



Councilmember Marni von Wilpert

City of San Diego • District 5

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 6, 2021

TO: Councilmember Monica Montgomery Steppe, Chair, Committee on Public Safety and Livable Neighborhoods

FROM: Councilmember Marni von Wilpert

SUBJECT: Committee on Public Safety and Livable Neighborhoods Priorities

Thank you to Chair Montgomery Steppe for the opportunity to share my priorities for the development of the 2021 Public Safety and Livable Neighborhoods Committee (PS&LN) workplan. I am honored to serve on this incredibly important and impactful Committee. I look forward to working with my fellow PS&LN Committee members and the public to move towards our shared goals of protecting our communities from wildfires, increasing public trust with police, achieving community equity, and prioritizing government accountability in the year ahead. My priorities for the PS&LN Committee for 2021 include, but are not limited to the following:

PUBLIC SAFETY:

- **Implementation of the Commission on Police Practices (Measure B)**
 - The residents of San Diego have spoken with the passage of Measure B, calling for the creation of the Commission on Police Practices. In my FY 2022 budget priorities memo, I called for the necessary funding and staff to ensure the timely implementation of the provisions outlined in Measure B. Once the Commission is operational, the Committee should continue to receive routine updates regarding their activities.
- **Fire-Rescue and Police Recruitment and Retention, and Diverse Workforce**
 - Ensuring our Police, Firefighters, and Lifeguards have adequate staffing and resources is essential to decrease emergency response times and ensure that those who protect and serve us are properly staffed and have all the resources they need to keep us safe.

- Having diversity in our public safety institutions that aligns with the diversity of our community is essential. In order to ensure a diverse workforce, we need to intentionally focus on diversity in recruiting and outreach programs, including the Girls Empowerment Camp. The PS&LN Committee should request regular updates from the Fire-Rescue and Police Departments to learn and improve upon recruiting and community engagement practices.
- This Committee should request to receive reports from the Chief of Police and the Fire Chief to learn more about their department's training efforts to address implicit bias within our workforce.
- **Community-Oriented Policing**
 - The Committee should receive regular updates from SDPD detailing their current community policing efforts. By building trust and partnerships with community leaders and groups, our policing efforts can be enhanced with creative community problem-solving to develop solutions to keep our communities safe.
- **Restorative Justice and Criminal Diversion**
 - The Committee should engage in efforts to support the City Attorney's Office and Community Courts, among others, to support criminal diversion programs. This will ensure that we reduce crime by allowing low-level misdemeanor offenders to have their cases dismissed in exchange for community service.
- **Family Justice Center**
 - The Committee should receive an update from the FJC regarding the transition to the City Attorney's Office and advocate for the necessary resources to ensure the FJC continues to provide the highest quality service to victims of domestic violence.
- **Office of Race and Equity**
 - I commend the previous City Council's decision to establish the Office of Race and Equity. The PS&LN Committee should receive updates on the status of the Office of Race and Equity and once operational, should receive a minimum of quarterly reports to keep the Committee apprised of the efforts and discoveries made by staff.
- **Wildfire Prevention and Resiliency**
 - As Climate Change-driven wildfires get worse each year, the City must work to prevent wildfires and ensure our City is prepared if another big fire like the 2003 Cedar Fire or 2007 Witch Creek fire were to occur. The Committee should invite regular briefings from our Fire-Rescue and Police Departments, and local Fire Safety Councils to ensure we are ready in case of an emergency.

- We must continue the City’s brush management services our residents rely on for the safety of their communities. Given the current state of climate change driven wildfires in California, the City must remain vigilant in our efforts to reduce the fire dangers that our communities face. Regular brush management is one of the most effective ways of protecting and hardening both private and public structures from wildfire risk.
- **Oversight of Smart Street Lights Program and City Surveillance Ordinance**
 - The Committee should continue in its efforts to enact a City surveillance ordinance. This ordinance is critical to ensure public trust and transparency in the City’s efforts to introduce new technologies. Upon completion of the surveillance ordinance, the Committee should work with SDPD, the City Attorney’s Office, and the Transportation and Storm Water Department to evaluate the future of the Smart Street Light program.
- **Mental Health Support for Our First Responders**
 - As our first responders work daily in crisis situations, and now on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic, the PS&LN Committee should receive briefings from the Fire-Rescue and Police Departments Wellness Unit to better understand the current mental health programs available to our Police, Firefighters, and Lifeguards. This discussion should also include an evaluation of other jurisdictions’ efforts to support first responders through mental health services.
- **Gun Violence Prevention Through Execution of Gun Violence Restraining Orders**
 - Effective gun violence prevention is an essential measure of public safety for our City. Since the City Attorney’s Office launched California’s pioneering Gun Violence Restraining Order (“GVRO”) program in December of 2017, the Office has obtained more than 500 GVROs and has removed more than 700 guns from dangerous situations. GVROs have been used to remove guns from situations involving threats of suicide, domestic violence, and mass shootings at schools, hospitals, and workplaces. I request that the PS&LN Committee receive updates from SDPD and the City Attorney’s Office on the Gun Violence Restraining Order Program and to help inform residents of this valuable program.
- **COVID-19 Emergency Medical Service Impacts**
 - The City Fire-Rescue Department has faced significant challenges during the recent surge in local COVID-19 cases. This has led to prolonged periods of time that ambulances were unavailable for service after arriving at local hospitals with patients that the hospital did not have room for. The Committee should work to bring the Fire-Rescue Department, County Health Officials, and our regional hospital partners together to identify ways to improve the return to service time of ambulances.

