



## **COUNCIL PRESIDENT SEAN ELO-RIVERA NINTH COUNCIL DISTRICT**

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

**DATE:** February 4, 2026

**TO:** Honorable Members of the Environment Committee

**FROM:** Councilmember Sean Elo-Rivera, Chair, Environment Committee

**SUBJECT:** 2026 Environment Committee Work Plan

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Every San Diegan deserves to live in a clean and healthy neighborhood. The San Diego City Council Environment Committee is uniquely positioned to advance this vision, which is why I am excited to share our 2026 Work Plan as the Chair of the Environment Committee. The Work Plan is based in part on your policy priorities, which were promulgated via memo in response to my call memo dated January 5, 2026.

As per the municipal code, the Environment Committee's areas of responsibility are policy matters related to:

- Clean Water Program
- Water Management and Policy
- Energy (Solar, Property Assessed Clean Energy Programs, Green),
- Multiple Species Conservation Program
- Solid Waste Disposal
- Recycling
- Air Quality Standards
- Hazardous Waste
- Regional Parks
- Open Space
- Public Utilities
- Golf
- Utility Undergrounding
- Franchise Agreements
- Stormwater Management and Policy
- Climate Action Plan
- Climate Resiliency Plan
- Sustainability
- Wastewater Management and Policy
- Independent Rates Oversight Committee
- Pure Water (including Indirect Potable Reuse/Direct Potable Reuse, Recycled Water, Graywater)
- San Diego County Water Authority
- Shoreline Preservation
- Wildlife Management
- Environmental Services
- Environmental Policy

District 9 staff reviewed each submission from the committee members and public and grouped them by themes, which are represented in the Work Plan. It then aligned the public's priorities with those of the committee members to build a list of policy priorities. Not all priorities submitted by the public or committee members are reflected in the Work Plan, but the Work Plan is neither exhaustive nor binding. I welcome your and the public's feedback on its priorities throughout the year.

**2026 Committee Meeting Information**

**Meeting Dates**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Type</b>
January 22	1:00 p.m.	Regular
February 12	1:00 p.m.	Regular
March 12	1:00 p.m.	Regular
April 16	1:00 p.m.	Regular
May 21	1:00 p.m.	Regular
June 18	1:00 p.m.	Regular
August 20	1:00 p.m.	Regular
September 17	1:00 p.m.	Regular
October 15	1:00 p.m.	Regular
November 12	1:00 p.m.	Regular

*Note: the legislative calendar is subject to change and special meetings may be called. The public will be notified in accordance with Brown Act noticing requirements when meetings are added or changed.*

**Meeting Participation**

Access

The public may participate in committee meetings either in person or via Zoom Webinar. Information for viewing, attending, and participating in meetings can be found on the City Clerk’s website and on each committee meeting agenda.

Non-agenda Public Comment

At each regular meeting, members of the public can provide non-agenda public comment. Non-agenda public comment is an opportunity to offer remarks on any topic relevant to the Environment Committee that is not being discussed as an agenda item. Speakers for non-agenda public comment will have 2 minutes to provide their remarks, although there will be no discussion among the committee members of the topics addressed during non-agenda public comment.

Public Comment

Members of the public have an opportunity to comment on each agenda item. Depending on the number of speakers, each speaker will have 1-2 minutes to provide their remarks, which must be applicable to the item being heard. Following the conclusion of public comment, committee members will deliberate on the item. Instructions for providing public comment are included on the meeting agenda and are promulgated at the meeting.

**Guiding Values**

Informing the Environment Committee’s work and policy priorities is the following set of values.

**Environmental Justice**

As defined by State law, environmental justice means “the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

Racist and prejudiced government decisions over the decades have resulted in San Diego’s lower income communities and communities of color being disproportionately impacted by pollution and associated health risks. Today, these communities are bearing the brunt of climate change. Environmental justice represents the intentional action to correct these inequities and ensure the input of San Diegans most impacted by climate change are considered in policies that affect them. Centering environmental justice is intended to eliminate disparities and provide opportunity for all.

**Sustainability**

UCLA defines sustainability as “the integration of environmental health, social equity and economic vitality in order to create thriving, healthy, diverse and resilient communities for this generation and generations to come.”

Decisions by the Environment Committee should advance this vision for all San Diegans.

**Economic and Worker Justice**

Too often, environmental justice is assumed to be at odds with economic and worker justice. This need not be the case. The work of the Committee should prioritize the economic well-being of working families and the empowerment, safety, and dignity of workers.

