursday, Sept. 11, 2025 | 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. | via Zoom

Healthy Communities Goal: *Promote access to healthcare and healthy foods*

In Attendance:

City of San Diego – Promise Zone (Amber Weber, Roosevelt Williams III, Chrishael Rose Sanchez, Daniella Salgado, Amairany Macias), **City of San Diego – Economic Development Department** (Christie Marcella), **I Love to Glean** (Karen Clay), **Blue Shield of California** (Ale Ricardez, Jacqueline Loam), **County of San Diego – Health and Human Services Agency** (Alondra Estrada-Lam), **California Coast Credit Union** (Angel Nolasco), **Leah's Pantry** (Carlos Alessandrini), **Barrio Botany** (Christina Abuelo), **Sherman Heights Community Center** (Daniella Kelly), **Sanford Stem Cell Institute UC San Diego** (Mericar Domdom, Alondra Venegas), **County of San Diego – Office of Emergency Services** (Nicholas Zobel, Myla Barker), **Neighborhood House Association** (Damon R. Carson), **The LEARN Program** (Lee Bardon), **Institute for Public Strategies** (Paola Rochin Bochm), **SAY San Diego** (Cynthia Knapp), **Urban Relations** (Lan Nguyễn), **San Diego LGBT Center** (Oscar Humberto Gomez), **Logan Heights CDC** (William Burties)

Meeting Notes:

Introductions, Culture Share, and Agenda Review:

- Alondra Estrada-Lam welcomed everyone to the September Healthy Communities meeting and shared this month's agenda.
- The culture share for this month was related to **National Suicide Prevention Month** and **National Self Care Awareness Month** and asked participants, "What are one or two healthy habits that help you feel your best physically, mentally, or emotionally?"

Partner Announcements:

- **Alondra Estrada-Lam:** Safe and Equitable Access to Parks and Everyday Destinations (SEAPED) project will be holding its third coalition meeting. If you are interested in joining, the meeting will be on Sep. 23 at 3 p.m. at the Southeastern Live Well Center. Also, the San Diego Childhood Obesity Initiative (COI) will hold its first park and walk audit on Wednesday, Sept. 24 at 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. at Memorial Park in Logan Heights. The route from Rodriguez Elementary to the Memorial Park will be evaluated in the walk audit. This is a cross-domain effort under the Safe Routes to Healthy Places project. Once the walk audit is complete, findings will be discussed with changemakers. If you are interested in attending, please click the link to RSVP. If you have any

Click the following links to stay connected to the San Diego Promise Zone

[Newsletter](#) | [Website](#) | [Email](#) | (619) 236-6700 | 1200 Third Ave, 14th Floor, San Diego, CA 92101

questions, please reach out to Alondra Estrada-Lam's email as she is the co-chair for COI's government domain.

