



**Councilmember Marni von Wilpert**

*City of San Diego • District 5*

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** September 30, 2022

**TO:** Charles Modica, Independent Budget Analyst

**FROM:** Councilmember Marni von Wilpert

**SUBJECT:** Budget Priorities for Fiscal Year 2024

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I appreciate the opportunity to submit my budget priorities as we begin the process of developing the Fiscal Year 2024 budget. Given the recent change in submittal date for City Council budget priorities, my budget priorities will be further developed as we gain more information about our financial outlook during the budget process.

I would like to thank in advance the Independent Budget Analyst, Charles Modica, for the assistance you and your office will provide during the budget development process and all the City Departments, outside organizations, and the public for your participation in the coming months.

Due to economic uncertainties and decades of underfunding our infrastructure assets, the City faces significant challenges in this budget cycle. I am committed to working closely with my Council colleagues, the Mayor, the IBA, city staff, and members of the public to develop a budget that is balanced, addresses the needs of our communities, and is fiscally responsible. As we move forward in the development of the FY 2024 budget, one of my main priorities is to ensure that we maintain adequate funding for core City services, especially public safety services, provided by our General Fund Departments.

We must continue our unprecedented efforts to assist our residents and businesses as we continue to recover from the pandemic. We must work closely with our public health partners, the County, the Office of Race and Equity, and others to provide consistent messaging and equitable recovery services for our residents. The City must be more efficient with every dollar as we navigate the economic challenges ahead.

In addition to the priorities mentioned above, I would like to submit the following budget priority requests:

## **Public Safety:**

- **Funding and implementation of the Commission on Police Practices (Measure B)**
  - The FY 2024 budget must prioritize funding to ensure the implementation of the provisions outlined in Measure B. The Council must remain focused on standing up the Commission on Police Practices as expeditiously as possible.
- **Fire-Rescue and Police Recruitment and Retention**
  - Ensuring our Police, Firefighters, and Lifeguards have adequate staffing and resources to answer 911 calls is essential. The FY 2024 budget must ensure those who protect and serve us are properly staffed and have the resources they need to keep us safe, including investments to recruit and retain high-quality first responders.
  - I request funding for the Fire/Rescue and Police Department to develop a local college/university recruitment strategy to improve local recruitment, in order to create a pipeline of new Officers, Firefighter/Paramedics, and Lifeguards with associate's and/or bachelor's degrees that represent San Diego's diverse communities.
  - I also request funding to continue our Fire/Rescue Department's successful "Women's Fire Prep Academy" which has enhanced equity and diversity and successfully increased the number of women in our fire department ranks.
- **Funding for Fire-Rescue and Police Department Civilian Support Staff**
  - I request additional funding and staff to support our first responders, including civilian administrative support staff and Police Investigative Service Officers (PISO) to help increase operational efficiency and reduce the administrative workload on our first responders.
  - Funding for a Client Care Coordinator to assist victims of domestic violence, sex trafficking, elder abuse, child abuse, and sex assault at Your Safe Place - a Family Justice Center.
- **Full funding for Fire-Rescue Air Operations**
  - Given the current state of worsening wildfires driven by climate change in California, the City must remain vigilant in our efforts to reduce the fire dangers that our communities face. I request that the necessary funding is provided in FY 24 to the Department to ensure the entire Fire-Rescue Air Operations fleet are fully maintained and operational.
- **Full funding for Brush Management and Right-of-Way Weed Abatement Programs**
  - The FY 24 budget must continue to fully fund the brush management services our residents rely on for the safety of their communities. Regular brush management is one of the most effective ways of protecting and hardening both private and public structures from wildfire risk. This request includes brush management services provided by Park and Recreation, the Public Utilities Department and Transportation Department's weed abatement program along our rights-of-way.
- **Fire-Rescue Fast Response Squad in San Pasqual Valley**
  - Maintaining funding for the Fast Response Squad in the San Pasqual Valley is essential to ensure adequate emergency response times and wildfire mitigation to San Diego's most northern community.