**Democracy**

Meaningful public participation is essential to building public trust and to developing and implementing impactful public policy. The Committee invites all members of the public to engage in Committee work. This can be through public comment at meetings to inform decision making and hold committee members accountable. It can also be through phone or email communication with committee members’ staff or the committee consultant in between meetings.

**Committee Goals**

Flowing from the committee’s principles are desired outcomes, which were identified by grouping community and committee members’ priorities by theme. Policies crafted and informed by the committee should result in improved quality of life for all San Diegans by:

- Advancing environmental justice
- Taking effective climate action
- Investing in infrastructure and services
- Advance economic and worker justice

## **2026 Environment Committee priorities**

The policy priorities below are designed to achieve the Committee’s goals and align with its guiding values.

### **Advancing Environmental Justice**

#### **Climate Resilient SD Implementation**

Climate Resilient SD is the City’s comprehensive climate adaptation and resiliency plan, designed to increase San Diego’s ability to adapt, recover, and thrive in a changing climate. The Committee will receive updates on Climate Resilient SD implementation and support policies that advance the objectives of the plan, including addressing sea level rise and mitigating wildfire risk. The Committee will also support the pursuit of external funding to advance Climate Resilient SD goals.

The Committee will work to strengthen San Diego’s ability to prepare for, withstand, and recover from climate-related impacts that affect public safety, infrastructure, and economic stability. This includes receiving updates on sea level rise impacts to housing, transportation, coastal assets, and critical infrastructure; providing oversight of mitigation and adaptation strategies addressing flooding, erosion, heat, and extreme weather; supporting wildfire preparedness efforts, including brush management, weed abatement, enforcement related to nuisance properties, and coordination with fire service providers; and promoting the integration of climate resilience into land-use planning and capital improvement programs.

#### **Support efforts to address the environmental crisis in the Tijuana River Valley**

The air and water pollution in and around the Tijuana River Valley have significant environmental and public health impacts. In conjunction with its several regional partners, the City should continue to monitor the Tijuana River Valley and provide its support in the response to this crisis.

#### **Monitor compliance of gas and electric franchise agreements**

In 2021, the City awarded San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) the franchises to gas and electric utility services, which entitles SDGE to use the public right of way to deliver those services. In conjunction with the Franchise Compliance Review Committee, the Environment Committee will monitor compliance with the franchises and update the Energy Cooperation Agreement.

#### **Addressing utility costs**

High costs water, electricity, and gas are contributing to San Diego’s high cost of living. The Committee will prioritize policies that mitigate cost increases and promote competition. The Committee will receive updates from the Public Utilities Department on water infrastructure, rate-setting, and billing practices, including ongoing improvements and best practices. The Committee will receive updates from regional water agencies and evaluate proposals to reduce customer costs. Regular invitations to SDG&E, San Diego Community Power and San Diego Water Authority representatives to provide updates will help ensure continued progress, transparency, and clearer communication with the Committee and the public.

#### **Receive updates from the City’s Climate Advisory Board and Climate Resiliency Board**

The Climate Advisory Board and Climate Resiliency Board were established to advise the City on environmental-related policies. The Committee should receive updates from both Boards on its priorities and outcomes. The Committee should receive input from these boards on items related to the Climate Action Plan and Climate Resilient SD Plan prior to their consideration by the Committee.

#### **Monitor Solid Waste, Recycling, and Landfill**

Effective management of solid waste, recycling, and landfills is essential to protect public health, reduce environmental impacts, extend landfill life, and support the City’s long-term sustainability and climate goals. The Committee will monitor implementation of the Zero Waste Plan and provide oversight of the organics recycling program. It will review landfill operations, capacity, and long-term planning, ensuring environmental compliance, methane capture, and emissions monitoring at landfill facilities. The Committee will also evaluate waste diversion strategies and explore innovative solutions to extend landfill life and reduce environmental impacts.

## **Attachment 1 – 2026 Environment Committee Work Plan**

### Air Pollution Mitigation Efforts

The Committee will prioritize strategies to reduce air pollution across San Diego to protect public health and environmental quality. This includes ongoing coordination with the San Diego County Air Pollution Control District to meet state and federal air quality standards, reduce exposure to toxic emissions, and support healthier communities citywide.

