



## **CITY OF SAN DIEGO**

### **OFFICE OF COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANTHONY YOUNG**

#### **FOURTH COUNCIL DISTRICT**

#### **COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S 2011 NEW YEAR MESSAGE**

It is an honor and a privilege to be selected by the Council members that serve all of San Diego to be the San Diego City Council President. This honor does not come lightly; it comes with great responsibility and understanding that my role is to represent not only my communities but all communities throughout San Diego.

2011 will be an exciting and action-packed year for the City Council. This will not be a year in which we address the city's problems and issues with sound-bites and not action. It is my intent to take bold and responsible action befitting the elected leaders of the eighth largest city in the nation.

For the past few years we have focused on fixing the city's financial problems. We will continue this focus on addressing the budget deficit and pension reform. However, we will also address the issues of a new city hall, new sports stadium and whether or not the Chargers stay or go, more open and transparent government, redefining the role of redevelopment agencies to ensure all redevelopment areas are vibrant and thriving, and restructuring the education system to help meet the needs of the regions employers.

Our laser-like focus on this problem has also had us dwell mostly on the general fund part of the City's budget and services, approximately \$1.42 billion. I have requested the Mayor and Council to join me in a renewed focus on communities and the City's entire budget of over \$2.85 billion.

Communities are affected by and serviced by several departments and programs that are not mentioned often when we talk budget and services. Areas such as golf courses, airports, public works, environmental services, development services and real estate assets, are all part of a budget of over \$2.8 billion. When we add these areas to our broader focus of Council budget actions on police, fire, libraries and parks, the community is better informed and involved. When we look at the entire City budget's programs and services, it opens our eyes and the eyes of the public to new and exciting possibilities to solving the structural budget deficit with a combination of managed competition, combining services and programs within city departments and possibly with other governmental entities, and reducing costs.

During my tenure as Council President there will be a clear focus on communities, regional assets and the myriad services provided by the City to communities. Yes, we have a pension reform problem to fix, yes, we have a budget deficit to fix, and yes, and we have a more focused involvement with our communities to address. However, I say to you all. No! We will not hide our heads in the sands of our beaches and not take clear, thoughtful and responsible actions on major issues impacting our regional assets.

Downtown is a multi-billion dollar regional asset that belongs to all of San Diego. Jobs and revenue generated by downtown benefit families and children all over this city. As Council President, I will be docketing issues for Council action that impact this regional asset including, a new government complex that replaces city hall and includes partnership with other government, quasi-government and private sector entities. This is 2011 not 1911, there is nothing saying this City Council cannot govern out of a building that has other functions and serves other public needs while also saving taxpayers millions of dollars. This is the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Why not a government complex that includes City offices, State offices, Federal offices, Port of San Diego Offices, and private sector business and commercial spaces.

I will be docketing for Council action expansion of the Convention Center. The Convention Center is a major part of the downtown regional asset and has generated billions of dollars and thousands of jobs for San Diego residents. This is 2011, we cannot stop nurturing and helping grow this goose with golden sails.

I will also be docketing for Council action the building of a new stadium by our regional asset, the San Diego Chargers. For too long we have been discussing this regional asset through sound-bites. On behalf of the City Council, I pledge to work in good faith with the Chargers, my colleagues and the Mayor to find a solution that works for both taxpayers and the team. The Spanos family deserves credit and respect for keeping the Chargers here. The Mayor, City Council and I clearly understand the enormous financial burdens that our City now carries, and for that reason there are no guarantees that we can get the job done with the Chargers. Again, we govern the eighth largest city in the nation and it is our responsibility to bring this matter to a conclusion, one way or the other. The Chargers want to stay in San Diego. The fans want them to stay in San Diego. The regional economy and the jobs they produce, need them to stay in San Diego. And – succeed or fail – I want to be able to say at the end of this process that the City has done everything possible to make that happen

I will be calling for your input and recommendations by scheduling evening City Council meetings out in the community that have special docket items for comprehensive discussions and actions on issues that impact you and your quality of life. Issues I plan to schedule include, Planning Committees and Business Improvement Districts, Pension Systems, Information and Technology Systems, and Jobs Creation and Employment Development Initiatives.

I have requested each Council Committee Chair to develop a ninety day action plan for their respective committees. This will give the Council and the public an opportunity to clearly focus on the various areas of city government and services their committees are charged with addressing while also creating additional opportunities for the public to engage in meaningful discussions about their city and the services it provides.

Councilmember Sherri Lightner, Chair of Land Use and Housing Committee will be spending the first 90 days focusing on issues which include modification of the Sustainable Energy building Policy, use of Linkage Fees, and extending time for building permits.

Council President Pro Tem Kevin Faulconer, Chair of the Audit Committee will be spending the first 90 days focusing on issues which include ensuring timely audits of the CAFR are completed, aggressively pursuing performance audits to find savings and efficiencies, and increasing revenue and recovery audits.

Councilmember Todd Gloria, Chair of Budget and Finance Committee and the newly established Ad Hoc Committee on Redevelopment will spend the first 90 days focusing on moving aggressively on the ten reforms that were contained in Proposition D, moving forward on financial measures from a menu of options that help eliminate our structural deficit, and thoroughly examining all options and recommendations to help make the Redevelopment Agency a public service that improves neighborhood redevelopment and is an economic engine and job creator for all of San Diego.

Councilmember David Alvarez, Chair Natural Resources and Culture Committee will be spending the first 90 days focusing on issues which include promoting water conservation, protecting our communities from floods, preserving the environment, and promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy.