- **Permanent Fire Training Facility**
  - San Diego City lacks a permanent fire training facility. Training is currently conducted at the former Naval Training Facility in and around old buildings, many of which have been condemned, and will be demolished to make way for the Pure Water project construction. Firefighters need a dedicated and safe location to conduct training, or they will be unable to provide effective service to the Citizens of San Diego. The FY 2024 budget should include the necessary funding to site, plan, and design a permanent fire training facility.
- **Fire-Rescue and Police Department funding for Mental Health Services**
  - The pandemic, staffing shortages, and mandatory overtime have all taken an enormous toll on our emergency responders and their families. We must continue to provide adequate resources to support the wellness of our first responders, including mental health support.
- **Gun Violence Prevention Initiatives**
  - While San Diego remains one of the safest large metro areas in the United States, we must budget adequate resources for implementing effective means of proactively intervening to prevent tragic gun-related violence. These efforts include, but are not limited to:
    - Continued funding for enforcement of the Eliminate Non-serialized, Untraceable Firearms (“ENUF”) ordinance, including support for the San Diego Police Department’s Ghost Gun task force.
    - Continued funding to maintain the City Attorney’s effective gun violence restraining order program.
- **Continued Funding for SDPD Street Racing and Sideshow Enforcement Operations**
  - Communities citywide have experienced a surge in loud exhaust, high-speed drivers, and unregulated car sideshows and races. In District 5, this has been especially felt in Scripps Ranch along Pomerado Road which also connects to Rancho Bernardo and the City of Poway. Street Racing and Sideshows are a growing issue across many jurisdictions in the state and additional focused enforcement is necessary to address this growing public safety issue.
- **Fire-Rescue Department Personnel**
  - I request the addition of six Fire-Rescue Department personnel (6.00 FTE) (two supervisors and four support staff) to create a Staffing Unit to manage and fill Department-wide vacancies. This unit will help ensure effective staffing levels to reduce costly overtime and help reduce firefighter burnout, fatigue, and injury. The Staffing Unit should evaluate other staffing models utilized throughout California, and in comparable Cities nationwide, to determine optimal staffing levels needed here locally.
  - I request the addition of one Administrative Lifeguard Sgt (1.00 FTE) to serve as the Lifeguard Division’s hiring, recruitment, and onboarding supervisor, and a point of contact for the increasing administrative burdens at the sergeant level.
- **Funding for FY 2024 Advanced Lifeguard Academy**
  - The Lifeguard Division runs an Advanced Lifeguard Academy every two years. With nearly a quarter of the Lifeguard Division’s full-time staff eligible for retirement in the next 4 years, it is essential to provide the necessary funding to run an Advanced Lifeguard Academy in FY 24.

## **Climate Change and the Environment:**

- **Funding for Climate Action Plan 2.0 (CAP 2.0) Implementation**
  - The City's efforts to implement the Climate Action Plan must continue with appropriate funding levels to achieve our carbon emission reduction and zero waste goals. The FY 24 budget should prioritize funding for implementation of the recently adopted CAP 2.0, starting with the most cost-effective priorities that will yield the greatest greenhouse gas reductions.
- **Funding for Implementation of Climate Resilient SD Plan, Municipal Energy Implementation Plan (MEIP), and Zero Emission Municipal Buildings and Operations Policy (ZEMBOP)**
  - The City recently adopted new planning and policy documents with ambitious goals and actions to prepare our communities for the impacts of climate change (Climate Resilient SD Plan) and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions generated by the City (MEIP and ZEMBOP). The FY 2024 budget should provide ample funding for implementation of these important documents.
- **Climate Equity Fund**
  - The creation of the Climate Equity Fund was a positive step in addressing the disproportionate risks of climate change faced by our low-income communities and communities of color. The FY 24 budget should continue to contribute the full annual allocation to the Climate Equity Fund.
- **Expedite the Development of the Mobility Action Plan**
  - Transportation accounts for more greenhouse gas emissions than any other sector. The Mobility Action Plan will provide a pathway to deliver a transportation network for future mobility options. The FY 22 and FY 23 budget included funding for the completion of a New Mobility Action Plan. I would request that the FY 24 budget include adequate resources and staff support to expedite and complete this important planning document.
- **Tree Trimming for Shade Trees**
  - Tree trimming of street and park trees is an essential service that impacts public safety and the City's liability. The City needs to prioritize continued full funding of our street and park shade tree maintenance contracts.

