



August 31, 2023

Mayor and City Council
San Diego City Hall
2020 C Street San Diego, CA 92101
Via Email

Subject: Climate Action Campaign's City of San Diego FY 2025 Budget Priorities Memo

Honorable Mayor and Councilmembers,

Climate Action Campaign (CAC) is a non-profit organization based in Southern California with a simple mission: **create a zero carbon future** through effective and equitable policy action.

Efficient public spending is critical to improving air quality, equity, health, and our quality of life, while also achieving the city's zero-carbon targets. [Gavin Newsom's Climate Measures and Revised Budget Plan](#), the [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#), and the [Inflation Reduction Act \(IRA\)](#), all include significant funding opportunities to build green, sustainable, and resilient communities.

The annual budget is a reflection of the city's priorities. This is an opportunity for the City to show a commitment to creating an equitable and sustainable future by ensuring key investments in climate, transportation, energy and housing policies in line with the 2022 Climate Action Plan (CAP) goals and the CAP Implementation Plan. Unfortunately, the Independent Budget Analyst's review of the FY 2024 proposed budget showed that unfunded CAP requests totaled \$94.1 million.

The City must intentionally use this budget to prepare to receive and effectively spend once-in-a-generation state and federal funding that will help to meet the goals established in the CAP and achieve climate justice for our communities.

We recommend that the following be prioritized in the FY 2025 budget:

Fully Fund the Climate Action Plan

Seven of nine Councilmembers expressed support for CAP implementation in their FY 2024 budget memos, yet the legally binding CAP remains significantly underfunded. The FY 2025 budget must show the total cost of implementing the CAP and outline funding allocation for key CAP actions and programs per year to advance its implementation.

Without proper funding, the City risks delaying action at a time when climate change and other safety and public health threats are becoming increasingly dangerous to San Diegans, especially those who live in Communities of Concern. The CAP Implementation Plan establishes that in order to create equitable outcomes, we must prioritize action and investment where the need is greatest by centering our most vulnerable community members throughout the City's decision-making processes.

We have two key recommendations:

- 1) Revise the five-year CAP Outlook within the CAP Implementation Plan, which summarizes estimated funding required to implement CAP actions during fiscal years 2024-2028. The five-year CAP Outlook must account for and close the \$94.1 million gap in CAP funding requests from Year 1, or the City will remain perpetually behind and not meet our legally required GHG reduction targets.
- 2) The City allocated \$9.2 million to the Climate Equity Fund (CEF) for FY 2024. To ensure equitable infrastructure and resilience investments, we ask the City to increase the CEF budget to \$15 million for FY 2025. Three Councilmembers made this exact request in their FY 2024 budget memos.

Mobility Master Plan

Transportation remains the greatest source of emissions in San Diego. Creating a balanced, equitable, connected and sustainable transportation system helps to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, contributes to an improved quality of life by bringing communities together, increases healthy physical activity, and reduces air and traffic pollution.

Unfortunately, the City of San Diego is significantly behind on creating this transportation network. **The City committed to a legally binding goal of 50% City-wide mode shift by 2035. However, we're currently only at 13% mode shift.** In addition, the current unfunded infrastructure needs amount to \$1.25 billion among bikes, sidewalks, signals, and street modifications, according to the Transportation Department's FY 2024 workplan.

The City will not be able to meet the CAP modeshift goals without fully funding and implementing the Mobility Master Plan (MMP). The MMP was included in five of nine Councilmember FY 2024 budget memos. It is also a "foundational action" within the CAP Implementation Plan, but continues to go unfunded. **We are requesting \$350,000 dollars at minimum be allocated to the MMP in the FY 2025 budget to ensure that this critical plan is completed as soon as possible.**

MMP projects not represented in the City's Five-Year Capital Infrastructure Planning Outlook and the City's annual Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget have little chance of being implemented. A MMP that aligns with the CIP budget is critical. A complete MMP should include necessary infrastructure projects that directly aid in reaching mode share targets. Without moving these MMP capital projects into the CIP budget, they will not be planned, funded, and realized. **We request that the City integrate MMP capital projects into the CIP budget.** This

is critical for planning, funding, and actualizing mode shift away from vehicles and advancing the City's equity commitments.