Councilmember Marti Emerald, Chair Public Safety and Neighborhood Services will be spending the first 90 days focusing on issues which include restoring and improving public safety services and neighborhood services. This includes getting critical updates and taking actions on fire and lifeguard services, police services, neighborhood code compliance services, parks and recreation center service, and community development block grant program reforms and achievements.

Councilmember Carl DeMaio will continue to address the very important issue of pension reform and eliminating the structural budget deficit. His “Roadmap to Recovery” outlines a financial recovery plan that includes budget balancing actions that the Council and Mayor will consider for action.

Councilmember Lorie Zapf, in addition to focusing on addressing the City’s financial problems, will make addressing the needs of small businesses and implementing various neighborhood initiatives a top priority.

My tenure as Council President will be more about open and transparent government, enhanced community involvement, and including the entire \$2.8 billion budget when we talk about resolving our structural budget deficit and, maintaining our number one government service, an efficient and effective public safety net of efficient and effective police and fire services.

Many other issues will be brought to the Council for action in 2011. We will address them with the same degree of focus and thoughtful decision making. We will be establishing a 9<sup>th</sup> Council District. The elected representative of that District and his/her constituents will not be short changed by this Council. They will be welcomed and provided the same resources as other Council Offices. Yes, we will probably once again be impacted by financial issues beyond our control. Issues such as the State's budgetary decisions which impact us locally, special elections which the city must pay for, or a slow- down in the economy which impacts our tax revenues. However, as I said before, this will not stop us from governing the eighth largest city in the nation and continuing looking at ways to save money, generate jobs, and make your city government work more efficiently and effectively.

I will be bringing forward to the Council for action new ways of doing business which include best practices borrowed from the business sector. One such practice I have discussed with the Mayor is, paying vendors earlier than the normal 30-90 days in exchange for a reduction in their pricing. This could save us millions out of a services and supply budget that totals over \$100 million.

I will be looking at new ways for the City to utilize the internet technology universe that saves us millions on operating costs and makes city government more transparent and accessible to the public. I strongly believe that in 2011 we can do a much better job of automating city forms and processes for permitting, licensing and other functions of city government used by small business, city residents, and major industry clusters in our city.

There is no disputing the fact that we will always be paying pensions to our city employees. I will not spend 2011 having people come before this Council beating up on and embarrassing the families of city employees for pension decisions made years and decades ago. It is unfair, it is mean spirited, and it is unnecessary. However, I will have calm, thoughtful, and productive discussions on resolving our pension payment dilemma with the combined input of our Unions, Mayor's office and pension experts. We have been chipping away at this problem since 2005 and 2011 will be the year we cut down the tree. However, we will continue to replant the pension system with new pension reform seeds that include new choices for employees which lower the city's pension costs while offering options for employees to contribute to and/or better manage their own pensions via 401(k) plans.

2011 will not be all about doom and gloom problems. We will also be addressing issues such as extending the Tourism Marketing District created in 2007. This entity markets our city to tourist and businesses travelers. When visitors fill our hotel rooms, restaurants, and shopping centers,

millions of dollars in tourist and sales tax go towards maintaining essential city services. Thousands of visitors come to our city for Comic-Con alone. I look forward to working with the District and others to include a Comic-Con Parade that is similar to the parade that is done each year for the Holiday Bowl and the thousands of visitors it brings to the city.

Working with our tourism industry and park institutions, the Council will help launch preparations for the centennial celebration of the 1915 Panama-California Exposition. This year long event in 2015 will be an opportunity to draw the eyes of the world to San Diego and allow residents the chance to celebrate our beloved regional asset, Balboa Park.

This will also be the year the Council takes action on recommendations to form a Balboa Park Conservancy. The Conservancy, as recommended, will take the lead on restoring and improving the park for the benefit of all San Diegans.

We will also be addressing ways to streamline the process and lower the costs of having community gardens in neighborhoods throughout the city. We have heard the call to expand the number of community gardens in our city. This request comes from communities who see the benefits of these community assets - better nutrition, reclaiming often vacant or underutilized land, and greater social interaction between diverse neighbors.

The Council's Citizens Revenue Review and Economic Competitiveness Commission will be bringing forth recommendations for us to consider which include workforce development strategies that better educate and prepare San Diego students to meet the employment needs of our major industries such as bio technology, health care, military, and our university systems.

There is also a plan and possible ballot measure being put forward by San Diegans 4 Great Schools to expand the number of school board members and impose term limits. This action would require a change in the San Diego City Charter and as such, I will be docketing this issue for discussion. Educating our children is a responsibility for all of us. When our schools are failing to provide future employees for our major industries such as defense, bio-tech, health, education, and government, it undermines the future vitality and stability of this great city. The City Charter gives a major responsibility to the Council for ensuring a School Board system is in place that can ensure the education of all present and future children.

Yes, 2011 will be a year of action for the San Diego City Council. I will continue to look for additional ways to involve the public in our governing process. I will continue the tradition of having Friday office hours for meetings with constituents and concerned citizens, no appointments necessary. As Council President, my open office hours will be every other Friday here at City Hall, 10<sup>th</sup> floor from Noon to 3 p.m. You are welcome to come and talk to me without an appointment.

Lastly, I will continue to work with you the citizens of San Diego, Mayor and City Council, City Attorney, Independent Budget Analyst, and all our outstanding city staff and city employees to make the year 2011 and the years that follow truly wonderful and prosperous for us all.

Happy New Year to you all.