## **Homelessness Services and Affordable Housing:**

- **Homelessness Housing and Services:**
  - Senior citizens are the fastest growing segment of our homeless population, we must expand homeless shelters and housing solutions that include services specific to support senior citizens. I would request funding for senior specific housing solutions and services to be expanded to meet the unique support needs of our homeless seniors.
  - I request funding to maintain and create additional LGBTQ affirming shelter beds and wrap-around services through the San Diego Housing Commission. Of the youth currently experiencing homelessness, 40% identify as part of the LGBTQ community, yet in the entire City there are not enough shelters specifically serving the LGBTQ community.

- I request funding to continue to support the Regional Task Force on Homelessness' Ad Hoc Committee to Address Homelessness Among Black San Diegans. This funding will help to develop policies and strategies to address the disproportionate number of Black San Diegans who are unsheltered as illustrated in the recent Regional Task Force on Homelessness presentation to the Council.
- **Maintain and Expand Substance Use and Mental Health Treatment Funding**
  - In recent years, the City and County partnered to establish a new Community Harm Reduction Team (C-HRT) facility for unsheltered residents who struggle with substance abuse and often co-occurring mental illness. With the ongoing opioid and fentanyl epidemics, the need for more substance abuse treatment is growing and has been a large gap in services for individuals experiencing homelessness. The City and County must continue to prioritize substance abuse and behavioral health treatment if we are going to effectively assist our unsheltered community.
  - Continued funding for the Multidisciplinary Outreach Team, and Conservatorship and Treatment Unit with the City Attorney's Office, to assist gravely ill unsheltered individuals with a variety of options for care and recovery, including mental and behavioral health care, outpatient treatment, a group home, the serial inebriate program or a medicated-assisted treatment program to overcome an addiction.
- **Affordable Housing**
  - The lack of affordable housing continues to be a significant challenge for the City. Among other things, we must continue to ensure that San Diego is fully leveraging any state and federal funding to support the development of more affordable housing opportunities throughout the City.
  - Young professionals are finding it increasingly hard to buy homes in San Diego. Our teachers, nurses, fire, police, and rescue personnel often cannot afford to live in the San Diego with the high housing costs. We must work with government affairs to leverage State and Federal first-time homebuyer assistance programs to help young families get a foothold in the housing market.
- **Housing Stability Fund for low-income families and senior citizens**
  - The COVID-19 pandemic illustrated the value of providing short-term rental assistance to keep families and senior citizens in their homes and out of the cycle of homelessness. In the FY 2023 budget, the Council authorized \$3.57 million towards a pilot program to establish a local flexible subsidy pool for up to 24 months of assistance for seniors, families with children, people with disabilities, and transitional age youth up to 25-years-old. I request that the FY 2024 budget include an additional funding to expand access to this important program.
- **Funding for Operation of the San Diego (Neil Good) Day Center**
  - The San Diego (Neil Good) Day Center provides unhoused individuals with critical services needed throughout the day. This includes access to restrooms, laundry, storage for personal belongings, and mail services – as well as connection with social workers and housing navigators. I request funding in the FY 2024 budget to ensure the Neil Good Day Center continues to successfully operate and provide these critical services, as well as additional funds to make needed facility repairs.