- [SEAPED & COI Announcements](#)
 - COI Event RSVP: [COI Park and Walk Audit All-Partner Convening Tickets](#)
 - Contact: alondra.estrada@sdcounty.ca.gov
- **Nicholas Zubel & Myla Barker:** Public comments are now open to provide feedback to inform an update to the County of San Diego Emergency Operations Plan: a comprehensive guide that details how the region will respond to major emergencies and disasters. As part of a related effort – the Food Justice Community Action Plan (FJCAP) initiative – food system stakeholders emphasized the importance of integrating food security considerations into emergency planning. By participating in the update process, you help shape emergency response priorities, identify service gaps and access barriers, and strengthen coordination across organizations and communities. The public comment period is open from Sep. 1 - Oct. 31, 2025.
 - [Emergency Operations Plan Flyer](#)
 - The Plan is available for review on the Engage San Diego County website: [Emergency Operations Plan | Engage San Diego County](#).
 - Questions or comments may also be submitted via email to: Nicholas.Zubel@sdcounty.ca.gov
- **Christina Abuelo:** Barrio Botany partners with food and nutrition services to offer monthly garden classes at elementary schools with high rates of free and reduced lunch, especially within the Promise Zone. Students help grow produce for school salad bars, sample garden foods in the cafeteria, and learn how to compost cafeteria leftovers to nourish school gardens. Barrio Botany also hosts garden-to-table workshops for youth and adults, runs summer camps such as the one held in the Logan Heights Library, and organizes volunteer events to maintain gardens. If you're passionate about food, sustainability, or community work, there are plenty of ways to get involved.
 - Contact shermangrows@gmail.com for more information.
- **William Burties:** Join Logan Heights CDC for their Homebuyer Workshop and Fair on Sep. 20, 2025 from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. at the Calvary Baptist Church, and Fall Job Fair on Oct. 8 from 3 - 5 p.m. at the Logan Heights Library. Logan Height's CDC is supporting small entrepreneurs who look to expand their business through their LEEP program. This program is offered to Spanish speaking individuals. See flyers below for more details on all events/programs.
 - [Homebuyer Workshop and Fair Flyer](#)
 - [Fall Job Fair Flyer](#)
 - [LEEP Program Flyer](#)
- **Mericar Domdom:** The Sanford Stem Cell Institute Symposium is a two-day multidisciplinary event highlighting recent breakthroughs in regenerative medicine. It will be held Oct. 16-17, 2025.
 - To register and for more registration, visit [2025 Sanford Stem Cell Institute Symposium Info](#).
- **Chrishael Sanchez:** The City of San Diego, in partnership with Keen Independent Research, is launching its first-ever Community Recreation Needs Assessment (CRNA) to better understand and serve the recreational, communication, and financial needs of



residents across all nine Council Districts. The assessment runs over several months in three phases: Phase 1: Districts 4, 8, 9. Phase 2: Districts 3, 6, 7. Phase 3: Districts 1, 2, 5. Council districts in the Promise Zone are 3, 4, 8, and 9, which include all of Phase 1 and part of Phase 2. Each phase lasts four months and includes virtual workshops, surveys, interviews & focus groups, and in-person public meetings. Residents, organizations, and stakeholders are invited to fill out the community survey, attend meetings, and share experiences and ideas. All feedback is anonymous and will help shape a more inclusive and equitable Parks and Recreation system. Survey deadline: February 28, 2026.

- For more information visit the [CRNA website](#).
- For questions, please contact Keen Independent Research Inc. at sdparksneeds@keenindependent.com.

Promise Zone Updates:

- Chrishael Rose Sanchez was welcomed as she joined the team mid-June. As the Grants & Research VISTA, she identifies funding opportunities, prepares letters of support, and assists with research that strengthens our Promise Zone efforts. She also is the VISTA who directly supports the Healthy Communities working group.
- We have had 30 organizations become an official Promise Zone partner since April. New organizations closely aligned with Healthy Communities that have signed an MOU since the last meeting in May are Blue Shield California, HealthCorps, Kate Sessions Commitment, Father Joe's Villages, GRID Alternatives, Outdoor Outreach, Traveler's Aid Society and Emilio Nares Foundation. For a complete list of all partners, please visit the [Promise Zone website](#).
- The Promise Zone has been selected to present as a panel at the Live Well Advance Summit on Oct. 22. Our session is titled "San Diego Promise Zone: How Cross-Sector Organizations Unite in Community," and the time will be from 1:15-2:00 p.m. Registration to attend the event is free and should open later this month. Jon Rios from the San Diego Housing Commission, Sarah Tuakli Cooper from EIS, and Angel Nolasco from Cal Coast will join as the panel. An exhibitor application is pending. The event will be held downtown at the San Diego Convention Center.
- Save the date for the Dec. 4, 2025 All-Partner Meeting and Mar. 3, 2026 Youth-Led Career Expo.
- Promise Zone held a community workshop and listening session regarding the development of the City's Inclusive Public Engagement Guide in Summer 2024. The City's Planning Department now has a webpage where the guide will be released for public review. Residents are invited to attend an in-person workshop, including one in the Promise Zone at Valencia Park/Malcolm X Library, or in a virtual workshop, or will be able to complete an online survey. The Planning Department also offered to prepare an email that was forwarded to the community members who participated in the Summer 2024 Promise Zone workshop that specifically shares how their feedback was incorporated into the guide.
 - City of San Diego [Inclusive Public Engagement Guide](#)



