

THE BRY BULLETIN

January / February 2020

Council President Pro Tem
Barbara Bry
District 1

Demanding Accountability and Transparency in the 101 Ash Street Debacle

The decision by the City Council on October 17, 2016 to purchase the 101 Ash Street building has been followed by a continuous series of missteps. After three years, with a price tag of \$18,000 a day, the City finally starting moving employees into the building last month.

Less than a month later, the City's Chief Operating Officer issued a memo which stated that the building will be closed to employees and the public. We also learned that a former engineer on the Ash Street project filed a \$25 million asbestos claim against the City.

In response, I have asked the City's independent Auditor to conduct an investigation. Specifically, it is important for San Diegans to question the due diligence the Mayor's Office performed ahead of the 2017 lease signing and to know the real costs of both locating to, then re-locating City workers from 101 Ash Street. Additionally, taxpayers should know whether contractors and subcontractors have met their performance goals and what impact the temporary closure of the Development Services Department will have both in the short and long term.

This lack of transparency and accountability is frustrating and unacceptable. I am hopeful that an independent investigation will shed light on 101 Ash Street, and we will finally have our questions answered in public.





City Hall Deep Dive

Legislative Happenings
& Highlights

Protecting Core Services from Budget Cuts

The average San Diegan probably doesn't spend too much time thinking about the City's budget process. However, this process is important because it directly impacts how your tax dollars are spent, and how crucial city services that you depend on each day will be funded.

Each January, I create a budget memo outlining my priorities for the upcoming financial year (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021, *see page 3 for memo details.*) Despite favorable financial forecasts and greater than expected return on revenues, the Mayor's Five-Year Financial Outlook projects four straight years of budget deficits. He predicts an \$84 million shortfall next year, and that is without consideration for the labor negotiations currently taking place. City departments have been asked to produce budgets with a four percent reduction.

My highest priority is to protect our core services from budget cuts and financial instability. To accomplish this, current spending levels and the effectiveness of such spending must be disclosed in line-item detail and scrutinized. Only then may we identify available resources to align with need. Until we know what we spend, where we spend it, and to what end, the budget is incomplete.

I am committed and eager to work with my fellow council members, the Independent Budget Analyst (IBA), the Mayor and staff, and the community to produce a transparent, balanced, and responsible FY 21 budget.

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My Budget Priorities

My budget priorities are broken down into several different categories including:

Environment

Our economic wellbeing is inextricably linked with the health of our environment. The effects of climate change such as wildfires, sea level rise and air quality will directly impact San Diego. The City's landmark Climate Action Plan (CAP) established San Diego as a global leader in environmental policy. It is time for our action to meet our ambition and fund the implementation of the CAP. I recommend:

- A CAP Five-Year Financial Outlook
- Prioritization of re-timing traffic signal, installing roundabouts, and an urban tree planting program
- Fully fund the analysis of the "Wildest" alternative in the upcoming Mission Bay Wetland Restoration plan EIR
- \$500,000 for planting 2,500 additional street trees
- \$100,000 for one additional arborist/horticulturalist in the Streets Division

Homelessness

Much of our homelessness costs are absorbed by city departments, yet the total cost is still unknown or undisclosed. The following homeless costs must be disclosed in one location:

- Police salaries and overtime
- Operational staff salaries and overtime
- CleanSD and Environmental Services
- Bridge Shelters
- Transitional Storage Center
- Navigation Center
- Real Estate Assets leases and purchases
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
- Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP)
- All other costs including but not limited to personnel, operations, contracts, and supplies

Public Safety

- Fully staff our San Diego Police and Fire Departments to cut down on costly overtime
- Maintain current funding for brush management
- Add lifeguard personnel to protect our residents and visitors in the water

Neighborhood Services

Libraries:

Our libraries welcome over six million visitors and are an essential resource to provide residents with access to books, technology, internet, innovation labs, homework assistance, tax assistance and much more. Consequently, I recommend:

- No reduction of service levels
- \$400,000 for programs
- \$500,000 for materials

Arts and Culture:

A vibrant arts and culture scene is necessary for San Diego to call itself a "World Class City." It enhances our region's capability to attract and retain talent to fuel our workforce and strengthen our economy. I recommend: Increase the budgeted amount for Commission for Arts and Culture funding by three percent.

Infrastructure

- \$529,000 to fully fund traffic light at Del Mar Heights Road and Mercado
- \$500,000 to begin design of the South University City Library improvements and expansion
- Fully fund first phase of construction for Marcy Neighborhood Park improvements
- Identify site for the Torrey Hills Fire Station identified in Citygate report
- \$2M for the Coastal Rail Trail (Gilman Drive from the La Jolla Colony Drive to La Jolla Village Drive)
- Initiate construction of the Village Loop Road
- Fully fund the transportation evaluation of Carmel Valley and Pacific Highlands Ranch as identified in the Carmel Valley Livability Subcommittee Report
- Repair/Replace the railing at the beach overlook at Moss Lane
- Repair cliff subsidence along Coast Walk, focusing on the eroded section encroaching into the trail at the rear of 7981 Prospect Place
- \$8,000 to secure the parking lot at Kellogg Park to prevent overnight parking
- Repave Hillside Drive from Soledad Avenue to Via Sienna
- \$150,000 to construct sidewalk from Azul Street to Poole Street

You can read my memo with a complete list of my budget priorities at <https://www.sandiego.gov/citycouncil/cd1/policymemos>

Over the next months, my budget priorities will be evaluated and incorporated into a Council resolution for the Mayor to review. The Mayor will then release the proposed budget in the Spring. After public hearings and council review, the budget will be formally adopted in June, before the new fiscal year official begins.