## **Infrastructure:**

- **Full Allocation to the City’s Infrastructure Fund**
  - When the citizens of San Diego voted overwhelmingly in support of Proposition H in 2016, establishing the Infrastructure Fund, there was clear direction from our residents that the Council must prioritize infrastructure investments in our budget. The FY 2024 budget must appropriate the full allocation to the Infrastructure Fund and show our residents that we take their direction and our infrastructure needs seriously.
- **Fixing our Streets (Increased Overlay)**
  - Street repair remains the top concern of residents in Council District 5. With the anticipated completion of the new street condition assessment, which will ensure current and accurate data is used to guide this essential City service, I would request that the budget prioritize increased overlay in FY 24 to address our City’s worst streets.
  - Some District 5 streets in need of overlay include, but are not limited to the following (additional priority streets in District 5 will be included in my Capital Improvement Budget Priority Survey):
    - Handrich Drive, Red Rock Drive, Scripps Trail, Riesling Drive, Negley Drive, Wild Grape Drive, Arboretum Place, Forestview Lane, Brooktree Terrace, Avenida Magnifica, Carmel Mountain Road, World Trade Drive, Stoney Peak Drive, Calle de las Rosas, Salmon River Road, Paseo Cardiel, Paseo del Verano Norte, Acebo Drive, Bellota Drive, Obispo Road, Pastoral Road, Pinata Drive, Lomica Drive, Francisco Drive.
    - The budget must also include adequate funding for the Transportation Department staff to evaluate the ratio of slurry seal/overlay repairs to ensure the City is utilizing its resources effectively, based on the street condition Overall Condition Index (OCI) data.
- **Vision Zero Infrastructure Improvements and Funding**
  - With tragic bike accidents on the rise, the safety of residents on our roads, bike paths, and sidewalks is paramount. The City must continue to allocate the funding necessary to implement traffic improvements on our most dangerous corridors to reach our Vision Zero goals and ensure the City is delivering complete street improvements for a multimodal transportation system.
  - Funding should also be available in the FY 24 budget for the evaluation of our most dangerous corridors for potential traffic calming and/or speed reductions as outlined in Assembly Bill 43.
- **Increase Funding for Safe and Sustainable Transportation for All Ages and Abilities Team (STAT)**
  - In FY 2022, the City installed temporary bollards along Pershing Drive to address an urgent safety concern and a history of vehicle and bicycle accidents. These relatively inexpensive improvements have made a significant difference in the safety of riders along Pershing Drive. The FY 24 budget should include additional funding for the City’s STAT Team, to continue the City’s effort to make bicycle safety improvements along our most dangerous rights-of-way.
- **Increased O&M and Capital funding for the City’s Storm Water System**

- The Storm Water program funding shortfall continues to threaten our investments in all other infrastructure assets with its growing backlog, the significant increase in emergency repairs, and potential for state and federal agency fines. The FY 24 budget must continue to increase the City's investment in Stormwater related O&M and Capital improvements. The City should continue to expand the capacity of our in-house stormwater pipe repair team to reduce the City's use of expensive emergency repair contracts.
- **Sidewalk Program Funding**
  - The walkability of our communities is more important than ever. We must continue to invest in the maintenance of sidewalks citywide. I request that we continue to fund the sidewalk program at pre-pandemic levels at minimum. This investment is essential to reduce injuries to pedestrians, accompanying liability pay-outs, and address the considerable backlog our sidewalk program faces.
- **Traffic Reduction Improvements**
  - We must continue to invest in improving our transportation network and transit system, by, among other things, making traffic signal modifications to improve traffic flow and by working with our transit partners on right-of-way improvements to make our transit system more efficient.
  - We must also ensure that City staff and the Communications Department have the necessary resources to keep communities informed of potential impacts related to transportation and other right-of-way improvements.
- **Continue Expanding Access to Online Services - Get It Done**
  - The city has made great strides in improving online access to requests for City services for residents in recent years. It is critical that we continue to expand and improve our Get It Done platform for improved public access, including additional language capabilities, new service request features, and continuing to refine and improve the City's responsiveness to service requests.
- **Funding for Police Facilities**
  - Deferred maintenance at City facilities often lead to more significant and costly repairs. Like many City facilities, Police Department Facilities are in need of significant Operation and Maintenance (O&M) and Capital investment. I request the FY 24 budget include additional funding for Police Department O&M and Capital facility improvements.

**Additional Priorities:**

- **Continued funding for the Office of Race and Equity.**
  - Ensuring that the City continues the important work towards racial justice and equity in all aspects of the City must remain a priority. The FY 24 budget must ensure that the Office has the necessary support staff to continue its critical work.
- **Continued investment in Employee Recruitment and Retention**
  - The past few years have demonstrated how much we rely on our City workforce to provide core public safety, environmental, and other services to our residents. However, the City's compensation surveys have shown that many city employees' compensation is well below the median compensation offered by other jurisdictions. Our ability to recruit and retain high-quality City employees is

suffering as a result, and our City is consistently losing our qualified employees to other jurisdictions, having a significant impact on government efficiency. With the passage of the City's Compensation Philosophy, the FY 24 budget should include continued investment in competitive employee compensation to avoid detrimental turnover and costly vacancies.

