




**COUNCILMEMBER JENNIFER CAMPBELL
COUNCIL DISTRICT TWO**

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: January 9, 2023

TO: Councilmember Marni von Wilpert, Chair, Public Safety Committee

FROM: Councilmember Jennifer Campbell 

SUBJECT: 2023 Public Safety Committee Priorities

This memorandum is in response to your call for 2023 priorities for the Public Safety Committee. I look forward to working with you and the rest of the committee members in taking actions that contribute to a safer and more secure San Diego.

SDPD Recruitment and Retention

Establish a local college/university recruitment strategy, with the goal of hiring new officers with associate's and/or bachelor's degrees, who represent the diverse communities of San Diego. We must also increase the salary of the police officers and maintain competitive compensation to address retention and acquisition. With proper staffing levels we will have more opportunities to allow for community-oriented policing, a greater opportunity to reduce the “burn-out” rate of officers, and the opportunity to increase response times from emergency personnel. Establish recruitment outside of California especially in states with problem weather.

Assess Status of the Operational Safety of Lifeguard Stations

Planning is needed for a replacement station that would serve as a joint-use facility for SDPD and our Lifeguards serving Ocean Beach. The Ocean Beach Lifeguard Tower is among the oldest stations in use and has fallen into disrepair with visible health and safety concerns

throughout the deteriorating structure. Additionally, the North Pacific Beach Lifeguards currently work out of a shipping container on the beach. It lacks bathrooms, locker rooms, running water, and adequate space for patient care or administrative work. The station's door does not properly lock from the inside, which creates a security threat at a beach where our lifeguards routinely perform law enforcement duties. Without hot water, stingray patients must be transported to the Pacific Beach tower south of the Crystal Pier, which delays patient care and diverts resources away from their area of response.

Continuing the Cooperation with Law Enforcement to Address the Illicit Fentanyl Crisis

Given the ongoing fentanyl crisis around the country and here in San Diego, continued cooperation and action with law enforcement to address the crisis is critical. There were 800 fentanyl deaths last year in our county.

Address the Disproportionate Impact of Enforcement on the LGBTQIA+ Community

While many in our community today have had nothing but positive interactions with law enforcement, that is not the case for everyone. Overwhelming evidence shows that inequities in the criminal justice system and law enforcement disproportionately impact our citizens of color and our LGBTQIA+ community. This is especially true for those who are transgender or non-binary. This committee must examine ways to ensure more equitable and safe protection for all people.

Address Hate Crimes and Anti-Semitism

With the increase of anti-Semitic rhetoric and hate in our City, we should invite our Human Relations Commission, local religious leaders, and community organizations such as the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) to update us on actions we may take to mitigate hate crimes and learn how we can support their efforts.

Emergency Medical Services

As the City's current EMS contractor, Falck provides San Diegans with 9-1-1 services in the City of San Diego. This committee should receive updates on clinical oversight, quality assurance and improvement, monitoring of first responder paramedic units and the transport provider's response times, and the financial and operational oversight of the entire EMS system.

Safe Bike Lanes

This committee should also look into ways to incentivize biking by ensuring existing bike lanes are safe and by continuing to partner with SANDAG to create more bike lanes completely separated from traffic across San Diego. In recent years, 7 bike fatalities have occurred and in 2021 alone, 16 were reported. We must ensure that San Diego has bike-friendly infrastructure to end bike related fatalities.

SDPD Beach Teams and Foot Patrols

We need walking patrols to address safety concerns, especially in our beach communities, canyons, and boardwalks as well as in high crime areas.

Wildfire Preparedness Updates from Fire Rescue

While San Diego has been lucky over the last few years when it comes to raging wildfires, we must be ever vigilant about this potential threat. This committee could hear from experts from outside organizations, fire resources providers, and City Fire Department staff about how we're preparing to take this threat head-on as we face longer and more intense fire seasons in the future. SDG&E has a large fire prevention and rapid response system that all citizens should know about.

Strengthen Mental Health Emergency Response

Mental health is a growing problem in the United States, with 90% of Americans saying it is now a crisis as result of the COVID-19 pandemic. We should strengthen City response to mental health emergencies and continue to collaborate with County programs designed to help people who are experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis by dispatching behavioral health experts and addiction specialists to emergency calls instead of law enforcement when appropriate.

Graffiti Abatement

Keeping our communities safe and clean of vandalism is vital to the welfare of our neighborhoods. Staff from the Code Enforcement Graffiti Control Program should be invited to share updates on both the progress and potential challenges of the City of San Diego's Graffiti Control Program. This would include information on how many reports are received on graffiti on public and private property and response times by City crews and contractors who repair this type of damage. It would be good to learn what relationship there is to gang activities and hate crimes this represents and how the City Council can help to establish programs to end gang formation and end the prejudice that leads to hate crimes.

Commission on Police Practices

Receive updates from the Commission on Police Practices, in order to hold the commission accountable for reviewing serious complaints brought by the public against officers of SDPD, reviewing all officers involved shootings and in-custody deaths reviews, and evaluating the administration of discipline arising from sustained complaints.

Homeland Security and Border Safety

It is important for the committee to receive updates from Federal, State, and County partners about migrant flows. With high numbers of migrants in San Diego-Tijuana, it is critical that the committee is up to date on the latest status of Title 42, as well as other immigration issues. This is especially needed as Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) officials have begun regular street releases of migrants at “transportation hubs” in the City of San Diego and because the migrant shelters in San Diego have reached capacity. Overall, staying current on border relations and immigration policies is vital for the City.

Thank you for your consideration of these priorities and I look forward to making progress on our biggest public safety issues.