



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: May 20, 2026

TO: Honorable Councilmember Henry Foster III, Budget Review Committee Chair,
and Honorable Budget Review Committee Members

FROM: Benjamin Battaglia, Director of Finance and City Comptroller, Department of
Finance

SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Review Committee Referral Responses for May 8, 2026

This memorandum provides responses and/or follow up information to unanswered questions asked at the Budget Review Committee meeting held on May 8, 2026. The responses are listed by department in numerical Council District order.

Communications

COUNCIL DISTRICT 6

QUESTION: Please provide a detailed breakdown of all unclassified positions, including the function and responsibilities associated with each role.

RESPONSE: See attached memorandum “Communications’ Core Functions & Unclassified Positions” (Attachment 1), which provides the core functions of the Communications department and a breakdown of the unclassified positions and how they support those core functions. Client department program assignments can be found at the following link: [Media Contacts for City Departments](#).

QUESTION: Regarding the Program Manager and Program Coordinator positions eliminated by Council but retained in FY 2026, please provide additional context on why these positions were previously identified as necessary to maintain, but are now proposed for transfer or reduction in FY 2027. Specifically, please explain the operational or budgetary changes that informed the decision to transfer one position to the Fire-Rescue Department and reduce the other at the conclusion of FY 2026.

RESPONSE: The Program Manager position is necessary because it coordinates public safety communications to residents and emergency messages across print, digital, and in-person platforms. This position is 100% dedicated to supporting the Fire-Rescue Department and is proposed as an addition to the Fire-Rescue Department for FY 2027, because it is no longer budgeted in Communications. This will ensure continuity of operations and the incumbent in the position will continue supporting the Fire-Rescue Department. The Program Coordinator position will be eliminated at year-end.

Police Department

COUNCIL DISTRICT 6

QUESTION: Please provide a full list of what is being funded out of the special funds.

RESPONSE: The Department's special funds include Seized Assets (Equitable Sharing) and State Citizens Option for Public Safety (COPS) Funds.

The State COPS Fund receives State funding from Motor Vehicle Licensing Fees (MVLf).

Equitable sharing funds are received from asset seizures and must be used in accordance with governing law and policy, the Guide to Equitable Sharing for State, Local, and Tribal law Enforcement Agencies, and all applicable federal laws, rules, regulations, and Executive Orders.

These funds must be used to increase or supplement the resources of the receiving State, local, or tribal law enforcement agency. The funds shall not be used to replace or supplant the agency's appropriate resources. The recipient agency (SDPD), must benefit directly from the sharing, "sharing will be withheld from any state or local law enforcement agency if the governing body or state or local law, regulation, or policy requires or directs: (1) specific expenditures of shared funds; (2) the transfer of federal equitable sharing funds to nonparticipating law enforcement agencies; or (3) expenditures for non-law enforcement purposes."

The fund balance for all funds is approximately \$7.3 million. The Department plans to spend these funds in FY 2027 on the following items:

Planned Expenditures	Amounts	Funding Source
Computer Aided Dispatch (New CAD contract)	\$ 3,000,000	COPS
Body Worn Cameras contract (BWC contract)	2,400,000	COPS
Data Analytics platform	500,000	Equitable Sharing
Air Support Fuel	411,000	Equitable Sharing/COPS
Communications system	260,000	Equitable Sharing
Helicopter Insurance	240,000	Equitable Sharing
Public sentiment surveys	240,000	Equitable Sharing
FLIR Maintenance	160,000	Equitable Sharing
Critical Incident Videos	81,000	Equitable Sharing
Other	8,705	Equitable Sharing
Total	\$ 7,300,705	

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May 20, 2026

QUESTION: Please provide a full update on the status of Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR) technology and vendor Flock. Please separate out the ALPR and smart streetlights.

RESPONSE: After City Council approved the continued use of the combined Smart Streetlight and ALPR technology in December, the Department was directed to issue separate Request for Information (RFIs) to all qualified vendors capable of providing ALPR and smart streetlight services.

The Department drafted the RFIs and submitted them to Purchasing and Contracting in April. According to the latest update from Purchasing and Contracting, both RFIs were released on May 13, 2026, and will close on June 15, 2026. They will remain open for 30 days, after which the Department will report the results back to the City Council.

Following the RFI process, the Department will initiate new Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for both Smart Streetlights and ALPR technologies. While the current agreement was originally established as a sole-source contract, significant developments in both the Smart Streetlight and ALPR markets now require the City to conduct a traditional competitive procurement process. Separate RFPs and contracts will be issued for each technology. The Department anticipates the full procurement process will take approximately two and a half years, which aligns with the remaining term of the City's current sole-source contract with Ubicquia.

