

July 14, 2026

Senior Affairs Advisory Board Report to the Mayor and Council Members

District Outreach Initiative: Advancing Age-Friendly Communities Across San Diego

From August 2025–May 2026, the City of San Diego's Senior Affairs Advisory Board (SAAB) undertook a citywide outreach initiative, meeting with each of the nine City Council district offices to strengthen relationships, raise awareness of issues affecting older adults, and identify opportunities for collaboration on behalf of San Diego's growing senior population. These conversations provided valuable insight into the priorities, challenges, and innovations emerging across our diverse communities. Just as importantly, they reinforced a shared commitment among City leaders to ensure that older adults can age with dignity, independence, and connection. **Through this initiative, SAAB completed meetings with all nine Council districts, established direct working relationships with district offices, and identified multiple opportunities for future collaboration on housing, transportation, communications, and community engagement.**

Based on the nine Council District follow-up letters, the outreach effort revealed a remarkably consistent set of priorities across San Diego's City Council districts: affordable housing, transportation, access to information and services, social connection, civic participation, and the need for stronger communication channels connecting older adults to available resources. The meetings also demonstrated that council offices across the city are actively engaged in senior issues and receptive to partnership with the SAAB.

Across all nine districts, several common themes emerged:

- **Housing affordability remains one of the most pressing concerns for older adults.** Council offices repeatedly highlighted the challenges faced by seniors living on fixed incomes, particularly as housing costs continue to rise. Discussions included rental assistance programs, shallow subsidy strategies, strategies to incentivize affordable housing development, and efforts to ensure seniors can remain in their communities as they age.
- **Transportation and community accessibility were consistently identified as essential to quality of life.** District representatives emphasized the importance of safe, walkable neighborhoods, accessible transportation options, and community infrastructure that allows older adults to remain active and engaged.
- **Access to information is often as important as access to services.** Many offices noted that valuable programs already exist but remain underutilized because seniors are unaware of them. Conversations highlighted the need for stronger public education, outreach, and communication efforts that connect older adults with available resources, benefits, and support systems.

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- **Social connection and community engagement emerged as critical priorities.** District leaders shared innovative ideas for strengthening civic participation, volunteerism, recreation programming, and community gathering spaces. Several discussions focused on reducing isolation by creating opportunities for older adults to contribute their talents, connect with neighbors, and remain active participants in civic life.
- **Partnerships matter.** Council offices consistently expressed interest in collaborating with SAAB on forums, educational events, policy discussions, and community engagement efforts. From supporting senior-focused legislation to sharing expertise on emerging issues, the outreach initiative established a foundation for ongoing cooperation between SAAB and City leadership.

The district meetings also highlighted promising efforts already underway throughout San Diego. These include support for housing affordability initiatives, expanded community outreach, food access programs, fraud prevention education, recreation center investments, volunteer opportunities, and innovative approaches to connecting residents with services and one another.

For SAAB, this initiative demonstrates the value of proactive engagement. Rather than waiting for issues to arise, board members invested time in listening, learning, and building relationships across the city. The result is a stronger understanding of local priorities, deeper connections with policymakers, and a clearer roadmap for advancing age-friendly policies and programs. This work also supports and continues the goals of San Diego's Age Friendly Action Plan by helping translate broad citywide priorities into direct conversations, district-level partnerships, and practical opportunities to improve the daily lives of older adults.

As San Diego's senior population continues to grow, collaboration between residents, community organizations, City departments, elected officials, and advisory bodies will become increasingly important. The SAAB remains committed to serving as a trusted resource and advocate, helping ensure that the needs, perspectives, and contributions of older adults remain part of the conversation shaping San Diego's future.

We thank the Mayor, City Council, and district staff for their partnership and look forward to continuing this work together to build a more inclusive, connected, and age-friendly San Diego for all.

Sincerely,

Gwenmarie Healey

Chairperson
Senior Affairs Advisory Board