### Tobacco Waste and San Diego's Environment

San Diego continues to face the negative impacts of tobacco use, including public health consequences, environmental harm, and litter in our communities. The committee is interested to explore additional strategies and potential solutions, including input from stakeholders and advocacy groups, to address these challenges.

## **Taking Effective Climate Action**

### Climate Action Plan (CAP) implementation

Implementing the CAP is essential to achieving the City's climate action goals. Goals and policies stated in the CAP include:

- Building decarbonization
- New building electrification
- Municipal fleet electrification
- Fewer vehicle miles traveled
- Waste diversion and gas capture
- Tree canopy and natural space restoration

The Committee should receive regular updates on Climate Action Plan (CAP) implementation and prioritize policies that advance the City's CAP goals, including Municipal Energy Strategy, Zero Emission Vehicle Strategy, Increase Safe, Convenient, and Enjoyable Transit Use Strategy. This includes implementing CAP strategies as prioritized in the adopted implementation plan, receiving regular progress briefings on decarbonization, electrification, and emissions benchmarks, and ensuring alignment of capital investments and departmental work programs with CAP actions. The Committee will also support the pursuit of external funding to advance CAP goals.

### Review Tree Canopy and Greenery Programs and Policies

Urban tree canopy is an important tool in mitigating the effects of climate change and is an environmental justice issue. The Committee will request staff briefings on funding, programs, and policies to expand and sustain the urban tree canopy, with a focus on communities of concern. The committee should explore opportunities to strengthen public-private partnerships and ensure the City Forester has the resources needed to grow and sustain our tree canopy.

### Natural Resources, Open Space, and Biodiversity

Preserving natural areas and promoting biodiversity are essential for climate resilience, public health, and ecological sustainability across San Diego. The Committee will support the preservation and expansion of open space and regional parks and advance habitat and wetland restoration efforts, including advancing key projects like De Anza Cove Revitalization. In addition, the Committee will monitor implementation of the Multiple Species Conservation Program and compliance with Multiple Habitat Planning Area requirements. Additionally, the Committee will promote biodiversity initiatives such as Bee City USA and the Mayor's Monarch Pledge. San Diego manages parks, beaches, and more than 20,000 acres of open space, including critical wildlife habitats, and the Committee will review current pesticide practices, public notification procedures, and safer, non-toxic alternatives to help protect vulnerable species and ecosystems.

## **Investing in Infrastructure and Services**

### Stormwater Investments

The storms and resulting floods on January 22, 2024, made clear the impact of our deficient stormwater infrastructure. The Committee will receive its annual update from the Stormwater Department and prioritize policies and contracts that will improve the City's stormwater system. The Committee will continue to monitor stormwater infrastructure projects, including drains and channels in flood-prone areas, develop funding strategies to address stormwater repair and maintenance backlogs, and prioritize the integration of stormwater planning

## **Attachment 1 – 2026 Environment Committee Work Plan**

with long-term water management and climate resilience efforts.

### Energy Infrastructure and Partnerships

The Committee request a briefing on San Diego's solar capacity, including how surplus energy is managed and the impacts on local infrastructure and costs. The Committee also requests updates from departments on partnership opportunities and on leveraging the City's real estate assets in collaboration with San Diego Community Power. In addition, the Committee is interested in receiving updates from San Diego Community Power on their operations and the development of the Regional Energy Network.

### Public Power Feasibility Phase 2 Update

The Committee will receive updates on the Public Power Feasibility Study, which is evaluating the potential for the City of San Diego to provide municipally owned electricity. The Committee will receive the Phase 2 of the Public Power Feasibility Study. Building on Phase 1 findings, Phase 2 will provide a detailed analysis of preferred structures for a potential Public Power entity.

### Project Labor Agreement Compliance

Ensure Compliance with the City of San Diego's Project Labor Agreement on all contracts and service agreements coming to the committee.

### Advance Pure Water and Hold Contractors Accountable

Pure Water San Diego will provide about a third of the city's drinking water and is the single largest infrastructure project in the City's history. The multi-phase project is expected to be completed in 2035. The Committee will receive an update of the Pure Water Project and consider Pure Water-related contracts and policies to advance the project. A key component of this oversight is ensuring strong contractor performance, cost controls, and adherence to project schedules to minimize impacts to ratepayers. The Committee will oversee Pure Water Phase I construction and the advancement of Phase II in alignment with program timelines and funding strategies to maintain program momentum and achieve long-term water supply goals.