



**COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOE LACAVA**  
**FIRST COUNCIL DISTRICT**

**M E M O R A N D U M**

DATE: May 9, 2025

TO: The Honorable Mayor Todd Gloria

FROM: Council President Joe LaCava

SUBJECT: Reflections on the FY2026 Draft Budget

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In light of a difficult budget discussion and reflecting on comments by my colleagues potentially rejecting reductions in the FY2026 Draft Budget, I offer initial thoughts for your consideration as you prepare the May Revise.

In reviewing the Draft Budget, I have serious concerns with proposed reductions in Parks & Recreation, Libraries, Stormwater, Lake Recreation, and Code Enforcement. Aside from the mitigation measures offered below, I have not yet identified sufficient new revenue or compensating cuts in other areas to fully alleviate my concerns to these reductions. I remain open to suggestions brought forward by this Administration, my Council colleagues, and the IBA.

**New Revenue Options Must Be Supported**

Before all else, we must secure the votes to pass new revenue measures.

- Solid Waste Management Plan (assuming protest votes are not successful)
- Comprehensive Parking Strategy

Further, our assumption regarding Measure C must come to fruition. These three new sources of revenue represent upwards of \$140 million in solving our \$300+ million deficit.

**Mitigation Measures That Can Be Implemented Near-Term**  
(Broader Council Support Unknown)

- Raise nonprofit special event fees to full cost recovery  
**Net: \$1,000,000**  
It may require a Motion to Reconsider, as the lower fee was adopted by the Council based on an amendment I made.
- Raise parking fines for expired meters as recommended by staff  
**Net: \$1,500,000**  
It may require a Motion to Reconsider as the lower fee was adopted by Council based on an amendment by Councilmember Whitburn.
- Mandatory one-week furlough for unclassified employees  
**Net: \$2,500,000**  
Reduces the estimated impact of a five percent increase for unclassified employees in line with unclassified agreements and the Salary Ordinance.
- Distribute security costs across all General Fund departments  
**Net: Unknown**  
Critical departments are currently charged for their individual security needs. Libraries and Parks, for example, should not be burdened while sacrificing operational funding that should be used for critical services/hours. Spreading the consolidated cost across all departments is the more equitable approach.
- Draw reimbursement from parking meter revenue for services provided by Neighborhood Policing Division and CleanSD.  
**Net: Unknown**  
Their services make neighborhoods and sidewalks more pedestrian-friendly and should be an eligible reimbursable cost.
- Strategic cuts across SDPD to preserve Northwestern Division  
**Net: As much as \$1,700,000**
- Charge Transient Occupancy Taxes on parking at hotels  
**Net: Unknown**
- Update private waste haulers fees  
**Net: Upwards of \$4,000,000**  
Bargain-basement fees have not been raised in decades. Expedite steps to achieve an increase in fees for FY2026.
- Paid parking for non-San Diego residents in Mission Bay and coastal parks  
**Net: Unknown**  
Begin Coastal Commission process now to allow for paid parking in Mission Bay and coastal parks, as part of Comprehensive Parking Strategy.
- Pass along credit card transaction fees for parking meter payments to the customer  
**Net: Unknown**  
Passing along the credit card fees increases the amount of revenue available to the City for eligible expenses.

Over the course of the week, I raised concern about several items. In reflection, I offer:

### **Making Reductions More Palatable**

- **Removing Fire Pits**  
Option 1: Keep the fire pits, but fully recover operating costs by instituting a permit and reservation mechanism. This could also make users more accountable.  
Option 2: By ordinance, ban all wood-burning fires on beaches and shoreline parks.  
Either option will facilitate late night enforcement by SDPD.
- **Reduction in Joint Use Park Maintenance**  
Option: By ordinance, ban dogs and pets so we do not violate our Joint Use Agreements and ensure the parks/play fields are safe and sanitary for the students the next day.
- **Reduction in SDPD "Overtime" (2025 Actual v 2026 Proposed)**  
"Overtime" is an HR term, rename these funding buckets for what they are, "Operational Reserves." We should also develop a "Plan B" as we can expect that the budgeted "Operational Reserves" will be exceeded as they necessarily do every year given on-going staffing challenges.

With the mitigations offered above, I close at this time with three asks that directly affect District 1 residents and visitors.

### **My Asks**

- Preserve SDPD's Northwestern Division Command (see above)
- Fulfill our funding responsibility to the San Dieguito River Park Joint Powers Authority (\$56,000 in addition to the Draft Budget)
- Keep all Shoreline Comfort Stations open (\$148,000 increase)

There will inevitably be amendments offered by my Council colleagues. I will weigh each by the merits and the compensating mitigation.

Thank you for your consideration as you finalize the May Revise.

cc: Paola Avila, Chief of Staff, Mayor Todd Gloria  
Matt Vespi, Chief Financial Officer  
Charles Modica, Independent Budget Analyst  
Matt Yagyagan, Director of Policy, Mayor Todd Gloria