- **Park Equity**

- Every community in the City needs to have quality park facilities and access for its residents. The PS&LN Committee should work with the Park and Recreation Department to evaluate the City's investment within our neighborhood parks to ensure that we are fully leveraging state and federal grants and equitably distributing resources to meet every community's needs.

- **Library Programming**

- The programming at our libraries, such as Library NExT program (Network of Education x Training) provides valuable workshops for K-12 students. Initially started as a pilot program at six San Diego libraries in 2017, it expanded to 21 locations in 2020 with plans to be offered at all City of San Diego library locations. The Committee should receive an update from the Library Department regarding NExT and other programming, including access to internet services, in order to discuss community outreach and engagement opportunities post pandemic. This should include evaluating opportunities to increase users through marketing campaigns, and partnerships with local school districts with special focus on underserved communities.

- **Urban Community Garden**

- I request that this committee look into alternative ways to increase access to park and green spaces in our communities by seeking city private partnership to turn unused parking lots, roofs, garages and abandoned lots into community gardens and parks.

- **Artistic Pop-Up at Abandoned Storefronts**

- Local Artists, entrepreneurs, and non-profits submitted proposals to activate storefronts. The winners will be invited to create pop-ups for limited engagements. The Committee should receive updates on this program and continue to evaluate creative strategies to engage the Arts and Culture community.

HOMELESSNESS:

- **Monitor & Support Regional Task Force on the Homeless (RTFH)**

- I request this committee continue to monitor and support the RTFH strategic regional plan and receive briefings on how City funded homeless service providers currently provide housing opportunities as they move away from VI-SPDAT criteria and coordinated assessment. This should include how those at risk of homelessness navigate these housing challenges and understand what steps are required towards being qualified for a home.

- **Utilization of Police Investigative Service Officers (PISO) and Community Relations Officers (CRO) in the Police Department**
 - The PS&LN committee should hold a discussion with Police Department leadership to learn more about the Department's utilization of PISOs and CROs to identify ways to enhance and improve their value for the Department and our communities.

- **Emergency Medical and Mental Health Services**
 - In order to continuously improve on the services, we provide to our communities, the Committee should hold discussions with our Fire-Rescue Department about new and changing healthcare models. These discussions should include, but not be limited to, evaluating the opportunities that community paramedicine provides and identifying new and innovative ways to work with our County partners to improve the public's access to mental health services.

- **Use of Force and De-escalation Policies**
 - De-escalation strategies are a critical tool for all law enforcement, and I commend the Police Department's renewed efforts to focus on this important tool. The Committee should work with SDPD leadership to continue the discussion regarding the Department's policies regarding use of force and find additional resources to assist our police officers by increasing the availability of PERT clinicians, among others. The discussion should also include an evaluation of SDPDs training program that relates to use of force tactics.

- **Citygate Studies Update**
 - The Committee should receive an update from Fire-Rescue on the Citygate Associates studies. This should include an assessment and recommendations for operational needs of our Fire-Rescue Department. The Committee should track the progress of these recommendations and advocate for priority needs addressed in the reports.

LIVEABLE NEIGHBORHOODS:

- **Discussion Regarding Opioid Settlement**
 - The PS&LN Committee should request a briefing from the City Attorney's Office regarding the settlement efforts that the City was party to related to the pharmaceutical industries involvement in the opioid epidemic. This discussion should include ways to utilize the settlement funds in communities most impacted by the opioid epidemic.

- **Diversity Study**

- The committee should be briefed on how City funded shelters embrace the diverse population they serve. The National Alliance to End Homelessness states that most minority groups in the United States experience homelessness at higher rates than Whites, and therefore make up a disproportionate share of the homeless population: Black Americans make up more than 40% of the homeless population, but represent 13 percent of the general population nationally. To end homelessness in San Diego we must address the range of issues that have resulted from racial inequity.

- **Regular Update from Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) and Psychiatric Emergency Response Teams (PERT)**

- The Committee should request regular updates from the City of San Diego's HOT which aims to provide homeless citizens a liaison to seek out available social services, and PERT that provide emergency assessment and referral for individuals in behavioral health crises.

- **Direct Placement Diversion Pilot Program**

- The Committee should request an update regarding our Direct Placement Diversion pilot program to provide individuals a shelter bed and access to services. Under the program, if an individual accepts placement and stays in a shelter or subsequent housing solution for 30 days, certain citations will not be filed. This program along with other mental health and substance abuse treatment programs are vital first steps to ending the cycle of homelessness for many.

- **BIPOC & LGBTQ+ Transitional Age Youth**

- This committee requests partnerships with service providers focusing on addressing some of the highest impacted homeless communities, including transitional aged BIPOC and LGBTQ+ youth.

- **Pursue Supportive Proven Programs**

- The committee should pursue and support proven programs to reduce homelessness such as mental health counseling, addiction treatment, criminal justice diversion programs and homeless courts. This will aim to balance compassionate enforcement of the law while providing the support and resources people need