- **As-Needed Consulting for Independent Budget Analyst (IBA)**
  - The IBA is an incredible asset for the Council and our City. In recent years, the Council has benefitted from the IBA having the ability to bring in outside consultants with specialized expertise. I request that the FY 24 budget include the necessary non-personnel funding to maintain necessary consultants, such as the consultant for review of major real estate transactions and water/sewer rate consultant, to continue to provide this essential expertise to the City Council.
- **Civic Center Plaza Building Security Upgrades**
  - Civic Center Plaza (CCP) is currently home to more than 800 City employees from more than a dozen City departments and offices that regularly interface with the public. Current security measures in CCP are inadequate and need to be upgraded. In an era of increased severity and frequency of threats directed at City staff, it is vital that we protect our City employees and the public as they conduct the City's business.
- **Support for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance and Accessibility**
  - Ensuring our City is accessible for all residents and visitors is essential. It is important that the City take a proactive approach to addressing the deficiencies that exist in our City. I request the creation of a dedicated Capital Improvement Project (CIP) and initial funding focused on implementing City's ADA Transition Plan and responding to ADA complaints submitted to the City.
- **Funding for the Office of Labor Standards Enforcement**
  - Too often, hard-working San Diegans cannot make ends meet because of wage theft or other labor law violations and law-abiding businesses are disadvantaged when forced to compete with businesses that break the law and cut corners. To combat these problems, the creation of an Office of Labor Standards Enforcement was called for in last year's FY 23 budget. Ideally, funding in FY 24 would support 2 Deputy City Attorneys in the City Attorney's Office and a full-time investigator.
  - This Office could also be self-sustaining, as the fines and civil penalties obtained from businesses that break the law can be funneled back to the office to continue the work of future investigations.
- **Prioritize Arts and Culture Funding**
  - I continue to support the goal of fully funding the "Penny for the Arts" in the next three years. The pandemic has had a devastating impact on San Diego's Arts and Culture community and this funding is essential to ensure world class Arts and Cultural opportunities throughout our City. This allocation was increased by the City Council in FY 23 and I request an incremental increase in the "Penny for the Arts" funding to remain on track to meet the goal within three years.



- **Library Funding**
  - The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that San Diego residents rely on libraries more than ever. From online access to cool zones, we must ensure we continue to support our libraries.
  - In previous years, the Library Department has seen continual decline in purchasing power in the face of growing costs and a limited budget. I support the Library Foundation’s call for an increase to the materials budget.
  - Growing maintenance needs at our Library facilities must be addressed to avoid higher deferred maintenance costs in the future. I would request an increase in the Library Departments O&M budget to begin to address the significant deferred maintenance needs in our libraries.
- **Funding and Staff Support for Development Services Department**
  - The Development Services Department provides a wide variety of development related services for residents and businesses throughout the City. In recent years, delays in processing permits and submittals have impacted both public and private development. In FY 2023, the Department is taking steps to better track and reduce processing times, but more funding and staff support is needed for the Department. For the FY 24 budget, I request additional funding and staff for the Development Services Department to help support their efforts to reduce the City’s backlogged permitting process.
- **Funding to Support the Office of the City Auditor (OCA)**
  - The Office of the City Auditor provides a significant return on investment for residents and taxpayers, and continues to deliver on its mission to “advance open and accountable government through accurate, independent, and objective audits and investigations that seek to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and equity of City government.”
  - I request that the FY 24 budget include funding for a salary increase for the City Auditor’s supporting staff to ensure we recruit and retain qualified auditors.
  - I also request the FY 24 budget include funding for one additional Senior Performance Auditor position (1.00 FTE) to increase the Office’s capacity in response to the growth seen in the overall City budget over the past seven years.
- **Office of Child and Youth Success**
  - The FY 2022 budget established the Office of Child and Youth Success to invest in family and youth health, wellness, and safety that will ensure the City is being responsive to the needs of our youth.
  - Ideally, the FY 24 budget will include adequate first year funding to hire the appropriate personnel to begin evaluating programs and opportunities for our residents, including access to much-needed childcare in our City – including providing child care at eligible city-owned sites.
- **California Public Records Act Streamlining**
  - I would request funding is included in the FY 2024 budget to increase efficiencies, reduce exposure to litigation, and to improve the coordination and speed of information released by the City.