Getting it Done in District One!

Carmel Valley



Due to safety concerns, the Pacific Highlands Ranch (PHR) Recreation Community Group voted to have the lights over the soccer field automatically shut off at 9:00 p.m. each night. Contracts are also being finalized for additional fencing around the PHR Pump Track, with construction slated to begin between late February and early March.

My office is also aware of the current community campaign advocating for the completion of the Village Loop Road. Having brought the Lin Family Trust to the negotiating table soon after taking office, we are waiting for the Mayor to act and move forward.

University City



This month, I sent a formal letter to Colonel Dockery and Congressman Peters to request that MCAS Miramar Air Traffic Controllers and pilots follow existing procedures. These measures were intentionally designed to avoid direct overhead flights of most residences and schools in University City.

Thank you to those who have contacted my office to report violations. Please know that I will continue to do everything that I can to convey your concerns to both MCAS and our congressional representative. Please contact my UC representative, Justine Murray, at JRMurray@sandiego.gov, for a digital copy of the letter.

Del Mar Heights



This month I ensured that a storm drain on the south portion of Roselle Street was cleared to help with water drainage. Additionally, work began on clearing the channel east of Roselle Street. Both of these improvements will greatly help with immediate flood relief. As for the city's long-term relief plans, this month, my Council colleagues supported my motion to approve the first disbursement of finances for Phase 1 of the Los Penasquitos Lagoon Restoration Project. Once completed, this project will provide long-term flood relief to the area. While the process of restoring the lagoon is lengthy in nature (due to the permitting process), this is an exciting step.

La Jolla



Hillside Drive - I have asked city traffic engineers to restore the previous 25 foot long and 4 ton (instead of current 5 ton) weight limit for trucks using the road. I have also asked the Mayor to repave Hillside Dr in the coming fiscal year.

Muirlands Underground - Concerns over the safety of digging conditions along Avenida Manana and Avenida Wilfredo has resulted in SDG&E pulling its contractors off the undergrounding work. I am appealing to SDG&E and the City to resolve the matter and resume the work. In the meantime, I am asking the contractors to notify residents of the street closures beforehand.

Fay Avenue Bike Path - The City is awarding a regional contract for brush abatement, and I am advocating for the tumbleweeds to be removed along the Fay Avenue Bike Path.

BB in the Community



I was proud to sit alongside two of my Council colleagues at The Association of Women in Water, Energy and Environment's "Path to Power" panel representing the first female majority on the Council.



My staff joined me at the Women's March to stand alongside thousands of strong women and allies to advocate for equality and justice.



I had a great time walking in the Inaugural Parade at the 10th Annual San Diego MLK Community celebration. It was wonderful walking to honor of Martin Luther King Jr.'s achievements, legacy, and vision.

What's your go-to guilty pleasure?

Eating pasta with olive oil or a slice of apple pie.

What is a good date night for you and your husband, Neil?

A great date night starts with a walk on the beach followed by dinner at home (cooked by my husband who is an amazing cook) and then a good movie.

What is a good book that you have read lately?

I have been reading a lot of children's books with my grandchildren. Two of our favorites are Goodnight Moon and The Very Hungry Caterpillar which I also read to my two daughters.

A Brief Break with Barbara





Odds and Ends

Promoting Equal Access to Technology for all San Diegans

Computers 2 Kids (C2K) believes that all children and their families, regardless of their economic status, need to be computer literate and have equal access to technology. Technology can provide crucial educational, occupational, and financial resources that to improve their educational options and future opportunities.

Computers 2 Kids closes this gap by refurbishing computers and placing them in the homes of low-income families. Since 2005, they have provided more than 408,000 children and their families with the tools necessary to improve their lives. Each computer includes Microsoft and more than 1,000 educational programs. Each family also receives training, technical support, and lifetime replacement should their computer fail.

With countless corporations, hospitals, municipalities, and universities continuously updating their equipment to newer technology, there is a need for secure and environmentally conscious disposal of their older computers. In 2018 alone, C2K kept 1.1 million pounds of e-waste out of our landfills.

San Diego is a tech and innovation hub which fosters a culture of STEM education and access. It was a pleasure to meet the C2K staff and to tour their operations facility. I was moved by their dedication to providing all children and their families with access to technology.



Staff News



Justine Murray, our University City representative, has been promoted to Policy Advisor. Justine will handle policy issues related to transportation, land use and cannabis. She will also continue to be the University City Council Representative.

Justine has been with my office since she was an intern, and I am very excited to see her take on this new, exciting role!