Heat Action Plan

Residents are already feeling the impacts of the climate crisis through wildfires, heat waves, flooding, and more. However, these effects are not felt equally, with low-income communities of color being the most vulnerable. It is not enough for San Diego to adopt policies that stop GHG emissions at their source, the City must also work to ensure that everyone can prepare, adapt, respond, and thrive despite external stressors as a result of climate change.

We request \$250,000 be allocated to develop and implement the San Diego Heat Action Plan. In March 2023, CAC wrote a [letter of support](#) for the San Diego Regional Climate Collaborative and the City of San Diego's application to the Adaptation Planning Grant Program for the project: **San Diego Heat Action Planning & Cooling Solutions Pathways**. Unfortunately, the City failed to receive that funding from the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR).

We request that the City prioritize heat-vulnerable communities by providing the funding needed to identify specific cooling solutions that mitigate heat exposure and build community capacity to respond to heat events. This should include nature-based cooling solutions to address extreme heat, flooding, and other climate hazards and provide additional community benefits such as cleaner air, improved water quality, recreational opportunities, and mental health benefits.

If properly funded, the Heat Action Plan can be a key strategy to prepare for and reduce risks related to climate change as well as a framework for implementing citywide resilience action in collaboration with front-line communities.

Southwest Neighborhood Park Project

Increasing access to park space is a climate resiliency strategy that improves public health, air quality, and the overall quality of life of residents. At minimum our communities, especially communities of concern, deserve increased park space, better access and improvements to existing parks, tree canopy expansion, and more green infrastructure.

We request additional funding for the construction of the Southwest Neighborhood Park be prioritized in this year's budget. This park is a high priority Capital Improvement Project (CIP) and approved General Development Plan in District 8. The proposed neighborhood park will provide approximately 11.5 acres of population-based park land, which the City currently owns 9.72 acres of. This project is in the final design stages and received \$1 million in the FY 2022 budget. However, the total estimated cost for the bid, award, and construction of this project is \$25.6 million. The City Council should continue working with the city's CIP team to determine the sufficient funding needed to be allocated in the FY 2025 budget for the construction of this project. This funding should come from a combination of city, state, and federal grants.

Funding should be used to develop park amenities such as a lighted multi-use field, multi-purpose courts, picnic area, shelter, shade trees, security lighting, playground, a paved loop trail, etc. The City should also include renewable energy resources such as solar and wind into the development of this park.

In summary, here are our top recommendations for FY 2025 Budget:

1. Fully fund the CAP. To achieve this, the City must provide the total cost of implementing the CAP and outline funding allocation for key CAP actions and programs per year to advance its implementation. This includes revising the five-year CAP outlook within the CAP Implementation Plan to account for and close the \$94.1 million gap in CAP funding requests. As well as increasing the CEF budget to \$15 million.
2. Allocate a minimum of \$350,000 dollars to the MMP and integrate MMP capital projects into the CIP budget to ensure that this critical plan is completed as soon as possible.
3. Allocate \$250,000 dollars to develop and implement the San Diego Heat Action Plan.
4. Prioritize funding to construct the Southwest Neighborhood Park, which is a high priority CIP and approved General Development Plan in District 8. This project received \$1 million in the FY 2022 budget. However, the total estimated cost of completing this project is \$25.6 million. The City Council should continue working with the city's CIP team to determine the sufficient funding needed to be allocated in the FY 2025 budget for the construction of this project. This funding should come from a combination of city, state, and federal grants.

Thank you for your consideration of our recommendations for the FY 2025 Budget. We look forward to partnering with you on these initiatives.

Sincerely,

Madison Coleman

Madison Coleman
Policy Advocate
Climate Action Campaign