- RFI 30000062-26-E, Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) – advertise 5/13/26 and close 6/15/26
- RFI 30000063-26-E, Citywide Video Camera System - advertise 5/13/26 and close 6/15/26

COUNCIL DISTRICT 7

QUESTION: Please explain the change in employees for Dispatcher 2. Is it a change in role and expectations or merely a title change?

RESPONSE: This is the result of a reclassification to have our Phone Dispatchers assigned to the Police Dispatch Division share the "POLICE" series name. The roles and expectations did not change.

Previously, Police Dispatch would hire employees as Dispatchers I, and in six months, they could be promoted to Dispatchers II. Approximately a year ago, the process was changed so that after six months, a Dispatcher I can now be promoted to a "Police 911 Dispatcher" instead of a Dispatcher II. This change was made because Dispatchers under the "Police" classification offered better pay and were better aligned with Police Dispatch duties, providing 24/7 support, managing a high volume of calls, and handling highly stressful call types, as compared to other City dispatch assignments. This change ultimately assisted with hiring and retention and allowed the department to become more competitive with other agencies.

Fire-Rescue Department

COUNCIL DISTRICT 1

QUESTION: Do lifeguards not have presumptive care?

RESPONSE: (from Risk Management) Per Labor Code §3212.11, Lifeguards have a legally mandated workers' compensation presumption for skin cancer. Under this law, it is legally presumed that any skin cancer developing or manifesting during a lifeguard's employment is work-related. Furthermore, Article 81 of the Memorandum of Understanding with Teamsters Local 986 provides presumptive illness coverages for workers' compensation benefits for employees in the classifications of Lifeguard II and higher, in accordance with, but limited to, the following California Labor Code provisions:

- Labor Code §3212 – Hernia and Pneumonia only;
- Labor Code §3212.6 – Tuberculosis;
- Labor Code §3212.8 – Blood-borne infectious disease or MRSA skin infection;
- Labor Code §3212.85 – Exposure to biochemical substances; and
- Labor Code §3212.9 – Meningitis

It is important to note that all work-related injuries are covered, not just those listed above. Under California Labor Code §4600, employers are required to provide all medical treatment that is reasonably required to cure or relieve the effects for all work-related injuries.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Battaglia

Benjamin Battaglia
Director of Finance and City Comptroller

BB/ff

Attachments: 1. Communications' Core Functions & Unclassified Positions

cc: Honorable Mayor Todd Gloria
Honorable City Attorney Heather Ferbert
Paola Avila, Chief of Staff, Office of the Mayor
Nick Serrano, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the Mayor
Charles Modica, Independent Budget Analyst
Rolando Charvel, Chief Financial Officer, Office of the Mayor
Scott Wahl, Chief of Police, Police Department
Robert Logan, Fire Chief, Fire-Rescue Department
Bethany Bezak, Chief Performance & Logistics Officer, Office of the Mayor
Kris McFadden, Chief Infrastructure Officer, Office of the Mayor
Rania Amen, City Engineer and Chief Community Services Officer, Office of the Mayor
Casey Smith, Chief Housing & Community Development Officer, Office of the Mayor
Matt Yagyagan, Director of Policy, Office of the Mayor

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cc continued:

Nicole Darling, Director, Communications Department

Angela Colton, Director, Risk Management Department

Christopher Purcell, Financial Operations Manager, Department of Finance

Department of Finance Staff

Communications' Core Functions & Unclassified Positions

Communications' Core Functions

1. Administration & Policy Guidance

- Serves as the primary policy advisor to City departments on communication methods and issues.
- Advises on public-facing messaging, internal communications considerations, and overall strategy for complex, high-profile or sensitive topics.

2. Media Relations & Emergency Communications

- Interfaces with the public and news media on emergency response, public safety, and high-profile City issues.
- Oversees the City's official responses to media inquiries and supports crisis communications.

3. Title VI / Language Access (Translations & Interpretation)

- Manages translation and interpretation services required under Title VI to ensure equitable access to information.

4. Graphic Design Services

- Provides full-service in-house graphic design, layout, and production-ready creative assets.
- Produces collateral for internal and external audiences, supporting PIOs and departmental campaigns.

5. CityTV (Government Access Channel)

- Operates CityTV, providing:
 - Live televised coverage of City Council, Committee hearings, public meetings, and press conferences.
 - Production of video content, PSAs, and City programming.
- Ensures compliance with Council Policy 700-37 on City use of cable television.

6. Public Information Services

- Implements public information, outreach, education and awareness campaigns on behalf of 25+ departments and the Mayor’s Office.
- Coordinates public messaging to ensure accuracy, transparency, and consistency across City initiatives, programs, events and services.