- The September newsletter spotlight is Alberto “Beto” Vazquez. Beto’s involvement in the Promise Zone and similar programs/projects arose out of a need to help his local community, in whatever way he could. He is currently the Director of STEM Engagement & Community Outreach for UC San Diego’s Center for Research on Education, Assessment & Teaching Excellence (CREATE) and is also the Director for UCSD’s Early Academic Outreach Program. To nominate a community member for a future Community Spotlight, click [here](#).

Guest Presentation: Adrianna Yemhatpe – Travelers Aid

Adrianna Yemhatpe serves as the Director of Social Services at Travelers Aid San Diego, an organization that has been providing transportation support and outreach services to the community for over 120 years. In her role, Adrianna oversees programs that address the needs of low-income older adults, individuals with disabilities, and unhoused populations, helping them access safe, reliable transportation and critical resources.

During this meeting, Adrianna shared valuable information with the Healthy Communities Working Group about the wide range of services Travelers Aid provides, including the SenioRide and Senior Solutions programs, homeless outreach, and RIDEFinder travel training. Her leadership focuses on ensuring vulnerable populations can overcome transportation barriers and connect with the care and opportunities they need.

- **About Travelers Aid**
 - Serving San Diego for over 120 years
 - Provides transportation support for low-income older adults, individuals with disabilities, and unhoused individuals
- **Programs Offered**
 - **SenioRide**
 - Eligibility: 60+, AMI 30% or below, San Diego County residents
 - Services: Pronto bus cards (lottery), 10 paratransit tickets/month (MTS Access & NCTD Lift), volunteer driver stipends
 - **Senior Solutions**
 - Eligibility: 55+, AMI 30% or below, diagnosed immunocompromised condition
 - Must live in City of San Diego or have recent cancer diagnosis (anywhere in county)
 - Services: Lyft/Uber rides (100 miles/month for SD residents; up to \$500/year for cancer-related medical rides), paratransit vouchers
 - **SDPZ Senior Solutions (starting Oct. 2025)**
 - Location: 1501 Imperial Ave., Thursdays 8am–3pm
 - Eligibility: 55+, immunocompromised, living in San Diego Promise Zone
 - Services: Proof of medical/housing appointments required; offers day passes, monthly bus passes, and MTS Access vouchers
 - **Homeless Outreach**

- Services: Certification of homelessness, DMV no-fee ID vouchers, birth certificate vouchers (SD County)
- **RIDEFinder**
 - Transportation referral and information
 - Travel training and trip planning
 - Orientation and mobility training (esp. for visually impaired)
 - Group outings to practice using public transit
- **Contacts**
 - **Adrianna Yemhatpe**, Director of Social Services – (619) 295-8393 ext. 314, adrianna@travelersaidsandiego.org
 - **Marcy Roke**, President – (619) 295-8393 ext. 317, marcy@travelersaidsandiego.org

Guest Presentation: Jacqueline Loam – Blue Shield of California

Jacqueline Loam is a Duals Enrollment & Outreach Manager with Blue Shield of California, specializing in connecting individuals who are eligible for both Medicare and Medi-Cal with comprehensive health coverage options through the Dual Special Needs Plan (D-SNP). With extensive experience in community outreach, enrollment strategy, and member education, Jacqueline works directly with seniors, low-income populations, and community-based organizations to ensure access to reliable, affordable, and coordinated healthcare.

Her role emphasizes building partnerships with local service providers, conducting educational sessions, and guiding members through the complexities of dual eligibility. Jacqueline is committed to fostering healthier communities by making healthcare systems easier to navigate, more accessible, and more responsive to individual needs.

