



Councilmember Marni von Wilpert

City of San Diego • District 5

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 6, 2021

TO: Andrea Tevlin, Independent Budget Analyst

FROM: Councilmember Marni von Wilpert

SUBJECT: Budget Priorities for Fiscal Year 2022

I appreciate the opportunity to submit my budget priorities as we begin the process of developing the Fiscal Year 2022 budget, in response to Councilmember Cate's request as Budget and Government Efficiency Chair. Additionally, I would like to thank the IBA for the assistance you and your office will provide during the budget development process. The City faces significant challenges in this budget cycle, and 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 and addresses the needs of our communities. As we move forward in the development of the FY 2022 budget, one of my main priorities is to ensure that we maintain adequate funding for the core government services provided by our General Fund Departments.

Given the unprecedented and ongoing COVID-19 pandemic that our communities are facing, I request that priority is given to COVID-19 Response and Recovery funding and programs in the FY 2022 budget. The City needs to assist our residents and businesses as we recover from this 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 FY 2022 budget should include funding for dedicated staff to work with residents, businesses, and non-profit organizations, including those within the Arts and Culture community, to assist in the application for current and future COVID-19 related financial aid and services they require. Additionally, the City budget must prioritize the acquisition of personal protective equipment (PPE) to be provided to our Police, Firefighters, Lifeguards, and other City frontline workers so they can do their jobs safely.

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 residents of San Diego have spoken with the passage of Measure B, calling for the creation of the Commission on Police Practices. In the FY 2022 budget, the City must prioritize the necessary funding and staff time to ensure the timely implementation of the provisions outlined in Measure B.
- **Full funding for Brush Management Programs**
 - The FY 2022 budget must continue to fully fund the 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.
- **Fire-Rescue and Police Recruitment and Retention**
 - Ensuring our Police, Firefighters, and Lifeguards have adequate staffing and resources is essential. We must approve a budget that ensures 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.
- **Gun Violence Prevention through execution of Gun violence restraining orders**
 - Since the San Diego City Attorney's Office launched California's pioneering Gun Violence Restraining Order (GVRO) program in December of 2017, the Office 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.
 - Effective gun violence prevention is an essential measure of public safety for our City. I request that funding be made available to hire 2.5 FTEs within the City Attorney's office to support the Gun Violence Restraining Order Program. These new FTEs will ensure the City can respond quickly and effectively to threats of violence involving firearms.
- **Fast Response Squad in San Pasqual Valley**
 - Maintaining funding for the Fast Response Squad in the San Pasqual Valley is essential to ensure adequate response times to our most Northern community.
 - In October 2017, a fire sparked in San Pasqual Valley, and the FRS helped contain the fire to 12-acres. The San Pasqual Valley FRS must continue to operate on a permanent basis to ensure appropriate Fire-Rescue and wildfire response times throughout northeastern San Diego.
- **Wellness Services Funding for Fire-Rescue Department for Focus Psychological Services Support.**

Environmental Protection:

- **Funding for Climate Action Plan Update and 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 budget should also provide adequate funding for the

Sustainability Department to update the CAP with current data and best practices.

- The FY 2022 budget must provide funding for the creation of a standalone Climate Adaptation Plan. This plan is essential as we continue to face impacts of worsening climate change, including prolong periods of drought, increased wildfire risk, and sea level rise. The plan must also focus on specific impacts felt within our low-income communities that are at greatest risks to climate impacts.
- **Climate Equity Fund**
 - The creation of a Climate Equity Fund is essential to ensure we are addressing the disproportionate risks of climate change faced by our low-income communities and communities of color. The FY 2022 budget should identify creative funding opportunities for the Climate Equity Fund.

Homelessness Services and Affordable Housing:

- **Homelessness housing and services**
 - We must prepare for post-pandemic homelessness housing and services as part of the FY 2022 budget. The utilization of the Convention Center has been a success, however we must ensure that funding and services are included in the budget to transition to long term programs.
- **Affordable Housing**
 - The lack of affordable housing continues to be a significant challenge for the City. Among other things, we must ensure San Diego is fully leveraging any state and federal funding to support the development of more affordable housing opportunities throughout the City.

Infrastructure:

- **Vision Zero Infrastructure Improvements and Funding**
 - 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 in order to reach our Vision Zero goals.
- **Traffic Reduction Improvements**
 - We must continue to invest in improving our 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.
- **Maintaining our Streets**
 - The City spends tens of millions of dollars per year on street maintenance. The FY 2022 budget must include funding for a new street condition assessment to ensure current and accurate data is used to guide this essential City service. The City is overdue for a street condition assessment, having not completed one since 2015. This data is also important for the City Council and residents to ensure the City is utilizing its resources wisely and tracking the progress and effectiveness of the City's streets program.

- **Pure Water implementation and community engagement**
 - The Pure Water program is critical for the City's water independence. As the Pure Water construction continues in the new fiscal year, we must focus on outreach and engagement with the communities most affected by the construction. My office is prepared to engage with staff and the community to facilitate these efforts.
- **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 in order to reduce liability pay-outs and address the considerable backlog our sidewalk program faces.
- **Maintenance of the City's Storm Water System**
 - The Storm Water program continues to threaten our investments in all other infrastructure assets with its growing backlog and significant increase in emergency repairs. The FY 2022 budget must provide adequate funding for Storm Water-related maintenance to reduce the City's risk of costly emergency repairs.

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.
- **Funding to execute City Lease agreements with Farmers in San Pasqual Valley**
 - The farms and agricultural activities in the San Pasqual Valley require long term lease agreements with the Public Utilities Department in order to make the necessary investments in their facilities. I request one FTE for the creation of an Agricultural Manager position, with a background in lease negotiations and an understanding of the agricultural industry who can work with the Public Utilities Department and the Real Estate Assets Department to support these unique local businesses.
- **Cost of Living Adjustment for City Employees**
 - While we are in a tight budget cycle with the current pandemic, we also rely more than ever on our City workforce to provide core public safety, environmental, and other services to our residents. Our ability to recruit and retain high-quality City employees is suffering and has a significant impact on government efficiency. Therefore, in order to avoid costly turnover and vacancies, and consistently losing our qualified employees to other jurisdictions, we should strongly consider a basic cost of living adjustment for our employees.
- **Expanding access to online services - Get It Done**
 - The city has made great strides in improving online access to 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 application's responsiveness to service requests.

- **Ensure adequate support for Code Enforcement Services to maintain clean and healthy neighborhoods.**

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