7. Website & Digital Content Management

- Manages content for sandiego.gov, City social media accounts, and internal platforms.
- Coordinates digital communications to ensure clear, accessible delivery of City information.

8. Internal Communications

- Produces internal communications such as CityNet content, employee notifications, internal videos, and newsletters to keep City staff informed and aligned.

9. Publishing Services

- Provides publishing, printing, and production services for elected officials and all City departments (Mayoral and Non-Mayoral).
- Supports high-volume printing, specialized output, and citywide materials distribution.

Unclassified Staff

Title	Function	How it supports Communication’s core services
Assistant Deputy Director	Oversees the Creative Services Division of the Communications Department, which includes CityTV, Graphic Design and Publishing Services. This position manages three teams who are responsible for producing visual content that conveys critical messages for all San Diego residents, visitors and elected officials. This position serves as a liaison to the Mayor, City Council, other elected	Supports core services 1, 2, 4, 5, 8 and 9. This position is critical to provide leadership guidance and management of the Creative Services section. The high visibility and technical nature of these groups (CityTV, graphic design and Publishing Services) require specific attention to contract and equipment management, to ensure staff is trained in best practices and to provide project management

	officials, department directors and external partners. The position also oversees the building space needs and facility requirements for these teams in three separate facilities: CAB, CCP and Plaza Hall.	oversight. As per the memo we provided, the position was reclassified from Program Manager to Assistant Deputy Director when the Publishing Services group was moved into Communications. This position interacts regularly with the Mayor's Office, Council Offices, the City Clerk and other executives to ensure City policies and visual standards are upheld.
PRA Program Manager	Supervises/supports PRA Program Coordinators. Manages the City of San Diego's PRA program, including overseeing the Nextrequest portal contract, creating and implementing citywide training, ensuring procedures and staff are in compliance with PRA law, provides guidance to elected officials and City departments on responses to PRA requests.	Supports Communications' commitment to transparency and customer service, but does not support our core services as listed above.
PRA Program Coordinator	Responsible for assisting with responding to Citywide PRA Requests and provide support to departments on PRA related issues. Train and guide PRA liaisons in departments.	Supports Communications' commitment to transparency and customer service, but does not support our core services as listed above.
Marketing and Social Media Program Manager	This position manages the City's social media and marketing program, which is responsible for reaching millions of people each month on multiple platforms including Inside San Diego (our City news website), social media platforms, email communications, digital displays, signage and through a variety of other printed materials. This includes managing contracts for digital and social media advertising on behalf of the City's operational departments (to promote programs and services), the City's presence on hiring	Supports core services 1, 2, 6, 7 and 8.

	platforms like LinkedIn, and other advertising content including the IKE kiosks in Downtown. The City currently has more than 900,000 followers on its social media accounts; ensuring the accurate and timely management of information on these accounts and across the digital landscape is critical to the City's strategic goals of providing accessibility and transparency. This position manages and maintains the City's social media calendar and provides training for City staff on social media usage and adherence to the Social Media Administration Regulation.	
Media Services Manager – Fire Rescue	Main communications person for the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department. They are available 24/7 to respond to emergencies and provide critical messaging to the public and the media. They manage social media accounts for SDFD and coordination of outreach events and promoting SDFD programs and services. Creates content for video and social media platforms.	Supports core services 1, 2, 3, 6, 7 and 8.
Media Services Manager – Emergency Services	Manages media relations programs and Spanish media translations for Mayor's Office and City departments. Also Supports Police Department and Office of Emergency Services with communications support, specifically with promoting community events and managing media inquiries.	Supports core services 1, 2, 3, 6, 7 and 8.
Media Services Coordinator – Homelessness	Manages communications needs for all of the City's homelessness programs and services, including coordinating with the SDHC and regional	Supports core services 1, 2, 3, 6, 7 and 8.

	<p>partners, coordinating with Neighborhood Police Division and ESD's CleanSD program, and all media inquiries. Creates content for video and social media platforms.</p>	
<p>Community Engagement Coordinator</p>	<p>Oversees the citywide translation and interpretation contracts, manages POs and invoices, and responds to requests from all City operational departments for language access. Also provides communications support to City departments, oversees the Communications Department news webpage (Inside San Diego) and creates content.</p>	<p>Supports core services 1, 2, 3, 6, 7 and 8.</p>
<p>News Team Program Coordinator</p>	<p>Supervises/supports the Multimedia Production Coordinators and manages the production calendar for CityTV. Serves as liaison a between Mayor's Office and classified staff, responds to emergency requests and manages CityTV equipment and engineering contracts and ensures best practices in line with government. television broadcasts and live stream. Creates content for video and social media platforms.</p>	<p>Supports core services 1, 2, 6, 7 and 8.</p>