- About the Program
 - Total Dual Special Needs Plan (D-SNP)
 - A Medicare Advantage plan for dual-eligible members (those who qualify for both Medicare and Medi-Cal).
 - Combines Medicare Parts A, B, and D into one coordinated plan.
 - Exclusively Aligned Enrollment → coverage through one parent organization for more holistic, streamlined care.
 - Goal: reliable, convenient, and accessible healthcare.
 - Blue Shield of California Mission
 - Create a healthcare system that is human, honest, courageous.
 - North Star: make healthcare worthy of family and friends while staying sustainably affordable.
- Enrollment & Eligibility
 - Who qualifies?
 - Full-benefit dually eligible individuals with both Medicare & Medi-Cal.
 - Must carry both Medicare & Medi-Cal cards.
 - Enrollment Periods
 - Annual Enrollment: October–December.



- NEW in 2025: Dual Eligible/Low-Income Subsidy (LIS) members have a monthly Special Enrollment Period (SEP).
- Members can choose:
 - Integrated D-SNP
 - MAPD (Medicare Advantage Prescription Drug plan)
 - Original Medicare + PDP (Prescription Drug Plan)
- Outreach & Support Team (San Diego + LA)
 - San Diego Contacts
 - Jackie Loam – 619-733-2025 – Jacqueline.Loam@blueshieldca.com
 - Ale Ricardez – 619-782-5731 – Ale.Ricardez@blueshieldca.com
 - Alma Villa Ortiz – 619-816-9910 – Alma.Villaortiz@blueshieldca.com
 - Regional Managers
 - Maggie Leguizamon (Sr. Manager, LA/SD) – 213-703-5513
 - Maria Reyes (Manager, LA) – 626-230-3908
 - General Duals Outreach Telesales: (800) 684-3332 (Mon–Fri, 8am–5pm)
- Collaboration with Community Partners
 - Works with organizations serving seniors and FQHCs.
 - Focus areas:
 - High-touch customer service
 - Expert guidance from DSNP-licensed agents
 - Strong community connections
 - Retention & growth strategies
 - Partnership Activities:
 - Lunch & Learns
 - Dedicated liaisons
 - Education sessions on systems & enrollment
 - Retention-focused strategies

Promise Zone Priorities & Transition Activities:

Amber Weber provided updates about the federal Promise Zone designation, which ends on June 6, 2026. The Promise Zone team is half the size that it was last year; as such, the number of working group meetings this year has been reduced. She invited participants to recommend organizations or people to present in future working group meetings. If you would like to suggest a guest speaker, please email PromiseZone@sandiego.gov.

Priority projects this year include the Youth-Led Career Expo (Mar. 3, 2026), the Community Perception Survey (Mar-April 2026), an Impact Report (for partners to complete), and transition plans. Participants participated in a poll regarding the Community Perception Survey. Most participants preferred using a Google Form to collect ideas for survey questions (link [here](#)), while some were interested in holding a smaller meeting to draft them collaboratively, which will be held on Oct. 23 from 11 a.m. - 12 p.m. Survey questions specific to each working group will be narrowed down and presented at the Oct/Nov. working group meetings.



Regarding the end of the federal designation, the City's role as the lead entity will change, allowing the initiative to be truly community-led, and the City will continue to support the Promise Zone in other ways. The Promise Zone Steering Committee will have two planning sessions in September and October, and co-chairs will take ideas from the August and September working group meetings to the planning sessions. Participants reflected on the future of the Promise Zone as it approaches the end of its federal designation, focusing on how to keep partnerships active and coordinated. The group discussed several ideas, including continuing regular convenings, seeking ongoing funding for staff support, and connecting with local government and philanthropic partners to sustain collaborative efforts. Overall, participants highlighted the importance of maintaining coordination and defining leadership roles as the Promise Zone moves into its community-led phase.

Partners are still encouraged to submit new activities, or update past activities, into the logic model with [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](#).
- **Next Meeting:** Thurs., Nov. 13, 2025, 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., via Zoom